



Implementation Guide

Information and Resources for Participating Institutions

September 2007 v1.0



AMERICAN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENTS CLIMATE COMMITMENT



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Implementation Guide is the "handbook" for implementation of the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). It was developed to more fully define the specific obligations represented in the Commitment, explain technical issues related to implementation, and set out the conditions to be considered in "good standing" within the ACUPCC. It is intended for use at several levels, including presidents and other senior administrators, sustainability committees and directors, and ACUPCC implementation liaisons.

Presidents signing the Commitment are pledging their institution to eliminate its contribution to global warming over time. This includes establishing an institutional structure to oversee the development and implementation of the school's program; completing an emissions inventory within a year and annually thereafter, establishing a climate neutrality action plan, taking some immediate steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, integrating sustainability into the curriculum and making their climate action plan, inventory and progress reports publicly available.

Presidents and Chancellors sign the commitment on behalf of their institutions. Those joining before December 2007 may also join the Leadership Circle and help lead and promote it. The Commitment is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of 15-20 volunteers from the Leadership Circle. Signatories, Leadership Circle Members and the Steering Committee are listed on the Commitment website: www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org.

Implementation of the Commitment is based on a school's implementation start date. For all Charter Signatories (those who before September 15, 2007), the implementation start date is September 15, 2007. For new signatories who join after September 15, 2007, there are three annual implementation start dates: September 15, January 15, and May 15. When an institution signs the Commitment, implementation begins on the next start date.

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMITMENT

Establish an Institutional Structure: After signing, the first step in the ACUPCC is to, within two months of the implementation start date, establish a committee or institutional structure to guide the development and implementation of the school's plan. This must include faculty, staff and students.

Measure Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Within one year of their implementation start date and annually thereafter, participating colleges and universities must complete an inventory and publicly report on their greenhouse gas emissions using established protocols outlined in this document.



Tangible Actions: Within two months of their implementation start date, signatories agree to select two or more tangible actions, from a list of seven options, to be completed while their long-term climate action plan is being developed (within two years). This Guide provides details on meeting this portion of the Commitment and provides examples of schools taking each of these actions.

Climate Action Plan: Within two years of their implementation start date, signatories agree to develop a climate action plan that includes a target date and interim milestones for achieving climate neutrality. Climate neutrality is defined as having no net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, within a minimum scope of boundaries laid out in this Guide. This is to be achieved through such measures as conservation, renewable energy, and carbon offsets or other measures to mitigate the remaining emissions.

Reporting Requirements: Signatory institutions commit to make their institutional structure, greenhouse gas inventory, climate action plan, and progress reports publicly available by providing them to AASHE for posting and dissemination. Signatories will submit these materials through an online form on the AASHE website.

In addition to providing more detailed information on the elements of the ACUPCC, this Implementation Guide includes useful information on carbon offsets, on various administrative aspects of the Commitment, and a glossary of terms.

Information on the Commitment itself is available through the ACUPCC website, www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org. The site includes contact information for the Commitment organizers, current news and events, and an up-to-date listing of Signatories. For assistance please contact:

Technical questions on this guide or ACUPCC implementation: Julian Dautremont-Smith, Associate Director, (AASHE), julian@ashe.org, (610) 349-5994

General questions on this guide or on ACUPCC implementation: info@ashe.org, (859) 402-9272

General questions on the ACUPCC or information about joining: Michelle McKay, mmckay@secondnature.org, (617) 477-9776



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for participating in the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). Through your leadership, America's higher education community will play a determinant role in addressing climate change, one of the defining challenges of the 21st century.

This Implementation Guide is the "handbook" for implementation of the ACUPCC. At the direction of the Steering Committee, it was produced by the Supporting Organizations with input and feedback from signatories as well as the Implementation Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Guide is to more fully define the specific obligations represented in the Commitment, explain technical issues related to implementation, and set out the conditions necessary to be considered in "good standing" within the ACUPCC.¹ Specifically, this document provides guidance on:

- when implementation begins;
- forming an institutional structure;
- conducting a greenhouse gas emissions inventory;
- meeting the tangible action options;
- developing a climate action plan; and
- reporting on implementation progress.

Information on the Commitment itself is available through the ACUPCC website, www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org. The site includes contact information for the Commitment organizers, current news and events, and an up-to-date listing of Signatories. For assistance please contact:

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We strongly recommend that ACUPCC participating institutions join the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) www.AASHE.org. AASHE provides weekly newsletters, resource materials, professional development, conferences, and other support for sustainability in higher education.

¹ Participation in the ACUPCC is voluntary, and these requirements are not intended to be legally binding.



OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITMENT

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 and to accelerate the research and educational efforts of higher education to equip society to re-stabilize the earth's climate.

Building on the growing momentum for leadership and action on climate change, the ACUPCC provides a framework and support for America's colleges and universities to go climate neutral. The Commitment recognizes the unique responsibility that institutions of higher education have as role models for their communities and in training the people who will develop the social, economic and technological solutions to reverse global warming.

Presidents signing the Commitment are pledging their institution to eliminate its contribution to global warming over time. This involves:

- establishing an **institutional structure** to oversee the development and implementation of the schools program to comply with the ACUPCC.
- completing an **emissions inventory** within a year;
- within two years, establish a **climate neutrality action plan** and set a target date and interim milestones for becoming climate neutral;
- taking **immediate steps** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by choosing from a list of tangible action options;
- integrating sustainability into the **curriculum** and making it part of the educational experience; and
- making their climate action plan, inventory and progress reports publicly available.

The college and university presidents and chancellors who are joining and leading the Commitment believe that, in addition to social and environmental benefits for their communities and society at large, exerting 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.

The full text of the Commitment can be found in Appendix A and on the ACUPCC website: www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org



WHO'S WHO IN THE ACUPCC

Signatory

Any president or chancellor who signs the Commitment is a Signatory.

Charter Signatory

Presidents and chancellors who signed the Commitment on or before September 15, 2007 are Charter Signatories.

