

Universities in action: What should they do to tackle climate change?



Writer and environmentalist [Katharine Wilkinson](#) stressed how important it is for **universities around the world** to be discussing the challenges of **climate change** in order to generate **proposals for solutions**.

This is what she said during her visit to [Tec de Monterrey](#), where she spoke with students from the Monterrey campus and later shared her vision at the **2023 Board Meeting**.

*“The **challenges of climate change** right now are very real, but they could also represent a great opportunity for more leaders to take action,”* said Wilkinson, who has been named by [Time](#) magazine as one of **15 women who will save the world**.



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In an interview with [CONECTA](#), the activist also spoke about three actions that **universities** such as the Tec can focus on.

*“Universities play a fundamental role in solution and policy **research**, as well as then sharing the results with the wider community,”* highlights the expert.

*“Another key role of higher education is to **train next-generation leaders** in all sectors to take an active role in tackling climate change,”* she added.

“Universities play a fundamental role in solution and policy research, as well as then sharing the results with the wider community.”

As a third point, she said that the Tec, *“plays a role in **innovation and taking action**, both of which are in development, which means proposing new solutions and new approaches.”*

[Wilkinson](#) shared that prior to her visit to Mexico, she researched the country’s **ecological issues** and learned that the vast majority of citizens are concerned about **climate change**.

*“Public opinion surveys show that 95 percent of Mexicans are concerned about **climate change**, so I think the first thing they should know is that if they’re concerned, they’re not alone,”* she said.



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The role of young people and citizens

Wilkinson gave a talk to students at the Monterrey campus, where she shared her experience as an activist.

She told them that as citizens, they can start with individual actions, joint actions in labor areas, and also elect political representatives who are concerned about **climate change**.

*“There’s a need to **develop resilience and adaptation strategies** at the same time as trying to globally solve the carbon emissions problem.*

*“There are things we can do politically as citizens in a democracy such as electing **climate leaders** and making sure that, once in office, they deliver on the promises they have made,” she said.*

Cynthia Villarreal, Director of **Sustainable Development and Outreach** at Tec de Monterrey, pointed out the importance of listening to **Wilkinson’s** vision.

*“Her visit allowed us to broaden and deepen the message to our audiences, helping to raise **awareness about climate change** and the need to address it quickly and effectively.*

*“Katharine was able to inspire and motivate our communities to reflect and take action, individually and collectively. We left her talks discussing the issue, reflecting on our **responsibility** and our role in this crisis,” said Villarreal.*

About the speaker

Katharine Wilkinson's climate change books are *All We Can Save* (2020), *The Drawdown Review* (2020), *Drawdown* (2017), and *Between God & Green* (2012).

Alongside Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, Katharine is the director and co-founder of *The All We Can Save Project*, an initiative in support of women leading climate change.

Co-host of the podcast *A Matter of Degrees*, Wilkinson was a senior writer and editor-in-chief of *Project Drawdown*, where she led the organization to share climate solutions with audiences around the world.

She is a member of the boards of *Doc Society*, *Chattahoochee Now*, and *Wild Ark*, an advisor to numerous climate-focused initiatives, and a guest lecturer at Sewanee.

Katharine is considered by **Time magazine** to be one of the “15 women who will save the world” and has been named by **Apolítico** as one of the “100 most influential people in gender politics.”

Board Meeting special guests

Members of the Tec's national and local boards receive information on how the university is doing and also hear talks from **international experts** at the institution's **Annual Board Meetings**.

In addition to Wilkinson, other participants included **Peter Leyden**, futurist and technology expert; **Fareed Zakaria**, journalist, and global affairs expert; and **Rafael Reif**, President Emeritus of MIT, who joined the Tec's Board this year.

“(They're) great leaders who inspire us to reflect on the challenges, but also on the opportunities we have,” [David Garza](#), Rector and Executive President of Tec de Monterrey.

The 2023 meeting was held February 19 to 21 at the **Monterrey campus**.

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