

DePauw University's Journey to the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment

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With the support and coordination of students, faculty, and staff, DePauw's new President, Brian Casey, has signed on to the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (the "ACUPCC"). The signing of the PCC is a testament to how fast change can happen on a campus when a few motivated students become invested in their own campus operations, and are empowered by the university to advocate for administrative change.

We offer the following documentation of the process leading up to the signing of the ACUPCC as a summary of lessons learned about effecting institutional change. Some of these lessons are highly general and may be of value to students, faculty, or staff campaigning for the ACUPCC on other campuses. Others are no doubt specific to DePauw's particular situation – we began advocating for the ACUPCC just as our previous president announced his pending retirement and escalated it during the search for the new president. We did not, in fact, anticipate succeeding so quickly.

Part 1 consists of a timeline of ACUPCC-related efforts on DePauw's campus. Part 2 includes as appendices all documentation that played a role in these efforts.

1. Timeline of the PCC Campaign at DePauw

Spring 2007

DePauw began undertaking campus-wide sustainability efforts bridging co-curricular programs, campus operations, and the formal curriculum in the 2006-07 academic year. Following presentations by students in Jen Everett's Environmental Ethics class on their sustainability projects, President Bottoms and VPAA appointed Everett part-time Sustainability Coordinator for the 2007-08 academic year.

August 2007

President Bottoms' opening address to the incoming freshman focused on the threat of climate change and the challenge of sustainability, unofficially setting a theme that ran through major speakers and events throughout the 2007-08 academic year. Behind the scenes, President Bottoms asked Everett to prepare a memo on whether DePauw ought to sign the ACUPCC at this time, given that it was the final year of his administration. In particular, would signing the ACUPCC create new obligations that would bind the next president to priorities to which he or she would not have the opportunity to consent?

Everett's memo (Appendix A) urges President Bottoms to go ahead and sign the ACUPCC despite it being the last year of his administration, outlining the ethical arguments for why DePauw is obligated to profess its commitment to sustainability in a public fashion.

October-November 2007

Our retiring president, President Bottoms, decided not to sign during his last year. He concluded that it would be better if the new president felt ownership towards the commitment by signing on himself.

Meanwhile, the presidential search committee got to work looking for DePauw's new President. Students on campus made sure they were part of the process from the start. Twelve students wrote to the presidential search committee expressing their thoughts that DePauw's new president should value sustainability and mentioned that an expression of that value should encompass the signing of the ACUPCC.

Three letters to the Editor were written (by Anthony Baratta, Kate Wright and Missy Orr, and Tim Martin) to our school newspaper, *The DePauw*, expressing a student interest in an institutional commitment to sustainability by signing the ACUPCC. (See Appendix B)

February 2008

Students questioned university presidential candidates at a public forum held by the presidential search committee. Some questions posed were:

- Do you know what the PCC is?
- Have you heard of other Indiana signatories?
- Would you sign?

By posing these questions at the forum, students made it clear that a shift towards bold Administrative leadership on Sustainability initiatives was desired on DePauw's campus. By making these concerns known at the public forum, DePauw students made aimed to show that at least some opinions on who should be our next president would be largely influenced by which candidate seemed to show the most interest and background regarding campus sustainability.

March 2008

President Brian Casey was appointed and a student, Anthony Baratta, talked to President Casey at a student reception (to meet our new president) and mentioned sustainability initiatives and the PCC. President Casey said he'd be interested in hearing more about it and urged Anthony to email him. President Casey cites this as his first in-depth communication with a student on DePauw's campus, and we largely attribute the president's timely interest in the PCC to Anthony Baratta's keen sense to get on the new president's radar as soon as possible. Anthony emailed President Casey informing him of DePauw Environmental Club activities and Sustainability initiatives (Appendix C). He also included an email from Professor Rich Cameron outlining the ethical argument and urgency of signing on (Appendix D). This initial interaction proved to be a strong catalyst for the eventual signing of the PCC.

June-August 2008

Anthony Barrata e-mailed President Casey to invite him to meet with the student interns of the DePauw Environmental Policy Project, a project that started in the summer and devoted itself to in depth

Environmental Policy Research in preparation for the 2009 session of the Indiana General Assembly. President Casey accepted the invitation.

At this meeting, the twelve students working with sustainability discussed the major issues they had been working on, such as renewable energy policies, and answered questions from President Casey about reception from legislators, and what research results surprised them. Although the students had not intended to use this forum to argue for the ACUPCC, President Casey brought it up himself, specifically asking, "Should DePauw sign it?" Anthony Baratta responded in a measured rather than zealous tone that DePauw was at a crossroads; we have unique opportunities related to sustainability, including the LEED Gold certification of the Prindle Institute and the increasingly visible DePauw Environmental Policy Project, but this was no time to rest on past laurels. Other institutions were moving toward sustainability at a rapid pace, and if DePauw did not continue to take action by doing things like signing the President's Climate Commitment, we would be left behind.

August 2008

The DePauw student newspaper interviewed President Casey and posed questions to him concerning plans for DePauw. President Casey reiterated that he expected his administration to have a lot of impact early on, but that his main focus in his first days would be to listen. "You have to see where you are before you see where you want to go," Casey said (Appendix E). Jen Everett, Taylor Cantril, and Missy Orr responded to this call; by preparing a Sustainability Report that outlined exactly "where we are" in terms of Sustainability on DePauw's Campus.

September 11, 2008

President Casey met with four student interns and the Sustainability Interns Supervisor to discuss the role of sustainability programs in DePauw's intellectual initiatives. In advance, he was presented with a comprehensive "Sustainability Status Report" outlining the ethical arguments for a Higher Ed institution to commit to sustainability, as well as a review of all sustainability related movements on campus. This report was especially helpful in convincing President Casey to sign. The strategy of the meeting was to emphasize how sustainability epitomizes what Casey's vision and goals for DePauw already were. (See Agenda in Appendix F.) Again, although we did not intend to campaign for the ACUPCC at this meeting, President Casey announced that he was convinced that it was the right thing to do and the right time to do it.

September 15, 2008:

President Casey signs the ACUPCC and there is a press release announcing the signing and the appointment of a new half-time Sustainability Coordinator. During the press release, Casey explicitly mentions how the prompt communication from Anthony Baratta influenced his signing the PCC so soon in his administration. (See Appendix G)

September 15, 2008- present:

DePauw is already using the student newspaper as a forum for discussion on implementing the PCC. Both the sustainability interns and Professor Rich Cameron wrote letters to editor in response to an editorial titled "Quite the Commitment" in which the editors of the DePauw responded to the signing of the PCC with concerns of student involvement in decision making. The Interns responded by outlining how Casey did in fact "listen" to student voices and the Interns also encouraged more people to get involved in where DePauw goes next (See Appendix H).

