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FRENCH AMERICAN INNOVATION DAY

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RESEARCH, INNOVATION & IMPACT
France - Arizona Institute for Global Grand Challenges

November 12 & 13, 2025
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

FRENCH-AMERICAN INNOVATION DAYS

Heat and Health

The University of Arizona
Health Sciences Innovation Building (HSIB), Forum

1670 E Drachman Street, Tucson

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

7:30am–8:00am
Registration

8:00am–8:30am
Introductory addresses

- 8:00 *Welcome from the University of Arizona* – **Linda Bixby**, PhD, Chief Research Partnerships Officer
- 8:05 *Welcome from the UA France-Arizona Institute for Global Grand Challenges* – **Regis Ferriere**, Deputy Director
- 8:10 *Welcome from the UA Southwest Center on Resilience for Climate Change and Health (SCORCH)* – **Kacey Ernst**, Core Lead
- 8:15 *Welcome from the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)* – **Jan Matas**, Head of US-Mexico CNRS Office at Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC
- 8:20 *Welcome from the City of Tucson* – **Fatima Luna**, Chief Resilience Officer
- 8:25 *Welcome from the French Consulate in Los Angeles and the Embassy of France in Washington DC* – **Virginie Molle**, Attachée for Science and Technology

8:30am–9:45am
Setting the stage - Keynotes and Q&A
Moderator: Kacey Ernst, Professor and Chair, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UA

- 8:30 **Eugene Livar,** Chief Heat Officer at Arizona Department of Health Services
  Presentation title
- 9:00 **Maxime Millefert**, Counsellor, Head of the Ecology, Sustainable Development, Energy and Transport Division, Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC
  The French national strategy on adaptation: A focus on Heat
- 9:30 Q&A with **Jennifer Botsford,** Bureau Chief for Environmental Health at Arizona Department of Health Services (TBC)

9:45am–10:00am
Break

10:00am–11:15am
Lightning talks and panel discussion: *Geographies of Heat and Health*
Moderator: Heidi Brown, Professor and Program Director, Epidemiology, UA
4 min lightning talks

- 10:05 **Anne-Lise Boyer,** Postdoctoral Researcher, Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS)
  Innovations in global heat governance: Exploring the role of Chief Heat Officers (work led by Minwoo Ahn, CLIMAS)
- 10:10 **Rémy Slama,** Research Director at French National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM), Lead of Paris Recherche Santé Environnement Climat
  Combined impact of climate change and decreases in particulate matter levels at the urban scale
- 10:15 **Candide Lissak,** Associate Professor, Institut de Recherche en Santé Environnement, Université de Rennes
  From Natural Hazards to Health Risks: Integrating Human health into climate change vulnerability assessment (in collaboration with David Gaillard, Université de Caen)
- 10:20 **Huaqing Wang,** Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, Utah State University
  The geography of Green and Heat: Linking urban vegetation to heat-related health outcomes
- 10:25 **Eytan Levi,** Architect and Co-founder, Roofscapes Studio
  Climate realignment: adapting existing buildings to urban heat

Panel Discussion facilitated by **Heidi Brown** with all lightning talk presenters

11:20am–11:30am
Day 1 Morning Session Closing Remarks

11:30am–2:00pm
Buffet Lunch with Poster Session

Join us on Zoom for both days at:

https://arizona.zoom.us/j/83101920160

The University of Arizona
Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine, Cantor Building

1502 E Mabel Street, Tucson

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13

7:45am–8:00am
Registration

8:00am–8:10am
Welcome Remarks
Annick Lesne, Research Director at CNRS, Science Director of the CNRS-UA International Research Center Global Grand Challenges

8:10am–9:25am
Lightning talks and panel discussion: *High Exposure Populations*
Moderator: Mona Arora, Assistant Research Professor of Public Health, UA
4-min lightning talks

- 8:15 **Rietta Wagoner,** Postdoctoral Researcher, Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center, UA
  Environmental and occupational exposures in a changing climate: Insights from the U.S.–Mexico border
- 8:20 **Melissa Furlong,** Assistant Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, UA
  Prenatal heat exposure and infant health
- 8:25 **Paxton Sample,** PhD Candidate, Cherrington Lab, College of Pharmacy
  Impacts of heat strain on ADME function
- 8:30 **Tarik Benmarhnia,** Professor of Epidemiology at the University of California San Diego's Scripps institution of Oceanography
  Extreme heat and population health: Advancing environmental justice in a changing climate
- 8:35 **Joseph Hoover,** Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Indigenous Resilience Center, UA
  Heat, health, and community resilience
- 8:40 **Alice Plane,** Former climate negotiator, former Brown Senior Fellow

Panel Discussion facilitated by **Mona Arora** with all lightning talk presenters

