

NATION, WORLD + SOCIETY

UCLA to host 'Science, Facts and the Public Debate' webinar, Jan. 14



UCLA

Gilbert Gee, Ursula Heise, Safiya Noble and Chon Noriega will bring an array of expertise to the discussion on how universities can help champion science and facts in the public sphere.

Elizabeth Kivowitz Boatright-Simon | January 6, 2021

As the nation prepares for a new presidential administration, UCLA Chancellor Gene Block will convene a discussion on the role higher education can play in addressing the pressing crises of our time.

The webinar, part of the ongoing UCLA Connections series, is entitled “Looking Ahead: Science, Facts and the Public Debate.” It premieres Jan. 14, at 6 p.m., and a recording will be available for viewing on the Connections website immediately after.

The conversation, featuring a quartet of UCLA faculty experts, will be particularly salient in light of the upcoming inauguration of Joe Biden as president. Over the next four years, the new administration will face intersecting challenges including the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, persistent inequality, climate change, mistrust of institutions and the rise of misinformation.

Among the questions the panelists will address: How can universities champion science and evidence while fact-based professions like journalism and medicine are under attack? How can universities inspire people to embrace facts to heal our economy, our planet and our culture—especially when so many are divided into conflicting media bubbles?

The faculty members will provide their unique perspectives on those subjects and more. They are environmental humanities scholar [Ursula Heise](#), public health researcher [Gilbert Gee](#), Internet and society expert [Safiya Noble](#), and storyteller and curator [Chon Noriega](#), who will serve as moderator.

“Institutions like UCLA that are dedicated to research and evidence must help build trust in facts and reliable data in order to address the major challenges of our time,” Block said. “To explore these issues, I am excited to help bring together the critical insights of an excellent group of experts.”

The virtual event is free and open to the public. Visit [UCLA Connections](#) to register and submit a question for the panelists.