

Climate Leadership Statement

We, the undersigned presidents and chancellors of colleges and universities, believe firmly in the power, potential, and imperative of higher education's key role in shaping a sustainable society. Not only are we deeply concerned about the increasing pace and intensity of global climate change and the potential for unprecedented detrimental impacts, but we also understand that technology, infrastructure, global interconnectedness, and our greatest asset – engaged, committed, smart students – allow us to explore bold and innovative solutions and to lead in climate action and sustainable solutions.

We have begun to experience the effects of climate change in our communities and we understand that these effects are projected to become more severe and damaging. We recognize that mitigation and adaptation are complementary strategies for reducing the likelihood of unmanageable change, managing the risks, and taking advantage of new opportunities created by our changing climate.

We believe colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by providing the knowledge, research, practice, and informed graduates to create a positive and sustainable future. Along with other aspects of sustainability, campuses that address the climate challenge by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by integrating resilience into their curriculum, research, and campus operations will better serve their students and meet their social mandate to help create a vital, ethical, and prosperous civil society.

We further believe that exerting leadership in addressing climate change will reduce our long-term energy costs and the costs of climate disturbance, increase our quality of life, attract excellent students and faculty, and build the support of alumni and local communities.

We have resolved to take action in one of the following Climate Leadership Commitments. We believe carbon neutrality and resilience are extremely high priority areas of action for all institutions and we aim to lead the nation in these efforts. We urge others to join us in transforming society towards a sustainable, healthy, and more prosperous future.

Climate Commitment:

An integrated climate commitment including carbon neutrality and resilience

1) Develop a comprehensive Climate Action Plan *

- a. Within two months of signing this document, create internal institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the Plan
- b. Within one year of the implementation start date, actively support a joint campus-community task force (or equivalent) to ensure alignment of the Plan with community goals and to facilitate joint action, and complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, also identifying near term opportunities for greenhouse gas reduction. Report these in the first annual evaluation of progress
- c. Within two years of the implementation start date, lead and complete an initial campus-community resilience assessment including initial indicators and current vulnerability
- d. Within three years of the implementation start date complete the Plan, (also reflecting joint community-campus components), which will include:
 - A target date for achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible
 - A target date by which defined thresholds of resilience will be met
 - Interim target dates for meeting milestones that will lead to carbon neutrality and increasing resilience**
 - Mechanisms and indicators for tracking progress (including those that cut across campus-community boundaries)
 - Actions to make carbon neutrality and resilience a part of the curriculum and other educational experiences for all student
 - Actions to expand research in carbon neutrality and resilience
- e. Review, revise if necessary, and resubmit the climate action plan not less frequently than every five years

2) Submit an annual evaluation of progress

- a. Within one year of the implementation start date, and every year thereafter, complete an annual evaluation of progress
- b. Make the action plan, annual evaluation of progress (including greenhouse gas inventory, resilience assessment etc.), publicly available by submitting them to the Second Nature Reporting System for posting and dissemination

* The plan may be designed to augment an existing sustainability plan, written as part of a new sustainability plan, or as a standalone plan. An online Guide is available that provides information on successful institutional structures, helpful templates on climate action plans, useful indicators of progress, guidance for reporting and much more.

** Assistance for developing interim milestones and a number of quick start actions are available online and are regularly updated

If there are compelling reasons why an integrated commitment is not appropriate for your college or university at this time, it is possible to sign either a carbon commitment or a resilience commitment separately.

Carbon Commitment:

1) Develop a Climate Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality *

- a. Within two months of signing this document, create internal institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the Plan
- b. Within one year of the implementation start date, complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and identify near term opportunities for greenhouse gas reduction. Report these in the first annual evaluation of progress
- c. Within two years of the implementation start date complete the Plan, which will include:
 - A target date for achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible
 - Interim target dates for meeting milestones that will lead to carbon neutrality**
 - Mechanisms and indicators for tracking progress
 - Actions to make carbon neutrality a part of the curriculum and other educational experiences for all students
 - Actions to expand research in carbon neutrality
- d. Review, revise if necessary, and resubmit the climate action plan not less frequently than every five years

2) Submit an annual evaluation of progress

- a. Within one year of the implementation start date, and every year thereafter, complete an annual evaluation of progress
- b. Make the action plan, annual evaluation of progress (including greenhouse gas inventory), publicly available by submitting them to the Second Nature Reporting System for posting and dissemination

* The plan may be designed to augment an existing sustainability plan, written as part of a new sustainability plan, or as a standalone plan. An online Guide is available that provides information on successful institutional structures, helpful templates on climate action plans, useful indicators of progress, guidance for reporting and much more.

** Assistance for developing interim milestones and a number of quick start actions are available online and are regularly updated

Resilience Commitment:

1) Develop a Climate Action Plan to increase resilience *

- a. Within two months of signing this document, create internal institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the Plan
- b. Within one year of the implementation start date, actively support a joint campus-community task force (or equivalent) to ensure alignment of the Plan with community goals and to facilitate joint action, and submit the first annual evaluation of progress
- c. Within two years of the implementation start date, lead and complete an initial campus-community resilience assessment including initial indicators and current vulnerability
- d. Within three years of the implementation start date complete the Plan, (also reflecting joint community-campus components), which will include:
 - A target date by which defined thresholds of resilience will be met
 - Interim target dates for meeting milestones that will lead to increasing resilience**
 - Mechanisms and indicators for tracking progress (including those that cut across campus-community boundaries)
 - Actions to make resilience a part of the curriculum and other educational experiences for all students
 - Actions to expand research in resilience
- e. Review, revise if necessary, and resubmit the climate action plan not less frequently than every five years

2) Submit an annual evaluation of progress

- a. Within one year of the implementation start, and every year thereafter, complete an annual evaluation of progress
- b. Make the action plan and annual evaluation of progress publicly available by submitting them to the Second Nature Reporting System for posting and dissemination

* The plan may be designed to augment an existing sustainability plan, written as part of a new sustainability plan, or as a standalone plan. An online Guide is available that provides information on successful institutional structures, helpful templates on climate action plans, useful indicators of progress, guidance for reporting and much more.

** Assistance for developing interim milestones and a number of quick start actions are available online and are regularly updated