9:25am–9:40am
Break

9:40am–10:55am
Lightning talks and panel discussion: *Innovation for Solutions*
Moderator and Facilitator: Jan Matas, Head of US-Mexico CNRS Office at Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC
4-min lightning talks

- 9:45 **Tom Dang,** Science and Operations Officer at National Weather Service, Tucson, Arizona
  National Weather Service: Science and Service
- 9:50 **Basile Chaix,** Research Director in Environmental Epidemiology, INSERM, Sorbonne University, Paris
  Heat & Health: The overlooked impact of indoor heat
- 9:55 **Auline Rodler,** Researcher in building physics and urban microclimate –BPE Team CEREMA, France
  How the urban context influences local microclimates and indoor thermal conditions: assessing climate adaptation measures
- 10:00 **Amelia Gallitano,** Professor of Basic Medical Sciences, UA College of Medecine Phoenix, and Lead, Heat and Health Resilience Innovation Consortium
  How can the Medical School innovate to reduce heat related illnesses and deaths?
- 10:05 **Sameer Halai,** Chief Executive Officer at WeHealth "Connecting the dots to drive outcomes": Combining alerts, public education, and resources across multiple languages and communication channels
- 10:10 **Laetitia Jubin,** Business and Technology Development Director, Saint-Gobain Ceramics
  Saint-Gobain: 360 years of materials innovation

Panel Discussion facilitated by **Jan Matas** with all lightning talk presenters

10:55am–11:10am
Break

11:10am–11:55am
Roundtable Discussion with Q&A: Research and Innovation in France and the U.S. Fostering Academic and Industry Partnerships
Facilitator: Joaquin Ruiz, Professor of Geoscience and Director of Biosphere 2, UA
Panelists:

- **Greg Barron-Gafford**, Professor, Geography, Development and Environment and Director of Food, Energy, and Water Resilience Solutions for Biosphere 2, UA
- **Thomas Corpetti,** Research Director, Environmental Data Science and Earth Observation, CNRS
- **Amelia Gallitano,** Professor of Basic Medical Sciences, UA College of Medicine Phoenix, and Lead, Heat and Health Resilience Innovation Consortium
- **Laetitia Jubin,** Business and Technology Development Director, Saint-Gobain Ceramics
- **Candide Lissak,** Associate Professor, Institut de Recherche en Santé Environnement, Université de Rennes
- **Jan Matas,** Head of US-Mexico CNRS Office at Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC
- **Constance May,** Program Manager, UC Irvine Climate Collaboration
- **Donata Vercelli,** Regents Professor, Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and Director, Arizona Center for the Biology of Complex Diseases, UA
- **Frederic Zenhausern,** Director, Center for Applied NanoBioscience and Medicine, and Director, Biomedical Engineering, College of Medicine - Phoenix, UA

11:55am–12:05pm
Closing Remarks
Jennifer Barton, UA Vice Provost for Health Programs (TBC)

12:05pm
Buffet Lunch

Organizing Committee

Regis Ferriere
Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Director, Iglobes International Research Laboratory
CNRS ENS-PSL UA FAI Deputy Director

Dr. Ferriere is a mathematical ecologist studying how ecological systems emerge, evolve, and adapt to environmental challenges, reshaping their surroundings. He earned his doctorate in mathematical ecology at Paris University and worked as a research associate at the University of Arizona and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria. He pioneered eco-evolutionary mathematics with collaborators in Austria and The Netherlands. As a professor at Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Paris, Dr. Ferriere founded the CNRS-ENS Ecotron IleDeFrance to study complex ecological systems. In 2012, Dr. Ferriere became an Associate Professor at the University of Arizona, fostering collaboration between UA and ENS. He became director of Iglobes in 2017, promoting interdisciplinary research between UA and French institutions. Iglobes helped create the France-Arizona Institute for Global Grand Challenges in 2021. Dr. Ferriere advocates for diversity, inclusion, and advancing science to solve global challenges.

Sky Dominguez, M.Sc.
France-Arizona Institute
Associate Director, Engagement and Program Development

Sky Dominguez serves as the Associate Director of Engagement and Program Development for the France-Arizona Institute for Global Grand Challenges (FAI), at the University of Arizona, Tucson. The FAI is the home of the 1st International Research Center (IRC) with France's National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). Ms. Dominguez holds a master's degree in environmental microbiology from the University of Arizona and a B.S. in Biology from San Diego State University. After her master's degree she transitioned out of the lab and to the administrative side of research programs – combining her passion for science with her desire to play a critical role in envisioning and supporting education and research programs. After 11 years in international research development Sky joined the FAI in March 2022. Her key responsibilities include managing all FAI and the IRC multifaceted programing, initiatives, and infrastructure development, as well as developing and implementing international collaborations and partnerships including the UA partnership with France's CNRS.

