Whit-ling Our Emissions: Proposed Strategies for Achieving Climate Neutrality at Whitman College

The following pages contain our student-led evaluation of the many aspects of the institution that play a part directly or indirectly in Whitman's contribution to global warming. Having identified these areas that affect the climate, we have posed suggestions for ways in which Whitman can improve its energy efficiency, reduce its emissions, move toward sustainability, and enhance its environmental reputation and value as an institution of higher learning. Our recommendations are not a comprehensive evaluation of all the various ways that Whitman can achieve carbon neutrality. Our hope, rather, is that our suggestions will start Whitman on the path to developing an economically sound plan to achieve carbon neutrality, a plan that will not place an undo burden on the College or its tuition-paying students.

We have separated our recommendations into two sections. The first section, "Concrete Climate Action," addresses ways in which Whitman can tackle its direct contributions to global warming, while the second section addresses ways in which the College can indirectly reduce its contribution to global warming. In each of the two sections, "Concrete Climate Action" and "Fostering a Climate Friendly Community," we have prioritized our suggestions from top to bottom in terms of their potential to reduce Whitman's contribution to global warming.

By developing and implementing a long-term plan to achieve carbon neutrality, Whitman will take a leadership role that is in line with the College's Environmental Principles, the culture of the campus, the desires of the larger Whitman community, and the mission of the College.

**Section One:**
Concrete Climate Action

1. Sign onto the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment; Inventory Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As stated in our letter, the signatories of the Commitment form a network of schools across the country that will, over the coming years, develop methods, technologies, and strategies for achieving climate neutrality. Signing the ACUPCC is at the top of our list because in order for Whitman to succeed in its quest to achieve carbon neutrality, it
must formalize its commitment to that goal. The College’s efforts to fight global warming must be seen as a unified effort, a college-wide initiative, a priority for Whitman, and one that is visible to the entire Whitman community. Signing onto the ACUPCC is an easy and practical way to formalize Whitman’s commitment to carbon neutrality because the institutions that sign the Commitment will share their ideas, methods, and resources most freely with the other Commitment signatories. As a member of this larger movement Whitman College will also gain media attention for its efforts. Signing the Commitment rather than developing an independent strategy is also advantageous because it will provide Whitman with a clear path and defined obligations: it is a formula that will save the College some time in developing its own specific plan and budget. In essence, through the Presidents Climate Commitment, Whitman will have the advantage of a network of colleges and universities striving towards a common goal without the pressure to conform to common deadlines.

We firmly agree with the ACUPCC’s statement on its website: “Leadership by presidents and chancellors is critical. Like other great societal challenges, such as the Marshall Plan, the Apollo project and the attempt to eradicate cancer, the effort to re-stabilize the earth’s climate will take great vision, research, and leadership of society by Higher Education. Presidents and chancellors are leading this effort because they can best establish the moral leadership and strategic direction that is needed to address this challenge. Moreover, only they can convene all parts of a college or university to address the education, research and operational changes needed by Higher Education. As the leaders of the primary intellectual sector of society, the presidents and chancellors are also calling on all of society to deal with climate disruption and declaring that Higher Education is ready and able to take on the challenge of finding solutions for the well-being of everyone.”

An inventory of Whitman’s greenhouse gas emissions will follow shortly after President Bridges signs the ACUPCC.

The World Research Institute (WRI) has developed a protocol with three scopes for the inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for corporations. In this protocol, Scopes One and Two are necessary to achieve carbon neutrality and Scope Three is optional, but recommended. The Scopes model has been used to quantify colleges’ greenhouse gas emissions as well. At Middlebury College, as an independent study, a student calculated Middlebury’s carbon footprint, measured in metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (MTCDE). Certain sectors of the college’s emissions did not correspond with the WRI model because Middlebury is an educational institution and not a corporation. Nonetheless, the WRI model could be used by students at Whitman to calculate Whitman’s greenhouse gas emissions. Students in the Environmental Studies internship program could do these calculations, as could a student pursuing an independent study in conjunction with a member of the faculty from Physics and/or Environmental Studies. An alternative toolkit for inventorying GHG emissions can be accessed through Clean Air-Cool Planet’s website at http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/toolkit/content/view/146/132/. Clean Air-Cool Planet is a non-profit organization located in the northeast that is dedicated to finding and promoting solutions to global warming. One of our Panel of 14, Colby College, has partnered with Clean Air-Cool Planet to tackle its campus’s contribution to climate change.
Inventoring the College’s emissions is a critical step in taking action to reduce Whitman’s contribution to global warming.

