



In this time of rupture

and dissolution,

revelation

and uncertainty



*we slow, listen and
come present, together*

*and in that trust, we may lean in
with humility*

*to listen for and live into
what arises between us*

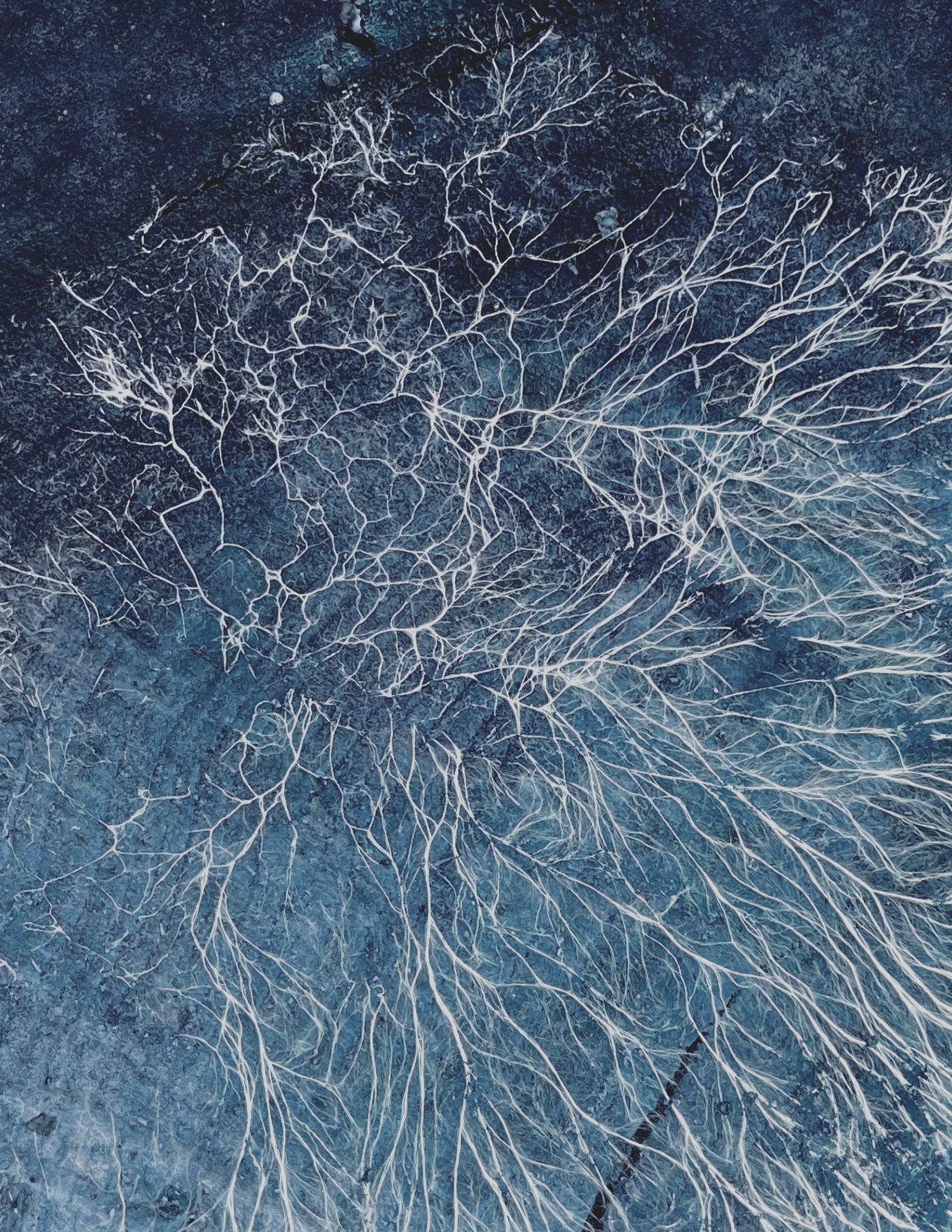
mycelial

emergent

a way for these times.

Council *on the* Uncertain Human Future

PRACTICE • NETWORK • PATH



Overview

The conditions of reciprocity and interdependence on which all of life on Earth depends have been disregarded and overshot by dominant global human civilization.

Our remarkable creative capacities could have been in respectful (even celebratory) dialogue with our earthly context, as they are in many indigenous cultures. Instead, a capitalist preoccupation with productivity and consumption prevailed, along with the cultural and economic behaviors that flow from it. It presumes a separation from and domination over the planetary web of life of which we are part, including the extraction of ‘resources’, the objectification of other living beings (including other humans) to meet our needs, and an insatiable impulse to grow, control our circumstances to assuage our fears, and see conditions as problems to be solved.

We live as though humans can defy these earthly limits, and even death itself. This western evolutionary path has proven pitiless, for us and the whole living world. In this time of reckoning, Earth is making clear her limits and that we do not control her...rather that we are interdependent within this remarkable living network from which we emerged.

The *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* is a practice of listening and coming present, within ourselves and between us, to this reality and to what, in this time of great uncertainty, might emerge from here. Within CUHF, we slow down and come to stillness as we join in this ancient practice of intentional exchange. We engage a simple arc of questions together, listening deeply to ourselves and others, human and non-human. We ground ourselves, explore what we know, listen between the cracks, feel the dissolution and loss, and over time, speak of possibility from here.

