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Higher Ed Institutions Awarded Pro Bono Consulting Opportunity to Help Advance Their Climate Projects

Boston, Massachusetts (March 18, 2021) - Ten colleges and universities were officially announced as the winners of a pro bono consulting opportunity that will help advance climate projects on their campuses.

Second Nature - a Boston-based NGO whose mission it is to accelerate climate action in, and through, higher education - issued this opportunity that is being provided and sponsored by Brailsford & Dunlavey and CustomerFirst Renewables.

The goal of this effort is to help the winning campuses reduce or eliminate their CO2 emissions while also minimizing operating costs or achieving other objectives. At each campus, the technical assistance will be worth between $7,500 and $10,000.

Specifically, the schools will receive advisory services to either assist them with:

- **Climate Action Planning** - to support the drafting of a climate action plan or the revising of an existing plan. This service will be provided by Brailsford & Dunlavey.

Or

- **Shifting to Renewable Power** - to support a transition to renewable power, which will include an assessment of the institution’s energy situation, identification of renewable energy solutions, and recommendations for implementing one or more of the advised energy solutions. This service will be provided by CustomerFirst Renewables.

“B&D would like to thank each of the finalists for the outstanding quality in submissions. The range of institutions and specificity of their plans made it abundantly clear that aggressive climate action is the next frontier for colleges and universities working to control expenditures and operate responsibly,” said Paul Brailsford, co-founder and CEO of Brailsford & Dunlavey. “Higher education needs resources like Second Nature to navigate the increasingly complex roadmap to campus sustainability and B&D is proud to be their partner.”

The pro bono opportunity - announced last fall - was open to higher education institutions that are affiliated with Second Nature as Climate Leadership Network signatories and/or University Climate Change Coalition (UC3) members. Second Nature received nearly 50 applications which were reviewed by a committee.
"We were impressed with the quality and number of applications for this pro bono consulting. Clearly, many colleges and universities are eager to make an impact with renewable energy," said Chris O'Brien, director of business development for CustomerFirst Renewables. We are excited to get going with the winning applicants, help them get traction, and become models for their peers."

The winning colleges and universities are:

- **Climate Action Planning**
  - Carleton College (Northfield, MN)
  - Lewis & Clark College (Portland, OR)
  - State University of New York: SUNY Cortland (Cortland, NY) and University at Albany (Albany, NY)
  - The University of Arizona (Tucson, AZ)
  - The University of the South (Sewanee, TN)
  - University of South Florida (Tampa, FL)

- **Shifting to Renewable Power**
  - Davidson College (Davidson, NC)
  - Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, GA)
  - Miami University (Oxford, OH)
  - The College of New Jersey (Ewing, NJ)

“Congratulations to all ten of the winning institutions! In conjunction with Brailsford & Dunlavey and CustomerFirst Renewables, we were happy to be able to provide this pro bono opportunity to the colleges and universities in our network, in support of your continued climate action efforts." - Tim Carter, President, Second Nature

The following is information from each winning institution and their projects:

**Carleton College**

In summer 2021, Carleton College will complete a campus-wide district energy transition from steam heating to low temperature hot water (120°F) with ground-source ("geothermal") heating and cooling. Thanks to this project, two commercial-sized wind turbines and rapid greening of the local electric grid, Carleton's Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions have dropped more than 50% from its 2008 baseline. This work with Brailsford and Dunlavey will help Carleton launch the next phase of carbon reduction efforts by creating an updated business as usual (BAU) model, exploring a fresh set of ideas and conducting a high level analysis of the costs and benefits associated with various carbon mitigation strategies. The work will culminate in a high-level road map to guide the next decade of carbon reduction opportunities at Carleton College.
“When Carleton signed the Second Nature Carbon Commitment in 2007, it was difficult to envision how we would meet our goal to be carbon neutral by 2050. But we have made great strides over the past decade, reducing Scope 1 and 2 emissions by over 50%. The planning context has evolved significantly since we developed our first climate action plan, and our next phase must reflect those changes while also incorporating lessons learned through our progress to date. Just as the Carbon Commitment spurred our initial efforts, Second Nature’s pro bono strategic consulting services will now help us begin to envision the next decade of climate action at Carleton College. - Eric Runestad, VP and Treasurer at Carleton College

Davidson College
Eleven years after publishing its first Climate Action Plan, Davidson College is focusing on emissions reduction in its in-process plan update. Purchased electricity remains the largest single contributor to campus greenhouse gas impacts. By joining forces with Second Nature, Davidson College will be able to evaluate the most effective and achievable strategies to address this component of our carbon footprint.