2. Evaluate Electricity and Campus Facilities

Many aspects of the campus that contribute to the College’s carbon footprint are covered in this section. We have divided them as we thought best; however, since energy consumption is key to all of them, there is inevitable overlap.

A. Energy Audit

An energy audit (or an energy savings contract) is a service that evaluates the energy efficiency of buildings on campus. Audits are generally performed by Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), which exist all over Washington, though primarily concentrated in the Western part of the state.

Benefits of contracting with an ESCO:

• **No upfront cost.** The college would sign a contract with an ESCO and they would begin the audit, making retrofits to heating, air conditioning, windows, insulation, lighting and electrical. The college would not be charged for the retrofits, instead the ESCO would cover the costs and then track the energy savings, using the savings to reimburse the original costs.

• **Significant Economic Savings.** Once the ESCO had earned their profit back, the savings would then go to the college. According to the New Buildings Institute savings range from 5%-30%.

• The actual audit can take anywhere from one to six months, depending on number and size of buildings. The payback period is typically 5-10 years.

• **Tested and Implemented in several schools.** Colleges and Universities across the country have used audits to maximize energy efficiency. Ken Hanna, the facilities manager at Allegheny College reported an $80,000/year savings with a seven-year payback period. Other colleges that have used audits include: University of Washington, Eastern Illinois University, and Bates College.

Implementing these efficiency improvements is in the best interests of the College and will provide huge savings into the future, which will allow the school to invest in more improvements and possibly other projects.

Contacts/Resources:

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B. Building Design and Construction:

The carbon footprint of a Whitman building includes the carbon emitted in producing the materials to construct the building, not just the carbon that is emitted once the building is in use by the Whitman community.

Whitman has recently established a plan for recycling materials removed from construction sites and produced through the construction of new buildings. This is an excellent new policy. There are more opportunities, however, for the school to use recycled materials in the construction of its buildings, and it is also possible that there are more materials generated at the sites that could be recycled. As the architects and contractors select materials for the buildings the lifecycle of the materials (production through disposal) should be taken into account; if materials are found to be environmentally expensive to produce and dispose of, then they should be replaced with more sustainable materials. If features present in the design of a building will cause significant environmental harm or will vastly increase the energy requirements of the building, the College should refuse to include such features in the building.

Because not all materials used in the construction of a building can be recycled, the most environmentally responsible form of disposal should occur. The College currently uses LEED equivalent specifications for the designs of its new buildings; we encourage the College to continue this policy and to raise the standards to which they adhere from perhaps a LEED equivalent bronze standard to silver. For reasons of aesthetics and carbon sequestration, we further urge the College to consider the impact on plant life that a building’s footprint can have. In siting our new buildings, Whitman should attempt to preserve as many trees and as much greenery as possible.

Our “green” buildings are a boon to Whitman’s image. They are highlighted in classes and on admission tours. By increasing our efforts to construct and promote our green buildings, we enhance the public image of the school and
educate Whitman students, faculty, and staff (present and future) about environmentally sound architecture; the lessons they learn will undoubtedly be taken into projects they pursue in the future, which has indirect advantages for reducing Whitman’s contribution to global warming. When we build with the best green designs available, we extend the life of our campus buildings and reduce the potential for costly future renovations.

C. Electricity and HVAC

Many of Whitman’s electricity and HVAC inefficiencies will likely be caught and managed through an energy audit, but there are simple ways that the school can improve its efficiency in these areas without looking to outside consultants.

Energy efficiency and using green technologies are important ways to work towards carbon neutrality. Carbon neutrality, however, is not the only benefit. More efficient use of energy means a more efficient Whitman, with reduced electricity bills and increased public support as an end result. Heating is the most energy-intensive process at Whitman, and should be regarded as the most important system to optimize. The greatest impact on this efficiency will come from two sources: better systems, and better community education regarding the newly placed systems. For example, if Whitman moves to shut off its heating or air conditioning systems in different campus buildings overnight or during certain hours of the summer, the community should be educated about the reasoning behind and advantages of such a policy. When it comes to the College’s heating systems, we would also like the school to increase the percentage of biodiesel burned for heating at the Physical Plant each year. It is currently around 1%. Whitman could also investigate the potential for even more efficient/environmentally sound fuels.