In this intentional space of slowing and coming present, what takes place between us is emergent and mycelial...outside normative rhythms, habits and expectations. Within the weave of honest speaking and deep listening, care and collaboration, openings may arise and new insights emerge.

This is an ancient and new path for cultural and planetary evolution...and one in which we are in respectful relationship with all of life.

Around the circle, we asked....

*In this era of profound
uncertainty, dissolution
and revelation,*

*how do you understand our work,
this work of the*

*Council on the
Uncertain Human Future?*

*It does not have to be this way and we know this.
We are not the only ones who know this.*

*People, plants, forests, savannahs,
fish, coral reefs, oceans, and
the atmosphere know this.*

99% of life on this planet knows this.

John Bailes

National Convener

It does not have to be this way and we know this. We are not the only ones who know this. People, plants, forests, savannahs, fish, coral reefs, oceans, and the atmosphere know this. 99% of life on this planet knows this.

Our modern world view is totally out of sync with life. Our survival cannot depend upon engineering feats holding back floods, fires, migrations, and diseases which in fact they have provoked. We have to find ways to live with life, all life, its transcendent form, that which exceeds our simplistic profit and loss statement world view. It is a matter of learning to compose with life, to create together as humans and together as all life with life.

I see this as the work of the CUHF...the work of freeing ourselves from the stranglehold this limited view has upon our lives, and opening together to a more complex, rich, and fertile way of being through the practice of Council. A diverse, open, truthful, respectful sharing and listening to the wonder and complexity of each of our lives, our interdependence and uniqueness. From this I see community, leadership, joined action emerging and sustaining life.

The Council process puts us back in touch with ourselves and one another, affirming our individuality and interconnectedness, strengthening our trust in ourselves and our experience and that of others. This is the beginning of community, real history, and real lore to receive, live by, and pass on. This interconnectedness is the beginning of true ethics and morality, of *never alone*. This is true learning.

Kirstin Edelglass

Rando Partnership
Council Member

*Like an ecosystem, we are generating
new ways of being and collaborating
for the benefit of all.*

There is a spaciousness in our councils, a time-out-of-time, in which we can pause and trust that insight will arise from our creative depths.

One insight sparks another and another until we find ourselves seeing possibility and light through the fog of despair. Like an ecosystem, we are generating new ways of being and collaborating for the benefit of all.

The CUHF is also a commons for our emotional response to what we are witnessing in our world. As we allow our hearts to express the anguish we have learned to conceal, we feel resonance from the souls around us, and hear words of gratitude and affirmation. Our pain is no longer personal—we are one node in a vast web of people who care and feel called to contribute to the healing of our world.

*The Council experience rattles the crumbling
foundation of a defunct dualistic paradigm,*

*one that demands our choice between mind and body,
thought and feeling, matter and energy,
self and other, individual and community,
human and nature, the mundane and the sacred.*

Kevin Gallagher

CUHF Core Team,
National Convener

The *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* is an emergent process that responds at multiple scales to the demands of world-historic dislocation, uncertainty, and change.

Most intimately and simply, for the individual, the CUHF process can disrupt the denial, isolation, and unprocessed grief that too often leads to chronic anxiety, paralysis, and despair, while offering access to essential communal wisdom, creative insight and even nervous system co-regulation. It is an antidote to the opacity that clouds our ever more uncertain future.

Widening the focus, the Council nurtures relationships within its host communities and organizations, supporting their resilience and growing their capacity to adapt to accelerating change. This occurs in part through disruption of existing socio-emotional norms, particularly those that privilege denial, delay, and obfuscation over radical honesty, and that marginalize emotional intelligence and embodied wisdom in favor of analytic rationality. In creating space for new ways of being and sources of wisdom, the Council liberates communal capacities for insight, creativity, and adaptability necessary to respond to our global predicament.

Full essay: councilontheuncertainhumanfuture.org/voices-of-cuhf/gallagher

*It is within the strange paradox between
the urgency of our time and what it demands from each of us,
and the stillness required for deep,
transformative change that the work of the
Council on the Uncertain Human Future
can profoundly serve.*

Lily Swanbrow Becker

Former CUHF
Associate Director,
National Convener

We need to step off the runaway freight train of our broken systems and pause. Creating and nurturing this space of pausing, breathing, and holding still can begin to release us from the inertia of our torn, insecure, polarized, and threatened world. Although we may often feel pulled between competing pressures, the most powerful action we can take at times is to step back and listen. It is in these quiet and contemplative spaces, sitting in intentional conversation with others, that the wisdom, strength, and seeds of change we so desperately need to bring about cultural transformation can begin to take root and emerge.

This process of creating space from which to welcome shifts in our collective understanding will not happen by itself. Also, not everyone may feel called to participate. But those who do may find themselves deeply moved by the Council circles CUHF convenes. And on a collective scale, this work serves far beyond the small circles and people who occupy them. Now, and likely to a greater extent into the future, the sparks, openings, shifts, and seeds sprung from CUHFs can ripple outward and spread in mycelial threads of transformation.

While a particular outcome from this work is never the intention nor a realistic goal for our uncertain world, we must all find a way to meet the times. The work of CUHF can help shine a light on that path while slowly, intentionally, and quietly beginning to open a doorway to transformative change.

