

At 12th CGI University meeting, President Bill Clinton and Chelsea Clinton bring together students, government leaders, and public health experts to drive action on the COVID-19 pandemic

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Press Release

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At 12th CGI University meeting, President Bill Clinton and Chelsea Clinton bring together students, government leaders, and public health experts to drive action on the COVID-19 pandemic

Today's virtual meeting, focused on responses to the global COVID-19 pandemic, included conversations with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo; California Governor Gavin Newsom; Congresswoman Karen Bass; Congressman Joaquin Castro; Seattle Mayor Jenny A. Durkan; 19th Surgeon General of the United States Vivek Murthy; Paul Farmer, co-founder, Partners In Health; Ophelia Dahl, co-founder, Partners In Health; Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.N. Special Envoy on Tuberculosis; Devi Sridhar, University of Edinburgh Chair in Global Public Health; and other leading public health experts

This weekend, students from across the globe are coordinating on projects to address the pandemic and other pressing challenges, after hearing from international leaders and experts; President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton also announced a new COVID-19 Student Action Fund to support student projects

Next CGI University Annual Meeting to be held at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, from April 9-11, 2021

Watch this year's full program now at live.cgiu.org

New York, NY – Today, President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton held a virtual convening of students, government leaders, and health experts from around the world for the 12th annual Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) meeting. Since its launch in 2007, CGI U has brought together 10,000 college students from around the globe to tackle the world's most pressing challenges – building “Commitments to Action” that address challenges on their campuses, in their local communities, and around the world.

Today's program included opportunities for students to hear from government and health leaders, have their questions answered by President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton, collaborate with other students, and respond to a new challenge to build Commitments to Action that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the program, students came together in virtual breakout sessions to discuss their Commitments to Action and responses to the pandemic with peers who are in the same region.

President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton also announced the formation of the [CGI U COVID-19 Student Action Fund, \(link is external\)](#) funded by Founding Partner, Kevin Xu and colleges and universities that comprise the CGI University Network. This fund will provide over \$100,000 in funding to student projects that aim to fight the pandemic, including awareness and prevention campaigns; disease monitoring and response systems; support projects for public health practitioners, and other programs.

Originally slated to take place at the University of Edinburgh this weekend, the CGI U program quickly transitioned to a virtual program due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the University of Edinburgh will now host the next annual CGI U meeting in spring 2021.

“If there is anything we have learned out of this epidemic, it is that we're still in an interdependent world. We can't escape each other, and networks with positive cooperation work better than people going off on their own to fight an enemy that knows no geographic or physical boundaries,” said President Clinton. “The last few weeks and months have been hard for everyone, including college and university students who have seen campuses shut down and classes put online. It is a credit to the CGI U Class of 2020 that in the middle of all this, they still want to do CGI and make a difference in their communities.”

“As we've seen in the last weeks and months, this has been a very grim moment for our world, and yet one of extreme ingenuity and resilience,” said Chelsea Clinton. “The work CGI University students are doing gives us a reason to be hopeful. And while I'm saddened we can't be together in person today, I'm grateful that we are able to come together, with students from around the world, to explore how we can respond effectively to this public health crisis, and ensure that the responses of today become the resilience of tomorrow.”

Watch the full program at live.cgiu.org. Highlights from today's conversations include (click for video):

- President Clinton speaking about the importance of building up and properly funding the National Stockpile, and working collaboratively with the World Health Organization ([video here \(link is external\)](#));
- Chelsea Clinton speaking about the importance of coming together as a community, checking in on family members, neighbors, and friends, and being able to ask for help ([video here \(link is external\)](#));
- New York **Governor Andrew Cuomo** speaking with President Clinton about what prepared him to respond to a challenge of this magnitude, and the important role of government during a pandemic, ([video here \(link is external\)](#));

