



AMERICAN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY  
PRESIDENTS CLIMATE COMMITMENT

American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment  
Program Overview

The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment is a high-visibility effort to make campuses more sustainable and address global warming by garnering institutional commitments to reduce and ultimately neutralize greenhouse gas emissions on campus. The effort is modeled after the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

**The challenge to reverse global warming will reshape the 21st century.** An immense and ever-growing body of scientific evidence points to the conclusion that our over-reliance on fossil fuels is causing the planet to warm at dangerous rates and the climate to destabilize. The participating presidents recognize the need to reduce the global emission of greenhouse gases dramatically, in order to avert the worst impacts of global warming.

**America's higher education community can play a determinant role in addressing climate change.** Leading society in this effort fits squarely into the educational, research, and public service missions of higher education. No other institution in society has the influence, the critical mass and the diversity of skills needed to successfully reverse global warming. Tomorrow's architects, engineers, attorneys, business leaders, scientists, urban planners, policy analysts, cultural leaders, journalists, advocates, activists, and politicians - more than 17 million of them - are currently attending the more than 4,000 institutions of higher learning in the United States. Higher education is also a \$317 billion economic engine that employs millions of people and spends billions of dollars on fuel, energy, products, services and infrastructure.

**The Presidents Climate Commitment provides a framework and support for America's colleges and universities to go climate neutral.** It recognizes the unique role of presidents and chancellors in providing leadership and guidance in their institutions and in society. Participating presidents are leading their institutions to develop a comprehensive plan of actions, within two years, that will ultimately lead to campus climate neutrality, and provide the critical education and research necessary to help society re-stabilize the world's climate. Through the Commitment's flexible program of conservation, renewable energy, offsets and other creative strategies, campuses can go carbon neutral in a timely and efficient manner. We seek the commitment of 200 college and university presidents by June 2007 and 1000 by December 2009.

The program has three major phases:

- **Phase I: Laying the Groundwork: Oct 06 - Mar 07** Development of commitment documents, plans, a website and support materials, and creation of a "Leadership Circle" of presidents who will become the public face and lead supporters of the program.
- **Phase II: Launch: Mar - Jun 07** Following an announcement to the higher education community by the Leadership Circle in January 2007, personal and direct marketing solicitation efforts targeting all American college and university presidents will commence in preparation for a public launch in June 2007.
- **Phase III: Public Rollout: June 2007 through 2009** A public launch and summit meeting at a major university in June 2007 will be followed by an ongoing outreach effort to solicit additional signatories and provide progress reports. The ultimate goal in this phase is to generate a broad, continuous, higher education effort on climate change with at least 1,000 participating institutions.

**The fight against global warming is gathering momentum** among students, faculty and administrators in higher education and in the public and corporate sectors. It is time for America's colleges and universities to show their strength and leadership. Early movers can realize extensive benefits in funding, attracting talent, achieving long-term cost reduction and generating broad support from alumni and communities while leading America to a new energy and economic future that is hopeful, healthy and prosperous. Many colleges and universities are already reaping these benefits.

**Addressing climate change will necessitate a transformation of our economy, our infrastructure and our communities** in creative and positive ways that will fuel economic growth, protect our communities and the quality of life we cherish, and move our civilization forward. Many of the necessary tools and clean, renewable technologies are already in various stages of development and/or deployment. America needs its great higher educational institutions to put these pieces together in a way that creates a new foundation for growth, prosperity and peace. By creating and implementing plans to reduce their global warming impact down to zero within a generation, our campuses can drive the scientific innovation and public education necessary to catalyze rapid change.

#### **Program Management**

The American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment has been developed and is being coordinated and supported by Second Nature, ecoAmerica and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). We welcome your inquiries, input and support.

#### **Contact Information**

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**American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment**

We, the undersigned presidents and chancellors of colleges and universities, are deeply concerned about the unprecedented scale and speed of global warming and its potential for large-scale, adverse health, social, economic and ecological effects. We recognize the scientific consensus that global warming is real and is largely being caused by humans. We further recognize the need to reduce the global emission of greenhouse gases by 80% by mid-century at the latest, in order to avert the worst impacts of global warming and to reestablish the more stable climatic conditions that have made human progress over the last 10,000 years possible.

While we understand that there might be short-term challenges associated with this effort, we believe that there will be great short-, medium-, and long-term economic, health, social and environmental benefits, including achieving energy independence for the U.S. as quickly as possible.

We believe colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by modeling ways to minimize global warming emissions, and by providing the knowledge and the educated graduates to achieve climate neutrality. Campuses that address the climate challenge by reducing global warming emissions and by integrating sustainability into their curriculum will better serve their students and meet their social mandate to help create a thriving, ethical and civil society. These colleges and universities will be providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the critical, systemic challenges faced by the world in this new century and enable them to benefit from the economic opportunities that will arise as a result of solutions they develop.

We further believe that colleges and universities that exert leadership in addressing climate change will stabilize and reduce their long-term energy costs, attract excellent students and faculty, attract new sources of funding, and increase the support of alumni and local communities.

**Accordingly, we commit our institutions to taking the following steps in pursuit of climate neutrality:**

1. Initiate the development of a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible.
  - a. Within two months of signing this document, create institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the plan.
  - b. Within one year of signing this document, complete a comprehensive inventory of all greenhouse gas emissions (including emissions from electricity, heating, commuting, and air travel) and update the inventory every other year thereafter.
  - c. Within two years of signing this document, develop an institutional action plan for becoming climate neutral, which will include:
    - i. A target date for achieving climate neutrality as soon as possible.
    - ii. Interim targets for goals and actions that will lead to climate neutrality.
    - iii. Actions to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and other educational experience for all students.
    - iv. Actions to expand research or other efforts necessary to achieve climate neutrality.
    - v. Mechanisms for tracking progress on goals and actions.

*(continued...)*

2. Initiate two or more of the following tangible actions to reduce greenhouse gases while the more comprehensive plan is being developed.
  - a. Establish a policy that all new campus construction will be built to at least the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver standard or equivalent.
  - b. Adopt an energy-efficient appliance purchasing policy requiring purchase of ENERGY STAR certified products in all areas for which such ratings exist.
  - c. Establish a policy of offsetting all greenhouse gas emissions generated by air travel paid for by our institution.
  - d. Encourage use of and provide access to public transportation for all faculty, staff, students and visitors at our institution
  - e. Within one year of signing this document, begin purchasing or producing at least 15% of our institution's electricity consumption from renewable sources
  - f. Establish a policy or a committee that supports climate and sustainability shareholder proposals at companies where our institution's endowment is invested.
3. Make the action plan, inventory, and periodic progress reports publicly available by providing them to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) for posting and dissemination.

In recognition of the need to build support for this effort among college and university administrations across America, we will encourage other presidents to join this effort and become signatories to this commitment.

Signed,



\_\_\_\_\_  
President/ Chancellor Signature

MODESTO A. MAIDIQUE

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/ Chancellor Name

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

\_\_\_\_\_  
College or University

Please send the signed commitment document to:

Mary Reilly  
Second Nature  
18 Tremont St., Suite 1120  
Boston, MA 02108

25 MAY 2007

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

or fax to: 320-451-1612  
or scan & email to: [mreilly@secondnature.org](mailto:mreilly@secondnature.org)