*Different ways of thinking, communicating
and acting in the world are needed. We can't know in advance
what forms the different ways will take, but
multitudes of human communities, other life forms and
ecosystems have some suggestions,
if we can only listen.*

Curt Newton

National Convener

This time of profound uncertainty and dissolution is also a time of revelation, and a time, hopefully not too late, for repair and regeneration.

There's an urgent need for people to bear witness, to truly take in and process what is happening; and do so in community where new insights and collective intelligence can emerge. Systems of human dominion over nature, extractive capitalism, racism, and male domination that have produced our escalating crises cannot be expected to solve the crises, and they are so deeply entrenched it can be hard to see them and imagine any alternatives. Yet so many people *of these systems* do want to make things better. I am one of those people, and I'm not alone.

Different ways of thinking, communicating, and acting in the world are needed. We can't know in advance what forms the different ways will take, but multitudes of human communities, other life forms and ecosystems have some suggestions, if we can only listen.

The methods of CUHF—slowing down, reflecting on the biggest questions, and listening to each other with undivided non-judgmental attention—hold great promise to help conceive of and begin to generate these forms.

*We need to open to the suppressed voice
of our own indigeneity, listening to the places we dwell
and to the creatures with whom we share these places.*

*As Bayo Akomolafe says, we need to shut up
and to go into the cracks.*

Walter Wright

National Convener

Given our situation, how can we address our deepest assumptions without reproducing them? The Council process can open a space of shared, radical listening, both to each other and to what is beyond habitual mind.

In this space, we have the possibility of allowing our assumptions' grip to loosen, suspending their influence, and bringing them into view. By listening open-heartedly to one another, we can allow new, unanticipated insights to arise. In this way, Council is a path to an emancipatory way of being with the world and with each other. It is a model for the world we are trying to bring into being.

In addition, we should note that this way of listening has been widely known and practiced in indigenous cultures. Tactfully, and with respect, we need to listen to what those cultures have been telling us for a long time... to right the endless wrongs we have inflicted, and are inflicting, on them. We need to open to the suppressed voice of our own indigeneity, listening to the places we dwell and to the creatures with whom we share these places. We need to shut up, to go into the cracks, as Bayo Akomolafe says.

*Each participant is holding space for many others —
students, colleagues, family members, communities,
and also trees, animals, waters, and places.*

*A Council is a circle.
It has no beginning and no end.
It has no leaders and no followers,
no hierarchy of power or privilege.*

*What a circle has is a center.
The center holds honesty, which is a kind of beauty,
which is a source of truth.*

Krista Hiser
National Convener

The function of the *Council on the Uncertain Human Future*, as I see it, is to put the most involved and engaged activists, teachers, and thinkers about the planetary predicament in a room together (real or virtual) to slow down and *thinkfeel* together. It is grief work, relationship building, and collective sensemaking.

It might seem counterintuitive to take the busiest and smartest people working on climate issues and put them through a slow arc of structured questions; yet, a mysterious energizing and clarity occurs from the Council process.

Nothing is solved here. No plans are made. It is a time to catch up to ourselves and witness others on the surreal path of reckoning and revelation. Each participant is holding space for many others—students, colleagues, family members, communities, and also trees, animals, waters, and places. The Council holds space for the space-holders.

Krista Hiser is a sustainability leader, professor of writing at Kapi'olani Community College (Oahu), and Senior Lead for Environmental Education at the Global Council for Science and the Environment.

Kathleen Dean Moore
National Council Member

Time and evolution have given human beings many gifts. Intelligence, endurance, foresight, adaptability, cleverness with tools. But the greatest gift, the gift that has allowed this species to endure when others have not, is the ability to come together in groups and work for the common good.

Now we are testing whether we have the ability to turn our gifts to the greatest of all challenges, finding a route through uncertainty to a future of cultural and ecological thriving. This is made all the more difficult as frightened people turn their backs on their gifts and seek stupid, short-term, and selfish solutions.

How essential, then, is the work of the *Council on the Uncertain Human Future*, recalling people to the ancient practice of Council, summoning the collective wisdom of people speaking from their hearts about what is essential and true.

A Council is a circle. It has no beginning and no end. It has no leaders and no followers, no hierarchy of power or privilege. There are no limits to its revolutions. What a circle has is a center. The center holds honesty, which is a kind of beauty, which is a source of truth.

Kathleen Dean Moore is a philosopher and writer, and Distinguished Professor of Environmental Ethics Emerita at Oregon State University.

*Discovering one's voice in the cosmic context
of living as part of the Earth rather than as
somehow an exception to the Earth
was not easy, but very rewarding.*

Jim Paradis
MIT Council Member

*We are creating a way for the collective voice
connected to the one heart/mind,
to speak and be heard.*

Barbara Waldorf
National Convener

*The Council on the Uncertain Human Future
provides a unique gift—to be present,
to share honestly, to listen deeply with others
as we step into the liminal space
between a world that has been hurtling
towards a climate reckoning and one
that must navigate its arrival.*

Asher Miller
Rando Partnership Member

Jim Paradis is Professor of Writing and Comparative Media Studies at MIT.

Barbara Waldorf is Managing Director of Natural Dharma Fellowship.

Asher Miller is Executive Director of Post Carbon Institute.