We are hoping that DePauw's Sustainability Website will also play a key role in keeping everyone involved, and we plan to hold two open forums where the DePauw community can give their direct input on which goals of PCC they would like to see pursued first. With the guidance of the newly appointed half-time Sustainability Coordinator, Carol Steele, we are moving forward by holding various public forums which will shape how we conduct DePauw's Greenhouse Gas Inventory or "Carbon Footprint" as well as how we will implement a comprehensive climate action plan at DePauw. We welcome input from any faculty, students, administration, or staff on how to move forward, and are also making connections with other schools to gain wisdom and knowledge on how others have implemented the ACUPCC.

Conclusion

Some key factors in DePauw's journey to the signing of the ACUPCC may be unique to our institution. The fact that students had the opportunity to have their voices heard in the first days of a new administration was, of course, invaluable. However, we feel that many lessons in our journey can be translated to other schools. For example, a clear presentation of the ethical arguments for an institutional obligation to mitigating climate change can have a lot value in persuading a top administrator that may not have previously aligned sustainability with their own goals. DePauw's "Sustainability Status Report" also proved to be incredibly helpful not only in discussions with President Casey but also in follow-up discussions with other administrators and as a brief for anyone wanted to get involved with the implementation plan. Most influential, we believe, was the persistence of DePauw's students in having their voices heard on campus, through the newspaper, public forums, and executive meetings. We feel that all students can take away the lesson from DePauw's journey that *individuals* can make big change on their own campuses.

2. PCC Campaign Documentation

- Appendix A. 8/11/07 Memorandum from Jen Everett to President Bottoms**
- Appendix B. 11/09/07 & 11/16/07 Three Student “Letters to the Editor” regarding the ACUPCC and presidential search.**
- Appendix C. 03/08 Email from Anthony Barrata to President Casey introducing him to the ACUPCC.**
- Appendix D. 03/08 Email from Professor Rich Cameron outlining the ethical argument for signing the ACUPCC.**
- Appendix E. 08/23/08 “Casey seeks input after taking office”- Article in The DePauw.**
- Appendix F. 09/11/08 Agenda for Sustainability meeting with President Casey.**
- Appendix G. 09/15/08 Press Release announcing President Casey’s signing of the ACUPCC.**
- Appendix H. 09/17/08 & 09/19/08 “Quite the Commitment” - article in The DePauw and two responding “Letters to the Editor”.**

[appendices available upon request from tbriery@depauw.edu]

Appendix A

MEMORANDUM

TO: President Bottoms
FROM: Jen Everett
DATE: August 11, 2007
RE: American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment: Should DePauw Sign (Now)?

My considered opinion is that you should sign on to the Presidents Climate Commitment despite this being the final year of your administration. For reasons explained more fully below, I do not think you need worry overmuch about binding the next president – either to big expenses or to particular projects: The commitment is both flexible and economically prudent. But I want to begin by emphasizing some broader contextual issues about the relationship between our institutional mission, ethics, and the economic bottom line. Afterwards, I address concerns about the financial implications of the commitment, independent of the issue of transitioning leadership. In the final section I discuss in more detail the sorts of constraints that would and would not be placed on the incoming president by the commitment.

Re: The Economic Costs of Institutional Values.

Given the science few would deny that, other things equal, it would be *ethically* preferable for DePauw to become carbon neutral – to cease being a net contributor to global warming. After all, the consequences of global climate change will become increasingly dire in the course of our students' lifetimes and will impose the most serious damage on those who both have done the least to cause it and are least equipped to respond to it. Moreover, since global warming may well reshape life as we know it within the next generation, DePauw's core *educational* mission of preparing students for lives of leadership and citizenship in the 21st century clearly calls on us to prepare them to face this challenge squarely. Involving students in the endeavor to make our own institutional operations climate neutral is win-win from the point of view of our core ethical and academic values.¹

It is often thought, however, that a university's environmental initiatives must first be justified in terms of the economic bottom line – that such practices are luxuries that institutions can afford to indulge only to the extent that they demand no net budgetary sacrifice. The flip side of such a position is that fiscal security should be guarded whether or not it demands an environmental sacrifice.

This perspective does not dominate our decision making in all areas, however. We do not first ask whether it is cost effective to diversify the faculty before deciding whether this is something we should do. We don't ask whether internationalizing our curriculum gives better return on investment than leaving it alone. In short, it isn't the bottom line that decides what our goals should be; rather, we decide what our goals should be on the basis of our institutional mission and values and then seek cost effective ways of achieving them.

Although signing the President's Climate Commitment is in fact likely to be in DePauw's long term economic self interest, we should generally resist structuring the discussion as though this is the deciding factor in its favor. Instead, our environmental commitments should be understood and framed on a par with other cost-intensive commitments to important ends that the University has made. Just as we have been willing to spend against the bottom line in pursuit of our ideals when it comes to diversity or faculty development or internationalization and so on (when we could surely save money in the short term by compromising on these ideals), so too we have reason to do so with respect to our environmental practices. In short, *even if* becoming carbon neutrality would constitute a net economic expense to DePauw (though it probably won't), this would be no more decisive argument against it than the expense of building the Prindle Institute would have been decisive against it.

Carbon Neutrality and the Bottom Line

But of course economics does matter and needs to be addressed. What's essential in thinking about the more narrowly economic implications of sustainability (as, indeed, with anything we do) is taking a systems perspective – that is, considering long range as well as short term financial implications of present decisions, and accounting for interconnections between different budget areas. Higher up-front capital costs for energy efficient construction must be compared along-side lower (often radically lower) middle- and longer-term operating costs, for example. Different choices regarding lighting,

¹ See AAC&U sources on education for citizenship via curricular service-learning and academic/co-curricular integration.

space design, and materials toxicity will have different financial implications for workplace efficiency and health care expenses.

There is a significant body of literature² supporting the conclusion that, by mainstream economic measures, most types of steps DePauw could take in order to reduce its own carbon footprint (e.g., green building, electrical co-generation, energy efficiency, etc.) are actually cost-saving in the medium and/or long term, particularly if sustainability is a priority in early stages of project development.³

Moreover, there are considerable implications of sustainability initiatives for the university's "intangible" assets – e.g., reputation, recruiting, alumni relations, fundraising potential – toward all of which, of course, we readily make tangible financial commitments. Given the social trend toward sustainability right now, a PR gain seems likely if we sign the commitment; there may even be a PR risk in being seen as "dragging our feet."⁴ As you know, there is a world of difference in the symbolic significance of energy conservation strategies pursued behind the scenes versus the very same strategies following upon a public commitment. In terms of these intangible implications, it seems to me that your signing the President's Climate Commitment would follow quite nicely on the dedication of the Prindle Institute – a further expression of DePauw's leadership as a place where our ethics are reflected not just in academic discussions but also in our actions on the ground.

In short, over the *long term*, the next president will likely reap a positive economic return on any investments in sustainability called for under the Presidents Climate Commitment.

But will he or she be compelled to incur even *short-term* costs of much significance? *No*. As described below, the terms of the commitment are broad and flexible enough to permit a very slow and conservative approach to achieving climate neutrality if the next president should decide this was the prudent course. Signing this year is actually good timing to allow the next president to take the lead in shaping DePauw's sustainability course – and its attendant costs.