Leadership Circle

The Leadership Circle is comprised of Signatories who have agreed to help lead the initiative, promote it, and recruit colleagues to join. Any interested signatory may join the Leadership Circle through December 2007.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the chief governing body of the ACUPCC. It is responsible for guidance, policy and direction of the ACUPCC. It is comprised of 15-20 volunteers from the Leadership Circle whose institutions reflect the diversity of higher education. The members of the Steering Committee are listed on the ACUPCC website.

Supporting Organizations

Under the guidance and direction of the Steering Committee, the supporting organizations work to support the ACUPCC in a variety of ways, including recruiting new signatories, helping signatories implement the Commitment, promoting the ACUPCC in the media, and fundraising. The three supporting organizations are: the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), Second Nature, and ecoAmerica.

Implementation Advisory Committee

The Implementation Advisory Committee is made up of 20-25 faculty, practitioners, and other experts who have experience working with climate change and sustainability issues on campus and beyond. The Committee provides guidance about resources campuses will need to support them in implementing the ACUPCC and helps shape implementation strategies, policies and resources.

ACUPCC Support Network

The ACUPCC Support Network refers to all the partner and supportive organizations, including the member associations of the Higher Education Association Sustainability Consortium (HEASC), the US Green Building Council, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the American Council on Renewable Energy. These groups provide technical and administrative support where appropriate, and generally promote the ACUPCC.



IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULES

To facilitate reporting and enhance possibilities for coordination and collaboration, the implementation start date for all **Charter Signatories** (those that signed the ACUPCC prior to September 15, 2007) is September 15, 2007. This means that Charter Signatories must:

- Create or designate institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of a comprehensive climate action plan by November 15, 2007 (i.e. within two months);
- Select at least two of the tangible actions from the Commitment by November 15, 2007 (within two months), and implement them by November 15, 2009 (within two years);
- Complete a greenhouse gas inventory by September 15, 2008 (i.e. within one year);
- Develop a climate action plan and initiate two or more of the seven tangible actions described in the Commitment by September 15, 2009 (i.e. within two years).

The implementation start date **for institutions that sign the ACUPCC after September 15, 2007** will be on the next of three possible implementation start dates throughout the year: January 15, May 15, and September 15. For example, the implementation start date for an institution that signs the ACUPCC in February 2008 would be May 15, 2008.

ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES

The ACUPCC is intended to cover all organizational units of signatory institutions, including multiple campuses. Signatories should refer to the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard](#) or the [California Climate Action Registry's General Reporting Protocol](#) for guidance on whether and how to account for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from operations or facilities in which signatories have a partial ownership share or working interest, hold an operating license, lease, or otherwise represent joint ventures or partnerships of some kind (both incorporated and unincorporated).

When participation in the ACUPCC by one or more organizational units – such as a specialized research facility – would present a unique and unduly burdensome challenge, signatory campuses may choose to exclude these units. The rationale for excluding such units should be provided in all reporting related to the ACUPCC.



INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment signatories agree to create "institutional structures" to guide the development and implementation of a comprehensive climate action plan. These structures are to be created within two months of the signatory's implementation start date. The institutional structure could take the form of a committee, taskforce, council or other body that is appointed specifically for the purpose of implementing the terms of the ACUPCC, or a pre-existing body (such as a sustainability council) that is given responsibility for ACUPCC implementation.

The structure should be empowered with the authority necessary to implement the Commitment, and should include high-level participants who have the ability to enact elements of the plan. Further, because achieving climate neutrality will require support from all sectors of campus, these structures should, at a minimum, include staff, faculty, student, and administrator representatives. Signatories may also choose to include trustees, alumni, local government officials, or other members of the community as participants in the process. The institutional structure should have a chair or other designated person who serves as the implementation liaison, the primary contact person on ACUPCC matters.

Beyond this broad outline, the exact form and composition of the structure is left to the discretion of the signatory institutions.



GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY

American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment signatories agree to complete a comprehensive inventory of all GHG emissions within one year after their implementation start date. This section provides guidance for conducting a GHG emissions inventory.

To enable comparability and consistency in reporting, signatories would ideally use the same methodology to calculate their emissions. However, the establishment of standards for ACUPCC GHG inventories is complicated by the fact that signatories are already using a variety of tools and methodologies to track their emissions, and in some cases they are enrolled in programs – such as the California Climate Action Registry or the Chicago Climate Exchange – that require emissions be calculated in specific ways.

In light of this, signatories may use any methodology and/or calculator that is consistent with the standards of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol) of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the World Resources Institute (WRI). The GHG Protocol is the most widely-used international accounting tool for quantifying GHG emissions and it provides the accounting framework for nearly every GHG standard and program in the world, including the Chicago Climate Exchange and the California Climate Action Registry. Clean Air Cool Planet's (CACP) Campus Carbon Calculator is also consistent with GHG Protocol standards.

For signatories not already participating in another GHG inventorying program, the CACP calculator is recommended because it was designed specifically for campuses and is the most commonly used tool for campus inventories.

Signatories must report on the emissions calculator they used, as well as the source of the emissions coefficients they used.

TEMPORAL BOUNDARIES

Before beginning an institutional GHG emissions inventory, signatories must determine the time period over which they wish to evaluate their emissions. To allow for comparability and aggregation of data, signatories are to calculate and report their emissions over periods of one year, as is standard practice. To simplify the data collection process, signatories may calculate their emissions according to their fiscal or academic year, rather than by calendar year. Whichever time period a signatory chooses, it should use the same time period consistently.

To aid the climate neutral planning process, signatories will need to understand their emissions trajectory over time. Therefore, signatories should endeavor to calculate, to the extent practical, their emissions from years prior to participation in the ACUPCC. Each signatory can decide for itself how far back it needs to track its emissions in order to understand its emissions trajectory. For guidance in tracking emissions over time, and specifically how to deal with structural changes such as acquisitions and divestments, signatories should consult Chapter 5 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard.



OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES

Consistent with GHG Protocol standards, signatories are expected to track and report emissions of the six greenhouse gases covered under the Kyoto Protocol:² carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆). The main focus should be on CO₂ since emissions of PFCs or SF₆ are unlikely to originate on campus, and emissions of CH₄, N₂O, and HFCs are likely to represent only a small percentage of an institution's total emissions.

