



Nepali Academics in America (NACA)



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2023 NACA Conference

Confronting Complexities, Transforming Possibilities

April 14-15, 2023

Phoenix, Arizona | Virtual (Online)

We gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship and logistical support of



Community Partners

NEPALESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



About the Conference

The main objective of this 2023 NACA conference is to provide a scholarly platform for those interested in and are committed to Nepal and Nepali diaspora communities. This conference will have a hybrid format, allowing the participants to attend the conference either in-person or online (virtually). The in-person sessions will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, (at Arizona State University, Downtown Campus) and the virtual sessions will take place fully online in the morning hours of the conference dates.

The theme of this year's conference, ***Confronting Complexities, Transforming Possibilities***, encourages a more informed dialogue on the growing socio-ecological changes and complexities around us, including but not limited to, food insecurity, distressed economy, urbanization, migration, geopolitics, water crisis, COVID-19 and public health, global climate change, disaster risks, and inequality and social justice. Confronted by these complexities, new innovative ideas and possibilities are also emerging, in which we see the tremendous value of interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship.

This conference explores how those conversations have directly and indirectly influenced our scholarship related to Nepal. Some of these challenges and their solutions are also uniquely linked to Nepal or the broader Himalayan context. The conference provides a scholarly forum to engage in these important conversations while reconnecting with friends and colleagues and adding some new connections in your professional network.

We invite scholars, scientists, artists, and practitioners to submit proposals for panels, roundtable discussions, and individual papers on the conference theme or closely related topics. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Poverty, inequality, distressed economy, and other systemic factors
- Scientific advances in biotechnology and medical sciences
- COVID-19 and public health concerns
- Climate change, vulnerability, and disaster risks
- Migration, remittances, and livelihood diversification
- Agriculture and food production systems and new innovations
- New issues and challenges in tourism and other service-based economy
- Environmental (mis)-management (e.g., water, forestry) and governance issues
- Energy systems, innovations, and equity issues
- Geopolitics, infrastructures, and transborder issues
- Advocacy, equity, and social justice in education



2023 NACA Conference logo art by
Milan Shrestha

This logo depicts the unprecedented socio-ecological changes and uncertainties faced by the Phoenix Metro Area—a desert city and the home city of our conference—and the US Southwest. These changes, mainly rapid urbanization, water scarcity, loss of biodiversity, public health concerns, and climate change, are also shared by Nepal and the wider Himalayan region, and we seek informed dialogues on these uncertainties.

Message from NACA President

As we seek to host our third NACA Annual Conference on April 14-16, 2023 (in person in Phoenix, Arizona, and online), we hope you are as excited as we are about the opportunity to meet and interact with members and friends of this evolving organization. We would like to thank you for your continuing support of this “non-profit and non-partisan network established to enhance collaboration among Nepali academics and other scholars affiliated with higher education and research institutions based in the United States of America and beyond.” We recognize the need for some of us to participate in this global event remotely and encourage those of us with an ability to participate in-person to do so and optimize our experience and networking benefits. We would like to thank the Program Committee co-chairs and members for their hard work on planning and making this event a success.

As we gear up for this momentous event, the Executive Council is excited to announce our third General Assembly (business meeting) to take place on April 15, 2023 (afternoon) per NACA Constitution and Bylaws (Article 5). This will be on the second day of this year’s annual conference hosted in a hybrid format. While remote (online) participation will be allowed, we encourage attending the General Assembly in person if at all possible.

We would also like to remind you that our biennial election to the Executive Council is to take place at or prior to this Assembly where every registered member will be expected to vote and, as appropriate, nominate appropriate candidates (including self-nomination) for different positions of the Executive Council as well as for voluntary membership to the three standing committees and Newsflash Team. Our organization depends on your enthusiasm, support, and participation for our collective interest and so we expect you to participate and take charge of different activities, initiatives, and bodies of the organization.

The Executive Council is currently working on the specific process of this election and nomination with the Membership and Member-Support Committee.

Please stay tuned for more details coming out very soon.

Udaya R. Wagle, Ph.D.

Founding President
On behalf of NACA Executive Council

Acknowledgements

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

NACA acknowledges that the main venue of our 2023 NACA conference--Arizona State University--is situated on the ancestral lands of Indigenous people past, present, and future. We thank and honor the Native American tribes and sovereign nations of the Salt River Valley—including the Akimel O'odham, Onk Akimel O'odham and Piipaash nations—whose stewardship of the land and waterways allows us to be here now. In addition, we honor their continued and many contributions today.