“As a small liberal arts institution, Davidson College is grateful to be part of Second Nature’s Pro Bono Consulting initiative. We are eager to explore new possibilities for campus energy procurement. CustomerFirst Renewables will be a critical partner in delivering the specialized expertise we need to translate vision to action.” - Ann McCorvey, Vice President, Finance and Administration and CFO

Georgia Institute of Technology
Using the expertise and time of Customer First Renewables, Georgia Tech seeks to conduct a renewable energy diagnostic study to understand the risk, opportunity, and value of pursuing a utility-scale power purchase agreement as a mechanism toward carbon neutrality and utility marketplace resilience.

“Georgia Tech is highly committed to sustainability. We are excited to work with Second Nature and Customer First Renewables to help us realize our sustainability goals, particularly around energy and carbon impacts. This analysis will help us understand the co-benefits of building resilience into our energy portfolio through the inclusion of more sustainable renewable energy sources.” - Kelly Fox, Executive Vice President Administration & Finance, Georgia Institute of Technology
Lewis & Clark College
With assistance from Second Nature, Lewis & Clark will accelerate its climate action plan update: Toward a Just and Resilient Future. Through this process, we will advance several interconnected goals: decarbonizing our operations, innovating climate education, advancing equity and inclusion, and leveraging local and regional initiatives.

"Lewis & Clark is thrilled to be a recipient of the Pro Bono Consulting grant to advance our climate action plan goals in partnership with Second Nature and Brailsford & Dunlavey. Local action by colleges and communities is essential to making progress on climate as we all work toward a just and resilient future. It's great to see regional and federal resources become more widely available as we continue to search for innovative methods to deal with climate change."
- Wim Wiewel, President

Miami University
As a recent signatory of Second Nature's Climate Presidents' Climate Leadership Commitment, Miami University is excited to receive this Pro Bono Consulting opportunity with CustomerFirst Renewables. Through this work, we seek to build on historical successes with our Utility Master Plan by exploring renewable energy options to craft and implement a Climate Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality. Concurrently, we envision these services to be one catalyst to further integrate sustainability campus-wide for our campus population.

"It is an honor to be among the higher education institutions awarded Pro Bono Consulting. Through a historical commitment to sustainability, Miami University has achieved many successes, and we believe we must look at and evaluate the next steps to address the climate crisis. This award will help facilitate and accelerate our Climate Action Task Force’s efforts to achieve carbon neutrality.” - Greg Crawford, President

State University of New York - SUNY
The University at Albany and SUNY Cortland will be working with Brailsford & Dunlavey to create a framework for making informed short-term decisions around investments that align with longer-term goals to significantly reduce Scope 1 emissions and attain carbon neutrality through
cost-effective, meaningful, and implementable actions that can be replicated across the SUNY system.

“At SUNY Cortland, we are always looking for new ideas on doing things more effectively and sustainably. This opportunity will help us make better decisions as we continue to push toward our goal of carbon neutrality. We look forward to working with Brailsford & Dunlavey and hope that together we will create a plan that allows us to shrink our carbon footprint more quickly and sets a course for other SUNY institutions to follow.” - SUNY Cortland President, Erik J. Bitterbaum

“As part of our Climate Action and Sustainability Plan, the University at Albany is constantly looking for innovative ways to reduce emissions and our carbon footprint. We are very happy and honored to partner with SUNY Cortland and Brailsford & Dunlavey to develop a plan that can be utilized by all SUNY colleges and universities.” – UAlbany President Havidán Rodríguez

The College of New Jersey
In 2020 the College of New Jersey developed and bid a request for proposal, “The Carbon Neutral Journey”, intended to engage an engineering firm in the development of a plan to achieve carbon neutrality for on-campus energy systems by 2040. Due to funding shortages caused by the pandemic we were unable to award the contract. The basic idea is to convert the existing steam heating plant to hot water. The existing steam distribution system suffers from significant deferred renewal, so the plan is intended to address that problem as well as the heating source. With the technical support the college will begin the process of developing a plan to phase out the existing boilers and cogeneration system, and convert the steam distribution system to hot water.

