

Kathy Schatzberg Challenge Instructions

Four Simple Steps

Step One: Enlist Help from Your Team

- Engage help from your assistant, ACUPCC liaison, and/or communications department

Step Two: Identify Your Targets

- Identify five or more colleagues to reach out to.
- Check your colleagues names against the ACUPCC signatory list* to make sure they are not already signatories.
- Check the list of institutions that have not joined* to get inspired on others you can reach out to.
- Work with your team to fill out KS Challenge Tracking Sheet* and send it back to Georges Dyer at gdyer@secondnature.org.

Step Three: Send the Cover Letter and Email

- Send colleagues personalized letters on your letterhead using our template as a guide. Please feel free to add examples of what you are doing and why you signed on.
- Mark your calendar seven days out to send follow up email.
- Seven days later send colleagues personalized emails using our template as a guide.

Step Four: Call Your Targets

- Call colleagues to confirm receipt and discuss participation the day after you send the email.
- If they have further questions, direct them to Tony Cortese, President of Second Nature, acortese@secondnature.org, 617-224-1611

Kathy Schatzberg Challenge Timeline

Preparation:

- 1) Receive KS Challenge announcement email,
- 2) Forward email to your team,
- 3) Identify colleagues, fill out tracking sheet, and send it back to the ACUPCC (gdyer@secondnature.org)

Day 1:

- 1) Customize cover letters,
- 2) Send to targets, and
- 3) Mark calendar seven days later to send emails

Day 7:

- 1) Customize emails, attach ACUPCC Info Packet, and send to colleagues
- 2) Mark calendar the following day to call targets

Day 8:

- 1) Call targets to confirm receipt of information,
- 2) Answer any questions they may have, and
- 3) Direct them to the ACUPCC website for further information.

Day 9:

- 1) Report back to the ACUPCC team (via gdyer@secondnature.org) on any successes, challenges, or feedback you receive through your efforts.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) General questions about the ACUPCC

Q: Why “climate neutrality” and why act now?

A: The re-stabilization of the earth’s climate is the defining challenge of the 21st century. The unprecedented scale and speed of global warming and its potential for large-scale, adverse health, social, economic and ecological effects threatens the viability of civilization. The scientific consensus is that society must reduce the global emission of greenhouse gases by *at least* 80% by mid-century at the latest, in order to avert the worst impacts of global warming and to reestablish the more stable climatic conditions that have made human progress over the last 10,000 years possible. Without preventing the worst aspects of climate disruption, we cannot hope to deal with the other social, health and economic challenges that society is facing and will face in the future.

To stop systematically increasing the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere all of our institutions must, collectively, achieve climate neutrality. Given that current concentrations of greenhouse gases are already far above the upper bound of natural concentrations over the past 650,000 years, many believe that we must aggressively pursue restorative solutions, where not only do we stop increasing the concentrations, but we start reducing the concentrations through tree planting, soil restoration, and other means of sequestration. Many scientists believe that we are already seeing the impacts of climate change, and due to the time delay in the system, that we are bound to see more in the coming decades as a result of concentrations already in the atmosphere. So there is a compelling case for becoming climate positive as quickly as possible.

See [Top Reasons to sign the ACUPCC](#)

Q: Will the ACUPCC actually have a meaningful impact in the fight against climate change? Is it sufficient to address this challenge?

A: Yes and no. The signatories of the ACUPCC, and the higher education industry as a whole, are leading society by driving the thought and defining the cutting edge of what is necessary and what is possible in effectively fighting climate change. There is much more that colleges and universities can do beyond the

requirements of the ACUPCC, and the ACUPCC in no way limits the efforts of individual institutions in this regard. In many instances, the ACUPCC is serving as a catalyst in leveraging all of the individual efforts being taken so that the higher education sector as a whole will continue to be the societal leader in addressing climate change.

Q: Is the ACUPCC just about greenhouse gas emissions from campus operations?

A: No. An important aspect of the ACUPCC is that signatories commit to taking “actions to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and other educational experience for all students,” and “actions to expand research or other efforts necessary to achieve climate neutrality.” While higher education only represents about 2-3% of the country’s carbon footprint, it represents 100% of the education footprint, in that our institutions teach not only our college students, but also the teachers who need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to adequately prepare our K-12 students for the new challenges of the 21st century.

