



Acceleration Fund

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Second Round Acceleration Fund Awardees Announced

Eight Higher Education Institutions Have Been Awarded Funding

Boston, Massachusetts (June 29, 2021) - Today, [Second Nature](#) - a Boston-based NGO focused on accelerating climate action in, and through, higher education - announced that eight higher education institutions have been awarded grant funding through the Acceleration Fund for innovative climate projects they are working on.

The [Acceleration Fund](#) is dedicated to supporting innovative cross-sector climate action activities driven by colleges and universities. The Acceleration Fund was first introduced a year ago at the 2020 Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit. Projects awarded funding in [2020](#) fostered long-term, campus-community partnerships and had the potential to scale climate activities beyond the single-year grant term.

Funding for this second round was made possible by [Lumina Foundation](#).

*“Transitioning to a clean, just economy cannot happen without strong participation from the postsecondary education sector,” stated **Terri Taylor, Strategy Director for Innovation and Discovery at Lumina Foundation**. “This will require doing business differently, with a stronger focus on equity and more attention to community partnerships. We are thrilled to see this group of institutions stepping up to the challenge.”*

Eligible projects included those that would use the monies for implementation of existing climate action projects or to support climate action planning activities. As with the first round of funding, projects were required to focus on long-term, campus-community activities that were likely to continue after the one year grant term expired.

Additionally this year, preference was given to applicants whose climate projects placed an explicit emphasis on climate justice, equity, and engagement with communities of color.

The number of applications received was positively overwhelming - illustrating the higher education sector’s active dedication to climate action. All applications were reviewed by an esteemed committee of sixteen.

(more)

The eight winning higher education institutions:

College of Menominee Nation (Keshena, WI)

Drexel University (Philadelphia, PA)

Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA)

Milwaukee Area Technical College *via Milwaukee Area Technical College Foundation Inc.*

(Milwaukee, WI)

Southern Oregon University (Ashland, OR)

Stetson University (DeLand, FL)

The University of British Columbia (Vancouver, BC)

University of Wisconsin–Madison (Madison, WI)

Colleges and universities eligible to apply included those who are [Climate Leadership Network](#) signatories and/or [University Climate Change Coalition \(UC3\)](#) members.

*“Just as with the first round of the Acceleration Fund, we were positively overwhelmed with the number and diversity of applications we received,” stated **Tim Carter, President of Second Nature**. “While it meant that our review committee had to make some tough decisions, it also affirms the higher education sector’s commitment to advancing climate action and climate justice. Thank you to every college/university that applied, and congratulations to the winning institutions!”*

On the following pages is more information about the colleges and universities awarded funding and their winning projects.



College of Menominee Nation

College of Menominee Nation, located on the Menominee Indian Reservation in northern Wisconsin, is working to provide more equitable access to their Phenology Trail and Learning Path. Located behind the College, the Phenology Trail is a walking path that educates users about different native plants using information stations that display the Menominee and scientific names, life cycle, and uses of that plant, and also provides data for ongoing research on how climate change impacts local plant phenology. This funding will support the purchase of a solar-powered golf cart that will enable Elders, veterans, and handicapped individuals within the community to explore the learning path and educate others about native plants and their cultural significance.

“Indigenous communities are often those hit first and worst by negative impacts associated with

climate change, which pose a threat to traditional ways of life and the natural resources utilized by the community. Being a tribal college and recognizing these unfortunate circumstances, College of Menominee Nation utilizes the Menominee Theoretical Model of Sustainability as the basis for much of our research, decision making and future planning. Our Phenology Trail and Learning Path showcases traditional Indigenous knowledge about native plants while also serving as a nucleus for the climate change research conducted at the College. This support from the Second Nature Acceleration Fund will allow the College to provide equitable access to the Phenology Trail and Learning Path, and incorporate our Elders as knowledge holders into our research.” - Christopher Caldwell, President of College of Menominee Nation



Drexel University

Drexel University is convening the Climate Resilience Research Agenda this summer with partners from the City of Philadelphia, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and academic and community-based climate experts from the Philadelphia region, with a goal of identifying the areas where additional research is needed to guide our region through the work needed for climate resilience. The Climate Solutions Acceleration Fund award will allow us to provide stipends for agenda participants who might not otherwise be able to participate, ensuring that critical voices are present for this important work.

"Drexel University is honored to receive this award from Second Nature's Climate Solutions Acceleration Fund in support of the Climate Resilience Research Agenda. At Drexel, we are marking 2021 as Climate Year. Climate Year amplifies our commitment to working in partnership to develop solutions to the climate crisis, and we are especially grateful to Second Nature for its support as we advance this mission." - President John A. Fry



Gonzaga University

Funds from this award will be used to provide honoraria to members of the Spokane Community that represent and/or provide support for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities to participate in the Spokane Climate Resiliency Academy. Funds will also be used to support the Resiliency Academy cohort's participation in Spokane City Council's Sustainability Action Subcommittee "Meeting in a Box" (MIB) engagements that present the Spokane Sustainability Action Plan to members of the Spokane Community. Lastly, funds will be used to retain a consultant/trainer for the Spokane Community Environmental Justice Task

Force, which is establishing an Environmental Justice (EJ) advisory group and identifying the most vulnerable communities that are disproportionately at risk to climate impacts in our community.

