

THE CAMPUS AND CLIMATE CONNECTION



How can you convey the importance of your cause to others and get them to join you in your efforts? In this document, you'll find some key talking points to help you guide your messaging.

Start by explaining why higher education is uniquely positioned to lead on climate change:

Higher education leaders have the power to inspire society to strive toward new levels of progress and success in climate solutions. They serve over 21 million students annually,¹ employ 3.9 million Americans,²

and are influential forces of innovation and growth in communities across the nation. Furthermore, they bridge gaps across diverse stakeholders and sectors, enabling them to lead our nation in creating a more healthy, prosperous and stable future for all generations. Leading on climate change within their campuses and communities enables them to:

1. ENHANCE AND HELP FULFILL THE SCHOOL MISSION — Colleges and universities' missions are to educate future leaders and workers. As centers of learning and research, colleges and universities can empower students, staff, and faculty to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience required to accelerate climate solutions.

2. DRIVE RECRUITMENT SUCCESS — According to *The Princeton Review's* 2014 survey, 61% of college applicants said information on a school's environmental commitment would influence their decision to apply to or attend the school.

3. ADDRESS STUDENTS' PRIORITIES — As young adults preparing for their futures, students are concerned about the impacts of climate change and want their schools to lead on climate solutions by example. Students are also looking to their schools to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need, and to foster collaboration among students and other stakeholders in the college community.

4. STRENGTHEN CURRICULUM — New sustainability programs and majors at the bachelor, masters and PhD levels have been implemented in schools throughout the nation. Community colleges are a source of clean energy training and schools are infusing climate change and sustainability into their curriculums (from the sciences to the social sciences). Climate change research centers have been established at universities with interdisciplinary teams working with federal and state labs and other universities.

5. PREPARE STUDENTS FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES — Students want to secure meaningful employment when they complete their studies. Clean energy jobs grew nearly two-and-a-half times as quickly as jobs in the overall economy. In recent years, sustainability positions are popping up in companies and organizations across the country,³ and an increasing number of companies are launching eco-friendly product lines and services.⁴

6. ATTRACT NEW SOURCES OF FUNDING — Federal and state governments, corporations, foundations and philanthropists provide substantial funding for projects and institutes related to climate change innovation and leadership. This funding improves and diversifies institutions' financial resources.

7. ACHIEVE COST SAVINGS — Colleges and universities spend between \$6 and \$7 billion each year on energy and utilities.⁵ An average of 30 cents per dollar that organizations spend on energy use in buildings is wasted through inefficiency.⁶ Energy efficiency projects save money by reducing energy costs and investing in renewable energy sources may increase future cost savings.

8. MANAGE FINANCIAL RISKS — Efforts to prepare for and help prevent further climate change may reduce financial risks resulting from climate impacts such as increasing and more severe storm⁷ damage to school and community infrastructure and disruption of school operations.

9. PROMOTE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT — Schools across the nation are partnering with local business and other civic leaders to innovate and build solutions that help prepare and prevent further climate change. Faculty, students, local professionals and experts can and are collaborating on climate-related projects that encourage powerful civic engagement, project-based learning.

10. PREPARE AND PROTECT COMMUNITIES AND REGIONS — Schools can help build prepared, resilient and dynamic communities by engaging citizens, organizations, hospitals and businesses in collaborative climate solutions initiatives. These efforts strengthen community relationships.

¹ <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98>

² <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012156rev.pdf>

³ <http://www.bls.gov/ggs/ggsoverview.htm>

⁴ <http://www.mintel.com/press-centre/social-and-lifestyle/consumer-interest-in-green-services-doubled-from-2008-10>

⁵ http://www.nacubo.org/documents/initiatives/College_Costs_2012.pdf

⁶ <http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/about-us/how-can-we-help-you/build-energy-program/business-case>

⁷ <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights/report-findings/extreme-weather-intro-section-2>