Our leaders of the future – the scientists, economists, authors, politicians, journalists, etc. – will need to understand and contribute to solving the sustainability challenges we are facing. Higher education is vested by society with the primary responsibility of educating citizens, so that civil culture may thrive. There is clear indication, however, that college and university graduates are not being prepared to deal with the complex, cross-disciplinary problems that global culture now faces. The ACUPCC is a jumping off point to promote a learning environment that provides the awareness, knowledge, skills and values to achieve a future where current and future generations achieve good health, economic security, social fairness and stability while restoring and sustaining the Earth's life support systems.

Q: To what exactly are presidents and chancellors committing?

A: Presidents signing the Commitment are pledging to eliminate their campuses' greenhouse gas emissions in a reasonable period of time as determined by each institution. This involves:

- Setting up a mechanism (committee, task force, office, etc.) within 2 months to guide the process.
- Completing an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions within 1 year, from the subsequent of the three annual start-dates: September 15, January 15, or May 15.
- Creating and implementing a climate neutral plan (that includes a target date and interim milestones for achieving campus climate neutrality) within 2 years.
- Taking 2 of 7 immediate steps specified in the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while the more comprehensive plan is being developed.
- Integrating sustainability into the curriculum and making it part of the educational experience.
- Making the action plan, inventory and periodic progress reports publicly available.

[Read The Commitment.](#)

Q: How was the ACUPCC formed?

A: After program and planning sessions among a group of college and university presidents and their representatives at the AASHE conference in October 2006 at Arizona State University, 12 presidents agreed to become Founding Members of the Leadership Circle of the ACUPCC. In early December 2006, these presidents sent a letter to nearly 400 of their peers inviting them to join the initiative.

By March 31, 2007, 152 presidents and chancellors representing the spectrum of higher education had become charter signatories of the ACUPCC. Of this group, 95 joined the Leadership Circle, agreeing to promote the initiative among their peers, serve as representatives to the press, and participate if possible in the public launch of the ACUPCC in June. In late March, the expanded Leadership Circle sent a packet of information to their peers at over 3,500 institutions, asking them to sign the Commitment. By September 15th, 400 institutions had joined as charter signatories.

Q: Who are the supporting organizations and what is their role?

A: Coordination and support for the ACUPCC has been provided by AASHE, ecoAmerica and Second Nature. These three non-profit organizations collectively provide the infrastructure for the initiative, including the website, outreach, tracking and financial management.

Contact:

- Tony Cortese, President of Second Nature, acortese@secondnature.org
- Judy Walton, Acting Executive Director of AASHE, judy@ashe.org
- Lee Bodner, Executive Director of ecoAmerica, lee@ecoamerica.net

Q: Can K-12 schools join the ACUPCC?

A: No, the ACUPCC is designed for institutions of higher education, however, the Green Schools Alliance has launched a similar initiative designed for K-12 schools. See <http://www.greenschoolsalliance.org/>.

2) Technical implementation questions about the ACUPCC

For more detailed information regarding implementation, please see the [ACUPCC Implementation Guide](#).

Q: What is climate neutrality?

A: For purposes of the ACUPCC, climate neutrality is defined as having no net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to be achieved by eliminating GHG emissions, or by minimizing GHG emissions as much as possible, and using carbon offsets or other measures to mitigate the remaining emissions.

Q: What emissions sources are included, and how are they calculated?

A: At a minimum, participating campuses should include in their inventories emissions produced through on-site combustion of fossil fuels (known as “Scope 1 emissions”); electricity consumption (“Scope 2”); student, faculty, and staff commuting; and institution-funded air travel (“Scope 3”). As the inventory methodology develops and to the extent practical, participating institutions should also endeavor to evaluate embodied emissions in purchased goods and services, including food.

Q: Does carbon sequestration on campus-owned land count toward achieving carbon neutrality?

A: Institutions are generally discouraged from counting sequestration by institution-owned land as an emissions reduction unless they clearly meet "additionality" requirements – i.e. that the offset would *not* have occurred in the absence of the institution's action. In the case of forest sequestration, it is quite possible that the sequestration would have happened even if the institution didn't exist. Likewise, emissions produced from natural features on campuses (e.g., methane emissions from wetlands) should also be excluded.

Q: What types of carbon offsets count toward achieving climate neutrality?

A: Generally speaking, there are two categories of offsets: those generated from projects that reduce or avoid GHG emissions at another site, and those from projects that remove or *sequester* carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. While some technical means of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere are under development, at the moment, the only feasible way to do so is to preserve and enhance the ability of natural systems (e.g. soils, trees, and plants) to do so. Under the ACUPCC, offsets from both categories count toward achieving climate neutrality.