Conference Co-Chairs

Gyan Nyaupane (*Arizona State University, Phoenix*)

Milan Shrestha (*Arizona State University, Tempe*)

Conference Program Committee

Listed alphabetically by last names

Ananta Acharya (*Corteva, USA*)

Sushil Adhikari (*Auburn University*)

Buddhi R Gyawali (*Kentucky State University*)

Omkar Joshi (*Oklahoma State University*)

Arun KC (*Save the Children USA*)

Madhukar KC (*Graduate Student Representative, Arizona State University*)

Prajwal Panday (*Nichols College*)

Soni Pradhanang (*University of Rhode Island*)

Amir Sapkota (*University of Maryland*)

Organizing Committee

Maheshwor Kafle (*Phoenix Children's Hospital*)

Madhukar KC (*Graduate Student, Arizona State University*)

Shasta Shakya (*Arizona State University, Tempe*)

Samridhi Shrestha (*Grand Canyon University*)

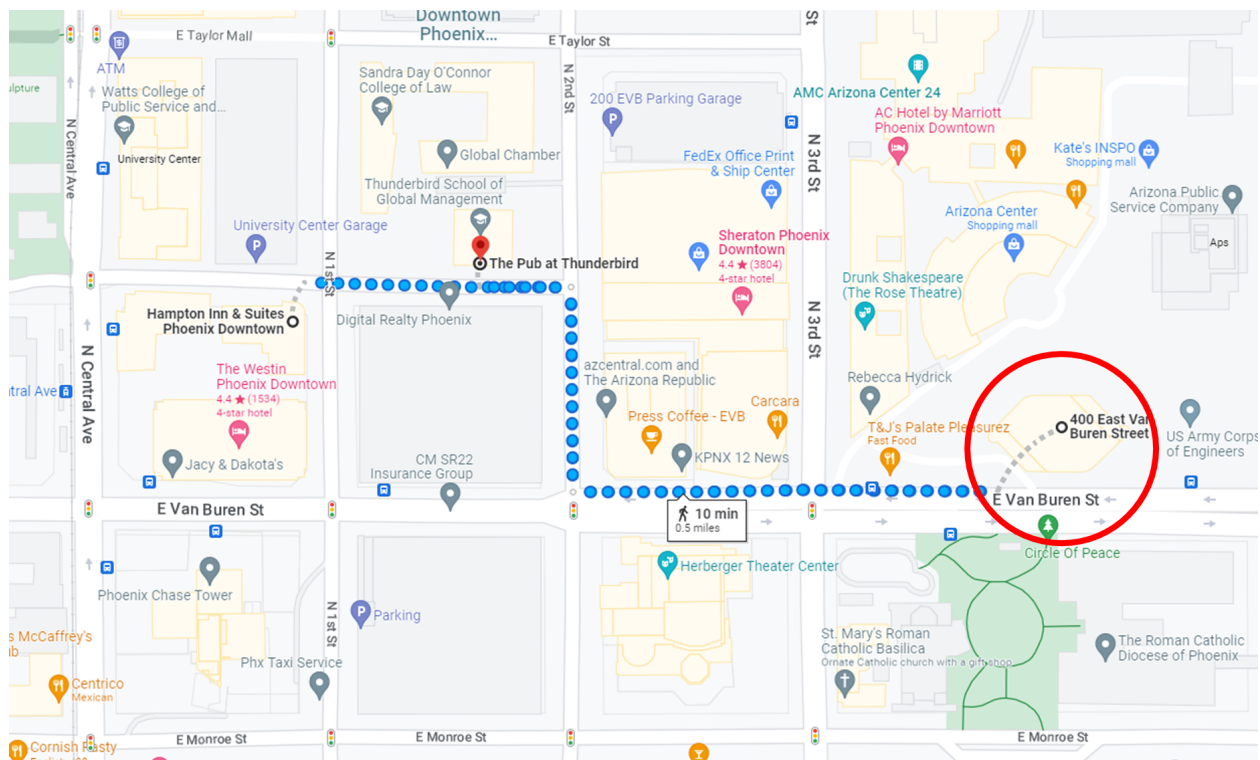
Avinaya Tripathi (*Graduate Student Representative, Arizona State University*)