Virginie Molle
Attachée for Science and Technology, Consulate General of France in Los Angeles

Virginie Molle is a Research Director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and currently serves as Science and Technology Attachée at the Consulate General of France in Los Angeles, within the Office for Science and Technology of the French Embassy in the United States. She fosters collaborations between French and American research and innovation ecosystems. After completing a PhD in Molecular Microbiology at the University of East Anglia (UK) in 2001 and a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University, she was recruited by the CNRS, where she developed research on bacterial virulence, infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and alternative therapeutic strategies, notably as head of the BLIS group (Biology of Staphylococcal Infections) at the University of Montpellier.

Célestine Belloeil
Deputy Attachée for Science and Technology, Consulate General of France in Los Angeles

Célestine Belloeil, PhD, has served as Deputy Attaché for Science and Technology of the Embassy of France in the USA since April 2024. She oversees research, innovation and technology in the Southwest of the United States aiming to strengthen scientific collaboration for both academics and entrepreneurs. She holds a PhD in Plant Biology from the University of Paris-Saclay where her research focused on the interaction between metals and plants and where she gained insights into the value of impactful collaborations for the advancement of science.

Kacey Ernst
Professor and Department Chair, Epidemiology and biostatistics
Principal Investigator, SCORCH

Dr. Ernst, Principal Investigator for SCORCH, brings deep experience in applied epidemiology, research, and education, alongside an extensive track record of cross-disciplinary collaboration. An infectious disease epidemiologist, her research primarily focuses on how humans, their environment and their interactions shape the risk of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. She has worked on projects throughout the globe, including in western Kenya, Indonesia, Ghana, and Mexico to understand the dynamics of dengue and malaria. Her research also seeks to engage communities in prevention and control by leveraging widely available and novel technologies. Dr. Ernst prioritizes collaboration because she believes it is critical to bring multiple disciplines together to tackle the challenges we face in a changing climate.

Mona Arora
Assistant Research Professor, Community Center, Environment and Policy Department

Dr. Mona Arora, an Assistant Research Professor at the College of Public Health, holds an MSPH in Tropical Medicine from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Arizona. She leads the ADHS-CDC COVID Disparities Initiative at the Arizona Center for Rural Health, focusing on advancing health equity and addressing social determinants of health among underserved populations. Dr. Arora's research builds public health capacity to tackle global challenges like pandemics, disasters, and climate change, using qualitative methods to evaluate systems' climate adaptation readiness. She collaborates extensively with rural and tribal communities to enhance resilience for public health emergencies. An educator on climate change, she contributes to national efforts as part of the Lancet Countdown U.S. Policy Brief Working Group and the Network of National Public Health Institutes Global Climate Change workgroup.

Anne-Lise Boyer
Postdoctoral Researcher, Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS)

Dr. Anne-Lise Boyer is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the School of Landscape Architecture and Planning at the University of Arizona. Funded by the Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS), her research examines how rural and border communities in Arizona and New Mexico can address the growing challenges of extreme heat. She is part of the core team of the Heat Resilience Initiative, led by Dr. Ladd Keith.

Nathan Cherrington
Associate Dean for Research, College of Pharmacy, UA
Director, Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center
Director, Center for Toxicology

Dr. Nathan Cherrington is the Musil Family Endowed Chair in Drug Discovery and Associate Dean for Research in the College of Pharmacy. He is also the Director of the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center and the Director of the Arizona Board of Regents Center for Toxicology. He received a B.S. in Zoology from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in Toxicology from North Carolina State University. He then moved to the University of Kansas Medical Center to pursue postdoctoral training in drug metabolism and disposition. He was awarded the Achievement Award by the Society of Toxicology and was made a fellow of the Academy of Toxicological Sciences.

Frank von Hippel
Professor, Community, Environment and Policy Lead, OneHealth Research Initiative

Dr. Frank A. von Hippel is a professor of environmental health sciences at the University of Arizona's Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, where he leads the One Health Research Initiative. He earned his A.B. in biology from Dartmouth College and Ph.D. in integrative biology from UC Berkeley. Previously, he held academic positions at Columbia University, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and Northern Arizona University. Dr. von Hippel conducts research at the intersection of ecotoxicology, toxicity mechanisms, and health disparities, focusing on Indigenous and underserved communities. He employs locally occurring wildlife and laboratory models, using a Community Based Participatory Research approach. An educator and researcher with experience in over 20 countries, his work has been featured in outlets like The New York Times and the BBC. He is the author of The Chemical Age and hosts the Science History Podcast.