Since there is currently no established certification system for carbon offsets, the program has not adopted any specifications for what type of offsets count. As certification systems for offsets and other greenhouse gas products develop, we will consider the adoption of standards for offsets.

Q: Are carbon offsets required to meet ‘climate neutrality’?

A: No, the ACUPCC does not require the purchase of offsets. Schools are committing to *making a plan* to reduce, and eventually eliminate or ‘neutralize’, GHG emissions. It may be very difficult to imagine

how to do this without purchasing offsets, however, it is possible. Net-energy positive building facilities exist and are becoming increasingly common as the green building industry becomes more sophisticated. For other emissions sources, such as air travel, creating carbon neutral solutions may be farther off, but are still feasible. For example, it is possible through teleconferencing, rail and road travel to greatly reduce if not eliminate air travel, and there are already efforts underway to develop carbon-neutral airplane fuels. These developments can be factored into long-term plans, and moreover, many universities can actually drive the research and development of these types of technologies as part of their plan.

If offsets are part of the plan, they should be viewed as a last resort after all on-campus reductions that are feasible at the time have been made. Finally, as the offset market matures, the higher education sector must provide the intellectual basis to shape it and ensure its protocols are robust and effective – the ACUPCC is an effective vehicle through which to do so, and these efforts are underway through the [ACUPCC Voluntary Offset Protocol project](#).

3) Questions of concern regarding the ACUPCC

Q: How much will this cost?

A: There are no fees or financial obligations associated with signing the ACUPCC.

The size of the investments needed to measure emissions, create and implement a climate action plan, and carry out two tangible actions will vary between schools and over time. There is considerable evidence and many case-studies that demonstrate attractive returns on investment for emissions reduction activities, and as these techniques and technologies are brought to scale, these rates of return are likely to improve. The ACUPCC also provides a community-wide framework and strategic perspective, without which ad hoc efforts around climate in academics and operations can 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.

Some important factors to consider:

- With volatile and increasing prices for fossil fuels, not taking a proactive approach to conservation, efficiency and alternative energy is a financial risk. Having a long-term strategic plan will avoid significant future costs
- Efforts to reduce GHG emissions should be viewed as investments, not costs, as they improve quality of life and the educational experience, and avoid long-term costs
- With established international carbon markets, the development of regional GHG markets in the US, and plenty of pending legislation at the federal level, it is highly likely that there will be a price on carbon soon – again, planning now will reduce financial risk. This also represents an

financial opportunity for schools that are ahead of the curve and well positioned as these markets emerge

- Creating a long-term plan that is right for your campus and situation is the best way to ensure that these efforts are as cost-effective as possible. Without the kind of comprehensive planning that brings in perspectives from all parts of campus (operations, academic, student life, etc.) – which only the president can call for – there is the risk that *ad hoc* efforts are more costly and time consuming, can lead the school down the wrong path, and generally be less effective
- Joining the ACUPCC will be more cost effective than going it alone, because it is a national, cooperative effort which will enable your institution to reap the benefits of information sharing, purchasing consortia, and other synergies between institutions

Q: Is achieving climate neutrality feasible?

A: There are two ways to approach the question of eliminating GHG emissions. One approach – exemplified by the signatories of the ACUPCC – focuses on what is necessary to avoid the worst impacts of global warming and works backward from there. The other approach – exemplified by campuses that have set shorter-term, percentage reduction targets – focuses on what is feasible and looks forward from there.

Good arguments can be made for either approach. No one wants to fall short on an obligation, so it is understandable that presidents hesitate to make commitments they aren't confident they can meet. On the other hand, what we perceive to be feasible today is likely less than what is actually possible, thus the feasibility approach will likely result in setting targets which are insufficient to forestall climate disaster. To overcome the climate crisis - in which failure to meet certain targets could push us over one or more tipping points toward climate catastrophe - it is more appropriate to set targets based on what we believe to be necessary, and then do everything we can to create the conditions under which achievement of these targets is feasible.

Further, the feasibility approach does not give enough weight to the potential of higher education to fundamentally alter the assumptions about future technology and consumption patterns that provide the foundation for feasibility analysis. By implementing the research and education components of ACUPCC, higher education institutions can accelerate technological and behavior change and thereby help to create conditions under which achieving the operational components is more feasible.

Q: Is the ACUPCC strong enough? Are there any consequences if ACUPCC institutions don't fulfill the terms of Commitment?

