Rupe Conference: Risk & Uncertainty & the Communication of Sea Level Rise
April 12, 2013 * Corwin Pavilion * University of California, Santa Barbara
Four Sessions

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This all-day culminating event of the Figuring Sea Level Rise series focused on several crucial, and highly misunderstood, questions in the debate about climate change and sea level rise: Who is likely to be directly and immediately affected? What is likely to happen to them? And why is it so challenging to accurately identify and communicate the likely impacts?

Ben Powless is Mohawk from Six Nations in Ontario. He has a degree in Human Rights, Indigenous and Environmental Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa. He works with the Indigenous Environmental Network, focused on climate justice and resource extraction in Indigenous territories, particularly the tar sands in Canada. He is currently working for the Defenders of the Land network, a national network of Indigenous communities, leaders, and allies dedicated to standing up for the sovereignty and sacredness of Indigenous lands. He was one of the cofounders of the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, working at both the national level and local level.

UCTV 4799-A • Program recording date & length: 4-12-13 • 58:30


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Roberta Reyes Cordero has been a professional peacemaker since 1987, specializing in cross-cultural, large group, and family mediation. In 1995/6 with a small group of local Chumash people in Santa Barbara, she co-founded the Chumash Maritime Association, a non-profit group seeking to revitalize indigenous maritime heritage. She is currently involved in a special project under the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and NOAA to work with coastal indigenous communities to develop protocols identifying how local knowledge can be interwoven with scientific-based policy to address marine acidification and sea-level rise impacts in three Pacific coastal communities. She has served on the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's Advisory Council, was a tribal representative on the California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative’s (MLPAI) South Coast Regional Stakeholders Group, and most recently served on the Blue Ribbon Task Force for the North Coast MLPAI.

Michael Williams is from the small village of Akiak on the lower Kuskokwim River in Western Alaska. Mike graduated from the Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon and served in South Korea as a member of the U.S. Army. He then studied at the University of Alaska, Kuskokwim Campus while working full time as a Mental Health Counselor. Mike is currently the Chief of the Yupiit Nation; Secretary/Treasurer of the Akiak Native Community; a Board Member of the Institute for Tribal Governments at Portland State University; a Board Member of National Tribal Environmental Council; Vice Chairman of the Yupiit School District; and a Board Member of the Rural Community Action Program. In July 2012, Williams served as the Alaska Panel Moderator for the Alaska delegation to the First Stewards Symposium, and presented testimony from his community's experience with erosion and permafrost melt. He currently works as a Wellness Counselor for his village and he is also an avid Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race competitor.

Kalei Nu'uhiwa was born and raised on Maui, Hawai'i. She was the first Masters
degree graduate of the University of Hawai'i Manoa - Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language. She has worked and volunteered with the restoration of the island of Kaho'olawe with both the KIRC and the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana. Her primary discipline is Papahulilani -- the study of all aspects of the atmosphere -- its phenology, energies, cycles and isochronisms from a Hawaiian perspective. In the traditional Hawaiian world view, these atmospheric elements embody the pantheon of kino akua Hawai'i, and provide a fundamental function in ancestral memory, still essential in the modern Hawaiian consciousness. She maintains ongoing studies of celestial alignments with sites situated in the Northwest and main Hawaiian islands, to understand traditional tracking of time and spatial measurements. Working with the Kamehameha Schools, Keaouhou-Kahalu'u Education Group, community groups, and cultural practitioners, Kalei continues to research and build understanding of the significance of site placement and use within the historical corridor of Kahalu'u, Kona. She is also a masterful photographer of native Hawaiian environments in their natural form.

Georgiana Valoyce-Sanchez is Native American of the Chumash (Schmuwich) and O’odham (Tohono and Akimal) People, born and raised in Southern California. She is an Elder on the Governing council of the Barbareno Chumash Council and the Chair of the Chumash Elders Women’s Council of the Wishtoyo Foundation. She has taught for the American Indian Studies Program at California State University, Long Beach for over twenty-six years, teaching American Indian Philosophies, American Indian Literature, California Indian History, Pre-1871 History and Ethnic Experience in the United States. She is a published writer who has appeared in several national and international publications; a renowned Storyteller and Board Member of the California Indian Storytellers Association, and co-founder of the League of Indigenous Voices in Story and Song (LIVS). She continues to be a dedicated advocate for the preservation of Indigenous languages, sacred sites, ceremonial practices and traditional arts.

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Rear Admiral (ret.) Dr. David Titley has a Master of Science in meteorology and physical oceanography, and a Ph.D. in meteorology from the Naval Postgraduate School, and was elected a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society. For over 30 years, his Navy career included duties as Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy, as director of Task Force Climate Change, and Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Information Dominance. Dr. Titley then served as the Deputy Undersecretary of Commerce for Operations, the Chief Operating Officer position at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Center of Climate and Security based in Washington DC.

Kathryn Yusoff studies aesthetics, social theory and environmental change. Her primary research interest is in the political aesthetics and biopolitics of environments within the context of climate change (past and present) and biodiversity loss. One of her other research areas is GeoPhilosophy: philosophies of nature, dynamic earth processes, time and climate. Her two current projects are The political aesthetics of climate change, and Prehistoric art, animality and climate change. Dr. Yusoff is a Member and author of Working Group II: Interdisciplinary, European Science Foundation (ESF) RESCUE (Researching Environmental, Societal Change on an Unstable Earth) research program.

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Paula Apsell oversees the production of NOVA documentaries and miniseries for television. She has also directed the series' diversification into other media -- most notably online, where NOVA is the most-visited site on PBS.org. Ms. Apsell has extensive experience in public and commercial broadcasting, including children's, medical, and science programming. She has also been a Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT, a fellow at the UCSB Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, and taught a UCSB course on The Art of Science Media. Some of her recent NOVA and Science Unit productions include "The Elegant Universe," "Origins," "Einstein's Big Idea," "Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial," "Making Stuff," "Earth from Space," and the large-format feature "Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure." A wide variety of science, production, and institutional awards underscore her accomplishments, including the Carl Sagan Award given by the Council of Scientific Society Presidents.

Dan Kahan (the Elizabeth K. Dollard Professor of Law, and Professor of Psychology, Yale University) received his J.D. from Harvard Law School, and served as a law clerk to Justice Thurgood Marshall, of the U.S. Supreme Court (1990-91). His current research involves risk perception, science communication, and the application of decision science to law and policymaking. Some relevant research projects and reports cover nanotechnology risk perceptions, mechanisms of cultural cognitions, science communication, attitudes on climate change, and the Second National Risk and Culture Study. Of particular relevance to this conference is his 2010 Nature article Fixing the communications failure.