- California **Governor Gavin Newsom** speaking with President Clinton about the impact that collective action to practice safe social distancing has had in helping flatten the curve and build capacity to handle the pandemic ([video here \(link is external\)](#));
- President Clinton about the importance of testing and contact tracing – tracing those who test positive and their contacts throughout their communities – in controlling the spread of the pandemic and future outbreaks, and the possibility of building a national AmeriCorps-style program to support the U.S. public health infrastructure;
- A discussion about the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color between President Clinton, **Rep. Karen Bass**, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus ([video here \(link is external\)](#)); **Rep. Joaquin Castro**, chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus ([video here \(link is external\)](#)); and **Ambassador Eric Goosby**, U.N. Special Envoy on Tuberculosis ([video here \(link is external\)](#));
- Seattle **Mayor Jenny A. Durkan** speaking with Chelsea Clinton about the importance of unified leadership, both at the global level and local level, in responding to the pandemic ([video here \(link is external\)](#));
- 19th Surgeon General of the United States **Vivek Murthy** speaking with Chelsea Clinton about rebuilding the national health infrastructure with a “Marshall Plan” of investment ([video here \(link is external\)](#)).

The CGI U Class of 2020 has already developed more than 650 Commitments to Action to address a wide range of issues. With a network of 10,000 alumni from more than 1,100 schools, 160 countries, and all 50 states, CGI U students have made more than 7,000 Commitments to Action, positively impacting their hometowns, their college campuses, and communities around the globe. In addition to this year’s COVID-19 challenge, some previously developed commitments by the CGI U Class of 2020 include:

- A commitment by Morgan Askew of Brown University to design and implement an anti-bias curriculum around substance use for emergency room physicians in Providence, Rhode Island, partnering with three hospitals to provide information on the topics of opioid crisis, racism & addiction, patient recovery, and the biochemistry of addiction;
- A commitment by Zaniya Lewis of George Washington University to provide free college and career readiness skills to high school students from underserved communities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region;
- A commitment by Eddy Alvarado of Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo to create technologies using artificial intelligence and real-time environmental sensors that predict the appearance of diseases in farms to increase the productivity and climate change resilience of poor farmers in rural Dominican Republic;
- A commitment by William Mun and Ashley Vargas of the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to provide a platform for artists of color at FIT by creating a committee of students to curate an annual exhibit featuring artists of color, and host a film screening featuring work by students reflective of inclusivity and empowerment;
- A commitment by Francisco Garcia of Arizona State University to create 12 civically engaged community-based murals in the city of Phoenix, decreasing unwanted graffiti, beautifying low income neighborhoods that are neglected, and providing an after-school program for students.

CGI U and IBM are also partnering on the [2020 Call for Code Global Challenge with a new University Edition \(link is external\)](#) launching on [April 22, 2020 \(link is external\)](#), to engage students in taking on COVID-19 and climate change. From its inception in 2018, Call for Code has tackled society's most pressing issues. This year, students creating solutions for the Call for Code University Edition will compete for a grand prize of \$10,000 USD and are also eligible to compete for Call for Code's global prize of \$200,000 USD.

Previous CGI U meetings have been held at the University of Chicago, Northeastern University, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Miami, Arizona State University, Washington University in St. Louis, George Washington University, the University of California, San Diego, the University of Texas at Austin, and Tulane University.

CGI U's year-round program is made possible through the generous support of The Hunter Foundation, IBM, Peter G. Peterson Foundation, and Kevin Xu, with IBM providing additional support as CGI U's lead technology partner for this virtual event.

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About the Clinton Foundation

Building on a lifetime of public service, President Clinton established the Clinton Foundation on the simple belief that everyone deserves a chance to succeed, everyone has a responsibility to act, and we all do better when we work together. For nearly two decades, those values have energized the work of the Foundation in overcoming complex challenges and improving the lives of people across the United States and around the world.

As an operating foundation, we work on issues directly or with strategic partners from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors to create economic opportunity, improve public health, and inspire civic engagement and service. Our programs are designed to make a real difference today while serving as proven models for tomorrow. The goal of every effort is to use available resources to get better results faster – at the lowest possible cost.

We firmly believe that when diverse groups of people bring resources together in the spirit of true cooperation, transformative ideas will emerge to drive life-changing action.