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## For Immediate Release

### Second Nature and U.S. Green Building Council Announce 2018 Winners of Higher Education Climate Leadership Awards

*University of Illinois and Delta College receive high recognition for commitment to climate action*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 9, 2019)** — Today, Second Nature, in partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), announced that the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Delta College have been selected to receive the ninth annual Climate Leadership Awards.

“The Climate Leadership Awards provide a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the progress happening through innovative climate action in higher education,” said Tim Carter, president of Second Nature. “Highlighting the exceptional successes of these universities and colleges inspires us all to do more, and gives us glimpses into what climate solutions are possible in and through our sector.”

Second Nature is a national nonprofit that works with a network of almost 600 university and colleges to lead the higher education sector in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and striving to meet the necessary goals laid out by climate scientists to avert the worst impacts of climate change. The Climate Leadership Awards recognize innovative and advanced leadership in climate change mitigation and resilience at colleges and universities that participate in Second Nature’s climate commitments.

This year’s winners exemplify leadership through practices, partnerships and initiatives designed to tackle the most complex climatic challenges of the twenty-first century. Both institutions implemented a campus as a living lab approach for sustainability practices, which includes applying energy efficiency practices in campus infrastructure and advancing research in renewable energy models. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s use of power purchase agreements reduces more than 17,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, while Delta College’s implementation of an Energy Optimization Incentive Program in collaboration with its utility provider maximizes conservation and savings.

Both winners also excelled at forging innovative partnerships by engaging with their local businesses, governments and communities to drive climate action. Delta College began a community partnership, known as “Common Good,” to host climate-adaptation and resilience learning sessions and launched a sustainability-immersive study abroad program through international partnerships with programs in Ireland, Costa Rica and France. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign convened local government leaders to set up a task force that will address climate resilience concerns, and enhances classroom learning through a sustainability

mentorship program that connects students with projects that enhance resilience and reduce environmental impacts.

“For the past nine years the Climate Leadership Awards have elevated colleges and universities making meaningful progress toward mitigating the effects of climate change. This year, we recognized campuses whose sustainability commitments are not only holistic and collaborative in scope, but also quantifiable in terms of the benefits provided to their students and community,” said Jaime Van Mourik, vice president of Education Solutions at USGBC. “This year’s winners and honorable mentions have hit several key milestones in their continued dedication to teaching and supporting the next generation of 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders.”

To further recognize signatory campuses at different stages of their climate commitment trajectory, Second Nature and USGBC awarded honorable mentions to six institutions this year, based on demonstrated excellence and progress within the individual focus areas of climate innovation, cross-sector collaboration, and student preparedness.

Honorable mentions include: Ohio University and Alamo Colleges District for climate innovation, Millersville University and Colorado Mountain College for cross-sector collaboration, and California State University, Long Beach, and Truckee Meadows Community College for student preparedness.

Award winners will be recognized as part of the 2019 Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit in Tempe, Arizona, Feb. 10-12. Presented by Second Nature and the Intentional Endowments Network, the Summit is higher education’s premier event to connect presidents and other senior campus leaders on climate change commitments. Visit [Second Nature](#) to learn more about the Climate Leadership Awards.

### **About Second Nature**

Second Nature is committed to accelerating climate action in, and through, higher education. This is accomplished by mobilizing a diverse array of higher education institutions to act on bold climate commitments, to scale campus climate initiatives, and to create innovative climate solutions. The signatories of Second Nature’s [Climate Leadership Commitments](#) make up the [Climate Leadership Network](#), comprised of almost 600 colleges and universities in every state and the District of Columbia who have committed to take action on climate and prepare students through research and education to solve the challenges of the 21st century. Second Nature aims to align, amplify, and bridge the sector’s efforts with other global leaders to advance urgent climate priorities. Learn more at [secondnature.org](#).

### **About the U.S. Green Building Council**

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. USGBC works toward its mission of market transformation through its LEED green building program, robust educational offerings, a nationwide network of chapters and affiliates, the annual [Greenbuild International Conference & Expo](#), the [Center for Green Schools](#) and [advocacy](#) in support of public policy that encourages and enables green buildings and communities. For more information, visit [usgbc.org](#) and connect on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).