Constraints on the Incoming President

If Dr. Bottoms signs the Presidents Climate Commitment, DePauw will be committed to taking real steps in pursuit of carbon neutrality. Below I summarize these steps and comment on both the costs and obligations they impose on the new president.

1. Within 2 months of signing: "**create institutional structures** to guide the development and implementation" of "a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible."

Note: This is a matter of designating responsible parties. We could fulfill this obligation by establishing an office or committee whose charge is to develop and implement a climate neutrality plan; assigning this charge to an existing office; and/or hiring new staff or consultants to carry out this charge.

2. Within one year of signing: "**Complete a comprehensive inventory** of all greenhouse gas emissions" (to be repeated every two years)

*Note: The accounting tools for such an inventory have already been created and employed on many campuses. If we didn't want to simply assign this project to existing staff, we could use students – through class projects or as hired interns – to carry out the research. We could even outsource the project – there are companies who perform precisely this service for universities and businesses.*⁵

3. Within two years of signing (i.e., by the end of the new president's first year):

- a. "**Develop an institutional action plan** for becoming climate neutral" – including a target date; interim goals; specific actions plans, including curricular elements; and a monitoring mechanism.

² See, e.g., [Green Investment, Green Return](#) (Eagan, David J. and Julian Keniry, National Wildlife Federation, 1998); [The Hidden Economics of Campus Sustainability](#) (Morris, John P., "Facilities Manager," May/June 2005); [The Payoffs of Planet-Friendly Initiatives](#) (Newport, Dave and Larry Litten, "Business Officer," June 2005).

³ We could also "achieve" carbon neutrality simply by purchasing renewable energy credits, without changing our institutional practices at all. This would indeed be an expensive path.

⁴ As Neal has likely mentioned, the conversations concerning sustainability at last year's meeting of Advisory Boards for the Media, Management, and Science Research Fellows programs overwhelmingly carried a tone of 'why isn't DePauw doing more?' My small breakout group specifically supported your signing the Presidents Climate Commitment – with no encouragement from me.

⁵ E.g., Good Company (www.goodcompany.com), Clear Carbon Consulting (www.clearcarbonconsulting.com), Native Energy (www.nativeenergy.com/organizations.html), and others.

Note: Primary expense for plan development would come from employee time investment (or service fees if outsourced).

b. **“Initiate two or more actions:”**

- i. **Establish a green building policy** that all new campus construction will be built to LEED Silver standard or equivalent.
Note: Cost-free in short term if there are no new construction projects on the new president’s plate; possible modest premium up-front on new projects, but cost-saving over long term.
- ii. **Adopt an energy-efficient appliance purchasing policy** requiring purchase of ENERGY STAR certified products in all areas for which such ratings exist.
Note: Effectively cost-free in short term, cost-saving over long term.
- iii. Establish a policy of **offsetting greenhouse gas emissions from air travel**.
Note: Surprisingly inexpensive – usually less than \$25 per round-trip domestic flight.
- iv. Encourage and provide access to **public transportation** for all faculty, staff, students and visitors at our institution.
Note: Harder for us, though setting up car-pooling system would be effectively cost-free to DePauw.
- v. Within one year of signing this document, begin purchasing or producing at least **15% of our electricity from renewable sources**.
Note: Production (e.g., wind turbine) would be expensive in the short term, cost-saving over long term. Purchasing electricity from renewable sources would probably be less expensive in the short term (depending on our options with Duke), but not cost-saving in the long run.
- vi. Establish a **sustainable endowment policy or committee**.
Note: Implications for our endowment could be positive or negative, but it would be effectively cost-free in the short run to establish such a policy or committee. Janet Prindle would be an excellent resource in this regard no doubt.
- vii. **Participate in the national RecycleMania competition**, and adopt 3 or more associated measures to reduce waste.
Note: Very low-cost student-run activity; waste reduction measures would be inexpensive up front and potentially cost-saving in the long run.

4. Make the action plan, inventory, and periodic progress reports publicly available through AASHE.

Thus, while the commitment is designed to encourage publicity and accountability, there is considerable flexibility in choosing our path to climate neutrality, with up-front costs that would range from trivial to highly significant, depending on what choices are made.

For example, while signing the commitment would indeed commit us to undertaking a particular project with real financial implications within the first year of the new president’s administration (i.e., committing the human resources necessary to develop a carbon neutrality plan or to conduct a carbon inventory, depending on when we sign), we will not be locked into any major new expenditures, and the new president would have complete discretion as to whether the two other measures undertaken in that year should or should not be ones with significant costs.

Moreover, while DePauw *will be committed to creating a real plan* for achieving carbon neutrality *and to transparency* with regard to our progress on the plan, the *timeline and path toward this goal are wide open*. The new president will get to decide whether to shoot for climate neutrality in 5 years, 50 years, or longer. Finally, there is no sanction mechanism for falling short of our goals; only the promise to be honest about it. So the only “teeth” to the commitment are found in our own commitment to having integrity and to being known for it – and we all expect these are things the next president will embrace.

Appendix B

11/09/07

Anthony Baratta's:

"Next DePauw president must commit to Presidents Climate Commitment

The Presidential Search Committee will hold its first formal interviews Nov. 17 and 18 to find the next president of DePauw. I urge the committee to select a candidate that will sign the Presidents Climate Commitment and take the lead among colleges and universities to reduce the effects of global warming.

The Presidents Climate Commitment is a public document that states the problems of global warming and what steps of action colleges and universities will take to reduce it. DePauw would not be committing a specific amount of funds but would set dates by which actions would be taken. Section 1b of the agreement states that within one year of signing, the university will "complete a comprehensive inventory of all greenhouse gas emissions (including emissions from electricity, heating, commuting, and air travel) and update the inventory every other year thereafter." An assessment and further steps are essential for becoming climate neutral and working toward sustainability.

I was proud to be a student at DePauw when I attended the DePauw Discourse and became educated about global warming. I was proud to be a student at DePauw when I saw how much progress President Bottoms has made through the recycling program and use of green products. The Presidents Climate Commitment is the next step.

Students can e-mail presidentsearch@depauw.edu with their opinions to ensure DePauw's name is added to the 427 signatories of The Presidents Climate Commitment.

Anthony Baratta, freshman"

Kate and Missy!'s :

11/16/07

"University should go more green

There is a movement gaining power among universities that challenges higher education to uphold civic and ethical responsibilities in the face of increased global warming by working towards climate neutrality. This means reducing carbon emissions and offsetting pollution with environmental initiatives. The movement is the Presidents Climate Commitment, which to date has been signed by 427 university presidents who have pledged to enact sustainable measures on campus.

We were excited to hear that Webster University in St. Louis recently signed the commitment. The American Lung Association ranks St. Louis as one of the top 20 cities with the highest levels of pollution. If Webster is tackling the problems of one of the most polluted cities in the nation, there is little reason why a college that is committing an entire year to issues of sustainability and environmental concern shouldn't commit itself likewise to climate neutrality.

