

Climate Leadership Statement

I, Harry Elam, the undersigned President of Occidental College, believe firmly in the power, potential, and imperative of higher education's key role in shaping a sustainable society. I am excited to represent Occidental College in joining a network of College and University Presidents who recognize that institutions of higher education have both a unique opportunity and a responsibility to address the unprecedented impacts of global climate change. This network understands that technology, infrastructure, global interconnectedness, and our greatest asset – engaged, committed, and concerned students – allow us to explore bold and innovative solutions and to lead in climate action and sustainable solutions.

Occidental College has an important role to play in confronting the critical problem of climate change and its danger to the environment locally, nationally, and globally. With urgency, we must act in ways that arrest extreme weather and other climate crises, including associated environmental injustices that threaten the earth and its people. Accordingly, the college must stand poised to protect future generations and create a healthier ecosystem on the campus and beyond.

We can incorporate climate resilience into our pedagogy and our operations. Because of the activities taking place in the classroom, on the campus, and on the field, our graduating students can become informed, ethical and climate-conscious global citizens. Moreover, knowing that other schools and presidents are joining us in this endeavor is empowering.

Our Integrated Strategic Plan, The Occidental Promise, acknowledges the “myriad courses and immersive opportunities already offered at Occidental that address climate change, climate resilience, and climate justice.” Further, through a Sustainability Lens, the plan calls for Occidental to “look for opportunities to encourage curricular growth in this field, including interdisciplinary work that addresses the critical nexus between climate and environmental science and environmental justice. These offerings are crucial to preparing our students to live and lead, and to combat the pervasive climate nihilism that impacts well-being.”

I sign the pledge below to join a network of leaders that believes colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by providing the knowledge, research, practice, and informed graduates to create a positive and sustainable future. Along with other aspects of sustainability, campuses that address the climate challenge by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by integrating resilience into their curriculum, research, and campus operations will better serve their students and meet their social mandate to help create a vital and ethical civil society. Further, asserting leadership in addressing climate change will reduce our long-term energy costs and the costs of climate disturbance, increase our quality of life, attract excellent students and faculty, and build the support of alumni and local communities.

With the endorsement of the Board of Trustees and at the recommendation of the President's Sustainability Advisory Council, representing the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and the student body, I sign the Climate Leadership Commitment below on behalf of Occidental College.

With this signing we affirm the critical priorities of carbon neutrality and climate resilience and aim to be a leader in these efforts. We urge others to join us in transforming society towards a sustainable, healthy, and more prosperous future.

Climate Commitment:

An integrated climate commitment including carbon neutrality and resilience

1) Develop a comprehensive Climate Action Plan¹ *

- a. Within two months of signing this document, create internal institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of the Plan
- b. Within one year of the implementation start date, actively support a task force (or equivalent) to ensure alignment of the Plan with community goals and to facilitate joint action, and complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, also identifying near term opportunities for greenhouse gas reduction. Report these in the first annual evaluation of progress
- c. Within two years of the implementation start date, lead and complete an initial campus-community resilience assessment including initial indicators and current vulnerability
- d. Within three years of the implementation start date complete the Plan, (also reflecting joint community-campus components), which will include:
 - A target date for achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible
 - A target date by which defined thresholds of resilience will be met
 - Interim target dates for meeting milestones that will lead to carbon neutrality and increasing resilience²
 - Mechanisms and indicators for tracking progress (including those that cut across campus-community boundaries)
 - Actions to make carbon neutrality and resilience a part of the curriculum and other educational experiences for all students
 - Actions to expand research in carbon neutrality and resilience

¹ The plan may be designed to augment an existing sustainability plan, written as part of a new sustainability plan, or as a standalone plan. An online guide is available that provides information on successful institutional structures, helpful templates on climate action plans, useful indicators of progress, guidance for reporting and much more.

² Assistance for developing interim milestones and a number of example tangible actions are available online and are regularly updated.

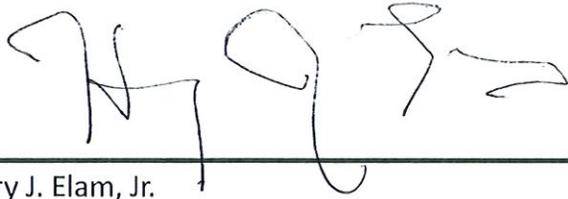
e. Review, revise if necessary, and resubmit the climate action plan not less frequently than every five years

2) Submit an annual evaluation of progress

a. Within one year of the implementation start date, and every year thereafter, complete an annual evaluation of progress

b. Make the action plan, annual evaluation of progress (including greenhouse gas inventory, resilience assessment etc.), publicly available by submitting them to Second Nature's reporting system for posting and dissemination

Signed,



Harry J. Elam, Jr.
Occidental College

Jan 21 2024

Date: January 21, 2024