A: The ACUPCC is a pledge to create a plan to incorporate climate and sustainability into the educational experience of all students, and to pursue climate neutrality in campus operations. Climate neutrality is the bare minimum for stopping the continued increase in concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere, and a necessary prerequisite for reducing those concentrations.

While there are no legal or financial repercussions for non-fulfillment, the accountability for meeting the terms of the Commitment comes through the public reporting. If an ACUPCC institution is "not in good

standing” because they miss a reporting deadline this will be highlighted on the ACUPCC [reporting page](#), and that institution’s stakeholders – the students, faculty, staff, alumni, administrators, trustees, etc. – will take the necessary steps to get the institution back on track and in good standing. Institutions of higher education take commitments – even voluntary ones – very seriously, and because so their credibility and reputation rely on their integrity on following through on such promises, this mechanism of accountability through public reporting is more powerful than the self-imposed threat of fines or regulation.

Q: Is it possible for a school of our size to make the Commitment?

A: Assessing climate risk and making a long-term plan for eliminating GHG emissions will benefit schools of all sizes. The institutions that have joined the ACUPCC range from the smallest to the largest, including College of the Atlantic with enrollment under 300, and Arizona State University and the University of Minnesota, both with enrollment over 50,000.

Q: What are the legal and financial implications of this obligation? What if we can’t fulfill the Commitment?

A: The ACUPCC calls for creating a long-term plan within two years and reporting annually on progress. Signatories make this commitment in good faith that every effort will be made to carry out that plan on schedule, but there are no legal or financial obligations to do so. The accountability for the ACUPCC comes through the public reporting on progress. If schools get off schedule, it is expected that their students, alumni, and community will encourage them to get back on track. Most schools will likely develop plans with many incremental steps and strategies for revision of the plan over the 20-40 year time period they cover. In the long-run, if for whatever reason, a school misses its target date or adjusts its plan, it is unlikely that anyone will fault the school for trying. They may however, if they don't try.

By setting out an inspirational, meaningful goal, history shows that devoted communities can achieve incredible feats. When JFK announced the challenge of putting a man on the moon before the 60s were done – it seemed impossible and now one knows how it would be done – but it was that vision and leadership, that enabled people to align efforts around a common cause and pull it off.

Q: What makes the ACUPCC different from other initiatives?

A: The crisis of un-sustainability, particularly the threat of catastrophic climate disruption, is not ‘just another’ issue. The scale and magnitude of addressing this common crisis in an effective and timely manner, through redesigning the basic mechanisms by which we meet our needs, requires purposeful collective action, and will require unprecedented modes of collaboration. Each school’s participation in

the ACUPCC is instrumental to the success of this collective effort. Each signatory acts as a draw for more schools, which may not yet be addressing the climate crisis, to sign. For each peer institution that doesn't sign, others use it as an excuse not to sign. The individual contribution of any school can be dwarfed by the impact that school would have as a leader in the ACUPCC, leveraging individual efforts to serve far broader national, international, and cross-sector cooperative efforts.

Further, the ACUPCC is designed to be flexible and non-prescriptive, so signatories are not sacrificing their autonomy to an 'external' agenda. It is a program created, developed, and managed by college and university presidents, and signatories have the option to engage with their colleagues and shape the initiative as they see fit.

Q: We are already addressing climate change on our campus. What do we have to gain by joining the ACUPCC?

A: First, it's important to recognize the tremendous power of a high-profile, collective action of this kind. The ACUPCC is sending strong signals to other sectors of society, from business to government. It is driving technology and service providers to develop new offerings because they can more clearly see the size of the market.

Second, the ACUPCC is a powerful show of leadership-by-example by higher education, demonstrating to businesses, governments, and communities that this is an important issue that can be effectively addressed with strong leadership from our institutions.

Third, there are benefits to the cooperative effort that the ACUPCC represents. Signatories are part of a learning community, where they share best-practices, resources and success stories, and have a meaningful voice in improving standards and protocols in the space. The fact that nearly 500 schools have signed on is driving new technologies and tools, enabling economies of scale, and allowing schools to address this challenge with less capital up front. Already, because of the size and profile of the ACUPCC signatory group, it has been able to formalize an agreement with the Clinton Climate Initiative, which will provide access to \$5 billion in low-cost financing for energy efficiency projects. This is just one early example of many exciting, innovative benefits that are emerging for the schools that join the ACUPCC.

Finally, the magnitude of the transformation to a low carbon economy is so great that purposeful, collective action by higher education is necessary for scaling this effort *in addition* to the excellent work that is already being done by individual campuses. This challenge is too large and complex for any one campus to solve on its own – the important individual efforts must be complemented and enhanced through collective action. We talk about the importance of “collaboration” in higher education, but how many times do we really act together as a sector? When could there be a better time to do so?

