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Nine (9) Colleges and Universities Awarded Pro Bono Consulting to Support Their Campus Climate Efforts

Boston, Massachusetts (March 23, 2023) - Today, [Second Nature](#) - an NGO focused on accelerating climate action in, and through, higher education - announced that nine (9) higher education institutions were awarded pro bono consulting services to aid their campus climate projects.

Through this initiative, technical and advisory support worth up to \$20,000 is given to campuses at no cost to them in three areas: (1) Climate Action Planning (2) Shifting to Renewable Power, and (3) Water Resiliency Strategy. Eligible schools - those who are [Climate Leadership Network](#) signatories and/or [University Climate Change Coalition \(UC3\)](#) members - could apply for support.

The Round III recipient colleges and universities are:

- **Climate Action Planning**
 - Furman University (South Carolina)
 - Lane Community College (Oregon)
 - University of Richmond (Virginia)
- **Shifting to Renewable Power**
 - Northern Illinois University (Illinois)
 - University of Florida (Florida)
 - University of Puerto Rico at Utuado (Puerto Rico)
- **Water Resiliency Strategy**
 - Salem State University (Massachusetts)
 - University of San Diego (California)
 - Virginia Commonwealth University (Virginia)

The Pro Bono Consulting opportunity was first announced in Fall 2020, as a new [Solutions Center](#) initiative. Provided and sponsored by [Brailsford & Dunlavey](#) and [Coho](#); two Second Nature partners, 23 colleges and universities have been awarded Pro Bono Consulting Services.

“As a proud partner of this vitally important program, B&D continues to be energized by the quality of the applications, and more importantly, the commitment these campuses are making

to aggressive climate action,” said Jeffrey Turner, Executive Vice President of Brailsford & Dunlavey. “As a sector, higher education continues to lead by example in combating an existential threat. But these schools and their students and faculty can’t do it alone, so it’s crucial that the business community continue to support these initiatives and spread the word on the importance of a healthier planet.”

The services provided are:

- **Climate Action Planning:** supports the drafting of a climate action plan that outlines a technically and financially feasible roadmap towards an equitable, carbon-free future, aligned with the education and research mission of the institution. This service is provided by Brailsford & Dunlavey.
- **Shifting to Renewable Power:** supports a transition to renewable power, which includes 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 is provided by Coho.
- **Water Resiliency Strategy:** supports water resiliency planning, a water diagnostic designed to uncover campus water risks and challenges, and identify solutions that minimize water risks, combat growing water/sewer costs, and enhance resiliency. This service is provided by Coho.

For this round, Second Nature received applications from twenty (20) higher education institutions. The nine awarded colleges and universities come from diverse regions and environments across the United States and US Territories, and are different types of higher education institutions.

“Second Nature’s work has been vital to leading the decarbonization of higher education institutions. CFR is honored to contribute by providing pro bono guidance to three universities poised to make significant reductions in their respective campus emissions. This program is catalyzing real impact,” said Gary Farha, founder and ceo, Coho.

“At Second Nature, we’re always working to advance the tools and resources we offer our higher education institutions in support of their campus and community climate efforts. When colleges and universities are able to reach their climate goals, we all win,” stated Tim Carter, Second Nature president. Following the success of the pilot round of the Pro Bono Initiative last year, we were thrilled to be able to offer a “Round III” this year once again in conjunction with Brailsford & Dunlavey and Coho; tremendous long-time partners of ours. Congratulations to all of the campuses who were awarded in this round”