"The College of New Jersey is committed to reducing our impact on climate through the shrinking of our carbon footprint. Foremost in our strategy is replacing fossil fuel consumption with renewable energy options, including solar. We applaud Second Nature’s advocacy on campuses nationwide, and are proud to be included in the group of institutions receiving pro bono planning services from CustomerFirst Renewables. This consultancy will bring insights and confidence to our ultimate purchase of on-site or off-site renewable energy." - Dr. Kathryn Foster, President
**The University of Arizona**

The support offered by this opportunity will catalyze the University of Arizona’s climate action planning process by convening key stakeholders, identifying areas of highest priority and impact, and mitigating risks. We look forward to Brailsford & Dunlavey’s expertise in helping us to shape a high-value Plan that is comprehensive, realistic, and guides our institution toward a more resilient, carbon-free future.

“The University of Arizona is honored and delighted to be one of the six schools selected to receive pro bono consulting support from Brailsford & Dunlavey. This generous support will enable us to accelerate the University’s first-ever Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, which will provide us with a roadmap to achieving climate neutrality by, or before, our target date of 2040. Brailsford & Dunlavey has an impressive track record, and we are eager to begin this process with them. The University of Arizona also continues to be dedicated to meaningful climate and sustainability action on our campus and in partnership with the Tucson and greater Southern Arizona community.” - **President Robert C. Robbins**

**The University of the South**

This technical support will enable the University of the South to update its existing sustainability direction to ensure that our objectives are aligned and up to date, and to broaden the standard climate action plan to one that engages the regional community. As an anchor institution on the Cumberland Plateau, the university’s plan must meet the future needs of both the campus and the region.

"The University of the South is honored to be among the colleges and universities selected for the Pro Bono Consulting award from Brailsford & Dunlavey. This opportunity to update the sustainability plans for the university will catalyze and accelerate campuswide engagement and implementation. The project will advance our quest for carbon neutrality and sustainability, which is an important local effort to meet global environmental challenges. We are proud to be included among the grant recipients.” - **Scott Wilson, Vice Provost for Planning and Strategic Initiatives**
University of South Florida
As a single, unified university with three campuses serving our Tampa Bay region, actions to address climate and the environment are at the forefront of our strategic priorities. With assistance from Second Nature and the pro bono consulting opportunity, the University of South Florida seeks to unify its Climate Action Plan and to combine and streamline its emissions related reporting.

“The University of South Florida is grateful for this support and to join our college and university partners in advancing climate action plans. Stewardship of our natural environment is a core value at USF, and a particular focus of our waterfront campus in St. Petersburg. Through study, service and action, we are committed to carbon neutrality and being a leader in sustainability.”
- Steve Currall, USF President and Professor

Second Nature

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. Second Nature aims to align, amplify, and bridge the sector’s efforts with other global leaders to advance urgent climate priorities. Secondnature.org.

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About Brailsford & Dunlavey
Brailsford & Dunlavey (bdconnect.com) is a Washington, DC-headquartered national advisory and program management firm with comprehensive in-house planning and implementation capabilities, dedicated to serving public agencies, professional sports organizations, educational institutions, and non-profit clients. B&D has more than 120 people in seven offices throughout the U.S. For more information, please contact Doug Kotlove at 202-266-3410 or dkotlove@bdconnect.com.
About CustomerFirst Renewables
CustomerFirst Renewables (CFR) is a trusted energy and water advisor that partners with impact-oriented clients to develop actionable strategies, implement tailored solutions, and optimize performance over time. CFR advises clients on strategy, procurement, and organizational implementation of renewable energy and resilient water solutions.
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