“Gonzaga University is honored to receive this grant from the Second Nature Climate Accelerator Fund. As a Jesuit, Catholic University, centering justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the work of sustainability is foundational to who we are. The funds will help amplify BIPOC voices in our Spokane Climate Resiliency Academy, support the effort to share the City of Spokane’s Climate Action Plan with its citizens, and provide the resources to hire a consultant to support the Spokane Community Environmental Justice Task Force. These are critical steps in realizing the full depth of sustainability in our community.” - Dr. Thayne McCulloh, President, Gonzaga University



Milwaukee Area Technical College via Milwaukee Area Technical College Foundation Inc.

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) is exploring the feasibility of a shared-benefit, community-engaged solution serving underrepresented communities struggling to afford renewable energy options, but also who are most in need of reduced utility bills. Led by MATC, a public technical college in Milwaukee, together with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a public university also located in Milwaukee, the project convenes local partners in the solar industry and community work groups focusing on finding equitable solutions with our students, while at the same time mitigating the college carbon footprint.

“We are grateful for the Second Nature grant which will strengthen MATC’s community connection to discover opportunities and remove barriers within our college sustainability practices. It will also build a stronger workforce pipeline to green jobs industries. Together we will explore how students and our community can learn job skills and take advantage of access to cleaner, sustainable energy for the betterment of our community.” - Milwaukee Area Technical College President Vicki J. Martin, Ph.D.



Southern Oregon University

The Social Justice and Equity Center at Southern Oregon University will establish an “equity and climate resilience” program to accelerate the pace at which a racial equity lens is brought to the forefront of climate adaptation and resilience efforts. The funds will be used to hire a student Equity and Climate Resilience Fellow, who will be charged with convening parties from the racial justice and social equity arenas with those working toward climate resilience and adaptation.

"Southern Oregon University recognizes the intersection of social equity and climate justice and is delighted to have received funding from Second Nature to help further our work in this area. Sustainability is a critical aspect of our Strategic Plan, our values at SOU and our daily operations. We work across the board to ensure our culture is infused with Sustainability."

- President Linda Schott

STETSON UNIVERSITY

Stetson University

This grant supports collaboration among Stetson University and community groups focused on memorializing African American experiences. The goal is to foster equitable access to cycling trail networks in our region by creating a mobile application for cycling and pedestrian infrastructure that features overlooked, local, African American histories. Participants will include students and local experts on the African American experience.

"We are extremely grateful to the Climate Solutions Acceleration Fund and Second Nature, Inc. for this grant. It will help fund an app for cycling and pedestrian infrastructure that features overlooked, local African American histories, and thereby foster equitable access to cycling trail networks in our region. This grant will enable our students to work with local experts on the African American experience in our area and enhance their own educational experiences."

- Stetson University President Christopher F. Roellke, PhD



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The University of British Columbia

As part of the University of British Columbia's Climate Emergency response, the university is developing a cross-sector Community Council forum where they will work with external partners to further justice-based climate action, equitable development and resilient communities. The funding will be used to hire a UBC student to help plan the Community Council and engagement processes.

"UBC has long been recognized for our leadership on sustainability and climate action, but we know that more urgent progress is needed. In the face of the climate emergency, UBC is working with our partners and communities to transform our economic, social and political systems to be more inclusive, equitable and just, and we commit to upholding the voices of young people, Indigenous peoples and all marginalized communities in this work. We are honoured to receive this grant from the Second Nature Climate Accelerator Fund." - University of British Columbia President Santa J. Ono, UC3 Leadership Lead



University of Wisconsin–Madison

Our Second Nature Climate Solutions Acceleration Fund grant will be used to accelerate planning efforts for a Community Resilience Center, the first of its kind in the greater Madison, Wisconsin area. Working with local community members, nonprofit organizations and government agencies as part of our Climate Leadership Network’s Resilience Commitment, a Community Resilience Center is envisioned to bolster resources for local community members by being a source of reliable and timely information and providing physical space for people or organizations to assemble. In the future, enhancing the facility with solar panels and energy storage would enable our Community Resilience Center to provide back-up power to the facility in times of emergency while supporting efficient and effective facility usage in non-emergency times.

“At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we are working with campus and community partners to develop pathways to meet the urgent threats of climate change with strategies that acknowledge the complexities of the challenge. We are grateful to be selected for the Second Nature Climate Solutions Acceleration Fund. Grant funds will be used to support innovative cross-sector planning efforts for a Community Resilience Center, one of several projects underway as part of our Climate Leadership Network’s Resilience Commitment. We recognize that higher education has a role to play in addressing this complex global crisis and we are proud to work with our partners and Second Nature to advance resilience strategies.”

– University of Wisconsin–Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank

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](https://secondnature.org).

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