Implementing the Presidents Climate Commitment at DePauw would mean making changes that have a big impact on our campus and community. It would mean more community bikes so students won't have to waste gas driving to class or to Kroger. It would mean Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified buildings and Energy Star appliances to reduce emissions. It would mean changing the DePauw fleet to hybrid vehicles. It would mean switching from coal power to a renewable resource. Ultimately, it would mean a healthier, greener, more ethical campus - something which every university worldwide ought to work toward.

The Presidential Search Committee needs to take these issues into consideration when choosing the next president of our university. Please e-mail presidentsearch@depauw.edu and voice your opinion on the importance of choosing a president who will take action on making our campus greener and sign the Presidents Climate Commitment.

Kate Wright, freshman

Missy! Orr, junior"

11/09/07

Excerpt from Tim Martin's letter:

(Martin compared the two potential candidates on Sustainability)

"...Fischer was more familiar with the Presidents Climate Commitment, which pledges a university toward the goal of carbon neutrality. Though noncommittal, he seemed interested in signing it (Trinity has signed it; Harvard hasn't). He also suggested replicating Trinity's model of a sustainability committee at DePauw. In regards to bringing more local, organic food to campus, Fischer said it would be a great way to build town-gown relations.

Climate change and its many interconnected issues will continue to be defining points of international crisis within the president's new term: his response to these issues will define his presidency. The future president must advocate institutional commitments to sustainable initiatives."

Appendix C

“President Casey,

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> Thank you so much for the excitement and creativity that you brought to
> campus during the interview process. Thank you also for taking an
> interest in the President's Climate Commitment and for directly asking,
> "Do you think this is the right thing to do?"

>

> I apologize for the amount of time it took to for me to e-mail you the
> answer to this question, but a lot of hard work and research was needed.
> I have attached a letter to you from members of Environmental Club and
> one of our advisors, Rich Cameron, containing "everything we know about
> this issue," as you requested, as well as specific recommendations.

>

> One thing that I would like to add is all of the exciting events that
> are already happening at DePauw regarding sustainability. Administrators
> at DePauw, specifically Steve Santo at DePauw Dining Services and Ted
> Fares at Physical Plant, are well ahead of the student body in terms of
> wanting to save energy and cut emissions at DePauw, so we have made it
> our job to educate DePauw students about what they can do to get on
> board. Several examples of projects that we are working on are include:

>

> * "Energy Wars," April 1-May 1. This contest will track each of
> the four dorms' weekly electricity output, water output, and amount of
> recycling. DePauw's electricity/heating/cooling costs increased by
> approximately \$182,000 dollars in the last academic year alone. We can
> help cut costs by getting students to unplug appliances that aren't
> being used, turning off lights, taking shorter showers, etc. If this
> program succeeds we would like to expand it to all of the dorms at the
> start of the 2008-2009 academic year.

>

> * Working with DePauw Dining Services to promote
> reductions/elimination of styrofoam. Obviously DePauw saves money by
> using already purchased glass plates rather than purchasing and throwing
> away styrofoam all the time. By getting students to request glass plates
> instead of styrofoam, costs will be saved.

>

> *Legislative action. In January, Lindi Connover and I testified
> for two bills in the House Committee of Environmental Affairs at the
> Indiana House of Representatives. When the two bills were moved to the
> Senate Committee, DePauw Environmental Club worked with DePauw students
> to send 120 letters to various state senators.

>

> *Getting members of the Greek community involved. Without the
> Greek Houses participation, carbon reduction cannot happen at DePauw.
> Environmental Club has worked to become more mainstream and involve
> members of every Greek House. Last semester we averaged around 5 members
> per meeting, but this semester we have had as many as 25.

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> *Working on the Presidents Climate Commitment. Currently I am at
> a student activism conference in Boston and just came from a workshop
> entitled, "The Path to Carbon Neutrality for College Campuses." It is
> amazing how many carbon reductions can be made that are smart business
> decisions as well! The members of DePauw Environmental Club have a
> wealth of information on this subject and, although there is still much
> to learn, would be happy to work with you and the administration on
> making a comprehensive plan once the Commitment was signed.

>

> Our newspaper, The DePauw, actually ran an article on the incredible
> amount of momentum DePauw has for sustainability on Friday, March 7th.
> Here is a link to the article:
> <http://media.www.thedepauw.com/media/storage/paper912/news/2008/03/07/News/Sustainability.At.Depauw.Whats.In.Store-3259252.shtml>
>
>
> Once again, your excitement and willingness to become knowledgeable about
> these major issues is refreshing. As you mentioned in your speech to the
> students during the interview process, success as a university president
> can be measured by the amount of intellectual curiosity on campus. I
> believe that we have a start, but it is only the beginning of what can
> happen at DePauw during your presidency.
>
> Thank you,
>
> -Anthony Baratta
> DePauw Class of 2011
> Co-President, Environmental Club”

Appendix D

03/08

Rich Cameron's email:

Dear President Casey,

DePauw's environmental club is extremely excited to welcome you to campus, and we're eager to begin working with you on DePauw's current and future sustainability initiatives. Today's DePauw students are the first generation of humans to live their entire lives under the specter of increasingly well confirmed and increasingly dire warnings regarding anthropogenic climate change. The work of thousands of scientists is utterly convincing: our current situation calls for responses on a scale and with an urgency possibly unprecedented in human history. Global climate disruption and the social, environmental, and political instabilities it will feed and intensify are very likely⁶ to constitute the defining issues of our lives.

At the reception welcoming you to DePauw's campus on the day your selection was announced you talked to the co-President of our club, Anthony Barratta, recalled a sustainability-related question he had asked in the student forum during your interview, and requested that he send you material on campus sustainability initiatives. This letter and the accompanying references and materials is our attempt to begin a dialogue with you on these issues and DePauw's role in addressing them.

The scientists tell us that humans have a narrow window of opportunity left to avert many of the worst of the catastrophic consequences their models predict given "business as usual" scenarios.⁷ Climatic "tipping points," points where our

⁶ "Very likely" in the IPCC's usage means >90% chance. And that's about how likely the science makes it that will in fact be the defining issue of our lives as well as the lives of our descendants for generations to come.

⁷ The quotes that follow give varying estimates of just how much time we have to avert catastrophic consequences, such uncertainties are inherent to the complexity of the issues involved. Nevertheless, regardless of which estimate is closest to being right, what rings clearly through all these major players' statements is that time is running out, we have much to do and little remaining time in which to do it. Thus, **Rajendra Pachauri** (head of the Nobel Peace Prize winning IPCC) says, "If there's no action before 2012, that's too late. What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment." ("U.N. Report Describes Risks of Inaction on Climate Change." From the New York Times of November 17, 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/17/science/earth/17cnd-climate.html?_r=2&hp=&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1195319084-Jdx9pxVCiIoHheE9QTud/A&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin) **Richard Somerville**, lead author of the IPCC 2007 Fourth Assessment Report, and signer of the 2007 Bali Climate Declaration by Scientists, says, "Time is running out. If an agreement isn't possible in the next 2, 3, or 4 years, it may be too late to prevent serious climatic consequences... Unless the negotiations can find the political will to agree on enforceable and meaningful (= large) cuts in emissions, the climate is going to degrade. That's just a fact." (http://www.climatewatch.org/index.php/csw/details/richard_somerville_time_is_running_out).