Introductory Addresses and Keynotes

Annick Lesne
Research Director at CNRS, Science Director of the CNRS-UA International Research Center Global Grand Challenges

Annick Lesne is the Co- Scientific Director of the CNRS/UA International Research Center as well as a CNRS Research Director (i.e., senior scientist) with expertise in statistical physics and nonlinear physics. She is pursuing interdisciplinary research at the Laboratory of Theoretical Physics of Condensed Matter (LPTMC, Paris) and the Institute of Molecular Genetics (IGMM, Montpellier). Her work focuses on understanding the multiscale organization and dynamics of complex systems, in particular biological and ecological networks, physical aspects of gene regulation and pattern formation. She joined CNRS Physics (one of the 10 thematic institutes of CNRS) as scientific officer in charge of interdisciplinarity in 2021, and as deputy scientific director since 2023.

Linda Bixby
Chief Research Partnerships Office UA Office of Research and Partnerships

Dr. Bixby brings more than 35 years of leadership experience spanning government, industry, academia and nonprofits. She recently joined the UA, November 2025, from the NobleReach Foundation, where she served as executive vice president for academic partnerships, designing and leading national programs that connect emerging technologies and talent with critical public missions. Her career reflects a strong record of building high-impact partnerships, developing innovation ecosystems and guiding cross-sector strategy. She has also held senior roles in the intelligence community, federal consulting, higher education and corporate environments, positioning her well to navigate the complexities of research partnerships at scale.

Fatima Luna
Chief Resilience Officer, City of Tucson

Fatima Luna is a dedicated professional serving as the Chief Resilience Officer for the City of Tucson, where she focuses on enhancing community resilience through data-driven strategies and sustainable practices. With a strong background in environmental economics and policy, she brings extensive experience in community outreach, program evaluation, and policy analysis. Fatima has previously held the role of Climate and Sustainability Advisor, where she worked closely with the Mayor to implement innovative sustainability initiatives. Her academic foundation includes a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Economics and Policy from UC Berkeley, which complements her practical expertise in quantitative and qualitative research. Fluent in Spanish, Fatima is committed to fostering inclusive dialogue and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Her approach combines strategic thinking with a passion for education and community development, making her a key asset in driving impactful change. Fatima's leadership style emphasizes adaptability and responsiveness to evolving community needs, reflecting her deep commitment to public service

Eugene Livar,
Chief Heat Officer - AZ Department of Health Services

Dr. Eugene Livar currently serves as Arizona's first Chief Heat Officer. Appointed to this role in 2024, he oversees the implementation of Governor Hobb's Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan. He began his public health work at ADHS in 2012 as an epidemiologist assisting with state efforts covering border health and unexplained deaths. Prior to the role of Chief Heat Officer, he held roles as Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) program manager, Office Chief of Disease Integration and Services, Bureau Chief of Epidemiology and Disease Control, and most recently, the Assistant Director of Public Health Preparedness. The Assistant Director role encompassed leading and overseeing six critical public health bureaus: the Bureaus of Emergency Medical Services & Trauma Systems, Environmental Health Services, Immunization Services, Infectious Disease & Services, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, and State Laboratory Services. Dr. Livar's forward-thinking approach and commitment to public health preparedness continue to shape policies and initiatives aimed at safeguarding the well-being of Arizona's residents.

Maxime Millefert
Counsellor, Head of the Ecology, Sustainable Development, Energy and Transport Division, Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC

A graduate of the National School of Administration (ENA) and holder of a DESS in Diplomacy and Strategic Negotiations from the University of Paris XI, Maxime Millefert began his career as a legal adviser in international law at the French Ministry of Defense (2003–2009). He joined the French Civil Aviation Authority (DGAC) in 2011 as Chief Negotiator for air services agreements and traffic rights. From 2013 to 2018, he served in Montreal as Deputy and Alternate to the French Permanent Representative on the ICAO Council, overseeing environmental matters and leading an initiative to study climate change impacts on aviation. Returning to France in 2018, he managed the National Air Transport Conference and helped draft the National Air Transport Strategy 2025. From 2019 to 2023, he served as Deputy Director for Air Services at DGAC, focusing on passenger rights and air transport facilitation.

Jennifer Botsford
Bureau Chief for Environmental Health at Arizona Department of Health Services

Jennifer serves as the Bureau Chief of Environmental Health. Jennifer holds a Master's of Science in Public Health from Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and dual bachelor's degrees from the University of Arizona. Jennifer began her tenure at the Arizona Department of Health Services in 2005. Her career progressed through several significant roles, including serving as the State Environmental Health Director, managing the Environmental Toxicology Program, Program Director of the Arizona Biomedical Research Centre, and Bureau Chief of Environmental Health Services

PANEL

Geographies of Heat and Health

MODERATOR & FACILITATOR

Heidi Brown
Professor, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UA
Director, Epidemiology Program

Heidi E. Brown, PhD, MPH, has a research focus on the epidemiology and control of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. Her goal is to identify human disease risk by modeling vector, host and pathogen distributions. The complex nature of the systems she works on diseases requires her to blend field collecting, ecological assessment, laboratory experiments, epidemiological analysis, spatial statistics, remote sensing, geographic information systems, and computer-based modeling in order to develop a more comprehensive view of disease dynamics. Current research areas include: West Nile virus, dengue, canine heartworm, valley fever, spatial epidemiology, and climate change.