... the companionship, wisdom and
mutual care that arises in our Council circles envelopes us
not so much in hope, as in a blend of
humility, ferocity, courage, gratitude and love.

***In slowing and listening, we become
permeable, mycelial, woven with each other within
the emergent living process of which we're part.
Together we become 'critical yeast' for
what has yet to arise; we bring ourselves
in inspiration, service and compassion
to what's real and possible from here.***

Diana Chapman Walsh
CUHF Co-Founder

My first experience of this Council left me knowing I could never again look away. Look away from our ravaging of Nature and Earth and all the chilling consequences. Others in that group had long ago moved our uncertain human future into the center of their consciousness. Made of it the engine of their passions and commitments.

So if you ask me what is important, essential, irresistible, irreplaceable about the Council practice, I would have to say first that it makes it impossible ever again to look away from what we humans are doing to our only home and all of its inhabitants.

From the precipice on which we now stand. And, at the same time, the Council practice makes it tolerable—maybe just barely so—to never again look away. For the companionship, wisdom and mutual care that arises in our Council circles envelopes us not so much in hope, as in a blend of humility, ferocity, courage, gratitude and love. Yes, love most of all. That's how we serve.

Diana Chapman Walsh is former President of Wellesley College (1993-2007), a public health scholar, and Life Member Emerita of the MIT Corporation.

Sarah Buie
Founding Convener

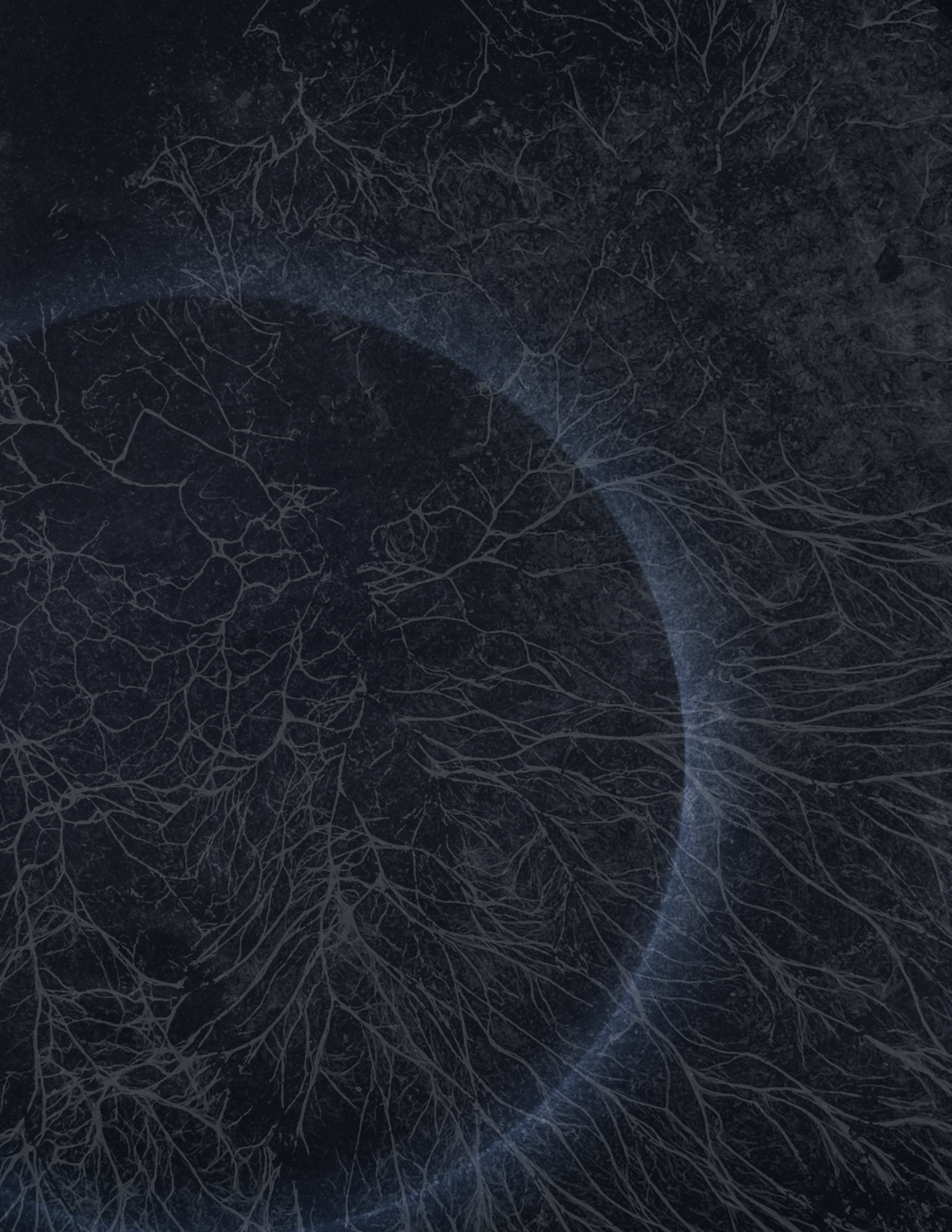
So we are asking, in these times like no other, *what matters now?*

Perhaps it is that we awaken to and come present within the evolutionary miracle of which we are part. That we slow down, shedding as we can, and live into the wonder and uncertainty of our existence, moment to moment. That we come together in a space of humility, witness, and *not knowing*—in *communitas*—and listen for the wisdom and insight that may arise between us.