Q: Is the ACUPCC a “one-size-fits-all” approach to this complex challenge?

A: The structure of the ACUPCC is specifically designed to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach, allowing each school to make their own climate action plan with their own target date for climate neutrality, to be achieved in a way that is feasible, cost effective, and right for their given circumstances. The ACUPCC is non-prescriptive with regard to how schools go about achieving climate neutrality and incorporating related issues into education and research. At the same time, it has the advantage of enabling schools to work within a common framework to develop their unique plans, which will provide the benefits of benchmarking, developing common standards, sharing best practices, avoiding repeating costly mistakes, and creating resources that can be useful in a variety of situations.

Q: Does this initiative require us to abandon or change existing efforts on campus to address climate disruption?

A: Signing the ACUPCC is not intended to be an alternative to any current plans for greenhouse gas reductions on a campus. The ACUPCC creates a larger context for a campus's current plans – one that acknowledges what science tells us - that we must neutralize greenhouse gas emissions by mid century. All current and planned initiatives at any institution are important elements of the comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality and will enhance the ability of the institution to achieve the ultimate goal.

Q: We are worried that the list of “tangible actions” is burdensome and prescriptive – is it feasible for our campus to complete two of the seven options?

A: The “tangible actions” aspect of the commitment is intended to ensure that there is some early action on campuses that sign, particularly those that have not done much to date on sustainability. They were developed with the great diversity of schools in mind and with the belief that at least two would be feasible and appropriate on any campus. They were also designed to provide sufficient flexibility so that they could be adapted to the various circumstances that different signatory institutions face. Signatories are only required to complete at least **two** of the seven options. Most campuses should be able to identify two options from the list of seven that are feasible and beneficial in the short term. Many schools have found that they had already completed, or were very close to completing, at least two of the options.

Q: Is the ACUPCC being imposed on colleges and universities by activist groups from outside of higher education?

A: No. The original conception of the idea for the ACUPCC came from a group of college and university presidents who identified the need for a national, cooperative effort with their colleagues to effectively address the climate challenge. They asked the supporting organizations – all of which are not-for-profit organizations and part of the higher education community, and none of which are activist groups – to staff and support the administrative requirements of the initiative. The ACUPCC is a presidents'

initiative, and the signatories, led by the Steering Committee, make policy decisions and shape the initiative.

Further, much of the promotion and support for the ACUPCC comes from other groups within the higher education sector, such as students, alumni, and higher education associations, who have elected to serve informally as ambassadors for the ACUPCC:

www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/ambassadors.

Q: Is the ACUPCC a political advocacy group?

A: No. The ACUPCC is about implementing and innovating solutions to the climate challenge and more effectively educating students so they are better equipped to be successful in the new, more complex, context of the 21st century – not political advocacy. The Steering Committee has explicitly decided to remain policy-neutral, and to focus on creating solutions and serving as a role-model for the rest of society. Of course, individual presidents are free to engage politically on behalf of their institutions as they see fit, but the ACUPCC initiative as a whole is explicitly not a political initiative.

Q: Does joining the ACUPCC make a political statement?

A: Addressing the climate crisis is a challenge that transcends political ideology, and affects the long term viability of society. The presidents making the Commitment are publicly demonstrating with their actions that reversing climate disruption is central to the education, research and service mission of higher education to help create a thriving and civil society. The presidents are making this commitment because of the scientific consensus, largely coming from higher education's experts, that reversing climate disruption is an urgent priority to accelerate human progress in the US and the world. The focus is on educating students to prepare them to be competitive and successful in the post-carbon economy, and to serve as role-models for the rest of society in demonstrating that shifting away from fossil fuels can provide economic and other social benefits, as well as the environmental benefits needed to support our large and growing global civilization.

Q: Does the academic aspect of the Commitment represent a threat to academic freedom?

A: No. By signing the Commitment presidents agree to promote education on climate issues and sustainability in ways that are appropriate within the community of the institution. This in no way dictates what is taught and learned or how it is taught and learned. In many institutions, the faculty has control of the curriculum, and the president cannot change it. Still, he or she can fulfill the terms of the ACUPCC by encouraging faculty to more explicitly engage students in this topics, and opening the dialogue around these topics on campus. The intent of this requirement is very much in line with the spirit of academic freedom and discovery of new knowledge by exploring the complexity of these issues that are relevant to the times.