On the same theme, **Kevin Watkins**, the lead author of the UN's Human Development Report of 2007/2008, tells us: "Working together with resolve, we can win the battle against climate change. Allowing the window of opportunity to close would represent a moral and political failure without precedent in human history." (<http://www.endpoverty2015.org/node/148>). The report itself says this about the urgency of our situation: "There is now overwhelming scientific evidence that the world is moving towards the point at which irreversible ecological catastrophe becomes unavoidable. Business-as-usual climate change points in a clear direction: unprecedented reversal in human development in our lifetime, and acute risks for our children and their grandchildren. There is a window of opportunity for avoiding the most damaging climate change impacts, but that window is closing: the world has less than a decade to change course. Actions taken—or not taken—in the years ahead will have a profound bearing on the future course of human development. The world lacks neither the financial resources nor the technological capabilities to act. What is missing is a sense of urgency, human solidarity and collective interest." (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>). And finally, consider this from *Science* magazine: "What worries these researchers is the prospect that we've started a slow-moving but relentless avalanche of change. A warming may well arrive by mid-century that would not only do immediate grievous harm--such as increase drought in vulnerable areas--but also commit the world to delayed and even more severe damage such as many meters of sea-level rise. The system has built-in time lags. Ice sheets take centuries to melt after a warming. The atmosphere takes decades to be warmed by today's greenhouse gas emissions. And then there are the decades-long lags involved in working through the political system and changing the world energy economy. "If you want to be able to head off a few trillions of [dollars of climate] damages per year a few decades out," says glaciologist Richard Alley of Pennsylvania State University in State College, "you need to start now." (Kerr (2007). "GLOBAL

“forcing” of the atmosphere pushes natural systems into states where *they* begin to force climate change at unprecedented and irreversible rates, are fast approaching (if they haven’t already been past in some cases).⁸ **These crucial years**, during which time our actions will in part determine whether humans do (or do not) respond to the climate crisis in ways that face up to the realities of our predicament, **happen to coincide with the first years of your Presidency at DePauw**. As such it is our sincere hope that together we can make urgent, substantive, and concrete policies and actions aimed toward learning to live on the planet sustainability a signature aspect of the first years of your Presidency. There is — quite literally — no time like the present for concerted effort on climate change.

As I’m sure you’re aware from watching the news in recent years, what legitimate “debate” there had been regarding anthropogenic climate change is over. As Joseph Romm recently wrote, “Deniers continue to insist there's no consensus on global warming. Well, there's not. There's well-tested science and real-world observations.”⁹ DePauw’s commitment to valuing and celebrating intellectual achievement demands that we take the IPCC’s synthesis report(s) on thousands of peer reviewed scientific studies on the issue with a sobering seriousness. And according to their most recent report, “Most of the observed increase in globally-averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is *very likely [which means a greater than 90% chance]* due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations.”¹⁰ Perhaps most alarmingly, however, a slew of peer reviewed studies released since the cut-off date for inclusion in the IPCC’s deliberations suggest that climate change is happening faster and at lower levels of carbon in the atmosphere than even the IPCC’s worst case scenario models feared to predict.¹¹

We won’t belabor the scientific cause for being alarmed, however. The data *is* alarming, and not to be alarmed isn’t to be “moderate” or “sensible,” it is at this late date simply a sign that a person is not paying attention or crediting the scientists with the straightforward conclusions of their research. As we said above, our hope is that we can work together with your administration to bring DePauw up to speed so that, within a few years, it might be plausible to call us leaders in mitigation efforts, in preparing to adapt to radical climate disruption, and in making the holistic changes in education required to educate students for lives in the radically changed world in which we will live our adult lives.

A striking feature of climate change issues up until now has been that our actions have been radically insufficient to the scale of the crisis we face. We, along with the authors of “Climate Code Red” are beginning to ask the following questions,

When do we as a community admit that the current responses are simply not enough and are wasting valuable time and getting us into worse trouble? At what point do we ask whether we need to put aside the limitations of our current models and modes of thinking and stop assuming that technological innovation and market-based mechanisms can deliver the reductions that the science is telling us we need to make in the absence of clear public policy to achieve a safe climate and the use of a full suite of measures, including lifestyle change? At what point do we acknowledge that we, as a local and global community, need to take the global warming problem seriously and consider all effective options, including those that have been treated as off-limits because they go beyond business-as-usual?¹²

We will need the leadership of your administration if DePauw is going to respond to the climate crisis in a way that is plausibly responsive to the scale and urgency of the threat.

WARMING: How Urgent Is Climate Change?” Science. Vol. 318. no. 5854, pp. 1230 – 1231.

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/318/5854/1230>

⁸ See, e.g., Inman, M. (2007). Global Warming 'Tipping Points' Reached, Scientist Says. National Geographic News: online: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/12/071214-tipping-points.html>. Lenton, T. M., H. Held, et al. (2008). "Tipping Elements in the Earth's Climate System." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences **105**(6): 1786–1793. Pearman, G. (2007). Evidence of Accelerated Climate

Change. Melbourne, Australia, The Climate Institute.

⁹ Romm, J. (2008). "The Cold Truth about Climate Change." Salon.com Retrieved Feb. 27, 2008, from http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2008/02/27/global_warming_deniers/print.html.

¹⁰ From the IPCC’s “Summary for Policy Makers,” (2007). http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf

¹¹ See, for an overview of (with links to) some of a slice of the primary literature see Romm, J. (2007) "Are Scientists Overestimating -- or Underestimating -- Climate Change? Part II: A closer look at the argument for climate change underestimation." (<http://gristmill.grist.org/story/2007/8/23/104546/410>). See also Spratt, D. (2007). "Avoiding Catastrophe: Recent Science and New Data on Global Warming Scenarios to Avoid Catastrophic Climate Change." Retrieved Feb. 26, 2008, from <http://www.foe.org.au/resources/publications/climate-justice/Avoidingcatastrophe%20bw.pdf>. and Spratt, D. and P. Sutton. (2008). "Climate Code Red: The Case for a Sustainability Emergency." Retrieved Feb. 24, 2008, from <http://www.climatecodered.net/>.

¹² Spratt, D. and P. Sutton. (2008). "Climate Code Red: The Case for a Sustainability Emergency." Retrieved Feb. 24, 2008, from <http://www.climatecodered.net/>. p. iv.