The *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* is a kind of portal. It invites us to a space of connection—with each other and with the Earth. In a simple intentional process with ancient roots, we ask real questions and lean into that which arises through them. Trust, empathy and insight grow between us, and a kind of momentum arises.

In slowing and listening, we become permeable, mycelial, woven with each other within the emergent living process of which we're part. Together we become *critical yeast* (Krista Tippett) for what has yet to arise; we bring ourselves in inspiration, service and compassion to what's real and possible from here.

Sarah Buie is Professor Emerita at Clark University, former Director of the Higgins School of Humanities, and Founding Convener of CUHF.



History

In 2014, a circle of twelve distinguished women sat together with the intention of opening the silence around planetary breakdown. Despite clear scientific evidence and consensus on the environmental crisis, as a society we were failing to acknowledge it—both in its root causes and its implications.

In the winter of 2014, the members of the first *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* came together in a Council practice to share what they knew and felt about our unprecedented reality, and to listen between themselves for how they might respond. Their insights, some of which are documented in the film *Listening for Signal* (2016), became the ground for what has followed.

That original National Council circle—hosted at Clark University and funded through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—remains the heart of a growing international CUHF network. It is now one of seven CUHF Steady Councils.

In 2025, eleven years later, hundreds of people have participated in CUHF Councils nationally and internationally, both in person and over Zoom, and the network continues to grow. Taking place in universities, non-profit organizations, in regional circles as far-reaching as the Bay Area, Kathmandu, and Santa Fe, and within other affiliated groups, Councils develop in a variety of ways, and with the guidance and facilitation of a CUHF National Convener. The integrity of each of them relies on the Council practice and a series of prompts developed and evolving over time.

A much-needed reimagining of the roles and responsibilities of higher education in these times is supported in the reckoning and community engendered through CUHF; to develop and further this transformation is a high priority for the project. A campus-wide curriculum initiative, *A new Earth conversation*, arose from Councils held among faculty and staff at Clark, with the CUHF practice at its foundation. The CUHF work has developed and spread on the Swarthmore College campus, where a team of conveners has taken this practice into the classroom and to the community as a whole.

As the threat of the pandemic mounted, we pivoted on March 14, 2020 and held the first session of the Bay Area CUHF via Zoom. That pioneering group (and the *Zoom in the spirit of Council* guidelines that soon emerged) broke the ground for the many groups that have convened virtually since then. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is among them; in collaboration with ESI and SHASS, more than seventy MIT faculty and staff have participated in the full CUHF process over the last two years, and a Steady Council has grown. Other virtual groups have included the Clark NEC Collaboratives Councils, the Rando Partnership, Mind and Life, AASHE, Bard MBA, EcoSattva groups, Journalists and Writers, Coal + Ice, and the Steady Councils.

Several other campuses are or have been involved in the work (UMass Amherst, University of Edinburgh, Worcester State, UC Berkeley, Brown University, Harvard Kennedy School, and others); a network among higher ed programs formed in the winter of 2023/24. In addition to faculty and staff, more than 800 students across these campuses have participated.

The Root Council evolved in 2022, and continues to lay ground for our work. In the last three years, we formalized a long collaboration with Natural Dharma Fellowship; based on multiple Ecosattva Councils, between us we create an EcoDharma stream, including *Green Dharma Retreats* annually, and monthly meetings of *Rewilding the Soul*, all with Council practice as their foundation.

Over the course of 2024, five Threshold Councils (constellated around Higher Education, Youth, Universe Speaks, Women Dharma Leaders, and To Bear and Nurture came present to the profound polycrisis in which we live. In 2025, we sit in Council together *In this time of rupture*. We continue to expand our higher education work and network, hold gatherings and residencies at our MASS MoCA office space, and in ways anticipated and as yet unimagined, continue to seed and nourish collective transformation.

Early support for this work was provided by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Since 2016, The Christopher Reynolds Foundation has been the primary funder of the *Council on the Uncertain Human Future*.

Practice Stream

Council on the Uncertain Human Future

As the foundation of our work, the *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* is conducted through the practice of Council—an intentional conversation based on an arc of questions. We begin by slowing into presence. We call forward the societal and political context in which we gather. We acknowledge the planetary changes underway and the human behaviors that led to them. As we speak into the consequences and implications for all living beings, together we explore how we might live now, given what we've come to see and know.

Once only held in person, Councils now also take place on Zoom and in a range of hybrid forms. The online practice meets in five two-hour sessions, usually weekly. Guidelines for *Zoom in the spirit of Council* support the online work. Visioning sessions are held at the end of the Council round in most cases.

Council in this Time of Reckoning

The Council in this time of reckoning (CITR) arose in response to the intersection of racism, eco-cide, pandemic, and rising authoritarianism made more apparent by the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. CITR is now the opening two-hour session of the full *Council on the Uncertain Human Future*; it is also offered independently.

CUHF Root Council

The Root Council invites a deeper view for those who have participated in the full CUHF. Drawing on that experience, we site ourselves within a longer planetary perspective, one based on the interdependence of all living systems on Earth and beyond. Taking that in, we ask *how do we understand being human within this larger view? How might we enter / re-join the larger community of life? What matters now?* First launched as an online Council, it has since been integrated into the agendas of Steady Councils.

