



UNIVERSITY OF
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U of I Publishes New Climate Action Plan

Urbana, Ill. — On Oct. 20, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Chancellor Robert J. Jones will approve and sign the newest version of the Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP). iCAP 2020, developed through broad stakeholder engagement and led by the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment (ISEE) and Facilities & Services (F&S), commits the campus to divest from fossil fuels, switch to clean energy sources, cut landfill waste, and pursue environmental justice.

iCAP 2020 is the campus's strategic sustainability plan to achieve net-zero carbon emissions as soon as possible and by 2050 at the latest. This is critical and urgent, as atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHG) contribute to unstable agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and heightened levels of air and water pollution that will particularly affect our most vulnerable communities.

SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based) objectives crafted in pursuit of this goal are organized into eight key themes: Energy, Transportation, Land & Water, Zero Waste, Education, Engagement, Resilience, and Implementation. Among the 56 diverse iCAP 2020 objectives:

- Increase the number of trees on campus
- Use clean energy sources for 15% of the total campus energy demand
- Reduce net air travel emissions by 100% by FY30

"We are proud of the university's commitment to sustainability and appreciative of Chancellor Jones's support as we continue to take action. Over the course of this year, campus and community members developed ambitious objectives, and we must work together to see them through," iSEE Interim Director Madhu Khanna said. "The Illinois family is passionate about sustainability and resilient; each one of our efforts helps to make a difference."

iCAP 2020 is the third iteration of the Illinois Climate Action Plan (previously published in 2010 and updated in 2015). A priority this year is fostering a culture of sustainability on campus, with objectives geared toward increasing the visibility of sustainable practices to inspire positive, lasting change. These include:

- Broaden the availability of sustainability education across the entire curriculum, beginning with first-year student orientation
- Support programs to develop love of nature and sustainability among children
- Promote zero waste events, with durable goods instead of disposables, and develop a comprehensive zero-waste messaging campaign

Student involvement was instrumental to the creation of iCAP 2020. For the first time this year, the chancellor's letter of endorsement is paired with a "Letter from the Students." Additionally, students were key proponents of an objective calling for the university's full divestment from fossil fuel companies.



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The Resilience chapter extends the iCAP's scope of influence beyond campus borders. It identifies opportunities for collaboration with Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy to implement strategies for urban biodiversity, green job programs, and environmental justice.

iCAP 2020 will be celebrated and signed by Chancellor Jones at the virtual Campus Sustainability Celebration from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 20. Speakers include Khanna, F&S Executive Director Mohamed Attalla, and several student sustainability leaders. [RSVP and learn more.](#)

Campus has made significant progress in implementing sustainability goals. In 2019, U of I became the first Big Ten university to achieve Bee Campus USA certification; it is also a certified Tree Campus USA, silver-level Bicycle Friendly University, and a three-time champion of the International Laboratory Freezer Challenge. Additionally, Solar Farm 2.0, which will produce 20,000 MWh annually, [began construction](#) as of August 2020.

Most recently, iSEE released the newest version of the [Certified Green Office Program](#) and launched the [Certified Green Chapter Program](#) to expand campus sustainability efforts into academic offices and Greek life, and iSEE and F&S released a [sustainability training video](#) in October 2020 to communicate the iCAP 2020 objectives and daily actions individuals can take to live sustainably.

Visit our [iCAP landing page](#) to read the full iCAP 2020 PDF, view a comprehensive list of objectives, and learn more about campus sustainability.