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Temple University Support of Open for Climate Justice: An Interview with Caroline Burkholder

🕒 October 17, 2022 📁 Open Access Week, Uncategorized 🔖 open access, open access week, open for climate justice 👤 Alicia Pucci



This week is [Open Access Week](#), a yearly international celebration that aims to increase awareness about open access. Most academic work is locked up behind a paywall, available only to those who are affiliated with a college or university. Open access scholarship is completely free to read and reuse. Help us celebrate by showing your support for OA on social media or by attending one of our [events](#).

Caroline Burkholder is the Sustainability Manager for [Temple University's Office of Sustainability](#). She is responsible for developing sustainability programming throughout the university, coordinating outreach and capacity building activities with students, faculty, and staff, providing support for new sustainability initiatives on campus, and assisting in the completion of institution-wide sustainability reporting. Burkholder recently spoke with Scholarly Communications Associate Alicia Pucci to discuss her work and how open can support climate justice and sustainability at Temple and beyond.

Help us to understand this year's theme, [Open for Climate Justice](#). What is climate justice and what should people know about it?

Climate justice is both a term and a movement centering equity in the application of sustainability principles in policy and practice. Climate justice recognizes that the social, material, and health impacts of a changing

climate will be felt differently by different populations and will disproportionately impact poor and historically underrepresented and resource-deprived communities.

Unsurprisingly, people living in developing countries produce fewer emissions per capita than those in the major polluting countries while bearing the brunt of the consequences with less power and fewer resources for mitigation and relief.

This disparity in experience is not naturally occurring but rather the conclusion of a racist and colonial extractive global economic system. Climate justice focuses its attention on the structural contributors to crisis, understanding climate change will exacerbate existing inequality and social action is necessary to demand restorative justice and correct past wrongs to ensure future prosperity.

What role does open play in your work with Temple's Office of Sustainability?

The Office of Sustainability was founded to achieve Temple's Presidential Climate Commitment – climate neutrality by 2050 – by greening the physical plant and decarbonizing campus operations; integrating sustainability principles into coursework, teaching, co-curricular activities and campus life; and facilitating research and resources to educate on critical issues of climate change and environmental justice.

As Philadelphia's only 4-year public university, an urban institution that is deeply engaged in the community, we recognize the Temple University's commitment to sustainability can have a profound impact on the health and quality of life of a large and diverse population within Temple and its surrounding community and the Philadelphia overall.

Open access and the availability of knowledge and resources is essential for solving pressing urban sustainability challenges, especially here in our own neighborhood. Our office engages with other sustainability professionals both inside and outside the academy, in city and state government, and across the region, country and globe to share best practices and strategize to reach our shared goal of decreasing emissions and building resiliency in communities, especially those who need it most.

An open and equitable exchange of ideas in climate action yields a diverse collection of data: climate action plan goals, various institutional reports, greenhouse gas inventories, waste audits, faculty and student research, student tools for community organizing and advocacy, engagement, campaign and event strategy documents, maps of sustainable features and amenities on campus, and more.

Temple has a detailed **climate action plan**. Are there any open tools or practices you hope to adopt to enable climate research and data?

Temple University's Climate Action Plan and its goals were mandated by President Ann Weaver Hart signing onto Second Nature's American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). Among other foundational actions like setting target dates and calculating our carbon footprint, the ACUPCC commitment requires the university to make the action plan, inventory, and progress reports publicly available, underscoring the value of open access. The visibility of data and progress to goal reports is essential for all university stakeholders to ensure accountability for action, especially for those goals concerning equity.

Another key function of the Climate Action Plan document is to increase awareness of Temple's sustainability initiatives and programs. When faculty and other university leadership understand what we're doing on cam-

pus and how they can take part, they can translate the local climate action work at all levels of Temple administration, and within different academic disciplines, into community engaged research and experiential and service learning which increases access to research and data and promotes climate justice.

The 2019 Climate Action Plan had the following goal:

Create an online repository for existing and future sustainability exercises and course material to assist faculty in integrating sustainability into their courses by June 2020.

In 2022, in accordance with the research goals outlined in the 2019 Climate Action Plan, the Office of Sustainability, together with Temple University Libraries, established the Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Justice Collection for TUScholarShare.

Tell us about your new [Climate Change, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice collection](#) in Temple's institutional repository [TUScholarShare](#). How does this platform encourage open practices?

The collection is a repository for articles, teaching and learning materials, data sets, research, books, and working papers related to climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice authored by researchers, staff, and students at Temple University. It features practitioners' documents, namely, case studies and tools authored by sustainability officers and other institutional stakeholders as well as faculty, graduate and undergraduate research.

By recognizing, incentivizing and connecting the faculty community, the repository facilitates a institution-wide development of a transdisciplinary sustainability science research agenda that integrates discovery and solutions-based research.

This open access repository creates support for sustainability research, tools, and resources by not only connecting sustainability scholars and practitioners within Temple community but also by connecting the work of the Temple community to the broader local and global coalition of climate advocates by sharing knowledge and collaboratively building a just climate future for Philadelphia and beyond.

Thank you Caroline!