



Last week I had the opportunity to attend the U.S. Department of Energy’s seventh annual **ARPA-E Energy Innovation Summit** in Washington, DC as part of the [student program](#). Since 2009, ARPA-E has awarded funding for research and development of transformational energy projects: high-potential, high-impact energy technologies that are too early for private-sector investment. I participated

While the focus of ARPA-E is on nascent technologies, which is more upstream than the subject matter of my studies and professional experience, I found the summit to be extremely engaging from the keynote speakers, to the technology showcase, and especially the student program. The summit agenda boasted energy superstars such as **Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Gina McCarthy, President of the World Bank Jim Yong Kim, and Former Vice President Al Gore**—not to mention several U.S. Senators and business executives. Gina McCarthy’s fireside chat was my favorite talk. She spoke of her determined resolve to implement the Clean Power Plan with or without the support of the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as her positive interpretation of



Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency



President of the World Bank Group with Head of Americas & Policy for Bloomberg New Energy Finance

President Obama’s decision to reject the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. Another unexpected highlight was a keynote speech given by Dr. Sophie Vandebroek, Chief Technology Officer and President of the Innovation Group at Xerox. She discussed the current energy transition as the “**democratization of energy**,” comparing it to the information technology transition that changed how we research—from using librarians as intermediaries to obtain information, to the pervasiveness of Google and the internet of things.

ARPA-E’s **technology showcase** was impressive—over 300 booths exhibited innovative energy technologies ranging from microstructured optical fibers that measure methane emissions, to an electric bike powered by solar panels that comprise the walls of its own shipping container. I participated in a tour of the electricity grid controls booths, which introduced me to several projects related to

my area of interest. In fact, I proposed using one of these companies for a group project this semester, in which we make investments in a hypothetical energy investment fund. Lastly, I really enjoyed meeting the other students at the summit. It was a diverse group of master’s and PhD candidates from all over the country, studying everything energy-related from engineering to policy. It was inspiring to be among a group of such motivated and passionate people and I look forward to encountering many of them over the course of my career.



U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz and David Ignatius, Associate Editor & Columnist for the Washington Post

I expect I will continue to draw on my ARPA-E experience in my classwork and job search. I highly recommend this conference to future Fletcher students interested in energy and innovation. Thank you to CIERP for making it possible for me to attend!

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