



## Benefits of Joining

### **Collective action opens up new opportunities and helps to avoid “re-inventing the wheel”**

The collective voice of the ACUPCC demonstrates leadership by example, and is being heard by government, industry, and the public, prompting them to take notice that the academic community sees climate change as a critical issue. A collective initiative benefits from increased visibility and economies of scale. A critical mass of university leaders can meet with leaders in government and industry to develop joint strategies to move society toward climate neutrality and open up new avenues of funding. Already, because of the size and profile of the ACUPCC signatory group, it has been able to formalize a partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative, which will provide access to \$5 billion in low-cost financing for energy efficiency projects and to peer knowledge of performance contracting in the higher education context. This is just one early example of many exciting, innovative benefits that are emerging for the schools that join the ACUPCC.

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The ACUPCC is a milieu for networking and information-sharing between schools and across sectors, helping schools interested in scaling up significant and transformational change while allowing them to benefit from the lessons learned by their peers. Signatories benefit from information sharing, best practices, and case studies from other institutions operating within the common framework of the ACUPCC, while retaining full autonomy over their planning and decision-making due to the flexibility of that framework.

### **Leadership improves a campus’s competitive position**

Hundreds of colleges and universities are already reaping great health, economic, social and environmental benefits by implementing programs to address climate change and sustainability. Because the fight against global warming is one of the defining issues of the 21st century, colleges and universities that exert leadership will have an advantage in the quest to recruit top students, faculty and staff, to attract new sources of funding, and to maximize the support of alumni and local communities. The ACUPCC provides a venue for powerful leadership-by-example, which is widely-recognized because of the national profile of the initiative.

### **Emissions-reduction initiatives are investments that generate real fiscal savings**

Visionary presidents and chancellors see that emissions-reduction initiatives are not simply costs, they are investments in the future of the institution (in terms of capacity, reputation, lower operational costs, etc.) and society (in terms of producing the research and graduates to address the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced, and one that will determine the habitability of the planet and therefore the survival of our civilization.) The value in creating a Climate Action Plan, starting with the end goal of climate neutrality in mind, is to create a strategic framework within which to evaluate actions in order to optimize the likelihood of reaching the goal of climate neutrality.

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There are no fees associated with joining the initiative, and while the amount of investment needed to fulfill the Commitment will vary between schools and over time, there are many case-studies that demonstrate attractive return on investment for emissions-reduction activities. As

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these techniques and technologies are brought to scale through the ACUPCC, these rates of return are likely to improve.

**The ACUPCC will enhance and accelerate existing climate action and sustainability efforts**

The ACUPCC provides a community-wide framework and strategic perspective that connects existing climate action activities and inspires new ones, without which, ad hoc efforts in academics and operations may cost more and be less effective. As regulations are developed, energy costs grow more volatile, and prospective students increasingly demand education on climate issues and sustainability, the potential costs of delays and inaction are far greater than any opportunity costs associated with foresighted, proactive investments today.

The ACUPCC is concrete and effective, and at the same time flexible and feasible. It is a commitment to a climate action planning process in which institutions figure out how they will get to climate neutrality. Signatories have two years to create these plans, and complete autonomy in determining their own targets and timetables, ensuring that actions are feasible, cost-effective, and achieve real reductions over the long-term. Target dates for achieving climate neutrality will be different for each institution – fast enough to role-model the solutions needed to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and at a feasible pace that will maximize benefits while minimizing costs. Most signatories will likely develop a plan with many incremental steps, including provisions for revising the plan as circumstances change, over a 20-40 year time period.

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