Anne-Lise Boyer
Postdoctoral Researcher, Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS)

Dr. Anne-Lise Boyer is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the School of Landscape Architecture and Planning at the University of Arizona. Funded by the Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS), her research examines how rural and border communities in Arizona and New Mexico can address the growing challenges of extreme heat. She is part of the core team of the Heat Resilience Initiative, led by Dr. Ladd Keith.

Huaqing Wang
Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, Utah State University

Huaqing Wang, PhD, is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at Utah State University. She is also affiliated with the Data Science & Artificial Intelligence Center and the Berryman Institute, which advances solutions to challenges at the intersection of humans and wildlife.
Wang is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and has received multiple recognitions, including the Utah ASLA Award of Excellence, the EDRA Core Certificate in Environmental Research Award, and the CELA Best Poster Award.

Eytan Levi
Architect and Co-founder, Roofscapes Studio

Eytan Levi works on adapting existing buildings to ongoing climate and societal changes. He is a co-founder of Roofscapes Studio, an architecture venture launched at MIT and based in Paris, through which he explores the mitigation of urban heat thanks to green and accessible rooftops over existing buildings. Eytan studied architecture and real estate development at MIT, EPFL and Tokyo University. His work has been exhibited at the Seoul, Rotterdam and Venice Architecture Biennales and published in the Guardian, the New York Times and CNN.

Rémy Slama
Research Director at French National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM), Lead of Paris Recherche Santé Environnement Climat)

Dr. Slama is an environmental epidemiologist, senior investigator at Inserm, the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research and Professor (Pr. attaché) at Ecole Normale Supérieure – PSL (PSL University Paris). He works at the Institute of Biology of Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris (IBENS), a joint research center from ENS-PSL, Inserm and CNRS, on PARSEC initiative, aiming to develop research on the nexus between climate change and human health

Candide Lissak
Associate Professor, Institut de Recherche en Santé Environnement, Rennes University

Dr. Lissak is a geographer working on risk assessment and environmental exposure affecting population. Since 2014, her work has focused on understanding environmental risks linked to human activities through various applications, such as natural hazards (e.g. landslides, sediment flux), pollution, and land degradation. As a geographer, she mainly uses remote sensing (both 2D and 3D), geomatic tools and field surveys to study how these processes evolve in the context of climate change. Since 2023, Dr. Lissak has shifted my focus toward environmental health, exploring how human practices impact ecosystems and population health, with a particular interest in leveraging satellite imagery for exposure analysis. More broadly, the aim is to build bridges between geography and health to support sustainable development and inform public policy.

PANEL

High Exposure Populations

MODERATOR & FACILITATOR

Mona Arora
Assistant Research Professor of Public Health, UA
Co-Principal Investigator, SCORCH

Dr. Mona Arora, an Assistant Research Professor at the College of Public Health, holds an MSPH in Tropical Medicine from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Arizona. She leads the ADHS-CDC COVID Disparities Initiative at the Arizona Center for Rural Health, focusing on advancing health equity and addressing social determinants of health among underserved populations. Dr. Arora's research builds public health capacity to tackle global challenges like pandemics, disasters, and climate change, using qualitative methods to evaluate systems' climate adaptation readiness. She collaborates extensively with rural and tribal communities to enhance resilience for public health emergencies. An educator on climate change, she contributes to national efforts as part of the Lancet Countdown U.S. Policy Brief Working Group and the Network of National Public Health Institutes Global Climate Change workgroup.

Tarik Benmarhnia,
Professor of Epidemiology at the University of California San Diego's Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Dr. Benmarhnia leads the climate change epidemiology lab at Scripps. He is also an affiliated researcher with UC San Francisco, and Inserm/EHESP in France. He finished his PhD in epidemiology jointly from the University of Montreal and Paris Sud and a post-doctoral position at McGill University with the Institute for Health and Social Policy. As an environmental and social epidemiologist, his work focuses on applying or developing causal inference methods to understand how environmental and social determinants affect population health and equity in the context of climate change but also what strategies are effective at minimizing such impacts.

Rietta Wagoner
Postdoctoral Researcher, Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center, UA

Rietta Wagoner, PhD, is a postdoctoral researcher in environmental and occupational health at the University of Arizona whose work examines how climate change exacerbates environmental exposures and health inequities in agricultural communities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Her research focuses on the intersection of heat, pesticide, and metal exposures and their impacts on reproductive and agricultural community health.