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

Climate Action Planning Recipient Institutions



Shi Institute for Sustainable Communities at Furman University

We aim to update our existing Climate Action Plan (CAP) with data-driven, technical assistance from Brailsford & Dunlavey made possible by this partnership with Second Nature and Coho. Our CAP was originally published in 2009. With this project, we hope to recognize past successes and evaluate new strategies that will help us accelerate our progress toward carbon neutrality. Throughout the process, our Shi Institute for Sustainable Communities at Furman will develop internal expertise that we can share with students, faculty, staff, and our community, ultimately magnifying the value of this award in our community and region.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to work with Brailsford & Dunlavey to update Furman's climate action plan. This pro-bono consulting support will build on our past efforts and reorient us on a clear path forward, providing technical expertise to analyze and prioritize greenhouse gas emission-reduction strategies. Furman has a long history of excellence in sustainability, and we are looking forward to taking this next step in partnership with Brailsford & Dunlavey. At Furman, we feel strongly that our sustainability work is strongest when it is grounded in responsible stewardship on campus, and we look forward to the work ahead." - **Furman University President Elizabeth Davis**



Lane Community College

Lane Community College will use the consulting services to have subject matter experts revise our existing Climate Action Plan 2.0 and provide a framework for our Climate Action Plan 3.0 update. The expertise and outside perspective of the consulting services will help us identify areas of improvement on our current carbon reduction efforts and CAP 2.0. In addition, the consultation services will help with the expansion of Climate Justice concepts with a roadmap and recommendations of how to incorporate a comprehensive equity-focused approach to climate action.

"Lane Community College (LCC) is a proud and grateful recipient of the Pro Bono consulting services. Working with subject matter experts will help us accelerate climate action by making

measurable progress toward achieving college-wide carbon neutrality by 2050. LCC has a long history of sustainability and it has been adopted as a college core value. These consulting services will help us to better integrate practices that support and improve the health of systems that sustain life into upcoming Climate Action Plan iterations as well as other institutional sustainability goals.” - Luis Maggiori, Sustainability Coordinator



University of Richmond

The University of Richmond will utilize the Pro Bono Consulting Services to integrate climate action and resilience planning into strategic, comprehensive, and energy planning processes. Working alongside Brailsford & Dunlavey and Coho, we will identify decarbonization strategies, revisit our climate action timeline, support the capacity of our talented staff, and communicate our climate action progress as well as our upcoming plans. By incorporating this roadmap into future strategy sessions, we can embed climate action, resilience, and sustainability into campus planning as our institution moves forward.

“I am proud of the progress we’ve made since committing to climate action at the University of Richmond. We have reduced greenhouse emissions by two-thirds since 2009, invested in energy efficiency, and adopted renewable energy. As we shift our focus to achieving the remainder of our carbon neutrality goal, we are grateful to Second Nature for helping us identify viable solutions to a sustainable future.” - David Hale, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Shifting to Renewable Power Recipient Institutions



Northern Illinois University

Northern Illinois University

NIU is committed to rapid decarbonization of our campus, and we are currently exploring options for solar energy production. As a peri-urban campus with ample land, NIU has the potential to become energy self-sufficient and significantly reduce our overall greenhouse gas emissions. Partnering with Coho will provide us with the much-needed industry expertise to optimize our land utilization and infrastructure resources as we consider which solar projects to pursue during our transition to renewable energy.

“We are excited about the opportunity to work with Coho. Their experience and expertise will be invaluable to inform our decision-making process as we transition to solar energy and achieve our campus decarbonization goals. Specifically, Coho will help us to identify the renewable energy projects on campus that provide NIU the best opportunities to fulfill our commitment to carbon neutrality, while also using our campus as a living laboratory to engage with students around real-world sustainability solutions.” - **Northern Illinois University President Lisa Freeman**

Freeman



University of Florida

The University of Florida developed ambitious goals for renewable energy in our draft Climate Action Plan 2.0. The Pro Bono work with Coho will be used to develop a plan to achieve these goals, including recommendations for best value utility-provided renewable energy purchases, recommendations for best long-term options for a portfolio of RECs and/or renewable energy, and recommendations for on-campus solar including locations and financing. Given restrictions in Florida for solar energy procurement and installation, we look forward to having experts guide us as we develop plans for both UF’s main campus and off-campus properties.

