

# **Tulane University Signs Commitment to Carbon Neutrality**

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Tulane University President Scott Cowen signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment today, pledging that the university will measure its impact on global warming and then develop a plan to achieve carbon neutrality through reduced energy use, green building, increased recycling efforts and other measures.

"Global warming is a phenomenon that affects us all. For those of us living in New Orleans and other coastal communities it has even greater urgency because several prominent scientists have linked global warming to the increased intensity of hurricanes," Cowen said. "This agreement continues and codifies Tulane's longtime commitment to reducing the environmental impact of our actions, while educating a new generation of leaders in environmental research and responsibility."

The commitment also calls for Tulane to integrate into its curriculum the concept of sustainability -- the effort to make human economic systems last longer and have less impact on ecological systems. Tulane already has adopted many such measures including:

• Energy and water conservation measures that will lower emissions on its uptown campus by 10 percent.

• Skylights, automatically adjusted electric lights, solar vents, maximized natural illumination and other features designed to reduce energy use by 45 percent each year in its new 142,000 square foot Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life.

• A program through which Tulane architecture students design and build environmentally friendly homes for hurricane victims.

• The Tulane-Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research, which conducts research and learning to enhance global understanding and solutions of environmental issues.

• The National Institute for Climatic Change Research Coastal Center, which mobilizes university researchers from around the country in the support of climate change research.

• Undergraduate degrees in environmental science and environmental studies and programs in architecture, public health, law and public service that offer an environmental focus.

• The Tulane Reading Project, whose 2007 book selection on climate change led to discussions by all first-year students with more than 60 faculty from 20 different departments.

• One of the first university inventories of greenhouse gases and one of the first Energy Star dorm rooms, outfitted entirely with energy-efficient appliances and electronic products.

“Colleges and universities must lead the effort to reverse global warming for the health and well-being of current and future generations,” said Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University and chair of the Presidents Climate Commitment Steering Committee. “Tulane has always been a leader on the issue and on behalf of all the signatories, I welcome President Cowen to the commitment. We are honored and pleased to have him join us as the landmark 500th signatory.”

The Presidents Climate Commitment is a high-visibility effort to address global warming by garnering institutional commitments to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions and to accelerate the research and educational efforts of higher education to equip society to re-stabilize the earth's climate. Under the guidance and direction of university presidents, the Commitment is being supported and implemented by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), Second Nature, and ecoAmerica. Learn more at:

[www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org](http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org)