Joe Hoover
Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Indigenous Resilience Center, UA

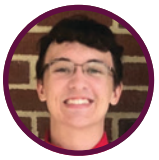
Joseph H. Hoover, PhD, is an environmental scientist specializing in the geography of water resources. His line of research is situated at the intersection of water resources, geography, and environmental health. An interdisciplinary perspective guides his scholarship, focusing on patterns of exposure and health impacts in rural, underserved communities in the United States. Current research and teaching focii emphasize three key areas: 1) potential exposure risk to environmental contaminants, principally through drinking water; 2) visualization and communication of chemical, environmental, and water quality information; and 3) health impacts of environmental exposures. The study of water and health in underserved communities illuminates contemporary issues linked to exposure and contamination.

Melissa Furlong
Assistant Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, UA

Dr. Furlong is an environmental epidemiologist who studies the chronic health effects of environmental contaminants, with an emphasis on pesticides and neurological outcomes. She holds a PhD in epidemiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a Master's in Public Policy from Duke University, and a B.S. in Psychology and Neuroscience, also from Duke University. She is the recipient of a Pathway to Independence Award from NIEHS (K99/R00).

Alice Plane
Former climate negotiator, former Brown Senior Fellow

Alice Plane is a climate expert, seasoned change management specialist with deep experience in regional cooperation across institutional and intercultural contexts, committed to equitable and sustainable transitions. She designs and facilitates transformation processes at individual, collective, and institutional levels using frameworks such as Adaptive Leadership, Immunity to Change, and experiential pedagogy. With field-tested experience in diverse geopolitical contexts (Afghanistan, Madagascar, France, the U.S.), she has led inter-ministerial taskforces, taught in top global institutions (Harvard, Brown), and spearheaded high-level climate diplomacy efforts. Her current focus bridges inclusive governance, inner development, and collective action—centering culture, complexity, and care to address the systemic predicaments of climate change and biodiversity collapse.



Paxton Sample
PhD student, Cherrington Lab College of Pharmacy

Mr. Sample is a PhD candidate in Nathan Cherrington's lab at the University of Arizona. His current focus is on the interplay between environmental stress, namely temperature, on the ADME properties of therapeutics and toxicants. Specifically, his work investigates a novel model of desert-like heat stress and the expression and function of drug metabolizing enzymes (Phase I, Phase II) and transporters (Slc, Abc, etc) of the rodents exposed to heat. The overall goal is to inform prescription and regulation of pharmaceuticals and environmental toxicants depending on the location and environment of individuals who may be at greater risk of ADRs and toxicities. With this background and training, I hope to be able to pursue a career in regulatory science post-graduation.

PANEL

Innovation for Solutions

MODERATOR & FACILITATOR

Jan Matas
Head of US-Mexico CNRS Office at Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC

an Matas is the Director of the CNRS office in Washington, D.C. From 2019 to 2024, he represented the joint CNRS–Université de Lyon office in Canada and served as the founding Director of the CNRS office in Ottawa. Previously, he was Director of International Relations for the University of Lyon (2013–2017) and Director of International Strategy at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (2007–2012). Trained in Geophysics, he earned his Master's from Charles University in Prague and his Ph.D. from ENS de Lyon in 1999, focusing on thermochemical modeling under high-pressure and high-temperature conditions. A CNRS researcher since 2000, he has worked in the Lyon Laboratory of Geology and taught at ENS de Lyon. He completed his Habilitation à diriger des recherches in 2012 and became a CNRS Senior Researcher in 2015. Matas was also a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley's Department of Earth and Planetary Science in 1999–2000 and 2006.

Auline Rodler
Researcher in building physics and urban microclimate – BPE Team, CEREMA, France

After a PhD in Civil Engineering in Building Physics I have completed several post-doctoral positions in the fields of energy, microclimate and energy efficiency of buildings. Since 2019, I am a full-time researcher at Cerema, where I contribute to the development of an urban microclimate modelling tool (Solene-Microclimat) that simulates the physical behaviour of buildings and the urban environment (vegetation, soils, building energy simulation, and techniques such as cool paints and surface water aspersion) at the district scale, particularly during heatwaves and under future climate scenarios. My work focuses on using thermal infrared satellite imagery and on-site experimental data to improve the assessment of outdoor thermal comfort and to validate urban physical models.

Sameer Halai
Chief Executive Officer at WeHealth

Founder & CEO of Wehealth, a Public Benefit Corporation dedicated to advancing privacy-preserving and human-centered digital infrastructure for public health. He leads the development of PHapp, a nationwide platform co-developed with the University of Arizona to deliver verified, localized health and safety information at scale. Halai earned his M.S. in Social Computing from the University of Michigan, with research in human-computer interaction and collaborative technologies. He has published in Risk Analysis and Computer Supported Cooperative Work, holds multiple U.S. patents, and brings 15+ years of interdisciplinary experience across social computing, epidemiology, and climate finance. His current work focuses on applying AI and communication science to strengthen preparedness and address misinformation in public health.

