

# Megatrend Future Day

Hosted by the University of Houston

November 9, 2012

## Presenting

- **Megatrends in Global Interaction—the Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation**
- **UH Policy Debate Team. Arguments: *In favor of and against increasing domestic energy production***

## Background

The Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation (<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de>), founded in 1977, is a global, non-partisan, not-for-profit organization mission to drive social change with numerous projects in four core areas: education, business and social affairs, health, and international relations.

One of the Foundation's major projects has been to examine and provide an overview of the current state and potential future interactions of six "Megatrends" that will shape our future. The outcome of this project has been published this year in a book titled *Megatrends in Global Interaction*.

The six Megatrends include:

- Demographics and Migration
- Global Security
- Biodiversity and Climate Change
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Economic Globalization
- Global Governance

To disseminate the findings of the report The Foundation has launched a Megatrend roadshow featuring "Future Day" events in locations around the world. A Future Day event includes an overview of the Megatrends findings, regional blogger reports, and panel sessions to discuss the complex nature of the Megatrends, their dynamic interactions and the impact on developed and developing countries. The inaugural Future Day was held in Berlin in the spring of 2012. Jonathan Stevens, Director of the Foundation's Global Futures Project, and editor of the report, is leading the Future Day initiative.

There are many reasons why UH would be a natural fit to host a Megatrends Future Day. The university's location in the City of Houston is a significant advantage. Houston is a Megatrend poster child. The city is a thriving metropolis, acknowledged world leader in the energy industry, home to the renowned Texas Medical Center, and culturally diverse with a burgeoning Hispanic population. UH is an emerging research and Hispanic serving university; an increasing number of undergraduates are first time generation to attend college. The university has 12 Colleges that provide a broad curriculum.

The Colleges of Technology, Engineering, Bauer Business, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Natural Sciences & Mathematics, Architecture, and Honors have programs and research on Megatrends areas of focus. The UH Office of International Studies and Programs serves students many of whom will experience first-hand and have influence on the Megatrend interplay.

The UH Megatrends Future Day initiative is being led by Dr. Peter Bishop, associate professor, Future Studies Program, College of Technology, and Lisa Robertson, External Relations, College of Engineering.

### **UH Future Day Format**

Future Days are half-day events including lunch. A UH Future Day itinerary includes a Megatrends report overview by Jonathan Stevens, followed by panel discussions about the interaction of the Megatrends with an emphasis on what the future energy might look like. The lunch offers attendees additional time to informally continue the discussions.

Following lunch, the participants will be invited to a public debate featuring the University of Houston Policy Debate team. Drawing upon knowledge and research developed for national competition in the 2012–2013 collegiate debate topic: *In favor of and against increasing domestic energy production*, Houston students will partner with industry representatives to debate and discuss the potential future interactions between global and domestic energy production. Two teams, composed of undergraduates and energy industry representatives, will each present brief constructive speeches and a period of cross-examination. The audience will be invited to advance arguments for both sides of the argument. The conclusion will involve a closing rebuttal and summary from each team of what they consider the superior arguments for their respective position.

### **UH Future Day Audience**

Invitations to the Megatrend Future Day and Debate session will be sent to UH students, faculty, and staff, as well as representatives from government, industry, and community organizations. The day's events will provide a unique and special opportunity to learn and participate in discussions that will have relevance to attendees. Students will gain perspective and insight about how they can use their education to help solve some of the world's most pressing challenges.

### **Campus-wide support**

Although a large portion of the cost of hosting a Future Day is provided by The Foundation (travel, accommodation, books), additional support from the university would ensure a truly Tier One experience. A sponsorship donation of \$500 from each participating colleges will provide benefits including a reserved table for 8 at lunch, three copies of the Megatrends Global Interaction book, special mention during the program, and an opportunity to help shape the Future Day format as it travels around the world!

### **Contact information**

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