



Assembly Select Committee on Alternative Protein Innovation- Informational Hearing

Nurturing the Industry in California to Build a More Sustainable Food System

Thursday, October 23, 2025
1:30 P.M. – UCLA – Royce Hall- 314

Panel Speaker Biographies



Pete Angelis, Associate Vice Chancellor of Housing and Hospitality, UCLA

Pete has served as Associate Vice Chancellor of UCLA Housing & Hospitality (H&H) since 2007. He oversees the entire H&H operation which houses roughly 25,000 students, faculty and staff, employs approximately 2600 team members and serves roughly 32,000 meals daily. The UCLA residential housing program will host the LA28 Olympics Athletes Village. The hospitality division of H&H includes the Luskin Hotel & Conference Center, The Inn at UCLA, the Lake Arrowhead Lodge, The University Club, and UCLA Catering. Prior to his appointment, Pete worked in the hospitality industry for more than 20 years with industry leaders Hyatt and Hilton Hotels. He received his B.A. in Economics from the University of California, Berkeley and completed the Executive Program at UCLA's Anderson School of Management. He actively serves, or has recently served, on several health and sustainability organizations including UCLA's Semel Healthy Campus Initiative Steering Committee (and co-leader of the EatWell Pod), Campus Sustainability Committee, Menus of Change University Research Collaborative (MCURC) Leadership Council and Senior University Administrators Committee. He serves on the LA28 Coordination Committee and leads the Olympic Village Housing & Dining subcommittees. Pete is also the Chancellor's appointee for the Board of the Rose Bowl Operating Committee and, until recently, served on the board of the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC).



Meghan Jones, Senior Policy Advocate for School Food Policy at Friends of the Earth (FOE)

Meghan Jones is a Senior Policy Advocate for School Food Policy at Friends of the Earth. In this role, she is responsible for leading strategic federal and state policy advocacy campaigns aimed at promoting healthy, climate-friendly meals in K-12 schools. Meghan most recently served as the Legislative Campaigns Manager for a lobbying firm advocating for sustainable agriculture and previously served as a Regional Director for Factory Farming Awareness Coalition, where she educated students and educators on the holistic impacts of industrial animal agriculture. She holds a Master of Legal Studies from Lewis and Clark Law School, and BAs from the University of Washington in Political Science and the Comparative History of Ideas with an emphasis in Critical Human and Animal Studies.



Michelle Wood, DrPH, MPP, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is Program Manager, Food Policy and Procurement

Michelle Wood leads the Food Policy and Procurement unit within the Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. She has worked at the department for over 15 years and oversees multiple policy initiatives and projects that address food insecurity, nutrition, and health equity. She is currently leading an initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through food procurement in the County of Los Angeles. Michelle received her Doctor of Public Health in Leadership from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health and Master of Public Policy from the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy.



Daniel Gertner, Lead Economic and Industry Analyst of Good Food Institute (GFI)

Daniel is the Lead Economic and Industry Analyst at the Good Food Institute, where his research focuses on identifying gaps and opportunities across the alternative protein supply chain. Daniel earned both a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Science in agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before joining GFI, he worked at a dairy market intelligence and consulting firm with a portfolio of projects spanning economic and data analysis, price forecasting, and bespoke consulting projects.



Zak Weston, Founder, Bioscale Consulting

Zak specializes in accelerating the scale-up of emerging impact technologies with high CAPEX needs, using supply chain systems coordination, dynamic cost analysis, and innovative financing mechanisms. Zak spent six years as the supply chain lead at the Good Food Institute (GFI), a non-profit think tank accelerating the field of alternative proteins. He is currently pursuing multiple projects to scale bio-manufacturing infrastructure, advance equipment and production technology, and deploy project finance and market shaping for emerging food ingredient technologies.



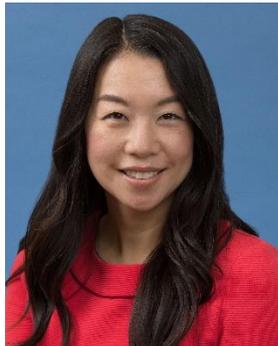
TK Pillan, Senior Advisor, Beyond Meat

T.K. currently serves as a Senior Advisor at Beyond Meat. He began his career in technology receiving an engineering degree from MIT and co-founding an e-commerce firm in the mid-90's. After exiting from his tech company, T.K. concluded that one of the most impactful ways to create a better future was to inspire and empower plant-based eating and co-founded the Veggie Grill chain of restaurants in 2006, which went on to become the leading 100% plant-based restaurant company in the U.S. with 37 locations across the country. T.K. also co-founded private equity firm Powerplant Ventures (now GroundForce Capital) to support and grow companies that deliver better nutrition in more sustainable and ethical ways with investments that included Beyond Meat, Ripple Foods, OWYN, Miyoko's Creamery, Liquid Death and Thrive Market. In addition to his undergraduate degree from MIT, T.K. received an MBA from UCLA. While at MIT, T.K. was captain of the school's baseball team and also a starter on its basketball team.



Amy Rowat, UCLA, Professor and Researcher

Amy Rowat is a Professor and Vice Chair of Integrative Biology and Physiology and Marcie H. Rothman Presidential Chair in Food Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is also a member of the UCLA Bioengineering Department, Molecular Biology Institute, Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Broad Stem Cell Research Center. Dr. Rowat holds degrees from Mount Allison University (B.Sc. Honors Physics, 1998; B.A. Asian Studies, French, & Math, 1999), the Technical University of Denmark (M.Sc. Chemistry, 2000), and the University of Southern Denmark (Ph.D. Physics, 2005). She was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Physics, Division of Engineering & Applied Science at Harvard University, as well as Brigham Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, such as the prestigious Allen Distinguished Investigator Award, a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER development award, and NSF Boosting Research Ideas for Transformative and Equitable Advances in Engineering (BRITE) Fellow award. Dr. Rowat has authored over 75 peer-reviewed publications and 5 patents.



A. Janet Tomiyama, Ph.D., is Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles and Director of the DIeting, Stress, and Health (DiSH) laboratory (www.dishlab.org)

She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Cornell University in 2001, her Ph.D. in Social Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles in June of 2009, and completed a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar Fellowship jointly at the University of California San Francisco and Berkeley. Her work has been recognized by early career awards from the Association for Psychological Science, the Society for Behavioral Medicine, and the Society for Health Psychology. She is also the recipient of the UCLA Life Sciences Excellence in Promotion of Diversity & Inclusion Award, the Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award, the Inaugural Excellence in Graduate Mentoring Award, and the Distinguished Faculty Teaching Award. Her research, which has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, focuses on what drives people to eat or not eat, with a special emphasis on consumer objections to cultivated and alternative meats and diets like vegetarianism and veganism