Basile Chaix
Research Director in Environmental Epidemiology, INSERM, Sorbonne University, Paris

Dr. Basile Chaix is a research director at Inserm. He coordinates the Nemesis team at the Pierre Louis Institute of Epidemiology and Public Health, at the National Institute of Medical Research and Sorbonne Université. The Nemesis team is interested in the independent and joint effects of different environmental exposures incurred in urban areas in the context of climate change. Basile Chaix is a member of the editorial board of Epidemiology.

Tom Dang
Science and Operations Officer at National Weather Service, Tucson, Arizona

Tom Dang is the Science and Operations Officer of the National Weather Service in Tucson, and has served in that capacity since 2020. Tom's training is in operational meteorology, having served in that capacity with the National Weather Service field offices in Alaska, California, and Washington before coming to Tucson. Tom earned his bachelor's degree in Atmospheric Science and Meteorology from the University of Kansas, and was born and raised in Kansas.

Laetitia Jubin,
Business and Technology Development Director, Saint-Gobain Ceramics

Since 2020, Laetitia leads innovation and strategic growth initiatives. Previously, she worked on public policies for breakthrough technologies and venture capital. She holds a PhD in NanoFluidics from École normale supérieure and has diverse research experience in energy storage, neuroscience, and polymer physics.

Amelia Gallitano
Professor of Basic Medical Sciences, UA College of Medicine Phoenix, and Lead, Heat and Health Resilience Innovation Consortium

Amelia Gallitano, M.D., Ph.D., has been intrigued by the neurobiological processes that influence mood and behavior since she was in high school. She is now a tenured Professor in the Departments of Basic Medical Sciences and Psychiatry at the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix. She is a board certified psychiatrist, and holds adjunct positions in Neuroscience at Arizona State University and the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen). Dr. Gallitano received her M.D., and Ph.D. in Neuroscience, from the University of Pennsylvania, and completed a Psychiatry Residency at Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute. She conducted Postdoctoral Fellowship research at Washington University School of Medicine in Saint Louis in the laboratory of Jeffrey Milbrandt, M.D., Ph.D., where she was also an Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry. In 2007, she moved to Arizona to join the new University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix. Her research investigates the hypothesis that immediate early genes mediate the interaction of environmental stress and genetic predisposition, to influence the development of psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia and mood disorders.

PANEL

Research and Innovation in France and the U.S. Fostering Academic and Industry Partnerships

MODERATOR

Joaquin Ruiz
Director of Biosphere 2, UA

Dr. Joaquin Ruiz received his B.S. in Geology and Chemistry from the University of Miami and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Michigan. He joined the University of Arizona Geosciences Department as Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1989 and Professor in 1993, serving as head of the Department of Geosciences from 1995 to 2000. He served as Dean of the College of Science from 2000-2019, Executive Dean of the Colleges of Letters, Arts and Science from 2009-2018, and Vice President for Innovation from 2013-2019. He was appointed Vice President of Global Environmental Futures in 2019 and has served as the Thomas R. Brown Chair and Director of Biosphere 2 since 2013. Dr. Ruiz is a Mexican Academy of Sciences member and was named a National Researcher by the Mexican government in 2010, when he was recognized for his outstanding scientific contributions and efforts to enhance Mexico's scientific and technological capacity through collaborations with the UA.

Greg Barron-Gafford
Professor, Geography, Development and Environment and Director of Food, Energy, and Water Resilience Solutions for Biosphere 2, UA

Dr. Barron-Gafford is a biogeographer, studying how external factors (like environment and human influence) and internal characteristics (like leaf biochemistry) determine where species thrive. His research group focuses on the interplay of vegetation, climate change, and plant function. They explore questions in Biogeography, Plant Ecophysiology, Ecosystem Ecology, Ecohydrology, and Critical Zone Science. He and his team study how semiarid plants and ecosystems respond to drought, climate change, and human pressures. For over a decade, they have pioneered 'agrivoltaics,' combining agriculture and solar energy. Beginning in southern Arizona, this work has expanded nationally and internationally. Dr. Barron-Gafford's goal is to develop science-based solutions to help people adapt to a changing climate.

Thomas Corpetti
Research Director, Environmental Data Science and Earth Observation, CNRS

Thomas Corpetti is a CNRS Senior Researcher at LETG-Rennes, France. His research focuses on the design of data processing methods for analyzing Earth observation data, such as images, time series, and 3D point clouds. These methodologies are primarily applied to environmental challenges, including biodiversity monitoring, urban heat islands, pollution monitoring, vegetation, and agriculture. He earned his PhD from the University of Rennes in 2002 and his Habilitation in 2011, both in data processing. After joining CNRS in 2004, he worked at the LIAMA (sino-french lab in computer sciences) in Beijing from 2009 to 2012 before returning to Rennes. His current research topics are at the intersection of remote sensing with physics, machine learning, multimodal data fusion, and 3D analysis (LiDAR). Since 2025, he has been leading the CNRS IRN ENVIRO-NET that includes, among others, the IRC France-Arizona Institute for Global Grand Challenges.

