

July 16, 2022

Dear Regents and President Drake,

I am submitting this letter written by the UC-AFT Climate and Environmental Action Committee, as a representative of the close to 5000 lecturers and 300 librarians represented by UC-AFT. At the University of California, nearly half of all undergraduate instruction is delivered by UC-AFT faculty. As deliverers of higher education at the University of California, and advocates for our students and their future livelihoods, we write in support of the recent Senate Memorial on fossil fuel emission reductions. We urge the Regents to act upon this memorial in the September Regents meeting.

UC senate faculty recently voted to request investment in UC infrastructure to reduce on-campus fossil fuel burning by 60% by 2030 and by 95% by 2035. We urge the Regents to fulfill, and fund, this request. We, as UC-AFT teaching faculty and librarians, add our voices to the Senate faculty across the UC, who have sent a clear signal that the UC needs to go beyond its “carbon neutrality” goal and set real goals for on campus emission reductions. **Please ensure that there is an action item in the September Regents meeting agenda to adopt and invest in the goals set out in the Senate Memorial.** A plan then needs to be made to achieve the emission reduction goals.

On a daily basis, we strive to educate our students on the social, ecological, and economic impacts of the climate crisis. Central to this is the disproportionate burden faced by those communities least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, both locally around our campus communities and globally: low-income, people of color, children, and other vulnerable populations. This is climate injustice. The UC’s current reliance on offsets is deeply concerning, as it perpetuates this social and climate injustice. The UC can, and should, do better. We add our voices to those of senate faculty and the UC Green New Deal Coalition, to demand more immediate action at the University of California to address the climate crisis.

As educators, academics, researchers, and scientists, it concerns us deeply that the UC is relying on carbon offsets to reach its goal to be carbon neutral by 2025, rather than making actual emission reductions. As a leading academic institution and one of the largest employers in California, the UC has a moral obligation to decrease its own carbon emissions.

We urge you, the Regents and President Drake, to enact actionable milestones for this next decade in the UC Climate Action Plan that will lead the UC to make genuine carbon emission reductions, instead of employing dubious carbon offset schemes. Here are actionable items that President Drake and the Regents can take now to move forward with climate action:

- 1) Adopt the recently passed Senate Memorial to reduce on-campus fossil fuel burning by 60% by 2030 and by 95% by 2035.
- 2) Expedite the transition to a fossil free UC as highlighted in the documentary film, *Coming Clean: A Demand for a Fossil Free UC!*
- 3) Prioritize full funding in the 2022-2023 budget for UC Berkeley to replace its aging co-generation plant with a 21st century 100% clean-energy microgrid. This will ensure that at least one of our campuses becomes a climate leader by retiring a fossil-fuel-burning campus co-generation plant this decade.
- 4) Prioritize full funding in the 2022-2023 budget for UCLA to study the best alternative to replace its co-generation plant with a clean-energy alternative.
- 5) Prioritize additional funding this year for energy conservation, carbon reduction, and electrification plans to be made NOW for all UC campuses to get on track, as Berkeley has, to make genuine carbon emission reductions this decade.
- 6) Prioritize nature-based solutions on all UC campuses. By this we mean increasing carbon sequestration and storage by enhancing our nature-based assets on all campuses. We need to commit to protecting and restoring green spaces, biodiversity, ecosystem function, and natural habitats on campuses, not reducing or ignoring them.
- 7) The UC should also develop policies that prioritize healthy and sustainable modes of transport, where driving passenger cars are no longer supported as the default option. This will require active involvement with local and state agencies that need to hear from the UC and from UC Health that public transportation and safe bicycle infrastructure, as alternatives to cars, are more sustainable and healthier for our campuses and surrounding communities.
- 8) Implement just labor transition to green jobs by ensuring that workers implementing green upgrades on campuses will be hired into unionized jobs with living wages and employed directly by the university administration.

In solidarity for real climate justice,



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