When upgrading campus living spaces Whitman should use Energy Star or better rated appliances. It then also makes sense to educate the students and faculty on how to maximize the use of new appliances. In the case of laundry, to make sure each load is a full load, and to promote washing clothes in cold water. Lighting has been outlined as the second most effective way to reduce energy use. Whitman could implement a program to replace all of the lights on campus (in dorm rooms, faculty and staff offices, and classrooms) with compact fluorescents (CFLs). CFLs have been put in place in many buildings, but there are lights that remain to be changed. CFLs, while still more expensive than incandescents, continue to become more affordable, and once in place the school will see immediate reduction in the College’s electricity bills, which will then allow the College to put more CFLs and other energy-saving device in place.

Another excellent way to reduce energy consumption from lighting would be by installing key-activated light switches much like are in use by some hotels, especially in Europe. In order to turn on the lights in periodically used rooms, a student or faculty member would have to slide their Whitman ID card into a card slot. This would then either turn the lights on automatically, or allow someone to turn them on. Thus, when they are done with the room, they must remove their ID cards and the lights go off automatically. Although some may think this an extravagant way to get the lights off, it is a proven method that works far more reliably than the current system does.
As stated before, it will be important that decisions made affecting the comfort of the faculty and student be made with their knowledge. In the past, changes to high-efficiency showerheads and less energy consuming room temperatures have been resisted because the students and faculty were unaware of the change's overall impact and viewed them as annoyances. Thus, the energy-saving changes were removed quicker than it took to put them in place. Adding on to that, campus education to reduce energy use will be very necessary. Such educational programs can be implemented through Orientation days and campus-wide events.

3. Hire an Environmental Coordinator

While the leadership throughout the campus - George Bridges, Peter Harvey, Dan Park, John Bogley, the Dean of the Faculty, the Dean of Students, Jed Schwendiman, student leaders, and the entire faculty will all work to implement a long term plan to achieve carbon neutrality, there must be a point person on campus who will keep the College on course with its chosen plan and who will be responsible for tracking the school’s progress. The person best suited to this job is an individual with academic training and professional experience in environmental fields – environmental engineering and economics would likely prove most valuable – and is a person who would not only be comfortable interacting with many individuals on and off campus to coordinate their efforts, but would also have the time to fulfill these responsibilities. No current employee of the College meets these specifications. While we believe, as proposed in our letter, that hiring a Whitman alumnus or alumna as a post-graduate intern would provide the College with some of the advantages of a professional environmental coordinator, such an internship could only serve as a temporary measure. We firmly believe that the College would be able to achieve the goals set forth in the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment most effectively and most efficiently if upon signing the Climate Commitment the College were to initiate a nationwide search for an Environmental Coordinator who, as an employee of the College, would be the primary person in charge of managing and tracking the progress of the long term plan.

An Environmental Coordinator is a position already much needed at Whitman, and is a position that exists at many of our peer institutions. An Environmental Coordinator would advance Whitman’s efforts to become an environmental sustainability leader among institutions of higher education by working with members of the administration, faculty, staff, and student body to provide knowledge, skills, and motivation to integrate the principles and practices of sustainability into the College’s strategic planning processes, the management of its resources and operations, and facilities planning and design. Environmental Coordinators at other colleges have conserved the institution’s financial resources and in so doing saved the schools many multiples of the coordinators’ salaries.

Our attempts at sustainability and environmental awareness at Whitman are stilted by the fractured actions of individuals and groups across the campus working in isolation. They are also weakened by three factors that would be mitigated by the presence of an Environmental Coordinator.
1. There is a lack of environmental expertise among activist groups and individuals at Whitman, expertise that is necessary for improving campus sustainability but that requires training which no current faculty or staff member (or student) has.

2. There is limited institutional memory for the environmental efforts that have been made in the past at Whitman. Without the knowledge of these successes and failures, many activists on campus waste time and resources repeating past research and actions. (An Environmental Coordinator would keep a written record of such actions and would serve as a vessel of information for the Whitman community.)

3. Not one of the individuals working on environmental matters on campus has either the time or the flexibility to make his or her environmental efforts a top priority.

If we were to hire an Environmental Coordinator who had both training and/or experience in promoting institutional sustainability and the people skills to work with faculty, staff, and students across campus, we believe Whitman would progress quickly towards environmental responsibility and awareness, gain a more economically efficient campus, and set an example for colleges across the country. A permanent Environmental Coordinator would enhance the visibility of the College’s commitment to the environment and benefits for student recruitment, public relations, and fundraising would follow.