Threshold Councils

A sense of precipice or foreboding has grown over the last years. In 2024, on what has become a threshold into an autocratic state in the U.S., we drew together five strong and very different groups to engage the question *What matters now?* from their base of concern—whether in Higher Education, through the MA Youth Climate Council, with the visionary leaders of Universe Speaks, among Women Dharma Leaders, or those considering the work of creativity and nurturing in To Bear and Nurture. Councils met in person—at sites which included MASSMoCA, the Higgins School at Clark University, and the Academy for the Love of Learning in Santa Fe—and online.

In the flow of rupture
(preceded by *On the rim of rupture*)

In 2025, the political and cultural conditions in the U.S. have been enormously destabilizing and harmful, predictable and revelatory, all at once. To further insight, community and even possibility in these times, we meet together monthly *In the flow of rupture*. Throughout the year, members of the community have taken part in online and in-person Council sessions to consider collectively: *What is happening*, and *how do we stay present, compassionate, grounded and in community amidst the convulsions? Can we together expand our insight and perspective, while being realistic, agile, skillful and of service?*

Steady Councils

Many CUHF groups wish to stay in community and ongoing conversation, and become *Steady Councils*. Led by anchor teams from the group, they draw on agendas and resources from the larger project, and/or develop their own. Steady Councils have included the National group, Santa Fe, Bay Area, EcoSattva, MIT, Journalists and Writers, and Coal + Ice; others are emerging.

Councils + Networks

as of December 2025

The *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* takes place among a range of groups, many of which are networks in themselves; some become Steady Councils ⁺. More information, including biographies of members, is available at councilontheuncertainhumanfuture.org.

INDEPENDENT

- + National CUHF *launched in 2014*
- Rando Partnership *launched 2021*
- + Journalists & Writers *launched 2022*
- + Coal + Ice performers *launched 2023*

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Clark University faculty and staff *launched 2015*
- Partnership Council at Clark University *2018*
- Clark University *A new Earth conversation* (NEC) curriculum initiative *launched 2017*
- University of Edinburgh *launched 2016*
- Berkshire Waldorf High School *launched 2017*
- University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy *2018*
- SERC University of California Berkeley *2019*
- Swarthmore College *launched 2019*
- Worcester State University *2020*
- Bard MBA in Sustainability *launched 2020*
- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) *launched 2020*
- + Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) *launched 2020*
- UMass Amherst *launched 2022*
- Harvard University Kennedy School *winter 2024*
- Brown University *spring 2025*

REGIONAL

- + Kathmandu, Nepal *launched 2017*
- + Santa Fe *launched 2017*
- + San Francisco Bay Area *launched 2020*

ORGANIZATIONAL

- National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), Boulder *2016*
- Dialogue & Deliberation Climate Action Network (DD-CAN) *2018*
- 350.org Central MA *2019*
- Mind & Life Institute *launched 2021*
- State of Massachusetts Youth Climate Council *launched 2023*
- MASSMoCA staff and community *launched 2025*

ECO-DHARMA

- + EcoSattva *launched 2017*
- Green Dharma Retreats *launched 2019*
- Rewilding the Soul *launched 2023*

THRESHOLD COUNCILS 2024

- What Matters Now in Higher Education at MASSMoCA and online *January-February 2024*
- Youth Council at Clark University *July 2024*
- Universe Speaks at MASSMoCA *August 2024*
- Women Dharma Leaders online *September 2024*
- To Bear and Nurture in Santa Fe *November 2024*

CUHF Resources

CUHF Website

The CUHF website is a rich repository of all aspects of the project, offering videos and downloads for the resources listed at right.

councilontheuncertainhumanfuture.org

International Zoom Events

CUHF International Zoom events enrich the questions and concerns of the *Council on the Uncertain Human Future*, and further community among members. They feature conversation partners around topics or a film, followed by breakout Council circles.

All We Can Save December 17, 2020

Sherri Mitchell, Susi Moser, Katharine Wilkinson

Love in the Time of Extinctions April 15, 2021

Kathleen Dean Moore, Joanie Kleypas

This Sentient Earth June 23, 2021

Melissa Hoffer, Elizabeth Monson,
Francoise Wemelsfelder

In Witness film launch October 25, 2021

Nara Garber, Sarah Buie

The Circle of Community December 8, 2021

Willa Blythe Baker, Kathryn Harris Tijerina, Beth Sawin

A Reckoning in Boston January 25, 2022

Kafi Dixon, James Rutenbeck

Once You Know April 7, 2022

Emmanuel Cappellin, Diana Liverman, Susi Moser

A Mindful Circle May 23, 2022

John Bailes, Willa Blythe Baker, Sarah Buie,
Diana Chapman Walsh, Kevin Gallagher,
Melissa Hoffer, Barbara Waldorf

