

# SU signs Presidents Climate Commitment, pledging to further increase campus sustainability

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Syracuse University Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor has committed the University to a leadership role in the fight against global warming by signing a pledge to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases on campus.

Cantor has signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). SU is currently one of 70 institutions to sign the commitment that asks colleges and universities to identify their greenhouse gas output and develop a plan to reduce those emissions over the next three years.

“By committing to the use of clean and renewable energy, Syracuse University is again demonstrating its strong leadership role in the area of sustainability and energy conservation,” says Cantor. “This leadership is exemplified through our great strides in campus energy management over the years, as well as the sustainable activity and innovation that is happening throughout campus. As the lead partner in the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems, we are always examining new ways to create a more sustainable University community.”

In July 2005, SU began the large commitment of purchasing a minimum of 20 percent of its electricity in the form of renewable energy, making SU the seventh-largest higher education purchaser of renewable energy in the country. These renewable energy sources — in the form of low-impact hydro and wind-generated electricity — are cleaner than traditional sources of electricity that produce carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas linked to global climate change.

In signing the Climate Commitment, American colleges and universities pledge to take certain actions that will bring their campus closer to climate neutrality — the concept of reducing or offsetting any greenhouse gases produced by any entity so as to produce a “neutral” effect on global warming. This includes a commitment to the development of a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible; the initiation of two or more tangible actions to reduce greenhouse emissions while a comprehensive plan is being developed; and making action plans, inventory and periodic progress reports publicly available to AASHE.

Modeled after the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, the Climate Commitment is coordinated and supported by AASHE, Second Nature and ecoAmerica. It recognizes the mobilizing role that presidents and chancellors in higher education play in community education about sustainable practices, through both visible sustainable initiatives and through curricular offerings. The initiative seeks the commitment of at least 200 charter signatories by June 2007 and 1,000 or more signatories by December 2009.

Building on SU's strong efforts to create a more sustainable campus and community, the Climate Commitment adds to the following ongoing environmental initiatives at the University:

- the implementation of several administrative committees addressing campus sustainability issues — including an energy council, a utility committee and a building sustainability committee — and the hiring of a manager and staff to oversee energy conservation efforts on campus;
- the commitment to a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification policy for all new building and renovation projects;
- research taking place at the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems (CoE) to develop advances in improving sustainability in built and urban environments;
- SU Food Services practices to include more locally produced foods in the menu and add an organic food section in the Schine Student Center dining facility;
- current recycling efforts and programs; each year, about 250 tons of recyclables consisting of paper, glass and metals are source separated and diverted from the waste stream and recycled; additionally, the Purchasing Department's Excess Property Disposal program has developed a recycling program for most pieces of technology equipment — computers, monitors, keyboards, and storage devices are able to be disposed of at little or no cost to the University;
- the University's landscaping herbicide/pesticide practices have been refined so that the amount of herbicides/pesticides applied to the campus landscape is at a much lower rate than that applied by the typical homeowner; and
- SU Printing Services' exclusive use of soy-based inks, which lessen disposal and air quality issues as compared to non soy-based ink and ink solvents used in the printing process.

For more information on the University's sustainable practices and initiatives, visit the Building a Sustainable Campus at Syracuse University website at <http://sustainablecampus.syr.edu/Sustainablecampus>. For more information on the Climate Commitment, visit <http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org>.