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Laetitia Jubin,
Business and Technology Development for Ceramics, Saint Gobain
Vice President of Strategy and M&A for SEMEA building materials

Since 2020, Laetitia leads innovation and strategic growth initiatives. Previously, she worked on public policies for breakthrough technologies and venture capital. She holds a PhD in NanoFluidics from École normale supérieure and has diverse research experience in energy storage, neuroscience, and polymer physics.

Candide Lissak
Associate Professor, Institut de Recherche en Santé Environnement, Rennes University

Dr. Lissak is a geographer working on risk assessment and environmental exposure affecting population. Since 2014, her work has focused on understanding environmental risks linked to human activities through various applications, such as natural hazards (e.g. landslides, sediment flux), pollution, and land degradation. As a geographer, she mainly uses remote sensing (both 2D and 3D), geomatic tools and field surveys to study how these processes evolve in the context of climate change. Since 2023, Dr. Lissak has shifted my focus toward environmental health, exploring how human practices impact ecosystems and population health, with a particular interest in leveraging satellite imagery for exposure analysis. More broadly, the aim is to build bridges between geography and health to support sustainable development and inform public policy.

Jan Matas
Head of US-Mexico CNRS Office at Embassy of France to the United States, Washington DC

Jan Matas is the Director of the CNRS office in Washington, D.C. From 2019 to 2024, he represented the joint CNRS–Université de Lyon office in Canada and served as the founding Director of the CNRS office in Ottawa. Previously, he was Director of International Relations for the University of Lyon (2013–2017) and Director of International Strategy at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (2007–2012). Trained in Geophysics, he earned his Master's from Charles University in Prague and his Ph.D. from ENS de Lyon in 1999, focusing on thermochemical modeling under high-pressure and high-temperature conditions. A CNRS researcher since 2000, he has worked in the Lyon Laboratory of Geology and taught at ENS de Lyon. He completed his Habilitation à diriger des recherches in 2012 and became a CNRS Senior Researcher in 2015. Matas was also a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley's Department of Earth and Planetary Science in 1999–2000 and 2006.

Constance May
Program Manager, UC Irvine Climate Collaboration

Program Manager for the UC Irvine Climate Collaboration, an initiative advancing pragmatic, solutions-driven research across disciplines. Rooted in UC Irvine's unique strengths, from engineering and environmental science to public health, policy, and law, the Climate Collaboration connects researchers, students, and partners from government, industry, and communities to translate knowledge into action and co-develop solutions for a changing climate.
Her career spans the French Ministry for Ecological Transition, the European Parliament, and the climate tech sector, reflecting a commitment to bridging science and policy. At UC Irvine, she helps turn research into practice and partnerships into impact. Constance holds a Master's degree in Climate Policy from the Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) and a UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability (IoES) Certificate.

Donata Vercelli
Regents Professor, Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and Director, Arizona Center for the Biology of Complex Diseases, UA

Dr. Vercelli received her MD degree from the University of Florence in 1978 and trained in immunology at Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School, where she was an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics from 1991 to 1994. After four years as Director of the Molecular Immunoregulation Unit at San Raffaele Scientific Institute in Milan, in 1999 she moved to the University of Arizona where she currently is a Professor of Cellular and Molecular Medicine, the Associate Director of the Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center, and the Director of the Arizona Center for the Biology of Complex Diseases (ABCD). She is an elected member of the Association of American Physicians (AAP) and from 2005 to 2012 was the Associate Editor for Genetics of The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. In 2022, she was named Regents Professor at the University of Arizona. Her research relies on both human and animal models and is supported by the NIH and industry.

Frederick Zenhausern
Director, Center for Applied NanoBioscience and Medicine, and Director, Biomedical Engineering, College of Medicine - Phoenix, UA

Dr. Zenhausern has several academic affiliations. At present, he is Endowed Chair Professor (tenured) of Basic Medical Sciences, Professor of Clinical Translational Sciences, Professor of Translational Neurosciences, at the College of Medicine, Phoenix, and Director of the Center for Applied Nanobioscience and Medicine (ANBM) at the University of Arizona (UofA). He is also member of the Therapeutic Development Program at the University of Arizona's Cancer Center, member of BIO5 and Professor at the Department of Biomedical Engineering, College of Engineering.Dr. Zenhausern received his B.S. in biochemistry from the University of Geneva, his M.B.A. in finance from Rutgers University and his Doctorate Es Science in Applied Physics / Condensed Matter at the University of Geneva.

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