WHAT MATTERS NOW? SERIES

celebrating 10 years of CUHF

Slow down, and listen October 7, 2022

Willa Blythe Baker, Michael Lipson, Emily Raboteau

Learn and unlearn November 13, 2022

Sherri Mitchell, Scott Eberle, Maura O'Connor

Lean into the cracks January 19, 2023

Bayo Akomolafe

Connect April 16, 2023

Kevin Gallagher, Chrissie Orr, Elizabeth Monson,
Mark Wallace

Know wonder May 2023

Presence November 5, 2023

Diana Chapman Walsh, Lama Willa Blythe Baker,
John Bailes

IN THE FLOW OF RUPTURE

opening reflections offered by:

Tom Murphy May 19, 2025

Roshi Susan Murphy June 30, 2025

Sherri Mitchell August 11, 2025

Lama Willa Blythe Baker September 15, 2025

Bayo Akomolafe October 20, 2025

Lama Liz Monson November 17, 2025

Michael Lipson December 15, 2025

Films

The three films produced by CUHF highlight the voices, questions, experiences and reflections of members of three circles—the National group as they hold a reunion in northern New Mexico; students at Berkshire Waldorf High School; and a group of CUHF members at MASSMoCA during the height of the pandemic.

Listening for Signal 2016

Nara Garber, filmmaker

The World We Wish to See 2017

Diane Lee, *filmmaker*

In Witness 2021

Nara Garber, *filmmaker*

CUHF Readers and Publications

A series of CUHF Readers offers reflections from a wide range of authors and sources, framed within the questions and context of these unprecedented times. The complete CUHF readers and other publications and articles are available on the CUHF website under Resources.

Seedbed

The members of the CUHF community are engaged in a wide range of professional and personal commitments related to the planetary crisis. *The Seedbed* (available on the CUHF website) shares individual and organizational commitments and affiliations as a resource for collaborations and network building between members.

People + Affiliates

Core Team

Sarah Buie *Founding and Lead Convener*
Diana Chapman Walsh *Co-founder*
Kevin Gallagher *Interim Lead, winter 2026*
Melissa Hoffer
Elizabeth Monson

All above also serve as National Conveners

National Convener Team

John Bailes
Pat Benjamin
Lily Swanbrow Becker
Madeleine Charney *UMass Amherst+*
Lauren Faria
Krista Hiser
Megan Holmes
Jennifer Jacobson *UMass Amherst+*
Linda Kentro *Kathmandu+*
Natasia Lawton-Sticklor
Laura McKee
Wendy Miles
Uli Nagel
Curt Newton *MIT+*
Kevin O’Keefe
Chrissie Orr
Hildur Palsdottir *Rewilding +*
Barbara Waldorf *Eco-Sattva+*
Aurora Winslade *Bard MBA+*
Walter Wright *Berkshire Waldorf+*

Steady Council Anchor+

Staff

Jane Androski *Communications Consultant*
Lauren Faria *Program Coordinator*
Kerri Stearns *Administrative Coordinator*
Aaron Richmond-Crosset *Technical Support*

Steady Council Anchors/
Local Conveners

Susi Moser *National*
Joannie Kleypas *NCAR*
Pauline Phemister *University of Edinburgh*
Wallace Heim *University of Edinburgh*
Asha Basnyat *Kathmandu*
Frances Klatzel *Kathmandu*
Esha Chiocchio *Santa Fe*
Carr Everbach *Swarthmore*
Clare Hyre *Swarthmore*
Oswaldo Morales Solorzano *Swarthmore*
Michael Ramberg *Swarthmore*
Mark Wallace *Swarthmore*
Harrison Blum *Amherst College*
Wendy Olmstead *SEI*
Paul LeVasseur *Berkshire Waldorf*

Affiliates

Clark University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI)
School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS)
Mind & Life Institute
Natural Dharma Fellowship
Post Carbon Institute
Swarthmore College

A circle of gratitude

We offer thanks for the many blessings, people and communities, including family and friends, who have made this work possible and flourish, and for all of those, human and earthly, that sustain our existence within the web of life.

At the center of the circle is Diana Chapman Walsh, who co-founded the *Council on the Uncertain Human Future* with Sarah Buie, CUHF Lead Convener, and has co-anchored it with loving skill and wisdom ever since. Susi Moser joined us in the birthing process, and has remained a strong partner as the work has grown. The first CUHF members—Diana, Susi, Sarah, Mary Catherine Bateson (deceased 2021), Mary Evelyn Tucker, Gretel Ehrlich, Kathleen Dean Moore, Beth Sawin, Joanie Kleypas, Willa Blythe Baker, Janet Echelman and Camille Seaman—became and remain a powerful sisterhood; we support and celebrate each other’s work, and often collaborate. We were mentored from the outset by Bonnie Mennell (Way of Council), and Walter Wright and Paul Levasseur have been dear allies.

Great thanks to the remarkable group of people who sustain the ongoing work. Diana and Sarah are joined by Kevin Gallagher, Melissa Hoffer and Liz Monson on the Core Team in leading the project. They are all National Conveners, as are John Bailes, Lily Swanbrow Becker, Pat Benjamin, Madeleine Charney, Lauren Faria, Krista Hiser, Megan Holmes, Jennifer Jacobson, Linda Kentro, Nastasia Lawton-Sticklor, Laura McKee, Wendy Miles, Uli Nagel, Curt Newton, Kevin O’Keefe, Chrissie Orr, Hildur Palsdottir, Barbara Waldorf, Aurora Winslade and Walter Wright. Each of them brings a bounty of experience, commitment, love and good humor. Serving as our Communications Consultant, Jane Androski has been a close companion in the steady evolution of the work, with the commitment, creative insight and dogged attention to detail it takes to make it possible; special thanks to Jane for stewarding this booklet. As Program Coordinator, Lauren Faria is an ally and support for what is possible from here; Kerri Stearns serves as Administrative Coordinator and makes everything possible with grace. Our tech maestro Aaron Crosset-Richmond gives us peace of mind with aplomb.

