



AMERICAN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENTS CLIMATE COMMITMENT

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Colleges and Universities Across the Country Submit Climate Action Plans

(Boston, MA) Today colleges and universities throughout the nation will announce their Climate Action Plans, representing the largest-ever segment of a societal sector to simultaneously announce concrete activities to address global warming. The plans illustrate the specific steps schools are taking to reach climate neutrality by drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions and long-term operational costs. Many schools are also outlining innovative ways that they are re-orienting their educational offerings to prepare students to meet the massive challenge of climate change upon graduation. These schools submitting Plans are early signatories to the [American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment](#) (ACUPCC), which was founded in 2007 and requires participating schools to submit the first iteration of their Climate Action Plans within two years of joining the initiative.

“That so many institutions of higher learning are simultaneously announcing their plans to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions while also preparing students to fight severe climate disruption is a powerful - and necessary - shift in the way American education does business,” said David Hales, President of the College of the Atlantic in Maine and a member of the ACUPCC Steering Committee. His school, which was the first to become carbon neutral in December 2007, submitted its Climate Action Plan to the ACUPCC reporting system web site today.

Said Cornell University President David Skorton, a signatory to the ACUPCC who has just submitted his school's [plan to be climate neutral by 2050](#), “If our core mission of learning, discovery, and engagement results in a more sustainable world, then we will have succeeded. That's why this effort is a priority for Cornell University.”

An emerging theme from today's submitted Climate Action Plans is a shift toward renewable energy sources. Ball State University will cut its carbon dioxide emissions by about 50% through the installation of a campus-wide geothermal district heating and cooling system. The University of New Hampshire will generate up to 85% of the energy used by the campus from the EcoLine™ project, a landfill methane gas-to-energy initiative. At Green Mountain College, a new heat and power biomass facility is predicted to shift 85% of current fuel oil usage to sustainable-sourced biomass.

A growing number of schools are finding that their sustainability efforts are saving them tremendous amounts of money and energy simultaneously. At Cornell, savings since 2002 from the Energy Conservation Initiative exceed \$6 million annually, with a 20% energy reduction goal for campus by 2012.

Many institutions are ensuring that all new buildings and major renovations meet the highest environmental standards. At the College of Marin, seven buildings under construction are seeking LEED certification. As part of the project, a 210 kW photovoltaic array was installed to provide approximately 50% of the power required to run one of the buildings.

The vast majority of schools submitting Climate Action Plans have already submitted their greenhouse gas inventories through the [ACUPCC online reporting system](#), a first step to determining and reducing their carbon footprint. The implementation of the Plans will require ongoing review, research, innovation, and cooperation among a wide array of campus constituents. As signatories to the ACUPCC, schools will receive support and resources to help them achieve their outlined climate objectives and will have access to a supportive network of peer institutions that can share insights into best practices.

In the coming weeks, the ACUPCC expects to receive additional Climate Action Plans from those schools that requested extensions – most due to a need for more time to make their Plans as comprehensive as possible, or to obtain approval from their boards of trustees or the larger campus community in advance of submission. Said Dave Newport, Director of the Environmental Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder, “We have completed an in-depth draft of our Climate Action Plan that we’re putting up on our web site this week. We will then seek public comment from our students, faculty, staff, and the broader Boulder community, and revise the Plan, as appropriate.” He added, “In carbon-conscious Boulder, we need to be sure we listen to everyone, and we value that input.”

“It is exciting to see how much innovative thinking has gone into these first drafts,” said Toni Nelson, Program Director of the ACUPCC. “Climate Action Plans are an important step in a long-term collective learning process that will help prepare Americans to participate in a 21st Century economy and a sustainable society.”

About the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment

Launched in 2007, the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment is a network of 650 signatory schools, representing all fifty states and the District of Columbia. This high-visibility effort to address global warming garners institutional commitments to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the research and educational efforts of higher education to equip society to re-stabilize the earth’s climate. The ACUPCC is led by a Steering Committee comprised of more than 20 university and college presidents. The lead supporting organization of the initiative is the national nonprofit [Second Nature](#), based in Boston, with additional key support provided by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education ([AASHE](#)). For more information, visit www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org.

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