

RAHUL PRASAD: Hello, and welcome to TEDxUofW 2021: “Meanwhile!”

My name is Rahul Prasad and I’m going to be your host for today’s event, guiding you through ten incredible, inspirational, and thought-provoking TEDx talks, three performances, and some special home videos made by members of the TEDxUofW team. You’re in for a great treat today.

But, before I go forward, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge that this conference, both its live and prerecorded aspects, are taking place on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe.

I would also like to mention that a transcript of every talk and performance can be found on our website at TEDxUofW.com. There is even a transcript for the words I am saying right now if you would like to follow along.

Next up, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our event sponsors.

Today’s event is presented by WSECU and co-sponsored by The HUB, Wells Fargo, and the University of Washington Alumni Association (and ASUW??). The continued support of these organizations allows us to put on this event every year and without them we would not be here today. So, thank you.

Today’s event extends beyond simply your computer screen. I invite you to engage with today’s TEDxUofW curators, speakers, and performers LIVE on our Instagram page. If you haven’t already, follow us on Instagram at @TEDxUofW. Throughout the entirety of this conference, you’ll have an opportunity to ask questions, share reactions, and just interact with the inspiring individuals you will be hearing from today.

We’ll get into more specifics about today’s event in just a moment, but before we do that, I want to invite the three people who have been working tirelessly to put this event on all year, our three TEDxUofW curators, to say a few words. Please welcome Lily Hansen, Arthur Liu, and Karina Mendoza.

ARTHUR: Hello, my name is Arthur Liu.

LILY HANSEN: My name is Lily Hansen.

KARINA MENDOZA: And my name is Karina Mendoza.

LILY HANSEN: We wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for coming to the TEDxUofW 2021 conference. It’s been a long journey to get to this point and we want to extend our sincerest gratitude to all of our amazing speakers, our generous sponsors, our veteran speaker coach, Ro Verdeja, and our amazing host, who stepped in at the very last moment, Rahul Prasad, in helping us bring this conference together.

KARINA MENDOZA: Most of all, we want to thank our team for working tirelessly throughout this last year in putting this conference together. Whether it be on our speaker selection team, production team, our public relations team, our finance team, our design team, or our web team, we are just so immensely proud of the work they have all done over the last six months.

ARTHUR LIU: TEDxUofW was founded by University of Washington students in 2012 and every year since then — except in 2020 — we have held a conference on our campus which is entirely planned and run by college students.

It was very disappointing when we had to cancel our conference last year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and we are so proud to be back this year. Although the circumstances may be different, we are confident the TEDx talks you will be hearing over the next couple of hours will introduce you to new ideas and perspectives, and will undoubtedly leave you inspired.

KARINA MENDOZA: Our theme “Meanwhile” represents the duality of life. In a year of so much loss and grief, we hope these talks remind you of all the beautiful work various individuals continue to do to better our world. Because while our time indoors may sometimes make our lives feel stagnant, we want you to know that meanwhile, so much else is still going on.

LILY HANSEN: Before we send you back to Rahul, we also wanted to address some recent conversations our team has been having behind the scenes. Before Rahul so graciously stepped in to host our conference, we invited another individual to host.

However, this last Thursday, we were notified of allegations of sexual misconduct against this individual. We promptly terminated our relationship and want to make it clear that neither TEDxUofW, nor the University of Washington, condones any form of sexual violence. As curators, and as part of TEDxUofW, we choose to believe survivors and are committed to using our platform to amplify the ideas and perspectives of those working to better our world.

ARTHUR LIU: Thank you, once again, for coming to the TEDxUofW 2021 conference. Enjoy!

RAHUL PRASAD: One more thank you to our curators in putting today’s conference together.

Over the next few hours, you’re going to get an opportunity to hear from a group of ten diverse speakers, covering topics from opera and food waste to outer space and medical vaccines. In between those TEDx talks, you’ll also be treated to performances by Seattle-based artists and pre-recorded videos by the TEDx team. Don’t worry though, you’ll also have an opportunity to take a break, stretch your legs, or grab a bite to eat.

So, let's get into it!