



## **CGHE Annual Conference 22-23 May 2023** **Session Details**

### **KEYNOTE 3 - Beyond “Business as Usual” in University Climate Action**

23 May 2023, 4:00pm – 5:00pm (UK)

*Chair: Simon Marginson*

*Speaker: Sharon Stein*

Universities are often understood to have a unique role in catalyzing climate action in society. But there is more than one way they can do this. On the one hand, universities must create space for conversations that welcome many different visions about their role in enabling possible futures in the face of the climate and nature emergency. On the other hand, the visions for the future that tend to take up the most space in these conversations are the ones that would sustain the status quo – visions that have been characterized as “business as usual, but greener.” If universities continue to sideline more critical and decolonial perspectives on the climate and nature emergency, climate action risks reproducing simplistic solutions, enacting unequal and paternalistic relationships with systemically marginalized communities, and educating people into the same Eurocentric imaginary of human progress and development that created today’s ecological crises in the first place. In this talk, I ask how we might reorient university climate action toward climate justice, emphasizing the challenges of this work, and offering a few examples of efforts in higher education to coordinate justice-oriented responses to today’s complex socio-ecological challenges.