Global Warming Potentials

Signatories are expected to calculate the emissions of each gas separately, and aggregate them into units of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-e) on the basis of each gas' global warming potential (GWP)³. While each of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Reports contains updated global warming potentials for the six Kyoto gases, international convention and many GHG programs including the California Climate Action Registry continue to use the GWPs contained in the IPCC's Second Assessment Report for consistency. For purposes of the ACUPCC, signatories may choose to use GWPs from the Second Assessment Report, or the most up-to-date GWPs from the IPCC. All GWPs should be over a 100 year time horizon.

Scopes

To help delineate direct and indirect emission sources, improve transparency, facilitate fair comparisons, and provide utility for different types of organizations and different climate policies and goals, the GHG Protocol defines three "scopes" for GHG accounting and reporting purposes.

Scope 1 refers to direct GHG emissions occurring from sources that are owned or controlled by the institution, including: on-campus stationary combustion of fossil fuels; mobile combustion of fossil fuels by institution owned/controlled vehicles; and "fugitive" emissions. Fugitive emissions result from intentional or unintentional releases of GHGs, including the leakage of HFCs from refrigeration and air conditioning equipment as well as the release of CH₄ from institution-owned farm animals. Scope 2 refers to indirect emissions generated in the production of electricity consumed by the institution. Scope 3 refers to all other indirect emissions - those that are a consequence of the activities of the institution, but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the institution.

Consistent with the GHG Protocol standards, ACUPCC signatories agree to account for and report on emissions from Scopes 1 and 2. In addition, as specified in the Commitment, signatories agree to report some Scope 3 emissions, specifically those from commuting and from air travel paid for by or through the institution, to the extent that data are available. For purposes of the Commitment, commuting is defined as travel to and from campus on a day to day basis by students, faculty, and staff. It does not include student travel to and from campus at the beginning and end of term or during break periods.

² The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is an international agreement ratified by over 170 countries that set targets and timetables for cutting the greenhouse gas emissions of industrialized countries.

³ Global warming potential refers to the total contribution to global warming over a certain time horizon resulting from the emission of one unit of gas relative to one unit of carbon dioxide. For example, if methane has a global warming potential of 21 over a 100 year time horizon, it means that over a period of 100 years, 1 lb. of methane has the same impact on climate change as 21 lbs. of carbon dioxide and thus 1 lb. of methane would count as 21 lbs. of carbon dioxide equivalent.



Emissions from commuting and from air travel paid for by or through the institution are the only Scope 3 emissions sources that signatories are required to report on. However, signatories are strongly encouraged, to the extent practical, to investigate and report on additional Scope 3 emissions, especially those from sources that are large and can be meaningfully influenced by the institution. Other Scope 3 emissions sources that signatories may choose to include in their inventory include, but are not limited to: waste disposal; embodied emissions from extraction, production, and transportation of purchased goods; outsourced activities; contractor owned-vehicles; and line loss from electricity transmission and distribution.

Institution-owned Forests

Institutions that own large tracts of forestland may include carbon sequestered by the forested area in their GHG inventory. Institutions interested in doing so should follow the GHG Protocol's Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry Guidance for GHG Project Accounting, which provides guidance to ensure that reductions from forest lands are real, lasting, and "additional."

Small Emissions Sources (De Minimis Emissions)

Signatories are encouraged to track and report their emissions to the fullest extent practical. However, consistent with the rules for participation in the Chicago Climate Exchange and the California Climate Action Registry, participants may designate small emissions sources that are difficult to track as *de minimis* and exclude them from the inventory, provided that the emissions sources collectively comprise less than 5% of the institution's total GHG emissions. Institutions declaring certain emissions sources as *de minimis* should use rough, upper-bound estimates to ensure that these emissions sources do in fact contribute less than 5% of the institution's total emissions. The estimations and assumptions used to determine *de minimis* emissions should also be described within the institution's GHG inventory.

For example, fugitive emissions of hydrofluorocarbons will likely comprise less than 5% of most institutions' total emissions, and assuming that this had been confirmed using rough upper-bound estimates, institutions could choose to exclude these emissions from their inventory. Other non-CO₂ emissions and emissions from small off-campus facilities might also be *de minimis*. For further guidance and examples on *de minimis* emissions, signatories should consult Chapter 5 of the [California Climate Action Registry General Reporting Protocol](#).

Verification/Certification

Emissions inventory verification or certification is not required of ACUPCC signatories, though they are encouraged to take steps to ensure their emissions inventory is complete and accurate. Chapter 7 of the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard](#) contains guidance on ensuring inventory quality that will be helpful in this regard. Additionally, Chapter 9 includes an overview of the key elements of a GHG verification process that will be useful to those interested in pursuing verification or certification of their emissions inventory.

Resources

- List of campus greenhouse gas emissions inventories
http://www.aashe.org/resources/ghg_inventories.php



TANGIBLE ACTIONS

The ACUPCC signatories agree to initiate two or more of seven specified tangible actions to reduce greenhouse gases while the climate action plan is being developed. The actions should be selected within two months and implemented within two years after the start date for implementation, unless otherwise specified, such as in option E on green power purchasing. This section provides explanations and examples of each of the seven options presented in the Commitment. It is acceptable to count policies and practices in place prior to signing the ACUPCC, and that remain in place while the plan is being developed, toward meeting this part of the Commitment.

It is important to note that the tangible action options are not intended to cover all possible emissions reductions opportunities. There are many important emissions reduction strategies related to onsite plant improvements, building energy efficiency upgrades and retrofits, sustainable procurement, and water conservation that are not included. The tangible action items were selected because they represent a few concrete, meaningful actions an institution can take in the short term to demonstrate its commitment to climate neutrality. Though the Commitment requires institutions to implement only two of the tangible actions within two years, they are encouraged to take as many of these actions as soon as possible because early emission reductions are important in slowing down the adverse effects of some greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and chlorofluorocarbons) that can remain in the atmosphere for several centuries.

A. GREEN BUILDING POLICY

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.

