

ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS TO FULFILL THE ACUPCC

The members of the Steering Committee encourage all ACUPCC presidents and chancellors to take an active leadership role in the ongoing process of developing and implementing the climate action plan.

By signing the ACUPCC, we have made an extraordinary commitment to leading the way – into largely uncharted territory – towards overcoming one of the biggest challenges in modern history: eliminating net greenhouse gas emissions. To do this we have each agreed to create climate action plans that promote the education and research needed to generate solutions, and to role-model those solutions in our campus operations. This is a commitment not only to our stakeholders – students, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and local communities – but also to each other, to all of the ACUPCC signatories that make up this network.

We are at a critical juncture in this initiative, and the broader sustainability movement. Nearly twenty percent of the charter signatories have not yet met their commitment to publish greenhouse gas inventories and work on two tangible actions for the 9/15/08 milestone. Today we are less than five months away from the next major milestone: publishing our timetables and strategies for becoming climate neutral by 9/15/09. In order to raise the percentage of signatories meeting the 9/15/09 deadline, we need for you to reaffirm your commitment to energy independence and global sustainability. We need your help in moving this effort forward.

We are asking you to focus on three tenants to propel the ACUPCC forward:

- 1) Treat sustainability as a major transformative initiative employing all the leadership skills of a major institutional change;
- 2) Invoke the broad-based support of emotional and participative change; and
- 3) Empower a dedicated force to establish tangible metrics, milestones, and concrete results.

Active leadership on an ongoing basis from the president or chancellor is critical for ensuring the success of individual campuses – and, consequently, of the initiative as a whole. Like any other major initiative, the changes needed to focus institutional attention and resources on the climate commitment agenda will require attention to institutional change. The role of senior administrators in leading change will depend on your campus experience with large-scale efforts and what you have learned about how to launch and sustain change on a campus-wide basis.

In many cases, administrators, staff, faculty and students begin the climate action planning process with feelings of optimism and enthusiasm, but quickly feel stuck because there is no clear way for the senior administrators to directly move the process along and ensure collaboration from all of the relevant departments and groups on their campuses. As a result, feelings of frustrations, paralysis, and resentment can emerge and derail the process and be replaced with a demoralizing feeling that the task at hand is not possible.

Of course, to address these challenges, we will all continue to draw on our own proven approaches to organizational leadership, tailored to the cultures and circumstances of our institutions. However, we believe the size, scope and complexity of creating a climate action plan makes this challenge unique in many ways, and may require exploring new and different approaches as well. Unlike most other recent nationwide efforts, the climate commitment agenda requires an effective alignment of campus operations, research and education and campus-community collaboration in order to create an environment that supports the kinds of creative solution-finding needed.

The accompanying resource *“Leading Profound Change”* represents the beginning of a dialogue and exploration of effective approaches, tools and concepts for leading the kind of change needed to fulfill the ACUPCC in ways that enhance our institutions immediately and over the long-term. The paper addresses the question: *What new and different approaches can we share from our experiences to ensure success and avoid frustrations?*

We look forward to your reactions, feedback and other ideas – and we thank you for your continued active engagement in this initiative, and ongoing leadership in creating a better future.

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