But we would also like to emphasize that climate change does not present us with a narrowly “environmental” or special interest issue. We do not (would urge you not to) conceive of facing up to the climate crisis as being in conflict with other educational and social goals and initiatives at DePauw. The connections to the ethics initiative and the Prindle Institute for Ethics should be obvious – the richest people on the planet have contributed the lions share to the carbon currently in the atmosphere, yet the poorest of the poor will feel the devastating effects of climate disruption first and hardest. And this should make it clear that addressing climate change at DePauw need not conflict with internationalization efforts – this is a *global* crisis, and only global solutions, ultimately, have any chance of warding off the worst consequences. Issues of racial diversity on campus are crucial to addressing climate issues insofar as different communities currently bear different environmental burdens from business as usual scenarios and dealing with the consequences of our past and present actions will necessitate working together across race and class boundaries. We embrace the idea that DePauw must strengthen its focus on all of these issues and that each is directly relevant to and not in competition with the current “environmental” crisis. Sustainability activists often note that we won’t achieve sustainability until we come to recognize a triple bottom line regarding all our activities, one that acknowledges and accounts for the effects of our action on economic activity and social organization as well as environmental impact. Concentrating on any one of these areas alone would be counterproductive (as we can see from the effects of concentrating on the single bottom line of the 20th century, the (narrowly) economic bottom line).

And so we need not fear that a concerted push on issues of sustainability would necessitate narrowing the scope of our concerns at DePauw. Historians and anthropologists and sociologists and scientists and artists, etc., all have important contributions to make toward learning to re-imagine ways of living in a radically changed world. We may well need to learn to think of our economies and societies in new ways in light of climate disruption, but these efforts at reconceptualization are among the tasks Universities are best prepared to undertake. We simply need to undertake these efforts across an array of disciplines and policies and pursue them with an urgency proportionate to our situation.

That is probably enough said at the level of generalities for now. We look forward to continuing and deepening the dialogue we’ve only just begun here throughout your term as President of DePauw. But before closing we would like to offer a set of concrete policy oriented suggestions regarding what we might do to begin to address the climate crisis in the ways we’ve endorsed above. Thus, we would like to see the Casey administration:

- Sign the President’s Climate Commitment. As their website says, “This involves: Completing an emissions inventory; Within two years, setting a target date and interim milestones for becoming climate neutral; Taking immediate steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by choosing from a list of short-term actions; Integrating sustainability into the curriculum and making it part of the educational experience; [and] Making the action plan, inventory and progress reports publicly available. (<http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/>). This is perhaps among the first and most obvious move toward putting DePauw on a sustainable footing. Signing and moving quickly toward living up to the spirit of the commitment would send a powerful signal early in your administration.
- Hire a full time, professional, experienced, sustainability coordinator tasked with directing and coordinating sustainability efforts at all levels across the University, e.g., with regard to procurement, transportation, building efficiency, remodels, curriculum development, campus life, etc. This person should be placed in a “high cabinet post,” where that means having an office close enough to yours to remain on your radar screen, having regular meetings with you on all aspects of sustainability efforts on campus, and so on.
- Make a focus on climate disruption, scientific literacy and the need to conceive of environmental issue as broader issues of values, economics, policy, and politics a regular part of your discussion of DePauw’s role in educating for the 21st century.
- Business as usual economics carried much longer into the future will be nothing short of suicidal for our species, but business as usual education is no more prepared to cope with the realities of a radically destabilized world than are businesses or governments. Acknowledging the problem of climate change in part involves acknowledging our own role as participants in this drama and working to re-orient our own roles, no matter what they are, so that they become responsive to the climate crisis. We therefore urge your administration to support curricular initiatives focused on sustainability issues, faculty development, speakers series, developing new classes, new programs, etc., to bring DePauw up to speed on education for the realities of a climate changed world. Form committees of concerned students, faculty, and staff to help develop roadmaps for a more engaged campus climate around global warming.

We should not attempt to re-invent the wheel! DePauw needs to learn to follow the inspiring models set by other successful campuses before we aim for leadership on this crucial issue — but we should aim for leadership, for many reasons. Nevertheless, our first priority needs to be to look to and learn from the achievements and mistakes of others as we work together to discover the best way forward on DePauw’s campus.¹³

¹³ There are many places to begin if you’d like to start researching what other colleges and Universities are doing, in concrete terms, to face up to the realities of educating for a climate disrupted world. See, just for starters, the “solutions” page from the President’s Climate Commitment: <http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/html/solutions.php>. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)’s list of colleges and University’s climate commitments: <http://www.aashe.org/resources/>

Appendix E

Casey seeks input after taking office

New administrators, new dialogue mark changes in presidency

By: Andrew Maddocks

Issue date: 8/23/08 Section: News

New University President Brian Casey wants to be all ears during his first year. In fact, he wants to talk DePauw with students over dinner.

The University's board of trustees converted a first-floor room of The Elms, the president's house, into a small dining room that Casey plans to use for Sunday evening dinners.

"If you have 30 people at the table, you're having a pizza party. If you have 10, you're having a conversation," Casey said.

Dinner table conversation is just one piece of Casey's effort to explore what he believes is the University's fundamental mission.

"DePauw University will rise and fall on the strength of its intellectual life," Casey said.

Every aspect of the institution depends upon an academic community full of creativity and excitement, he said. The quality of education is the most basic reason students attend. Day-to-day classroom interactions among students and faculty most immediately fulfill those expectations.

Casey said it's easy to get distracted as an administrator, but he is determined to keep the University focused on students and faculty as its highest priority. A short list of questions guides his philosophy.

"Does this make the place intellectually stronger? Does it tell the story [of DePauw] to a wide audience and is this place an appealing place for students and faculty?" Casey said.

To find answers, he wants everyone - students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees - to start talking to him and to each other.

gw_commitments.php. Conference, to be held on Clemson University's campus Sept. 5-8, 2008: "Human Flourishing & Restoration in the age of global warming." <http://people.clemson.edu/~athomp6/conference/home.html>. See also: <http://community.middlebury.edu/~cneutral/>. And: https://segueuserfiles.middlebury.edu/midd_shift/Middshift%20Carbon%20Neutrality%20Toolkit.pdf.

"DePauw's a very polite place in a lot of ways," Casey said, "but I want this to be a real discussion."

Casey isn't leading that discussion alone. He is joined by two new Senior Advisors to the President, who stepped in July 1, the same day he took office.

Christopher Wells joined the University in a permanent role as the point man for the administration's information-gathering efforts. Later, he will shift into a strategic-planning role. Tom Dixon, in a year-long transitional position, brings Casey significant experience as a former DePauw vice president of finance and administration and a member of the Greek Fact-Finding Commission.

Wells served as a dean in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences under Casey's direction at Harvard University, and also worked in business and information technology. Casey was determined to keep Wells on his team when he came to DePauw.

"I was using him on so many projects that I said, 'Why don't you just come work for me?'" Casey said.

Flattered but worried about the impact on his family, Wells initially declined the offer.

"Dr. Casey is a very energetic and persuasive guy and didn't take my immediate no for an answer," Wells said.