To achieve this option, signatories must adopt and implement a written policy stating the institution's intention to meet or exceed LEED Silver standards or equivalent for all new buildings and major renovations. Signatories are encouraged, but not required, to apply for LEED Silver certification from the USGBC. An internal system of evaluating all new buildings to ensure that they meet LEED Silver standards is also acceptable. The policy may include a qualifier limiting application of the policy to new buildings over 5,000 gross square feet.

To ensure that the green building policy results in more energy efficient buildings, signatories are encouraged to incorporate requirements to achieve specific energy points. For instance, in addition to requiring LEED Silver standards, the policy could also mandate the achievement of LEED points related to optimizing energy performance, advanced commissioning, and measurement and verification.

A signatory institution wishing to use an alternate green building standard may do so as long as they provide in their ACUPCC reporting a clear rationale as to why the alternate standard should be considered equivalent with LEED Silver.



Examples

Clemson University

Clemson has adopted a Sustainable Building Policy which stipulates that "all new facilities over 5,000 gross square feet and major capital renovations costing more than 50% of building replacement value shall seek to acquire a LEED Silver rating at a minimum."

http://www.clemson.edu/facilities/pdf/p&p/Sustainable_Building_Policy.pdf

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC Chapel Hill's Design and Construction Guidelines specify that "every project is expected to incorporate measures that would allow it to be certified at the [LEED] silver level," but certification is not required.

<http://www.fpc.unc.edu/DesignGuidelines.asp>

Resources

- US Green Building Council
<http://www.usgbc.org/>
- List of campus green building policies
http://www.aashe.org/resources/building_policies.php

B. ENERGY STAR PROCUREMENT POLICY

Adopt an energy-efficient appliance purchasing policy requiring purchase of ENERGY STAR certified products in all areas for which such ratings exist.

To achieve this option, signatories must adopt a written policy stating the institution's intention to purchase ENERGY STAR certified products in all areas for which such ratings exist. The policy may include a qualifier limiting application of the policy to "whenever financially possible," "when the extra cost is less than or equal to the resulting energy savings," or "wherever practical."

Examples

The University of California System (10 campuses)

UC campuses follow a system-wide Policy on Sustainable Practices which mandates that "for product categories that have ENERGY STAR® rated products available, the University will focus its procurement efforts only on products with an ENERGY STAR® rating, consistent with the needs of UC researchers."

<http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/coordrev/policy/PP032207guidelines.pdf>

Villanova University

Villanova has adopted an Energy Star Purchasing Policy which states that "Villanova University is to purchase Energy Star equipment for both single and mass purchasing actions whenever financially possible."

<http://www.finaffairs.villanova.edu/policy/procurement/energystarpolicy.pdf>



Resources

- ENERGY STAR for Higher Education
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=higher_ed.bus_highereducation
- List of campus procurement policies on purchasing energy efficient appliances
http://www.aashe.org/resources/appliance_procurement_policies.php

C. AIR TRAVEL OFFSETTING

Establish a policy of offsetting all greenhouse gas emissions generated by air travel paid for by our institution.

To achieve this option, signatories must adopt and implement a written policy stating the institution's intention to purchase carbon offsets for campus air travel. Signatories may also wish to incorporate actions to reduce their institution's air travel into this policy.

Since few campuses currently track air miles traveled, and doing so can be challenging, until a tracking system is in place, signatories may approximate their total air travel miles by dividing the total amount spent on air travel by a factor of \$0.25 per passenger air mile.⁴ Alternatively, a signatory might implement such a policy by arranging for its travel agent(s) to track and offset the campus air travel emissions.

Guidance related to carbon offset purchasing is contained in the section on offsets below. Institutions may not count green power purchases undertaken to achieve tangible action E toward meeting the requirements of this tangible action as well – that would be double counting.

Example

College of the Atlantic

COA follows a Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions Resolution (approved by the Board of Trustees) that states the College's intent "to avoid, reduce or offset all greenhouse gas emissions associated with the activities of the college," including "transportation associated with academic programs, and transportation to and from campus by students, staff and faculty, and other transportation made necessary by campus events."

<http://www.coa.edu/html/carbonnetzeroproc.htm>

D. PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Encourage use of and provide access to public transportation for all faculty, staff, students and visitors at our institution.

⁴ Huang, S. (2000). An Analysis of Air Passenger Average Trip Lengths and Fare Levels in US Domestic Markets. [Working Paper] Institute of Transportation Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=its>



To achieve this option, signatories must provide free or heavily subsidized (50% or more below retail price) public transportation passes to students, faculty and staff. Operation of a fare-free shuttle system that provides access to key parts of campus and to surrounding neighborhoods (i.e. not just between campus and remote parking lots) also meets this option. Merely encouraging faculty, staff, and students to use public transportation is not sufficient to achieve this action option.

Examples

University of Colorado at Boulder

All students, faculty, and staff at CU Boulder receive fare-free transit passes (called “Eco-passes”) allowing unlimited use of public transportation within the region. The student portion of the program is funded by a mandatory student fee approved in student elections.

<http://ucbparking.colorado.edu/AlternativeTransportation/>

Lewis & Clark College

The college provides students, faculty and staff with a fare-free shuttle system that provides access to downtown Portland as well as local neighborhoods and grocery stores.

<http://www.lclark.edu/dept/parking/shuttle.html>

E. GREEN POWER PRODUCTION OR PURCHASING

Begin purchasing or producing at least 15% of our institution’s electricity consumption from renewable sources within one year of signing the ACUPCC.

To achieve this option, signatories may install and operate one or more renewable electricity generating devices on campus; purchase renewable electricity produced off-site but directly connected to campus; purchase renewable energy credits (RECs, also known as Green Tags); or any combination thereof such that 15% of the institution's total electricity consumption is either derived directly from renewable sources or mitigated through the purchase of RECs.

On-campus installations of the following electricity sources may count towards meeting the terms of this action option: wind, solar, geothermal, low-impact hydropower, clean biomass, and bio-diesel. However, if a signatory is selling the renewable energy credits derived from such installations, the signatory may not also count the electricity from these installations toward meeting this option. Likewise, if the renewable energy generating devices installed on campus are owned and maintained by a third party, the institution must have contractual rights to the associated emissions reductions for the electricity to count towards achieving the 15%. Otherwise two parties would be claiming emissions reductions for the same electricity. Renewable energy technologies that are not used to generate electricity do not count toward achieving this option.

