

News Release

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UNC, Town of Chapel Hill become first town-gown pair to pledge carbon reduction plan

CHAPEL HILL – The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Town of Chapel Hill have become the world’s first town-gown participants to commit to a 60 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

Earlier today, a UNC-Chapel Hill professor representing the United States at an international environmental conference in England filed the university’s pledge that made the commitment official on the website of the Carbon Reduction, or CRed, program. The university administration finalized its pledge earlier this month. The Chapel Hill Town Council approved the town’s pledge Monday night (June 26).

The voluntary CRed program, based in England, aims to enlist communities, businesses and other organizations around the world in committing to specific plans to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. CRed says nearly 22,000 pledges made to date represent a total savings of 27,174 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually.

“This sends an important positive message about how seriously this community – the university and the town – takes its responsibilities to be an excellent steward of the environment,” said UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor James Moeser. “We are proud to join with the town in this commitment to leadership in sustainability and hope that other university communities around the world will follow suit.”

Dr. Douglas Crawford-Brown, director of the Carolina Environmental Program (CEP), today (June 27) entered the pledge for the university on the CRed website (<http://www.cred-uk.org/>) before an international audience in England. He was in Norwich at the University of East Anglia serving as the U.S. representative to the Carbon Connections project, a new carbon-reduction effort funded by the British government.

In its pledge, the university cited the compilation of a carbon dioxide inventory for all emissions sources originating with campus operations. The inventory showed that the university produces between 335,000 and 345,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. About half of

those totals come from electricity and steam generated at the campus cogeneration facility, which has pioneered the use of innovative cogeneration technology and is one of the nation's cleanest coal-burning energy plants.

Another 36 percent of the university's carbon dioxide emissions come from electricity purchased from Duke Power Co. The rest comes from transportation, stationary sources and miscellaneous operations. The inventory found the per capita emissions rate to be approximately nine metric tons per person per year.

"Our goal is to reduce the total per capita carbon dioxide emissions from campus operations by at least 60 percent by 2050, with a timetable as follows (consistent with the repair and replacement cycle of the campus): 10 percent reduction by 2015; 20 percent reduction by 2030; 30 percent reduction by 2040; 45 percent reduction by 2045; 60 percent reduction by 2050," the university's pledge said.

UNC plans to detail specific strategies it will use to meet those reduction goals in a follow-up document submitted to the CRed program by the end of this year. Initial plans listed include fare-free transit service (including Chapel Hill Transit and Triangle Transit Authority, for which the university will begin bearing the full cost for employees this fall), migrating UNC vehicles to biodiesel or other biomass options and strengthening the campus energy conservation program.

Working with the CEP, the university plans to implement a system to accurately record emissions data to monitor progress, the pledge says. CEP will take the lead in developing an innovative education program using the campus as a study site for undergraduate and graduate students that will focus on issues of sustainability, energy, community design and economic development.

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Web links: <http://www.cred-uk.org/>, www.carbon-connections.org, www.townofchapelhill.org

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