The thousand-mile move and position change started to look more tempting through discussions with his family and further research, he said. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard was already in a transitional period, and Wells saw similarities between Harvard and DePauw, though the schools operate on different scales.

Most importantly, he saw vast but partially untapped potential here.

"DePauw could be the best story in liberal arts education in the country right now," Wells said.

Wells and Casey share a vision of DePauw on the brink of even greater levels of achievement. Casey cites two areas where he sees immediate possibility: University promotion and the endowment.

"DePauw is stronger than the stories it tells about itself," he said. "DePauw won't really proclaim itself, and that really makes me crazy."

Casey said a "shyness" appears everywhere from the University's Web presence to admissions brochures - a trend Casey plans to turn around.

Casey also sees the University endowment as an underutilized asset. According to the 2007 National Association of College and University Business Officers Endowment Study, DePauw's \$554,051 endowment ranks 134th in the country, falling between comparable schools Wabash College and Denison University.

"We're not poor," Casey said, "but I'm not sure we have systems in place so our resources are applied to our most important priorities and mission."

Casey only identified these areas after exhaustive research and education that began at the beginning of DePauw's presidential search process.

"Starving for information," Casey constantly asked for financial reports, capital project planning reports and staff reports as part of research that prepared him for day one of his new administration.

The research didn't stop when Casey officially took office. Casey immediately dove into meetings with senior administration officials, learning the operations, finances, staffing and overall management structure.

Director of Media Relations Ken Owen witnessed Casey's busy first six weeks on campus.

"It would be very easy as a president to let a couple months go by without making waves," Owen said. "He's definitely been engaged from moment one in the life of DePauw."

The Sunday student dinners are another manifestation of that engagement, but they're not the only channel of communication Casey plans to open this year. Casey mentioned Friday's Faculty Institute as the start of a conversation that he hopes will continue through governance committees. This fall he will meet with all the academic department heads, and

travel throughout the U.S. meeting with alumni to hear their opinions.

Administrators said at an Aug. 15 press conference that Casey's visibility will be as comprehensive as possible in the upcoming year.

"Somebody will be disappointed because they didn't get a chance to talk to President Casey, but there will be a whole lot more people who will have a chance to spend time with him," said Executive Vice President Neal Abraham.

Casey, Wells and the new administration want to make significant progress on their institutional assessment by the October board of trustees meeting. For now, Casey wants to listen.

"You have to see where you are before you see where you want to go," he said.

Appendix F

The Agenda of the meeting with President Casey:

The Role of Sustainability Programs in DePauw's Institutional Priorities

Meeting with President Casey

September 11, 2008

Tiffany Briery, '08
5th Year Campus Sustainability Intern

Taylor Cantril, '11
Campus Sustainability Intern

Sarah Batto, '05 (Earlham College)
5th Year DePauw Environmental Policy Project Intern

Missy! Orr, '09
Campus Sustainability Intern

Jennifer Everett, Department of Philosophy
2007-2008 Sustainability Programs Coordinator
Sustainability Interns Supervisor

DePauw's sustainability initiatives embody *precisely* the priorities set out for DePauw under the new administration of President Casey. We embrace these goals wholeheartedly.

1. Strengthen DePauw's intellectual climate vis-à-vis the social climate on campus.
2. Develop a coherent vision of DePauw's identity vis-à-vis our various sub-DePauw identities.
3. Tell DePauw's story effectively in a competitive admissions market.
4. Strengthen the local community and town-gown relations.

DePauw's efforts to promote sustainability education and campus practices have the potential to achieve these goals to a superlative degree. Our sustainability programs, however, now stand at a critical juncture requiring administrative support and investment.

Tiffany Briery – The Importance of Institutional Leadership

- 5th Year Internship
- Sustainability Coordinator

Missy! Orr – Building Community Relations on Campus and Beyond

- Start Green
- Greencastle

Sarah Batto – Raising the Intellectual Bar

- DePauw Environmental Policy Project (DEPP)

Taylor Cantril – Academic Engagement Across Campus Sectors and Disciplines

- Focus the Nation
- Energy Wars

Recommendations:

1. Pursue sustainability as an academic priority.
2. Invest in sustainability personnel.
3. Make sustainability commitments official.

Appendix G

Press Release:

“September 15, 2008, Greencastle, Ind. - DePauw University today demonstrated its commitment to environmental responsibility and counteracting climate change by signing the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. By signing the commitment, DePauw's Brian W. Casey joins 575 college and university presidents and chancellors across America who are pledging to neutralize the greenhouse gas emissions of their institutions and make environmental awareness a key component of campus life.

President Casey has charged Neal B. Abraham, executive vice president of the University, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the faculty, to develop a plan for implementation of the pledge and present it to the community by December 1. Abraham will be charged specifically to see how the University's academic program can support -- and can be enriched by -- the University's sustainability efforts.

Present at this morning's announcement were DePauw student leaders; faculty members Jeanette Pope, Kelsey Kauffman and Jennifer Everett (who oversaw DePauw's sustainability efforts last year); and Greencastle Mayor Sue Murray. As it continues to look for new environmental efficiencies, DePauw will share information with Greencastle, which has been named 2008 "Green Community of the Year" (along with Bloomington) by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns.

"These are issues which are enormously important to our students and which many of them are already doing something about in the way they live their everyday lives," Dr. Casey said as he signed the commitment. He noted that the first e-mail he received after being named DePauw's 19th president was from sophomore Anthony Baratta, asking Casey to ramp up DePauw's sustainability efforts.

"As part of the task of educating young people we must also listen to their concerns and ensure that the University itself is living up to its obligations as a citizen of the world. Today's move means that DePauw is committed to enhancing the work it has done in recent years to be a place that finds innovative ways to reduce the strain it puts on Earth's resources. This is also a pledge that DePauw will enhance its already rich discussions of environmental issues and problem-solving throughout the University's academic life."

By becoming a signatory of the Presidents Climate Commitment, DePauw University pledges to begin the process of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and becoming climate-neutral. The document states that universities can be leaders in serving as "role models for their communities and in training the people who will develop the social, economic and technological solutions to reverse global warming." In addition, the presidents and chancellors signing the commitment say they believe that taking action will stabilize or reduce their institution's energy costs, will attract excellent students and faculty, as well as new funding sources, and will increase the support of alumni and local communities.

Dr. Abraham announced today that he is appointing Carol Steele, associate dean of academic affairs, to serve as administrative coordinator of DePauw's sustainability efforts and of compliance with the Presidents Climate Commitment. She will be assisted by Tiffany Briery, a 2008 DePauw graduate and fifth-year intern, as well as senior Missy Orr and sophomore Taylor Cantril.

Learn more about the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment by clicking [here](#).

DePauw's new Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics recently became the first building in Indiana to earn a LEED New Construction Gold 2.2 rating for energy efficiency and environmental design from the U.S. Green Building Council. The Prindle Institute is featured in the latest edition of **Environmental Design + Construction** magazine.

