UC³
University Climate Change Coalition

2020-2025
UNIVERSITY CLIMATE CHANGE COALITION (UC3)
STRATEGIC PLAN

Climate change is an urgent, global issue that requires immediate and accelerated action to not only limit global average temperature increase to below 1.5°C by the end of the century, but also avoid irreversible and catastrophic impacts.[1]

While the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that these goals are within reach[2], the imperative remains to scale up climate actions by both state and non-state actors to accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement[3] and the 2030 Agenda[4].

As powerful and influential subnational actors, institutions of higher education are especially well positioned to act as agents of change in their communities to accelerate cross-sector climate action.[5,6] This is especially true of large, leading research institutions, which not only possess the ability to serve as important knowledge generators, anchor institutions, and neutral conveners in their communities, but also serve millions of students – many of whom are young adults – who will not only become the next generation of leaders but are also likely to be disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. Leadership demonstrated by these institutions can play a pivotal role in accelerating climate action in communities around the world and influence the lives of students for generations to come.

1 United Nations. (20919). Report of the Secretary-General on the 2019 Climate Action Summit and the Way Forward in 2020. New York. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/assets/pdf/cas_report_11_dec.pdf

2 IPCC. (2018). Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change. Geneva.

3 United Nations. (2015). Paris Agreement. New York: United Nations.

4 United Nations. (2015). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: United Nations.

5 Munro, A., Marcus, J., Dolling, K., Robinson, J. and Wahl, J. (2016). Combining forces: Fostering sustainability collaboration between the city of Vancouver and the University of British Columbia. International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 17(6), 812–826. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-04-2015-0082

6 Filho, W. (2011). About the Role of Universities and Their Contribution to Sustainable Development. Higher Education Policy, 24. https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2011.16

ABOUT THE PLAN

Moving into the third year since the launch of the UC3 at the 2018 Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit, the Coalition has matured and refined its role as an accelerant of place-based climate solutions and leading voice on the urgency of emissions mitigation and climate resilience actions. **This strategic plan represents an updated vision and trajectory for the Coalition, building upon its successes and lessons learned over the past two years from cross-sector forums, internal collaborations, and partnerships with local and regional stakeholders.**

UC3
GUIDING FRAMEWORK AND CORE VALUES

Guiding the Coalition's work is a framework of core values that are woven throughout the goals and strategies outlined in this plan. While specific goals and strategies are subject to change over time as new priorities and opportunities emerge, these core values are meant to remain more constant and used to guide the success of UC3 activities now and into the future.

In maintaining these core values, the UC3 member institutions are committed to active and continued involvement in the Coalition to ensure its long-term success as a generative and collaborative group.

UC3 CORE VALUES

Teaching and Applied Learning

The UC3 is committed to fostering transformative teaching and real-world learning experiences that engage students in studies, reflective practices, and action around climate change.

Coalition-Wide Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

The UC3 is dedicated to coalition-wide collaboration, fostering peer learning, and the sharing of knowledge across institutions and with the wider higher education sector.

Cross-Sector Partnerships and Place-Based Climate Action

The UC3 recognizes the importance of climate action that is responsive to the local context and drives the need for developing cross-sector partnerships that build connections between students, faculty, and staff at research universities and key stakeholders in the community.

Generation of Useful, Impactful Knowledge and Demand Driven Research

The UC3 values demand-driven research that addresses important gaps in climate action research and generates useful and impactful knowledge for timely climate solutions.

Institutional Leadership and Integration

The UC3 member institutions seek to leverage the leadership of university presidents and chancellors and build institutional consensus to pursue climate action by integrating academics, operations, and community engagement.

UC3 2020-2025 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Over the course of the next five years, the UC3 will strive to uphold its core values through actions taken by individual member institutions, and as a coalition, to achieve strategic goals in the UC3's three, interconnected spheres of influence: **campus**, **community**, and **global**. While the goals represent broader, desired outcomes of this plan, the strategies outline several potential avenues for UC3 to achieve its goals.
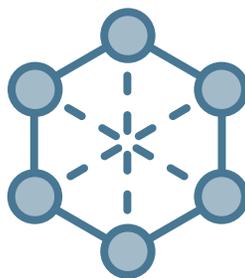
Campus   →   Community   →   Global

UC3 2020-2025 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Strategies realized through the actions of individual members institutions are labeled "**Member**," while those realized through the actions taken by the Coalition as a whole, or clusters of institutions, are labeled "**Coalition**." Given the geographic and institutional diversity of the UC3, Coalition members will choose the Member and Coalition strategies that they are best positioned to engage in and implement. As the UC3 Network Lead, Second Nature will continue to facilitate and coordinate Coalition-wide activities.

