Cornell University
David J. Skorton

When I signed the Presidents Climate Commitment on February 23, 2007, I was indicating our intention to build on efforts to reduce Cornell's environmental footprint and energy consumption that had begun more than a decade earlier. Some examples include our Lake Source Cooling project, first proposed in 1994, and our more recent Combined Heat and Power Project. Combined with aggressive conservation measures, these projects have positioned us to exceed the Kyoto Protocol compliance goal for reducing carbon emissions that we adopted in 2001 at the urging of students in KyotoNOW!, despite the growth that has occurred on our campus.

My decision to sign the ACUPCC was informed by a white paper prepared by a committee of staff, faculty and students detailing Cornell's efforts to reduce its carbon emission and potential paths toward achieving climate neutrality. I was also impressed and persuaded by a petition signed by over a third of the undergraduate student body advocating Cornell's leadership in this area.

A faculty/staff working group is currently developing and assessing the technical, social, and financial steps necessary to reduce campus energy use and carbon emissions. The group has enlisted the aid of Cornell undergraduate and graduate students through class projects that have ranged from an evaluation of regional biomass capacity, to student attitude surveys, to the development of communications plans for educating the campus community about the ACUPCC. We will continue our efforts to focus student interest in climate change toward activities that will help Cornell determine and take the right steps for reaching carbon neutrality.

The ACUPCC is also accelerating Cornell's adoption of green building strategies and the construction of very low-energy-use buildings. For example, Professor Paulette Clancy, chair of the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, requested a proposed renovation plan to be redeveloped to incorporate more energy efficient lab and office space.

I am pleased with the progress that Cornell has made in its efforts to achieve climate neutrality. I look forward to engaging more faculty, staff, and students in reducing emissions from transportation, business travel, and campus energy production. ACUPCC implementation

proposals and the work of our faculty-led Center for a Sustainable Future, created in fall 2007 to enhance research and education efforts campus-wide in areas of energy, environment, and economic development, will be important to our continuing efforts.