The Bartlett Reflection Center, which is in the final stages of construction near the Prindle Institute within the DePauw Nature Park, has also been designed to obtain LEED certification.

On August 21, the National Wildlife Federation honored DePauw University for its efforts to promote sustainability in its report, "Campus Environment 2008: A National Report Card on Sustainability in Higher Education." Details can be found in this previous story.

Learn more about DePauw's sustainability efforts by [clicking here.](#)"

Appendix H

Quite the commitment

Posted: 9/16/08

For a man who said he wanted his first year as DePauw's president to be about listening, Brian Casey spoke loudly Monday when he signed the Presidents Climate Commitment. The impact of his decision is simply too immense for anyone to judge at this time. Only as the University embarks on its two-year path to develop a plan to reach climate neutrality will the community fully understand the effects of what DePauw has pledged.

The most tangible element of this commitment is that DePauw now must hold itself to specific standards and deadlines regarding its impact on the environment. Instead of some nebulous idea about environmental practices, we now have a clear-cut way of examining where we are as an institution in terms of sustainability. How we measure up to those standards will continue to be big news on campus for years to come.

But to some extent, how big this decision is depends on how DePauw approaches the requirements outlined in the commitment. If we only meet the minimum interim guidelines, students' everyday lives will likely not be impacted by it. But if we go all out in following the seven actions the commitment outlines, we may all be seeing a change at DePauw even before we fulfill the ultimate goal of climate neutrality.

While the vision of the Presidents Climate Commitment is definitely admirable, we find one component questionable: the incorporation of sustainability into the curriculum. If that simply means encouraging students to discuss the issue, then we're making good progress and we're in favor of continuing down that path. But if it implies that DePauw must replace certain class offerings with sustainability-centered courses, that's taking the commitment too far. The University shouldn't force discussion of environmental concerns, as legitimate as they may be, into places where it doesn't belong. Classes such as professor Kelsey Kauffman's course on environmental activism are wonderful additions to DePauw's curriculum. However, encouraging physics classes to investigate the difference in velocity of a recycled or non-recycled bottle doesn't do much to enrich DePauw. We hope that the University's new focus on sustainability will expand and enliven intellectual discourse, not pigeonhole it.

On a more positive note, it's encouraging that Greencastle Mayor Sue Murray found Monday's signing significant enough to attend. The city's recognition by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns as one of the state's greenest communities shows sustainability is an issue on which DePauw and Greencastle are on the same page. It would be foolish for the University to think that it can commit to such sweeping changes without the support of Greencastle. It's DePauw's job to implement climate neutrality, but if we can serve as partners in progress with local leaders, the impact is bound to be even greater.

Lastly, while it is Casey's name that appears on the pledge, student input can and will have a direct influence on the path the school's commitment takes. So many student activists have fought to make this agreement become a reality; it would be a shame for the implementation to be wholly top-down. The most straightforward form of student action would be white papers from Student Congress stating which areas of the sustainability pledge we feel are most important. But let's write letters, send e-mails and make our ideas known to administrators. At the least, let's be informed about what climate neutrality

means and what each of us can do to reach the goal.

-Kali Geldis didn't contribute to this editorial.

Letters to the editor

Posted: 9/19/08

Sustainability is here - to stay

As advocates for discourse concerning the recent signing of the Presidents Climate Commitment, we'd like to praise the editorial board for their editorial "Quite the Commitment." DePauw's sustainability voice is no longer a quiet murmur. It's loud, enthusiastic and coming from all directions: students, faculty and staff. If President Brian Casey promised to listen for his first year, it's no wonder this issue came to the forefront of his attention. In fact, during the signing Casey mentioned that the first e-mail he received as president was from then-freshman Anthony Baratta, who outlined the commitment and DePauw's growing interest in sustainability.

Sustainability is no longer a "new" idea on DePauw's campus; we encourage everyone to check out the Sustainability Status Report on the Web site (www.depauw.edu/univ/sustain) to see how far we've all come in the last several years. Furthermore, we'd love to echo the editors' call for more student feedback: concerns, criticisms or suggestions every student should be a part of where DePauw goes from here. Casey wasn't only responding to a national and global movement, but most importantly to a local, student-led movement on this campus. We hope that more people from every corner of campus can get involved.

The editors' expressed a concern that a goal might be to "replace" current classes with "sustainability-centered" ones. We think every discipline has something to offer to the discourse surrounding sustainability. However, pursuing rigorous, traditional curricula and working on climate-change problems are not mutually exclusive goals. For example, a physics class at DePauw, Physics for Poets, is currently studying renewable fuels. Last January's "Focus the Nation" teach-in demonstrated the interconnected nature of sustainability problems.

Twenty-two professors representing 15 disciplines spoke and led conversations on climate change. Many teamed up with professors of other disciplines to compare and contrast academic perspectives. These connections happen organically, and it's this thinking that may start deepening the connection between sustainability and the intellectual life at DePauw. We share the editors' hopes that DePauw's "focus on sustainability will expand and enliven intellectual discourse." In fact, we're excited to have watched this happen already.

Please e-mail tbriery@depauw.edu with concerns, criticisms and suggestions.

-Tiffany Briery, fifth-year intern

-Taylor Cantril, sophomore

-Missy! Orr, senior

Campus Sustainability Interns

It's time to rethink curriculum to include sustainability

Thank you for focusing on President Brian Casey's signing of the Presidents Climate Commitment. Your tempered skepticism is appropriate - it's a good step, but so far only paper and promises. The test will be how high, or low, we set our goals and how we translate them into action. Stay skeptical and attentive - press for real change or don't expect it to come.

The editors also expressed concern that sustainability not be "forced" into courses where it doesn't belong. While I agree, I'd like to add two observations.

First, the worry seems to presuppose an over-narrow idea of sustainability, which isn't all, or even primarily, about environmental science. It's about learning how societies work, religious views about humanity's place in the universe, past collapses, the economics of (un)sustainable practices, ideals that support wellbeing and justice and so on. The disciplines thus already include sustainability in their ambit. Given the crisis we're precipitating, we have, however, good reason to re-focus all the disciplines and a great many disciplinary questions around our current predicament. This will require both students and faculty to rethink disciplinary boundaries and content, but nothing need be forced.

Second, note that the educational tradition of not tying literature (and history and sociology and psychology, etc.) to sustainability is neither climatically nor intellectually "neutral" and should not be treated as an unproblematic baseline. The strength of the liberal educational tradition is its willingness to critically examine assumptions that contemporary society (of whatever century) takes for granted, including assumptions about disciplinary content and boundaries. The climate crisis should make us examine those assumptions, e.g., in teaching in ways that divorce disciplinary content from the social, economic and environmental processes with which they interact and on which they depend responsible (in part) for our crisis of unsustainable living? Let's debate how and to what extent sustainability issues can be infused in DePauw's curriculum, but beware the assumption that how we've traditionally done things and what you've come to expect from your courses can safely be taken for granted as we look ahead to the climate-disrupted world you'll inherit upon graduation.

-Rich Cameron, philosophy professor