“The University of Florida is delighted to have the opportunity to work with Coho to accelerate our transition towards the use of renewable energy for campus energy needs, meeting the goals identified in the draft Climate Action Plan 2.0 for renewable energy for purchase electricity and on-campus generation. The work with Coho will build upon our current efforts, demonstrating UF’s commitment to our 2025 Carbon Neutrality date. We are excited to develop the path forward in cooperation with Coho and Second Nature and we are grateful for this opportunity.” -
Matt Williams, Director, UF Office of Sustainability



The University of Puerto Rico at Utuado

The University of Puerto Rico at Utuado is committed to improving sustainability education in Puerto Rico. A key step to achieve this goal is to increase the sustainability of our campus. UPRU seeks to reduce its campus greenhouse gasses emissions, and decarbonize the energy consumed on our campus and nearby communities. The Pro Bono consulting opportunity from this partnership with Second Nature, Brailsford & Dunlavey, and Coho will be used to develop a solid plan for the transition to renewable energy. Our final goal is to fully transition to solar energy for all energy consumed on campus.

“We greatly appreciate being a recipient of the Pro Bono Consulting initiative sponsored by Second Nature. For small colleges like the University of Puerto Rico at Utuado (UPRU) these opportunities are a game changer. Our institution is deeply committed to the advancement of Second Nature Commitments. The Pro Bono Consulting will enable our campus to initiate the transition to sustainable energy sources. This will allow UPRU to become an example for our region.” -
Dr. Luis A. Tapia-Maldonado, Chancellor of the UPRU

Water Resiliency Strategy Recipient Institutions



Salem State University

Support from Coho will enable Salem State University to sharpen our understanding of opportunities to reduce operational water use and realize environmental and cost savings. We look forward to their guidance in developing a more systematic approach to monitoring our water usage and to making the financial case for strategic improvements. We anticipate that a detailed plan will guide us in wiser stewardship of stressed regional water resources.

“Salem State is pleased to be offered the opportunity to work with Coho through Second Nature’s Pro Bono Consulting Program. Our mission to prepare a diverse community of learners to contribute responsibly and creatively to a global society requires that we demonstrate leadership and responsible stewardship in our own operations. Through the consultancy, we anticipate identifying cost-effective strategies to reduce our water use and associated impact on local water resources.” – **Karen House, Vice President for Finance and Facilities**



University of San Diego

As a university located in drought-stricken California, USD recognizes and understands its obligations to better use the water it consumes and reduce its overall water use across campus. By receiving this pro bono consulting grant from Second Nature, Coho, and Brailsford & Dunlavey, USD will be able to go beyond the basic water conservation projects it has implemented to now identify new, unrealized opportunities to better manage its entire water system, ultimately helping the university achieve its environmental and climate goals.

“USD sincerely appreciates this pro bono consulting opportunity from Second Nature. Every day, the university commits itself to being a good steward of the environment to ensure that generations of the future can have and enjoy the resources of today, and in being selected for this initiative, we are able to strengthen that commitment.” - **John Alejandro, Director of Sustainability, USD**



Virginia Commonwealth University

We welcome this opportunity to work with Coho at this critical time in our sustainability journey. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the water resiliency of our urban campuses will be important to the development of the ONE VCU Sustainability Plan, a comprehensive sustainability roadmap for VCU and VCU Health. The expert advice of Coho's consulting team will strengthen our ability to assess the most feasible approaches to renewable energy use, develop new ways to improve our water consumption patterns, and help us to reduce the impact of our activities on the James River, Virginia's largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay.

"We are delighted to be working with Coho on water resiliency and our renewable energy portfolio. This consultancy has come at an opportune time, as we embark on the development of a sustainability strategic plan that will help the university and the health system continue to carry out our mission to solve society's most complex challenges. The Coho team's insights and actionable steps will further support VCU and VCU Health's work with our community to support the well-being of our students, patients and future generations." – **Ann Kildahl, Director of Sustainability**



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](https://secondnature.org).



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 Coho, an ERM Group Company

Coho 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. Coho advises clients on strategy, procurement, and organizational implementation of renewable energy and resilient water solutions. <https://www.cohoclimate.com>