

Transforming the Northwest Energy System NWESS 2026



University of Washington
Alder Hall
April 1-2, 2026



Speaker: Michelle Vargo, Senior Vice President Energy Operations at Puget Sound Energy

Title: "Resilience, Innovation, and Growth: Leading PSE Through Industry Transformation"

Abstract:

The utility industry stands at a critical inflection point as customer demand surges while decades-old infrastructure reaches end-of-life, compounded by increasingly severe weather and wildfire risks that demand stronger, more resilient systems. New opportunities for bi-directional energy partnerships with customers are emerging just as society's dependence on energy continues to expand across nearly every aspect of modern life.

Join Michelle Vargo, PSE's SVP of Energy Operations, as she shares insights on leading Washington state's largest utility through one of the most significant transformations in the company's 150-plus year history.

Bio:

Michelle Vargo is senior vice president of Energy Operations for Puget Sound Energy, responsible for gas and electric operations, generation operations, engineering, customer and system projects, project management, service provider operations, and wildfire mitigation and response.

Michelle joined PSE in July 2023 from Seattle City Light, where she served as Chief Operating Officer responsible for all utility transmission, distribution and system operations functions. Prior to that, she held a number of leadership roles, including Deputy Chief Operating Officer, and as a director in both Transmission and Distribution and Generation Operations and Engineering. Before joining Seattle City Light in 2013, Michelle worked in business development for the LNG and industrial gases industry and spent five years as an engineering officer in the United States Army.

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Michelle is a licensed professional engineer with an MBA from The University of Chicago. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the United States Military Academy and is a graduate of the Energy Executive Course at the University of Idaho.

