



For Immediate Release

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Higher Ed Leaders Gather at 2019 Summit to Activate Urgent Response to Climate Reports and Accelerate Campus Action

Boston, MA (February 5, 2019) — In Tempe, Arizona, on February 10-12, higher education leaders will convene to innovate, scale, and accelerate progress in climate action on campuses and across public sectors. Hosted by Second Nature and the Intentional Endowment Network (IEN), the [2019 Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit](#) draws together leaders in higher education, including presidents, trustees, CFOs, endowment/foundation officers, and sustainability directors, with diverse stakeholders to plan and equip for the large-scale solutions needed in the next decade to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, according to the recent leading scientific reports.

“Since we met last year, the evidence has been growing that the environmental challenges facing the US and the planet are accelerating,” said President David Finegold of Chatham University. “I’m looking forward to being with colleagues from universities that are taking the lead in addressing these challenges, and coming away with some innovative approaches we can apply at Chatham.”

“I see this Summit as crucial for those aiming to address increasingly pressing global environmental issues. Putting these higher education thought leaders in the same room is truly a catalyst for rigorous and robust action on our campuses and in our communities,” said President Scott Miller of Virginia Wesleyan University.

Climate leadership is not new to higher education. Hundreds of institutions have committed to going carbon neutral, starting over a dozen years ago with the launch of the [Presidents' Climate Leadership Commitments](#). The latest science makes it clear that we need to escalate a just transition to a low-carbon, inclusive and sustainable economy with opportunity for all -- now and in the future. This Summit will focus on how higher education can answer this call by providing the knowledge, graduates and role-modeling behaviors needed to realize this vision.

“Colleges and universities have to be leaders on this issue now,” said President Wim Wiewel of Lewis and Clark College. “Our commitment to climate leadership influences millions of students, makes a real difference in our carbon emissions, and together with other sectors we can make a difference, even while the federal government is largely absent on this issue.”

“Eastern Connecticut State University is proud to be involved in the higher education sustainability movement, and pleased to be an active partner with Second Nature,” said

President Elsa Núñez of Eastern Connecticut State University. “We look forward to continuing to work with other higher education leaders as we seek to accelerate our nation’s response to the many challenges presented by climate change.”

The event’s agenda will examine how campuses can reduce their carbon footprint, increase their campus resilience to climate impacts and address the social justice implications of the greater vulnerability of marginalized communities. Interactive sessions will aim to strengthen collective action between universities and colleges in areas such as: endowments investing for a climate-friendly, sustainable economy, large-scale renewable energy procurement, and carbon offsets and carbon pricing to support emission reduction goals.

A panel including Michael Crow, President of Arizona State University, and Mustafa Ali, Vice President of the Hip Hop Caucus, will explore higher education’s cross-sector role in responding to the urgency of the climate crisis. Additionally, the Summit will help catalyze partnerships between higher education and cities, states, businesses, and other stakeholders to bridge the gap between sectors for comprehensive approaches to solving the scope of imminent environmental challenges.

Unique themes at this year’s Summit include: empowering women in leading climate action solutions; diversity, equity and inclusion at the forefront of conversations around climate leadership and sustainable investing; and the collective power of faith-based institutions to expand climate leadership efforts in education and community action.

Participants of the 2019 Climate Leadership Summit will leave equipped and inspired to create applied research and academic initiatives that support the public sector’s climate goals and explore enhancement opportunities on campuses for the development of climate resiliency, economic prosperity, and social equity.

The event is free to press and media professionals. Please email bpainter@secondnature.org for how to register with a complimentary pass. For more information, view the [full agenda](#) for the 2019 Summit.

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

About the Intentional Endowments Network

The Intentional Endowments Network is a non-profit, peer-learning network advancing intentionally designed endowments – those that seek to enhance financial performance by aligning investments with institutional mission, values, and sustainability goals. It provides opportunities for learning and education, peer networking, convening, thought leadership and information exchange around a variety of strategies (e.g., ESG integration, impact investing, and shareholder engagement) across asset classes. www.intentionalendowments.org