Map

Conference Venue, Reception Hall, and Major Hotels

Conference Venue: Room 730 and 706 at the Arizona Center 7th Floor
Address: 400 E Van Buren St, Phoenix, AZ 85004

Reception Hall: The Pub at Thunderbird
Address: 401 N 1st St, Phoenix, AZ 85004



Conference At-A-Glance

Conference will take place in the Arizona Center (7th Floor) of the ASU Downtown Campus (400 E Van Buren Street, Phoenix AZ 85004)

FRIDAY, APRIL 14

Room # 730		Room # 706
07:00 - 08:45	Registration and Light Breakfast	
Online 07:30 - 08:45	Online Feature Roundtable 1 Political Economy & Geopolitics of Infrastructure Building in Nepal Biswo Poudel (Former VC of National Planning Commission), Prabin Khadka (University of Essex) Krishna Gyawali (Former Secretary, GoN) Moderator: Gaurab Aryal (WUSTL)	
Keynote I 09:00 - 10:30	Keynote Speech Intersection of Climate Change, Urbanization, Water Security and Public Health: Emerging Challenges Kumud Acharya (Desert Research Institute)	
10:30 - 10:45	Tea Break	
Session 1 10:45 - 12:15	Confronting Complexities in Forest Management and Protected Areas	Online: Solid Waste Management and Bioengineering
12:15 - 13:30	Lunch Break	
Session 2 13:30 - 15:00	Workshop 1 Research Grants and Collaborations	Online: Agricultural Value Chain, Poverty and Food Systems
15:00 - 15:15	Tea Break	
Session 3 15:15 - 16:45	Online: Nepali Diaspora Academics: Our Contributions & Challenges	Emerging Socio-economic and Environmental Issues
Reception 17:30 - 19:30	<u>The Pub</u> , The Thunderbird School of Global Management, 401 North 1st Street, Phoenix	

SATURDAY, APRIL 15

Room # 730

Room # 706

07:00 - 08:45 Light Breakfast

Online
07:30 - 08:45 Online Feature Roundtable 2 | **Dengue Epidemics in Nepal: Reflections on the Lessons and Challenges for the Healthcare System** | Anup Subedee (Kirtipur Hospital), Reshma Tuladhar (Tribhuvan University), Moderator: Sadeep Shrestha

Keynote I
09:00 - 10:30 Keynote Speech 2 | **Awkward But Fitting In: Complexities, Adaptations, and Opportunities as a Foreign Disaster Researcher and Ally in Nepal**
Jeremy Spoon (Portland State University)

10:30 - 10:45 Tea Break

Session 4
10:45 - 12:15 Workshop 2 | Book and Journal Editorship Online: Himalayan Environments and Climate Change

12:15 - 13:30 Lunch Break

Plenary
13:30 - 15:00 **NACA Business Meeting**
President's updates and annual reports; General Assembly; New Executive Council

15:00 - 15:15 Tea Break

Session 5
15:15 - 16:45 Open Discussion | Academic Enterprise & Administration: Reflections and Lessons Online: Climate Change Policies, Care Economy, and Environmental Issues

Closing
17:00 - 18:00 Room # 730 and online

DAY 1 - APRIL 14 (FRIDAY) Times are in Arizona Time USA

07:00 - 08:30 REGISTRATION AND LIGHT BREAKFAST

07:30 - 08:45 ONLINE FEATURE ROUNDTABLE 1

Zoom link: TBA and ROOM 730

POLITICAL ECONOMY & GEOPOLITICS OF INFRASTRUCTURE BUILDING IN NEPAL

Moderator: **Gaurab Aryal** (Washington University, St Louis)

Panelists: **Biswo Poudel** (Kathmandu University, Former Vice Chair National Planning Commission, Nepal), **Prabin B Khadka** (University of Essex), **Krishna Gyawali** (Former Secretary, GoN)

09:00 - 10:30 KEYNOTE SPEECH 1

ROOM 730 and Zoom link: TBA

WELCOME REMARKS, **Udaya R Wagle** (President, NACA)

INTRODUCTION, **Gyan Nyaupane** (Arizona State University)

KEYNOTE SPEECH, **Kumud Acharya** (Desert Research Institute), *Intersections of Climate Change, Urbanization, Water Security and Public Health: Emerging Challenges*

10:30 - 10:45 TEA BREAK

10:45 - 12:15 SESSION 1

ROOM 730

CONFRONTING COMPLEXITIES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS

Moderator: **Gyan Nyaupane** (Arizona State University)