To count towards the 15% necessary to achieve this action option, purchased RECs must be Green-e certified or meet the Green-e standard’s technical requirements. The Green-e Renewable Energy Certification Program is the leading voluntary certification and verification program for RECs. Green-e certification ensures that RECs meet strict environmental and



consumer protection standards. Green-e certified RECs are available from a variety of nationwide retailers, and may also be available from the signatory's electric utility.

Examples

University of Minnesota, Morris (wind turbine)

UMM has installed a 1.65 MW wind turbine on its campus. The turbine produces 5.6 million kilowatt hours of power annually, more than half of the University's annual electricity use.

<http://www.morris.umn.edu/greencampus/WindsOfChange.pdf>

Butte College (solar panels)

Butte installed 1.06 MW of solar photovoltaic panels in August 2005. The panels generate 1.6 million kWh annually and reduce the college's utility bills by one third.

<http://www.renewableenergyaccess.com/rea/news/story?id=35896>

New York University (REC purchase)

In October 2006, NYU purchased 118,000,000 kWh of wind power RECs, an amount equivalent to the power that the University purchases annually from its electric utility.

<http://www.nyu.edu/public.affairs/releases/detail/1235>

Western Washington University (student-funded REC purchase)

In spring 2004, 85% of voting students supported a fee increase of up to \$19 per quarter to purchase RECs. In response to the student request, the WWU Board of Trustees approved a Renewable Energy Fee of \$1.05 per credit with a maximum of \$10.50 per quarter. The fee generates approximately \$355,000 annually, which enables the University to offset 100 percent of its electricity consumption with RECs.

http://west.wvu.edu/ucomm_news/articles/1067.asp

Resources

- Green-e (includes a list of retailers of Green-e certified renewable energy products)
<http://www.green-e.org/>
- EPA's Green Power Partnership
<http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/>
- List of campus solar electric installations
http://www.aashe.org/resources/solar_campus.php
- List of campus wind turbine installations
http://www.aashe.org/resources/wind_campus.php



F. CLIMATE-FRIENDLY INVESTING

Establish a policy or a committee that supports climate and sustainability shareholder proposals at companies where our institution's endowment is invested.

To achieve this option, signatories may adopt and implement a written policy stating the institution's intention to vote in favor of shareholder resolutions that support action to reduce GHG emissions. Alternatively, signatories may establish an advisory committee on responsible investment with student and faculty participation to review and make recommendations on climate-related shareholder resolutions at companies in which the signatory's endowment is invested. Signatories are encouraged to incorporate other climate-friendly investment strategies – such as direct shareholder engagement with major GHG emitters and positive investments in climate-friendly technologies and investment funds – into their policies and/or the charges to their advisory committees.

Examples

Stanford University

Stanford has adopted policy guidelines that instruct the endowment to vote in favor of shareholder resolutions that support action to reduce GHG emissions.

Dartmouth College

The Dartmouth Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility has consistently supported shareholder resolutions that support action to reduce GHG emissions.

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~finance/committees/acir.html>

Resources

- Sustainable Endowments Institute
<http://www.endowmentinstitute.org/>
- Responsible Endowments Coalition
<http://www.endowmentethics.org/>

G. WASTE MINIMIZATION

Participate in the Waste Minimization component of the national RecycleMania competition, and adopt 3 or more associated measures to reduce waste.

To achieve this option, signatories must participate in the Waste Minimization component of RecycleMania, a friendly competition among campuses to increase recycling and reduce waste. The competition takes place every year over a 10-week period in the spring and requires contestants to report waste generation in a user-friendly online system. The Waste Minimization component of the competition rewards the institution that produces the least amount of municipal solid waste (including both recyclables and trash) per person.



To capture the GHG reductions achieved as a result of these waste reduction activities, signatories who undertake this tangible action option are encouraged to include emissions from waste disposal in their GHG inventory.

Examples

University of Texas at Austin

UT Austin won the Waste Minimization competition in RecycleMania 2007. The University recycles almost 40% of its waste, and has a variety of programs underway to cut down on waste generation.

Resources

- Recyclemania
<http://www.recyclemaniacs.org/>
- College and University Recycling Council (CURC)
<http://www.nrc-recycle.org/curc.aspx>
- U.S. EPA WasteWise College and University Campaign
http://www.epa.gov/wastewise/targeted/colleges/cu_index.htm



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The ACUPCC signatory institutions agree to develop an institutional action plan for becoming climate neutral. This climate action plan is to be developed within two years of the implementation start date, and should include a target date as well as interim milestones for achieving climate neutrality as soon as possible. For purposes of the ACUPCC, climate neutrality is defined as having no net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to be achieved by minimizing GHG emissions as much as possible, and using carbon offsets or other measures to mitigate the remaining emissions. To achieve climate neutrality under the terms of the Commitment, all Scope 1 and 2 emissions, as well as those Scope 3 emissions from commuting and from air travel paid for by or through the institution, must be neutralized.

The plan should explain how the institution intends to achieve climate neutrality by its target date. It should also describe planned actions to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and/or other educational experience for all students as well as actions to expand research, community outreach and/or other efforts toward the achievement of GHG reductions for the institution and/or the community and society. Finally, the plan should describe mechanisms for tracking progress on goals and actions. Signatories may choose to incorporate their climate action plan into a more comprehensive sustainability plan.

GENERAL FORMAT

The climate action plan should be in the form of a brief summary report that is comprehensible by and accessible to the general public. For consistency, signatories are encouraged to include the following sections in their report (several of which are explained in greater detail below):

- *Introduction* – describes why the institution is taking this initiative and other background information.
- *Campus Emissions* – describes the institution's current emissions trajectory and sets a target date for climate neutrality. This section should include visual representations of the institution's emissions trajectory under business as usual and under the ACUPCC plan, as well as a graph illustrating the contribution to the institution's total emissions from each emission source.
- *Mitigation Strategies* – shows how the institution intends to achieve climate neutrality. This section should include sub-sections describing how the institution will neutralize emissions from each source.
- *Educational, Research, Community Outreach Efforts* – describes plans to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and/or other educational experience for all students as well as actions to expand research, community outreach and/or other efforts toward the achievement of climate neutrality; this section should include sub-sections on education, research (if appropriate), and community outreach.



