

Climate Leadership Statement

We, the undersigned presidents and chancellors of colleges and universities, believe firmly in the power, potential, and imperative of higher education's key role in shaping a sustainable society. Not only are we deeply concerned about the increasing pace and intensity of global climate change and the potential for unprecedented detrimental impacts, but we also understand that technology, infrastructure, global interconnectedness, and our greatest asset – engaged, committed, smart students – allow us to explore bold and innovative solutions and to lead in climate action and sustainable solutions.

We have begun to experience the effects of climate change in our communities and we understand that these effects are projected to become more severe and damaging. We recognize that mitigation and adaptation are complementary strategies for reducing the likelihood of unmanageable change, managing the risks, and taking advantage of new opportunities created by our changing climate.

We believe colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by providing the knowledge, research, practice, and informed graduates to create a positive and sustainable future. Along with other aspects of sustainability, campuses that address the climate challenge by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by integrating resilience into their curriculum, research, and campus operations will better serve their students and meet their social mandate to help create a vital, ethical, and prosperous civil society.

We further believe that exerting leadership in addressing climate change will reduce our long-term energy costs and the costs of climate disturbance, increase our quality of life, attract excellent students and faculty, and build the support of alumni and local communities.

We have resolved to take action in one of the following Climate Leadership Commitments. We believe decreasing carbon emissions on our campuses carbon neutrality and eventual decarbonization of our campuses, as well as increasing resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of mounting climate change impacts are extremely high priority areas of action for all institutions. We believe higher education should be leading in these efforts, and we urge others to join us in transforming society towards a sustainable, healthy, and more prosperous future.

Carbon Commitment

Upon signing, institutions commit to creating internal institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the Carbon Commitment and the development of a Climate Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality and/or decarbonization targets*

Suggested Timeline:

Within one year of the implementation start date:

- Create internal institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the Carbon Commitment and create the Climate Action Plan.
- Complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and identify near-term opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide the first annual progress update.

Within two years of the implementation start date,

- Complete the Climate Action Plan, which will include:
 - A target date for achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible, that recognizes the urgency to achieve more rigorous decarbonization by mid-century **
- and/or
- A target date for 90% decarbonization of Scopes 1 & 2 emissions, or a target date for decarbonization of 80% across all scopes.***
- Interim target dates for meeting milestones that will lead to carbon emissions reduction****
- Mechanisms and indicators for tracking progress
- Actions to make climate action a part of the curriculum and other educational experiences for all students
- Actions to expand research in climate action

Annually:

- Submit annual progress updates to Second Nature
- Publicly disclose GHG inventory to Second Nature

Every five years:

- Review, revise if necessary, and resubmit the Climate Action Plan

Signatories of all Commitments agree to the integration of climate in education curriculum, expanding research efforts, ongoing reporting, and creating and revising an action plan. Campuses report progress each year to Second Nature through annual progress updates.

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* The Plan may be designed to augment an existing sustainability plan, written as part of a new sustainability plan, or as a standalone plan. An [online guide](#) is available that provides information on successful institutional structures, helpful templates on climate action plans, useful indicators of progress, guidance for reporting, and much more.

** Target dates for achieving carbon neutrality and/or decarbonization goals should not fall later than mid-century.

***Second Nature recommends a *decarbonization* target of a 90% reduction of Scope I and II emissions by 2045, or an 80% reduction across all emissions by 2050. As such, target dates for carbon neutrality should come well before mid-century, thereby positioning campuses to lead strategically and achieve rigorous decarbonization.

****Assistance for developing interim milestones and a number of example tangible actions is [available online](#).

Signed,

President/Chancellor Signature

President/Chancellor Name

College or University Name

Date

Please send the signed commitment document to:

Second Nature, 160 Alewife Brook Pkwy #1182, Cambridge, MA, 02138

Or scan & email to: commitments@secondnature.org