MEMBER

COALITION

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
CAMPUS

Goal 1 Leverage university resources to accelerate and promote climate action research, teaching and/or co-curricular activities on campus

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
COMMUNITY

Goal 2 Foster and strengthen cross-sector partnerships in community to co-create place-based climate action solutions that reduce GHG emissions and build community resilience

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
GLOBAL

Goal 3 As an international coalition, elevate and amplify research universities' leadership role in accelerating global climate action and transitioning to a more resilient, low-carbon future

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
CAMPUS

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
COMMUNITY

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
GLOBAL

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:
CAMPUS

Goal 1

Leverage university resources to accelerate and promote climate action research, teaching and/or co-curricular activities on campus

CAMPUS

Strategy 1.1

Create and implement campus as a living lab initiatives, programs, and/or projects. Service-learning projects allow for the integration of academic and operational sustainability into the academic curriculum and offer students the opportunity to develop climate solutions that address real-world, campus challenges.

Strategy 1.2

Establish pathways to incorporate concepts of climate action and sustainability across the curriculum. These pathways stretch beyond a single class or program to integrate concepts of emissions mitigation, climate adaptation, and resilience into a wide array of courses, resulting in increased climate literacy among students.

Strategy 1.3

Support student participation in campus climate action activities and foster climate leadership. Supporting student participation in strategic planning and other activities related to emissions mitigation and campus resilience empowers students to become leaders in their campus communities and beyond.

Strategy 1.4

Encourage operational climate leadership on campus. Operational leadership that addresses climate change not only helps campuses reduce emissions and become more resilient, but it also helps universities operate more efficiently and effectively by generating cost savings, increasing capacity for long-range planning, and creating more attractive, convenient, and productive places to live, work, and study.

Strategy 1.5

Conduct comparative case studies on key climate issues across member institutions. Comparative case studies allow for the analysis and synthesis of important differences, similarities, and patterns across Coalition member institutions on addressing key climate issues. These studies produce useful knowledge on the efficacy of various climate solutions from which generalizations can be made and lessons can be learned.

Goal 2

Foster and strengthen cross-sector partnerships in community to co-create place-based climate action solutions that reduce GHG emissions and build community resilience

COMMUNITY

Strategy 2.1

MEMBER + COALITION

Continue hosting local cross-sector climate forums that identify climate action goals in the community and establish potential opportunities for cross-sector collaborations.
As anchor institutions and neutral conveners, large research universities have a unique potential to serve communities by bringing together diverse, cross-sector stakeholders to facilitate dialogues on shared climate goals, foster strategic partnerships, and bolster climate action.

Strategy 2.2

MEMBER

Create applied, community engaged learning opportunities for students that address place-based climate issues.
These applied learning opportunities couple academic coursework with the application of institutional resources to address key climate issues facing private, public, and/or civic sector partners in the community.

Strategy 2.3

MEMBER + COALITION

Co-develop university-community research projects with cross-sector partners.
These projects allow researchers from universities to partner with local utility providers, government agencies, NGOs, and others in the community to address important gaps in climate research.

Strategy 2.4

COALITION

Make collective climate solutions resources accessible and useful to policymakers and other key decision-makers in the community. Making climate solutions resources more accessible, relevant, and responsive to community needs can aid decision-makers in developing policies that accelerate climate action and allow leading research institutions to bolster the civic mission of higher education.

Strategy 2.5

COALITION

Identify funding sources and establish regional programs that incentivize cross-sector collaboration for place-based climate solutions. Incentive funds can seed and scale regional cross-sector climate action activities and foster long-term campus-community partnerships.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE: GLOBAL

Goal 3

As an international coalition, elevate and amplify research universities' leadership role in accelerating global climate action and transitioning to a more resilient, low-carbon future

GLOBAL

Strategy 3.1

COALITION

Release collective statements and calls to action advocating for bold and ambitious global climate mitigation and adaptation actions and targets that incorporate climate justice. Collective statements and calls to action help challenge Coalition members and other cross-sector partners to achieve together what they may not be able to achieve on their own.

Strategy 3.2

COALITION

Use the *Research for Policy Platform* to publish joint primers, policy statements, research briefs, and talking points on key global climate change issues and solutions that are inclusive of climate justice. The joint research and development platform was launched in July 2019 to establish a unified set of principles and policies that directly support higher education leaders in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Coalition members will continue to use the Platform to identify, monitor, and research the most urgent climate policy issues using the best available science and synthesize this work into actionable summaries and recommendations for university leaders.

Strategy 3.3

MEMBER + COALITION

Represent leading research universities at international climate change conferences, forums, and summits. International climate change gatherings represent unique opportunities to amplify the work of the Coalition on a global scale in collaboration with higher education colleagues and cross-sector partners.

Strategy 3.4

COALITION

Work with other university alliances, networks, and coalitions to identify mutual areas of interest and opportunities to lead international efforts to promote climate action at universities across the globe. Working with other alliances, groups, and networks ensures that the Coalition avoids the duplication of efforts and helps strengthen global efforts to promote climate action at universities around the world.

Strategy 3.5

COALITION

Develop joint collaborative, cross-Coalition research projects and initiatives. Building on the UC3's core values of cross-Coalition collaboration and knowledge sharing, members seek to pull together knowledge and resources to apply for joint research grants and address global research questions related to climate action.

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