- *Financing* – explains how the institution will finance the mitigation strategies and other efforts described in the rest of the plan.
- *Tracking Progress* – describes how the institution will track its progress in achieving the goals set out in the rest of the plan.

The institutional body responsible for the ACUPCC should record and compile information about the process of developing the plan. This record should include minutes from meetings, input from stakeholder groups, and a longer, more detailed report with descriptions of emissions reduction activities, plan for contingency (e.g., if interim targets are missed, or if the plan needs to be amended), and information about key actors, technologies, etc. This will allow the signatory schools to retain important institutional memory and to assess the value of steps taken in implementing the action plan.

TARGET DATE AND INTERIM TARGETS

According to the IPCC, in order to limit the global mean temperature increase over historical norms to 2-2.4 degrees Celsius (the temperature at which there is a high probability of catastrophic impacts), global emissions need to be reduced 50-85% below 2000 levels by 2050, with CO₂ emissions peaking before 2015.⁵ As institutions consider their own targets, they are encouraged to keep this broader context in mind, especially with regard to initiating emission reductions as soon as possible in order to slow down the adverse effects of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and chlorofluorocarbons) that can remain in the atmosphere for several centuries.

To aid the target-setting process, the ACUPCC institutional structure will want to develop a comprehensive list of potential measures for avoiding or reducing GHG emissions from each of the sources included in the GHG inventory. The structure can then evaluate each emissions mitigation strategy according to institution-specific criteria that the structure itself has established. Example criteria that signatories may wish to consider when evaluating mitigation options include:

1. potential to avoid or reduce GHG emissions
2. flexibility as a step towards future emissions-reduction measures
3. return on investment or financial impact
4. potential to create positive and/or negative social and environmental side-effects
5. relationship to other potential measures and opportunities for synergistic measures
6. potential to be scaled upward if successful
7. potential to involve students and faculty

Once the measures have been evaluated, they can be prioritized based on the same criteria, and early actions can be identified. In many cases, early actions can reduce costs or generate savings. To facilitate the financing of steps toward climate neutrality, signatories may wish to consider

⁵ Working Group III contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Fourth Assessment Report. "Climate Change 2007: Mitigation of Climate Change." Summary for Policymakers. Bangkok, Thailand. 30 April – 4 May 2007. <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM040507.pdf>.



establishing mechanisms to reinvest these savings in the secondary and tertiary measures that may have higher upfront costs.

Careful analysis of the emissions-reduction measures will enable signatories to envision possible courses of action and establish targets that are in line with the commitment to achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible, but that is also realistic, flexible and affordable. Chapter 11 of [the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard](#) provides additional guidance on setting targets.

Resources

- [List of existing campus global warming commitments](#)

CURRICULUM AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

This section of the climate action plan will be highly institution-specific and should take into account the institution's particular strengths. It should start by describing the institution's current educational offerings (both curricular and extra-curricular) related to climate change and sustainability. It should then set out planned actions to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and other educational experience for all students.

Example actions that institutions may wish to consider for inclusion in this section of the plan include:

- Initiation of faculty development workshops on climate change and sustainability
- Creation of new academic programs related to climate change and sustainability
- Establishment of a graduation requirement in sustainability
- Development of institution-wide incentives or programs to encourage faculty across the institution to address sustainability in their courses
- Participation in climate-related educational initiatives like [Focus the Nation](#)
- Inclusion of students on building and construction, operations, and facilities committees
- Implementation of student life educational initiatives related to climate change and sustainability, such as: peer-to-peer outreach and education efforts like "[Eco-Rep](#)" programs; sustainability pledge programs (e.g. [Graduation Pledge](#) or [Harvard Campus Sustainability Pledge](#)); First Year Experience and/or New Student Orientation sustainability sessions; sustainability themed housing; and sustainability competitions between residence halls.

This section of the plan should also explain how the implementation of the ACUPCC will be integrated into the institution's educational efforts (e.g., by having students or classes perform the campus GHG inventory), as well as how the entire campus community (including alumni) will be made aware of the institution's participation in and progress toward implementing the ACUPCC.

Because some of these educational actions can also lead to emissions reductions on campus, these efforts (as appropriate) should be integrated with the previous section.



Resources

- List of academic programs in sustainability
<http://www.aashe.org/resources/programs.php>
- ACPA - College Student Educators International website on sustainability
<http://www.myacpa.org/task-force/sustainability/>

RESEARCH

This section of the climate action plan will be highly institution-specific and may be omitted by institutions that are not engaged in significant research activities. It should start by describing the institution's current research efforts related to climate neutrality and sustainability, and should then describe planned actions to expand these efforts.

Example actions that institutions may wish to consider for inclusion this section of the plan include:

- Establishment of research fellowships or other financial support mechanisms for research related to climate change and sustainability
- Initiation of major research initiatives related to climate change and sustainability
- Provision of climate and sustainability related research opportunities for students
- Creation of research institutions or academic centers related to climate change or sustainability

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND OTHER EFFORTS

As with the previous sections, this section of the climate action plan will be highly institution-specific. It should start by describing the institution's current community outreach efforts related to climate neutrality and sustainability, as well as any other relevant activities not covered elsewhere in the plan (e.g. using endowment investments to support GHG reductions). It should then set out planned actions to expand these efforts.

Example actions that institutions may wish to consider for inclusion this section of the plan include:

- Initiation of community service or service-learning activities related to climate neutrality
- Development of community partnerships related to GHG reductions and sustainability
- Introduction of community education initiatives related to climate change and sustainability
- Development of programs that support faculty and staff in making personal efficiency upgrades at their residences, such as subsidized home efficiency audits.

This section of the plan should also explain how the surrounding community will be made aware of the institution's participation in and progress toward implementing the ACUPCC.

