

**Café Salon Notetakers' Template for Café Salon #7 - Note-taker Laura Beauvais**  
**#7 Climate Change - a multidimensional issue considering the human, societal, local, global implications and scientific issues (especially given the report from the IPCC, which has just made dire predictions) - Facilitators: Rod Mather**  
**– Room 300, Senate Chambers**

**Summary Notes**

1. *What would it look like for URI to take leadership in this area?*

Break down the silos among disciplines. Need to address the politics that allow bridging the human and science systems. The international policy level framework could guide us. There are choices that the University can take to address climate change, but we need to look at the implications for those choices on other important goals and values of the University (e.g., allowing freshmen to have cars on campus).

URI as an institution needs to have commitment to this issue in its policies and operations, in addition to a commitment to the teaching and research program. We need to take these challenges in the world and act fairly immediately.

Look at how the curriculum is delivered as a way to reduce our footprint--online and blended courses. Requires faculty to consider new ways to educate students.

Need to decouple the rewards the planet will get (long term) from those that individuals receive (immediate).

Teach our students how to see the changes that are happening because otherwise it is their "normal." They need to see themselves to be agents of change on actionable and meaningful strategies.

New structures? Centers? Distributed networks? Seed money for projects? Incentives for collaboration? We have a Sustainability Council but how well is this working? Maybe we need to build up this unit for being a center that supports research, education, community projects. Provide incentives for campus projects that work on climate change issues. This will give it more clout and resources on campus. Maybe a name change to include climate change. Possible name: "Climate action and resilience in RI" Get Sheldon Whitehouse involved--naming opportunity? This center needs to be reaching out to all across campus (and other stakeholders) and needs to be inclusive. Should inventory all efforts going on among faculty on campus in research and teaching.

2. *How does work in this topic open up research/scholarly activity across disciplines? - Who is already working on this topic?*

Some collaborations already exist: art and landscape architecture; water resources and entomology. Consider the research and teaching side of the issue; these could be different. Earth systems and human systems are broad areas. Idea of robust action: take short term action that does not foreclose long term action.

Intersection of the human and “earth” systems is where inquiry needs to occur.

### 3. *What is the right breadth of areas to be covered?*

One coherent model: integrate human and earth systems. But it is hard to separate the two systems. Look at the complexity of the whole; design solutions that address that complexity.

How or should we target our efforts? Teaching and research and local focus. RI has experienced many effects of climate change so focus on local problems is useful. HOWEVER, we also need to expand our students knowledge and experience that translates to leadership beyond the local.

Need to address the US’s footprint on climate change--one of the biggest contributors.

Consensus: focus on local efforts, realizing these are global issues.

### 4. *What are the University’s strengths that would build out this topic well?*

We have the scientific data but the real issues are dealing with the human issues. We have to address from multiple lenses that we have here at URI to bear on complexities of the grand challenge of climate change.

Intermediate scale--the small state of RI gives us a sense of place that can be an advantage for us. Experience of interacting global problems such as climate change are local and the city-state of RI can be a laboratory for dealing with these.

Strengths: Sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities, health, global, our size. University policy can lead the way in modeling change through its policies and operations. We can begin by calculating our own carbon footprint and then develop ways to reduce it. Students can be engaged in these efforts.

Marketing expertise to publicize our success.

### 5. *What areas of the topic would be a main focus for URI?*

Focus might be adaptation strategies on the global level.

Resilience of cities

Adaptive transportation

Reduction of carbon emissions is a global issue (mitigation); adaptation to climate change is local.

Highlighting those areas that we are already making progress

Suggest having a sister campus to work on these issues together and across the globe and compare issues and progress.

#### *6. Other issues*

Be inclusive of those who are invited to be part of this endeavor.

Political issues

Work with industry, NGO's, other partners

Disciplines represented in the salon: TMD, Oceanography, Engineering--water resources and civil and environmental engineering, Landscape architecture, economics, business and management, art and art history, entrepreneurship, biology, communications, international