- *Can Bufferzone Programs Contribute Positively in Management of Protected Areas?*
Neelam C Poudyal (University of Tennessee), **Thakur Silwal** (Institute of Forestry, Nepal), **Sweta Dixit** (University of Tennessee), **Omkar Joshi** (Oklahoma State University)
- *Landowner willingness to accept compensation for planting trees on open lands*
Ram K Adhikari (University of Tennessee), **Neelam C Poudyal** (University of Tennessee)
- *Understanding Factors Affecting Perceived Climate Change Vulnerabilities in High Mountains of Nepal*
Omkar Joshi (Oklahoma State University) & **Neelam C. Poudyal** (University of Tennessee)
- *The COVID-19 Pandemic, Migrant Returnees, and the Forest Dependent Rural Livelihood in Mid-Hills of Nepal*
Rajan Parajuli (North Carolina State University), **B Prabin** (North Carolina State University)

ROOM 706 and Zoom link: TBA**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND BIOENGINEERING**

Moderator: **Sushil Adhikari** (Auburn University)

- *Challenges and Opportunities to Manage Municipal Solid Waste in Cities of Nepal*
Sushil Adhikari (Auburn University)
- *Recovery of Energy and Nutrients as a Sustainable way for Management of Solid waste in Nepal*
Bishnu Acharya (University of Saskatchewan)
- *Management Problems in Municipalities of Nepal: Key Issues and the Way Forward for Sustainability*
Dhundi R. Pathak (Engineering Study & Research Centre, Nepal)
- *Converting Organic Waste into Bio-methane and Fertilizer in Nepal: Experience from Gandaki Urja*
Kushal Gurung (WindPower Nepal Pvt. Ltd., Nepal)

12:15 - 13:30 LUNCH BREAK

13:30 - 15:00 SESSION 2

ROOM 730**WORKSHOP 1 | RESEARCH GRANTS AND COLLABORATIONS**

Moderator: **Omkar Joshi** (Oklahoma State University)

Panelists: **Amir Sapkota** (University of Maryland School of Public Health);

Buddhi R. Gyawali (Kentucky State University); **Neelam C Poudyal** (University of Tennessee)

ROOM 706 and Zoom link: TBA**AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN, POVERTY AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

Moderator: **Krishna P Paudel** (USDA ERS)

- *Pay it Forward: A Mechanism for Achieving Scale in Anti-Poverty Programs*
Nicholas Magnan (University of Georgia, Athens)
- *Frequent vs. Lumpy: Impact of Remittance Patterns on Consumption and Poverty*
Shankar Ghimire (Western Illinois University), **Kul Kapri** (Rowan University),
Maroula Khraiche (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley)
- *Decomposing the Impacts of an Agricultural Value Chain Development Project by Ethnicity and Gender in Nepal*
Tisorn Songsermsawas (IFAD Italy), **Kashi Kafle** (Texas A&M University),
Paul Winters (University of Notre Dame)
- *Food Related Concerns, Awareness on Safety, and Illness at Home: Examining Consumer Households in Nepal*
Aditya R Khanal (Tennessee State University)

15:00 - 15:15 TEA BREAK

15:15 - 16:45 SESSION 3

ROOM 730 and Online**NEPALI DIASPORA ACADEMICS: OUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES**

Moderator: **Dinesh Paudel** (Appalachian State University)

Panelists: **Hemanta Ojha** (University of Canberra); **Tara Sigdel** (University of California, San Francisco)

ROOM 706**EMERGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Moderator: **Buddhi R Gyawali** (Kentucky State University)

- *Management of Health Information of Nepalese Labor Migrants*
Rajendra Karkee (BPKIHS, Dharan)
- *Exploring Translanguaging Practices of Multilingual Nepali Immigrant Families in the US* **Madhukar KC** (Arizona State University)
- *Power Tradeoff Across Scales in Nepal's Multi-Level Climate Governance System*
Suman Acharya (University of Maine)
- *To be or Not To Be? A Case Study of Tourism-based Livelihood Diversification in Upper Mustang, Nepal*
Tashi Gurung (Arizona State University)

17:30 - 19:30 THE PUB (ASU Thunderbird School, 401 North 1st Street, Phoenix)

DAY 2 - APRIL 15 (SATURDAY)

