

UC CARBON NEUTRALITY INITIATIVE

In November 2013, University of California President Janet Napolitano announced the Carbon Neutrality Initiative, which commits the university to becoming carbon neutral by 2025, something no other major university system has done.

It is a bold effort to bring a community of half a million people, spanning 10 campuses, five medical centers and three national laboratories, to carbon neutrality within 10 years.

This ambitious target builds on the University of California's pioneering work on climate research and furthers its leadership on sustainable business practices. UC is improving its energy efficiency, developing new sources of renewable energy and enacting a range of related strategies to cut carbon emissions. We believe that our model, in which campuses serve as large-scale demonstration projects for developing and testing promising ideas, can illuminate the path forward for others. Strong visionary leadership has paved the way for cross-campus, multidisciplinary collaborations in search of real-world solutions. Through the Carbon Neutrality Initiative, the university has pledged to:

- Achieve carbon neutrality by 2025
- Make carbon neutrality and sustainability part of the educational experience for all 246,000 students
- Expand and accelerate research in carbon neutrality and climate resilience
- Invest at least \$1 billion of our endowment and pension fund over the next five years in solutions to global climate change

We are making big strides on both the research and operational side of the carbon neutrality challenge.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The university more than doubled its on-site solar energy in 2015. It now has a total of 27.5 megawatts of solar installed across its campuses and medical centers and another 22 megawatts planned.
- UC purchased an additional 80 megawatts of off-site solar energy – the largest purchase by a university. By 2016, this solar power will supply 60 percent of imported electricity at participating campuses.
- The university's total greenhouse gas emissions are now below 2000 levels, and three campuses have reduced emissions to 1990 levels. All campuses have a climate action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions further and are developing plans to achieve complete carbon neutrality by 2025.
- UC was the first university in the world to sign the Montreal Carbon Pledge; the first American public university to adhere to the United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment; and the first U.S. pension plan and endowment fund to sign the Japan Stewardship Code, which promotes responsible and sustainable economic growth.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

This fall, more than 50 UC researchers and scholars came together to propose a practical, actionable blueprint for avoiding catastrophic climate change.

Bending the Curve: Ten Scalable Solutions for Carbon Neutrality and Climate Stability incorporates the latest science and technology, as well as the societal, regulatory and ecosystem approaches that will need to be brought to bear to reduce greenhouse gases.

A summary of their findings will be widely disseminated at the UN Climate Summit in Paris and is available online: bit.ly/climateUC

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- **Reduce short-lived climate pollutants now.** We should act now to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, including methane, black carbon, HFCs and ozone, which are powerful greenhouse gases. If we cut back quickly, we can slow global warming in the near term, averting extreme climatic events and providing breathing room for the world to fully transition to carbon neutrality.
- **Immediately scale up the technology we have.** Solar and wind power, electric light-duty vehicles, and efficient devices, particularly for lighting, air conditioning and industrial processes, are ready for widespread use now. Promote existing technology while emerging solutions develop to fully transition the world to carbon neutrality.
- **Religious and community leaders are vital allies.** Because fundamental changes in attitudes and behaviors are critical, solutions must bring researchers and scholars together with community and religious leaders to lower barriers and create a culture of climate action to take concrete steps toward solving our shared climate crisis.

- **Reduce emissions from the wealthiest, empower the poorest.** Climate action requires lowering the carbon footprint of the wealthiest 1 billion (who contribute roughly 60 percent of the climate pollution), while promoting clean energy for the poorest 3 billion, who will suffer the worst consequences of climate disruption.
- **Health impacts are happening today.** Climate change is affecting human health right now. Burning fossil fuels causes both air pollution and climatic events that result in human illnesses and death as well as significant loss of food crops and water.
- **California is a model for the world.** California's economic growth and success with governance, regulations, market-based instruments and promotion of national to international climate action plans, as well as technologies developed by UC and tested in living laboratories throughout the state, can serve as a model for other parts of the world.

MORE INFORMATION

Sustainability Director Matthew St. Clair
matthew.stclair@ucop.edu, 510-287-3897