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AMERICAN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS' CLIMATE COMMITMENT SIGNATORIES ANNOUNCE PROGRESS

Reports show major strides and ambitious plans by higher education institutions

Boston, MA – The American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) released its [2008 Annual Report](#), showing building momentum on comprehensive action towards clean energy and greenhouse gas pollution reductions in higher education as well as the beginning of a shift to training students and faculty to confront climate change. More than 620 schools in every state, representing nearly one third of the US student population, have signed the Commitment.

“As the national debate on climate finally moves in a positive direction after years of neglect, leaders in higher education are inspiring the rest of society to address the critical challenge of global climate disruption by reducing emissions on campus and by starting to re-orient the education of the nation’s future professionals,” said Dr. Anthony D. Cortese, President of Second Nature, one of the ACUPCC’s supporting organizations.

Exemplars of the Commitment include Foothill-DeAnza Community College District, Arizona State University and Furman University, all of which have adopted multiple initial actions and completed their emissions inventories as part of their participation in the Commitment. Foothill-DeAnza Community College District, which built the first community college LEED platinum building in the nation, established a green building policy, public transportation enhancements and has implemented green power production. Arizona State University adopted green building policies, Energy Star procurement policies, air travel offsetting, and public transportation enhancements. Furman University also adopted a green building policy and an Energy Star procurement policy. Martha J. Kanter, Chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Michael Crow, President of Arizona State University, and David Shi, President of Furman University, are co-chairs of the Presidents' Climate Commitment Steering Committee.

"The number of signatory institutions continues to grow, and these schools are reporting their actions publicly on AASHE's website. They've submitted hundreds of greenhouse gas emissions inventories; and the first climate action plans are already coming in ahead of schedule," said Judy Walton, Executive Director of the Association for the

Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), one of the three supporting organizations. She added: "Institutions are also implementing recommended near-term actions, from green building standards to energy-efficient purchasing policies. With all this data, the site with the public reports is becoming a great resource, providing a way for schools to see what their peers are doing and to learn from each other."

The higher education sector directly contributes \$320 billion to the US' GDP and produces about 42 million metric tons of annual global warming pollution. The report, available at presidentsclimatecommitment.org/annualreport, shows near-comprehensive fulfillment of Commitment responsibilities among the signatories for 2008. This includes creation of emissions inventories on schedule by the founding 265 signatories of the Commitment. These inventories reflect an average of 16,617 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually by the institutions. ACUPCC institutions aim at elimination of over 10 million metric tons of greenhouse gas pollution.

"The ACUPCC schools have set a national leadership benchmark with a goal of climate neutrality, the only sector-wide initiative in the country to do so," said Rafael Reyes, Program Director of ecoAmerica, the third supporting organization of the Commitment. "These institutions are leading the nation and the world in the development of a clean green economy that will provide sustainable economic growth, increase national security, and restore American technological leadership."

About the ACUPCC

The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment is a high-visibility effort to address global warming by garnering institutional commitments to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions, and to accelerate the research and educational efforts of higher education to equip society to re-stabilize the earth's climate.

The Commitment establishes discrete steps for participating institutions including a two-month progress report with initial "tangible actions" and GHG inventory reports after one year. The next major step is to create within two years a climate action plan for becoming climate neutral and ensuring all graduates have the knowledge and skills to help society to do the same, with regular progress reports after that. The Commitment includes public reporting of all steps to provide best practice guidance for institutions throughout the country. All emissions inventories and tangible action steps taken by Commitment signatories are available at acupcc.aashe.org.

Learn more at www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org

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