TRACKING PROGRESS

The final section of the climate action plan should describe how the institution will track its progress in achieving the goals set out in the rest of the plan. For example, signatories may wish to establish a centralized reporting system to track actions taken to reduce emissions as well as efforts



to incorporate climate neutrality and sustainability into educational, research, and community service activities. This system could also include evaluations about the cost and benefits of each project so as to help foster intra-and inter-campus learning.

Signatories are encouraged to also consider more quantitative methods of tracking progress. For example, signatories might utilize energy management and related systems to continuously monitor major emissions sources. Similarly, to measure success in making climate neutrality and sustainability part of the educational experience for all students, signatories might conduct periodic sustainability literacy surveys of students or surveys of faculty to assess the sustainability content of their courses.

MODIFYING THE PLAN

Signatories may choose to modify their climate action plans in response to changing circumstances. In such cases, the revised plan should be provided to AASHE for posting and dissemination. In addition, changes to the plan and the reasons for them should be described in reporting associated with the ACUPCC.

Signatories are encouraged to reevaluate their plans at least every other year (in conjunction with the ACUPCC reporting schedule) and make any changes necessary to keep plans relevant and up-to-date.



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

ACUPCC signatory institutions agree to make their climate action plan, inventory, and progress reports publicly available by providing them AASHE for posting and dissemination. Signatories agree to submit these materials to AASHE through an online form on the AASHE website. This will provide a common template for reporting and allowing maximum flexibility for sharing data.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

The online form will ask signatories for a variety of information about their GHG emissions and plans to reduce those emissions. In addition to basic information like institution name and contact information, the form will request three types of information:

- *Contextual* – these will be questions about contextual information that would facilitate peer comparisons, including the institution's "Basic" Carnegie Classification, its size (in both student FTE and gross square footage), and its community type (urban, rural, or suburban).
- *Emissions* – these will be questions about the institution's emissions, including boundaries, emissions calculator and coefficients used, scope 1 emissions by source, scope 2 emissions, scope 3 emissions by source, reductions due to offsets, *de minimis* emissions, and trend data.
- *Climate Action Plan Implementation* – these will be questions about the institution's progress in implementing its climate action plan, including the tangible action options the institution has decided to undertake.

REPORTING FREQUENCY

A signatory's due date for reporting is the same as the signatory's implementation start date. The following reporting deadlines apply:

- Within 2 months, signatories are committed to submitting information on the institutional structure for developing their climate action plans, including designating the institutional liaison and the two tangible actions that will be implemented before the end of year 2;
- Within 1 year, signatories are committed to reporting the results of their GHG emissions inventories;
- Within 2 years, signatories are committed to submitting their climate action plans and updated information on GHG emissions;
- Within 3 years, signatories will report both their GHG emissions and their progress in implementing their climate action plans;
- Starting in year 4, signatories will continue to report their emissions data annually and will be encouraged to submit narrative progress report annually as well, but will only be required to submit narrative progress reports every other year.



OFFSETS

The term “offset” refers to the practice of compensating for GHG emissions that cannot feasibly be avoided at a given time, by supporting projects that reduce, avoid, or sequester emissions elsewhere, *and that would not have otherwise occurred*. These projects generate offset credits, or “offsets”, that individuals or organizations purchase to compensate for their emissions. Since there is currently no well-established and widely-used certification system for carbon offsets, the Steering Committee has not adopted any specifications for types of offset products that are acceptable within the ACUPCC. As certification systems develop, the Steering Committee will consider the adoption of quality standards for offsets that count under the ACUPCC.

It is important to note that, under the Commitment, each institution sets its own target date for reaching climate neutrality so offsets need not be purchased immediately or even in the near future. If an institution were to eliminate all of its GHG emissions through other means by its target date, offsets would not be necessary at all. In general, signatories are encouraged to invest in on-campus emissions reductions before purchasing offsets, especially in the early stages when ‘low hanging fruit’ (i.e. relatively easy reductions with high returns on investment) are available.

Given the emerging nature of the carbon offset market, those institutions that choose to buy offsets are encouraged to exercise due diligence before committing to particular offset suppliers. To the extent possible, institutions should select offset suppliers that:

- are transparent about the projects where their offsets originate, and provide sufficient information about these projects to enable customers to evaluate offset quality;
- have strong, objective policies to ensure that offset projects are additional and would not have happened without the existence of the offset market;
- are transparent about their project selection processes and other internal operations;
- monitor offset projects to ensure reductions are occurring as projected;
- ensure that their offsets are “retired” after the purchase so that they cannot be traded back into the market;
- provide offsets with ancillary social and environmental benefits beyond GHG reductions;
- use third-party verification to ensure offset quality.

In addition, since most GHG emissions are also accompanied by other air pollutants, signatories may wish to give preference to offsets generated from projects within the institution's airshed. For more detailed explanations of what to look for when purchasing offsets, institutions are encouraged to read the two reports listed in the resources section.

Resources

- [Consumer's Guide to Retail Carbon Offset Providers](http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/ConsumersGuidetoCarbonOffsets.pdf)
<http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/ConsumersGuidetoCarbonOffsets.pdf>
- [Voluntary Offsets For Air-Travel Carbon Emissions Report](http://www.tufts.edu/tie/tci/pdf/TCL_Carbon_Offsets_Paper_April-2-07.pdf)
http://www.tufts.edu/tie/tci/pdf/TCL_Carbon_Offsets_Paper_April-2-07.pdf



EXTENSIONS

In the event that, despite its best efforts, a signatory is unable to meet all of the terms of the ACUPCC, the signatory may remain in good standing by submitting in writing to the Steering Committee a request for an extension. The request should describe the signatory's efforts to fulfill the terms of the ACUPCC and explain why it has been unable to do so. The request should also include a new target date for meeting the terms of the Commitment as well as a list of steps the signatory will take to achieve this target. The request should be submitted as soon as the signatory becomes aware that it will be unable to fulfill its obligations under the ACUPCC. The Steering Committee or designee will then review the request and decide whether to grant it.

NON-FULFILLMENT

Participants in the ACUPCC agree to make every effort to meet the terms of the Commitment outlined in this document. A signatory that does not meet one or more of the terms and has not received an extension through the process described above is considered to be in non-fulfillment of the ACUPCC and is not in good standing. Signatories that are not in good standing with the ACUPCC will be so noted on the website as well as in the annual reports and other materials related to the ACUPCC.

