



UNH Commits To Climate Neutrality

Interim President J. Bonnie Newman Signs American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment

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Editors note: A photo of UNH Interim President J. Bonnie Newman is available to download here:

http://www.unh.edu/president/jbonnieneuman/images/bonnie_newman.jpg

DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire Interim President J. Bonnie Newman signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment today, adding UNH to the leadership circle of more than 60 colleges and universities committed to climate neutrality, significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and education and research on climate change. UNH is the first New England land-grant university to sign the commitment.

"Signing the Presidents Climate Commitment naturally stems from our broader commitment to sustainability," said Newman. "It is part of our mission as an institution of higher education not only to engage in world-class research on such pressing issues as climate change – and to educate our students about these issues so they are prepared to engage in solutions – but also to lead by example."

"Sustainability is part and parcel of UNH's identity," added John Aber, vice president of research and chair of the UNH Energy Task Force. "We are thrilled to be a part of a small group of colleges and universities that are leading the way in addressing climate change through what we teach, how we operate, what we research, and how we engage with the community."

Presidents signing the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment are pledging to eliminate their campuses' greenhouse gas emissions over time and ultimately to achieving climate neutrality. This involves creating an institutional structure to guide the development and implementation of climate neutrality, completing a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, setting a target date and interim milestones for becoming climate neutral, taking immediate steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – such as providing access to public transportation or adopting an energy-efficient appliance purchasing policy – and integrating sustainability into the curriculum.

"Signing the Presidents Climate Commitment is part of UNH's commitment to being a climate protection campus that engages the entire university community – and ultimately all of New England - in climate change education and emissions reductions," said Tom Kelly, director of the UNH Office of Sustainability. "Our continued emissions reductions are complemented by our integrative research, interdisciplinary curricula at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and broad-based education about the relationships among energy choices, climate, and economic and social well-being."

UNH, a leader in sustainability, has many initiatives underway that will help the university achieve climate neutrality. The university has developed a novel greenhouse gas emissions inventory tool that has been adopted by more than 200 colleges and universities in the United

States; it engages faculty, staff and students in a universitywide energy task force chaired by a vice president; in 2006 it brought online a combined heat and power (CHP) facility, or cogeneration plant; and UNH is in the preliminary stages of a groundbreaking project that will bring landfill methane gas to this facility. When emissions reductions are combined with its innovations in climate education, teaching, and research, UNH's comprehensive Climate Education Initiative places the university at the vanguard of higher education on the issue.

Under the guidance and direction of the leadership circle, the Presidents Climate Commitment is being supported and implemented by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), of which UNH is a member, Second Nature, and ecoAmerica. To date more than 60 universities and colleges have signed the Commitment.

"UNH is the first public land-grant university in New England to sign the commitment, demonstrating once again the university's long-standing leadership in sustainability," said Anthony Cortese, president of Second Nature, a research institute dedicated to education and sustainability, and co-creator of the Presidents Climate Commitment. "We are thrilled to have UNH on board."

More information on UNH's sustainability efforts is available at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu and www.unh.edu/etf. More information on the Presidents Climate Commitment is available at www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org.