The CUHF work was supported in its early days with the partnership of Ellen Foley and the late Amy Richter at **Clark University**; a circle of sixteen wonderful faculty and staff colleagues envisioned *A new Earth conversation* in a process arising from and based on the CUHF. Great thanks to Ed Carr and IDCE for hosting both CUHF and NEC, to the NEC faculty and staff who served on the Advisory team and/or led Collaborative courses launched with the CUHF (especially ongoing ally Professor Steve Levin), and to the CUHF student conveners and to the hundreds of students who have participated.

Thanks to Pauline Phemister at the **University of Edinburgh** for her early commitment along with Wallace Heim, Francoise Wemelsfelder, Harriet Harris, and others in the Edinburgh and Chaplaincy CUHFs (and in loving memory of Wendy Wheeler and Rachel Howell). Steve Sagarin at the **Berkshire Waldorf High School** has offered unstinting support for our work there. Our regional circles began among a group of women in **Kathmandu** with the leadership of Linda Kentro, Asha Basnyat and Frances Klatzel. Thanks to Esha Chiocchio for her partnership in creating our **Santa Fe** circle, and Diana Chapman Walsh and Janika McFeely for helping bring the **Bay Area** circle into being. Kathleen Dean Moore is a steady partner with the **Journalists and Writers**, and Carissa Stolting continues to catalyze the inimitable members of **Coal + Ice**.

CUHF is so grateful for the connections with our affiliated institutions. Aurora Winslade initiated the work of CUHF at **Swarthmore College**; Aurora also supports the CUHF work with AASHE and in the **Bard Sustainable MBA**. At the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** (MIT), the Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI) and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHASS) were partners in sustaining this work. A large CUHF community has grown at the Institute since the spring of 2020. Enormous thanks to John Fernandez, Emily Hiestand, Laur Hesse Fisher, Julie Newman and especially Curt Newton, liaison for the ongoing work and Steady Council anchor. With Lamas Willa Blythe Baker and Liz Monson, and collaborators Barbara Waldorf and Hildur Palsdottir, **Natural Dharma Fellowship** is an ongoing CUHF partner for several EcoSattva groups, the Green Dharma retreats, and the Rewilding the Soul series. We're also grateful for the partnership of Susan Bauer-Wu and **Mind and Life Institute**, and to the many other CUHF sites (**UMass, Harvard, Brown, Central MA 350.org, MASSMoCA**) that have hosted the work. Melissa Hoffer brings the **Massachusetts Youth Climate Council** into this work, with Pat Benjamin and now Lauren Faria as allies as well.

We have been blessed to work with Nara Garber, our remarkable creative partner in making two CUHF films, and by the inspiration of so many others, including special event guests Francoise Wemelsfelder, Joanie Kleypas, Kathleen Dean Moore, Susi Moser, Liz Monson, Beth Sawin, Sherri Mitchell, Tim DeChristopher, Katharine Wilkinson, Kathryn Harris Tijerina, Kafi Dixon and James Rutenbeck, Emmanuel Cappellin, Diana Liverman, Michael Lipson, Emily Raboteau, Scott Eberle, Maura O'Connor, Bayo Akomolafe, Tom Murphy, Roshi Susan Murphy, Willa Blythe Baker, artists Blane de St Croix, Ledelle Moe and James Turrell, and many more (see Resources).

We offer thanks for many who have deepened our awareness of human existence on Earth and within the cosmos. They include Thomas Berry, Rachel Carson, Joanna Macy, John Seed, Arne Naess, Roy Scranton, Carlo Rovelli, Elizabeth Kolbert, Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Swimme, Kathleen Dean Moore, Gretel Ehrlich, Camille Seaman, Lama Willa Blythe Baker, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Pope Francis, Susan Murphy, Octavia Butler, Bayo Akomolafe, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, Alnoor Ladha and Lynn Murphy, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Terry Tempest Williams, Donna Haraway, Paul Kingsnorth, Catherine Ingram, Naomi Klein, Rebecca Solnit, Francis Weller and Achille Mbembe.

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Finally, great thanks to all the members of Councils who, in their presence, honesty and insight, energize and illuminate these efforts, and a shift of consciousness more widely.

Sarah Buie, Lead Convener



*Council gathering, In Witness film;
MASSMoCA, December 2020*

*Can we—human beings—really be present
to these colossal changes that are occurring?*

*And if so, what then? Council gave me time to...
be still, reflect on this moment in time,
and inquire into my beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors
about the world that’s shifting around me, with me.*

Laur Hesse Fisher
MIT Council Member

*This is the conversation
all of civilization should be having.*

Harrison Blum
EcoSattva Council Member,
Local Convener

Harrison Blum is the former Director of Religious and Spiritual Life at Amherst College.

Laur Hesse Fisher is the former Program Director of the Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI) at MIT.

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of CUHF

Council on the Uncertain Human Future

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