



SURA Hosts Energy Justice Forum

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Washington, D.C. — The Southeastern Universities Research Association hosted the Energy Justice Forum, which brought together researchers across multiple disciplines to explore the topic of energy justice from a myriad of perspectives. Through speakers, panels, and breakout discussions, participants addressed the question: “What is energy justice?”

“A national awakening is occurring in energy, where communities are reevaluating how energy technologies are developed and implemented,” said Dr. Sean J. Hearne, President and CEO of SURA. “Ultimately, the energy landscape from workers to users must reflect all the people of this nation and provide clean, efficient energy equitably to all people.”

Scientists from over a dozen universities, experts in the field from eight organizations, SURA staff, graduate and undergraduate students approached energy justice through four unique breakout groups over the course of the two-day forum: Community Impact and Implementation; Cyberinfrastructure and Data Science; Energy Research and Development; and Policy, Legal, and Regulatory. These discussions were led by Dr. Saniya LeBlanc of the George Washington University and Dr. Omar Faison of Virginia State University, who were also members of the organizing committee, as well as Dr. Walter Lowe of Howard University, Dr. Robert Orttung of the George Washington University, and Aida Lebbos, General Counsel at SURA. Dr. William Moore of Hampton University and Kevin Kelly of Clark Hill, members of the organizing committee, provided ideas and leadership to the Energy Justice Forum.

Dr. Sean Hearne, SURA’s President and CEO, welcomed everyone, then Daniel White, Energy Program Specialist at the Washington, D.C. Department of Energy, began the program with the keynote address, considering questions such as, “How do we plan our policies to reach all district residents and what does energy justice look like?” White emphasized the importance of bringing stakeholders together, from building owners to local community members, starting with earliest stages of policy development, to support an equitable energy transition.



Participants engage at the Energy Justice Forum

Next, Dr. M. Omar Faison, Associate Vice Provost for Research & Economic Development at Virginia State University, led a discussion where everyone had input on how they would define energy justice through a word cloud generator. Friday's panel, moderated by Dr. Saniya LeBlanc, a professor in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department and Director of the Energy Innovation Initiative at the George Washington University, featured R. Denise Everson of Thinkbox, Mozzine Lowe from the Center for Energy Education, and Dr. Simone Stewart from the National Wildlife Federation, who held an innovation discussion on energy justice research and community impact.

On the second day, Dr. M. Omar Faison led a panel exploring how high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science impact energy research. Panelists Dr. Elvis Moleka, Vice President of Labs and Data Science at Groundswell, Inc. and Dr. Tricia Youngbull, Lead Energy Technologies Engineer/Scientist at the Emerging Technologies Innovation Center MITRE presented research and technology.



Participants listen to a panel at the Energy Justice Forum

[SURA](#) is a consortium of sixty member universities that fosters collaborations which enhance members' capabilities of undertaking significant, transformative scientific research projects that no single institution can handle independently. The Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility is managed by Jefferson Science Associates, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SURA, for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science.

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