07:00 - 08:30 LIGHT BREAKFAST

07:30 - 08:45 ONLINE FEATURE ROUNDTABLE 2

Zoom link: and **ROOM 730**

DENGUE EPIDEMICS IN NEPAL: REFLECTIONS ON THE LESSONS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Moderator: **Sadeep Shrestha** (University of Alabama at Birmingham)

Participants: **Anup Subedee** (Kirtipur Hospital); **Reshma Tuladhar** (Tribhuvan University)

BREAK (15 MINUTES)

09:00 - 10:30 KEYNOTE SPEECH 2

ROOM 730 and Zoom link: TBA

INTRODUCTION: **Milan Shrestha** (Arizona State University)

KEYNOTE SPEECH 2: **Jeremy Spoon** (Portland State University) *Awkward But Fitting In: Complexities, Adaptations, and Opportunities as a Foreign Disaster Researcher and Ally in Nepal*

10:30 - 10:45 TEA BREAK

10:45 - 12:15 SESSION 4

ROOM 730

WORKSHOP 2 | BOOK AND JOURNAL EDITORSHIP

Moderator: **Gyan Nyaupane** (Arizona State University)

Panelists: **Samir Khanal** (University of Hawai'i), **Udaya R Wagle** (Western Michigan University), **Sadeep Shrestha** (University of Alabama at Birmingham)

ROOM 706 and Zoom Link: TBA

HIMALAYAN ENVIRONMENTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Moderator: **Milan Shrestha** (Arizona State University)

- *Botanical Diversity in Eastern Nepal's Alpine Zone*
Elizabeth Byers (Independent Scholar)
- *The Changing Ecology of a High Himalayan Valley: The Case of The Kanchenjunga Conservation Area, Nepal*
Alton Byers (University of Colorado at Boulder)
- *Streamflow and Water Availability in the Context of Climate Change*

Soni Pradhanang (University of Rhode Island), **Tirtha Adhikari** (Tribhuvan University), **Rocky Talchabhadel** (Texas A&M University), **Sanjib Sharma** (Howard University), and **Dibit Aryal** (Chinese Academy of Sciences)

- *Labor Migration Triggered by COVID-19 and Its Impact on Climate Change Adaptation of Producers in Sunsari District, Nepal*

Amrit Shrestha (University of Tennessee), **Sreedhar Upendram** (University of Tennessee), **Seong-Hoon Cho** (University of Tennessee), and **Neelam C Poudyal** (University of Tennessee)

12:15 - 13:30 LUNCH BREAK

13:30 - 15:00 PLENARY

ROOM 730 and Zoom Link: TBA

NACA BUSINESS MEETING

- PRESIDENT'S UPDATES
Udaya R Wagle (Western Michigan University)
 - SECRETARY'S REPORT
Milan Shrestha (Arizona State University)
 - TREASURER'S REPORT
Krishna P Paudel (USDA ERS)
 - CLOSED SESSION - NACA ELECTION
 - NEW EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCEMENT
-

15:00 - 15:15 TEA BREAK

15:15 - 16:45 SESSION 5

ROOM 730

OPEN DISCUSSION | ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE & ADMINISTRATION: REFLECTIONS & LESSONS

Moderator: **Brijesh Thapa** (Oklahoma State University)

Panelists: **Devi Gnyawali** (Virginia Tech), **Alok Bohara** (University of New Mexico), and **Shanta Pandey** (Boston College)

ROOM 706 and Zoom Link: TBA

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES, CARE ECONOMY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Moderator: **Ram Acharya** (New Mexico State University)

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- *Measures of Racial Participation Rates in USDA Direct Payment Programs*
Anil K. Giri (USDA ERS), Dipak Subedi (USDA ERS), and Kathleen Kassel (USDA ERS)
 - *Does Crop Insurance Influence Crop Yield Impacts of Warming Temperatures? A Farm-level Analysis*
Madhav Regmi (New Mexico State University)
 - *Why Care for the Care Economy: Empirical Evidence from Nepal*
Aashima Sinha (University of Utah) and **Ashish Kumar Sedai** (University of Texas, Arlington)
 - *Increasing NO₂ Risk for Asthma in Louisiana: 2005-2020*
Keshav Bhattarai (University of Central Missouri), Madhu Gyawali (San Jacinto College), Lok Lamsal (University of Maryland Baltimore County), and John Yeager (University of Central Missouri)

17:00 - 18:00 CLOSING AND NETWORKING

Notes