Failure to meet a target or milestone set out in a signatory's climate action plan does not in and of itself mean that a campus is in non-fulfillment of the ACUPCC. In such cases, signatories are expected to disclose the deviation from the plan in their progress reports, and describe planned steps to get back into accordance with their plan. If circumstances necessitate modifications to the targets and milestones within the plan, signatories may revise their plan according to the guidelines above.

A signatory that is in non-fulfillment of the ACUPCC may come back into good standing at any time by taking the required steps.



DEFINITION OF TERMS

Charter Signatory	A president or chancellor who signs the Commitment by September 15, 2007.
Climate Neutrality	For purposes of the ACUPCC, climate neutrality is defined as having no net GHG emissions, to be achieved by minimizing GHG emissions as much as possible, and using carbon offsets or other measures to mitigate the remaining emissions. To achieve climate neutrality under the terms of the Commitment, all Scope 1 and 2 emissions, as well as those Scope 3 emissions from commuting and from air travel paid for by or through the institution, must be neutralized.
The Commitment	The American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) generally, and more specifically the document containing the requirements and deadlines of the ACUPCC, which presidents and chancellors sign on behalf of their institutions.
Commuting	For purposes of the Commitment, commuting is defined as travel to and from campus on a day to day basis by students, faculty, and staff. It does not include student travel to and from campus at the beginning and end of term or during break periods.
<i>De Minimis</i> Emissions	GHG emissions from one or more sources, for one or more gases which, when summed, are materially insignificant. For the purposes of the ACUPCC, the <i>de minimis</i> level is less than 5% of the institution's total emissions, as is the standard.
Fugitive emissions	Emissions that are not physically controlled but result from the intentional or unintentional releases of GHGs. They commonly arise from the production, processing, transmission, storage, and use of fuels and other chemicals, often through joints, seals, packing, gaskets, etc.
GHG Emissions Inventory	A baseline quantification of GHG emissions, from which emissions reductions can be measured and progress towards climate neutrality can be tracked.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	For the purposes of the ACUPCC, GHGs are the six gases covered under the Kyoto Protocol: carbon dioxide (CO ₂); methane (CH ₄); nitrous oxide (N ₂ O); hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs); perfluorocarbons (PFCs); and sulphur hexafluoride (SF ₆).
Implementation Advisory Committee	The Implementation Advisory Committee is made up of 20-25 experts and practitioners who have experience working with emissions reduction activities on campus. The Committee provides guidance about resources campuses will need to support them in implementing the ACUPCC and helps shape implementation strategies, policies and resources.
Implementation Start Date	The date after which implementation begins and from which the implementation deadlines apply. The three possible start dates are: September 15, January 15, and May 15.
Implementation Support Network	All the partner and supportive organizations, including the member associations of the Higher Education Association Sustainability Consortium (HEASC), the US Green Building Council, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the American Council on Renewable Energy. These groups provide technical and administrative support where appropriate, and generally promote the ACUPCC.
Institutional Structures	The party or parties responsible for carrying out the obligations of the ACUPCC on campus. This could be new or existing group(s) on campuses and could be represented in the form of a committee(s), task force(s), working group(s), etc. The institutional structure will have a chairperson who is the liaison with the supporting organizations.



Leadership Circle	The Leadership Circle is comprised of signatories who have agreed to help lead the initiative, promote it, and recruit colleagues to join. Any interested signatory may join the Leadership Circle through December 2007.
Operational Boundaries	The boundary established for identifying emissions associated with the institution's operations. The process for establishing operational boundaries includes categorizing direct and indirect emissions, and choosing the scope of accounting and reporting for indirect emissions.
Organizational Boundaries	The boundary established for identifying which aspects (departments, schools, joint ventures, etc.) of the institution that it owns or controls will be included under the ACUPCC.
Scope 1	A reporting category that accounts for direct GHG emissions from sources the institution owns or controls.
Scope 2	A reporting category that accounts for indirect GHG emissions from the generation of purchased electricity consumed by equipment or operations owned or controlled by the institution.
Scope 3	A reporting category that accounts for indirect GHG emissions from all other sources that occur as a consequence of the institution's activities but are not owned or operated by the institution.
Signatory	Any president or chancellor who signs the Commitment.
Steering Committee	The governing body of the ACUPCC. It is responsible for guidance, policy and direction of the ACUPCC. It is comprised of 15-20 volunteers from the Leadership Circle whose institutions reflect the diversity of higher education.
Supporting Organizations	The three non-profit organizations responsible for facilitating the overall process and managing the day-to-day administration of the ACUPCC, at the direction of the Steering Committee. They are: the Association for the Advancement for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), Second Nature, and ecoAmerica.
Sustainability	<p>A dynamic state in which global ecological and social systems are not systematically undermined. Sustainable development is often defined as that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Ensuring that activities do not systematically undermine ecological and social systems is to ensure that the ability of future generations to meet their needs is not compromised.</p> <p>There are four basic ways ecological and social systems can be undermined (as originally articulated by The Natural Step): when natural systems are subject to systematic increases in concentrations of substances from the earth's crust (e.g. fossil fuels, heavy metals) concentrations of substances produced by society (e.g. CFCs, DDT) degradation by physical means (e.g. deforestation, overfishing) and when social systems are subject to conditions that systematically undermine people's ability to meet their needs</p> <p>Sustainability is often evaluated using the 'triple bottom line' for ecological, social, and economic health because economic considerations are such a large and central aspect of social systems, and vital to the continued operation of individual organizations.</p>
Temporal Boundaries	The time period over which GHG emissions are evaluated. In the case of the ACUPCC they are evaluated annually, either by calendar year or the institution's fiscal or academic year.



The 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:

- I. 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.

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.
- g. Participate in the Waste Minimization component of the national RecycleMania competition, and adopt 3 or more associated measures to reduce waste.

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,

*The Signatories of the American College & University
Presidents Climate Commitment*





www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org

The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment is coordinated and supported by Second Nature, ecoAmerica and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).



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