There are numerous resources available regarding the design of job descriptions for such a position, fundraising for such a position, and hiring an Environmental Coordinator. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (www.aashe.org) is one excellent resource. We have also attached “A Practical Guide to Hiring a Sustainability Professional for Universities and Colleges,” produced as a white paper by The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, and the Campus Consortium for Environmental Excellence.

4. Increase Purchase of Wind Power with the Goal of Achieving 100% Wind Power Purchasing

With the school’s current commitment to purchase $20,000 in wind power and the added funds from the Alternative Energy Gift Fund, the amount of clean, renewable energy that Whitman purchases continues to rise. While purchasing wind power is more expensive than purchasing the normal mix from the grid, it is certainly one of the greatest ways that Whitman can reduce its carbon footprint as much of our electricity still comes from coal and other carbon-emitting sources. Whitman currently purchases all of its wind power through Pacific Power’s Blue Skies program. Whitman, however, has the opportunity to increase its purchase of wind power by buying less expensive Green Tags from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, a non-profit organization that strives to promote the use of clean, renewable energy. Whitman alumnus Jaimes Valdez was the first person to promote wind power purchasing at Whitman and is currently an employee of the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF). He would be happy to talk to Whitman about purchasing Green Tags through the non-profit, which cuts out the cost of Pacific Power operating as a middleman between Whitman and the wind power producers.
As a part of its environmental policy, Whitman should push towards eventually purchasing 100% renewable energy whether it comes through BEF or Pacific Power.

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www.greentagsusa.org

5. Transportation

1. Fleet

   We would like to see Whitman implement a replacement policy for its fleet which states that upon replacing old vehicles the school will look for not only the safest, but the most fuel-efficient vehicles available that fit the needs of the school. We think the College should consider not only alternative fuels such as biodiesel, but hybrids, hybrid plug-ins, and flex-fuel vehicles. The school should refuse to purchase vehicles that fall below EPA-recommended fuel efficiency standards. The vehicles that Whitman replaces should be recycled to the greatest extent possible, unless they are being passed on to other users. An environmentally sound fleet with cutting edge technology would provide a wonderful opportunity for environmental education, enhance the public image of the school, and would be a good long term investment for the College especially considering the rising cost of fuel.

B. Transport of Goods to Campus

   We should reduce the amount of transport that occurs for goods to come to the campus and consider ways to reduce the transportation of waste from the College. We should also examine the efficiency of our transported goods by reducing the number of shipments the college receives – consolidate trips. As the availability of oil decreases and the pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions rises, the transport of goods will become increasingly expensive. By reducing our transport costs now we will be ahead of the game.
6. Food Service

While Bon Appetit is one of the top services on campus devoted to environmental stewardship, there are still several improvements that can be made. Local and organic food is purchased “when available” but we would like to see those foods in the dining halls on a more consistent basis. The annual “Local food” day is a great way to raise awareness about the importance of eating local, however it would be ideal if that day was not needed due to the incorporation of local products into everyday meals. Not only does local food benefit our community but it also reduces food transportation costs and transportation emissions. (It is reported that the average food item travels 1500 miles.) Additionally, student initiative was the driving force behind the current compost program in Prentiss dining hall, but Jewett, Lyman and Reid are left out due to the magnitude of the program. Institutionalized composting would ensure the best use of our waste materials, whereas compost could be used as a fertilizer on campus. Specific recommendations include:

- At a minimum meet the “Low Carbon Diet” Bon Appetit is implementing nationwide in 2008 which includes:
  - Reducing the use of beef by 25% - Livestock production is responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Sourcing all meat and poultry from North America - 80% of the energy used by the food system comes not from growing food, but from transporting and processing it.
  - Sourcing nearly all fruits and vegetables from North America, using seasonal local produce as a first preference and using tropical fruits only as “special occasion” ingredients - Most bananas have traveled 3,000 miles in high-speed refrigerated ships to reach an American breakfast plate. A local apple might be grown within 10 miles.
  - Serving only domestic bottled water and reducing waste from plastic bottles - Americans throw away 40 million plastic water bottles every day.
  - Reducing food waste - Goal of 25% reduction in three years or less.
  - Auditing the energy efficiency of kitchen equipment - In home or commercial kitchens energy losses of up to 30% can be easily corrected for very low cost.

- Purchasing a commercial scale composter. The college would make an initial investment but could then sell the compost to community members or use it on the grounds or in the organic garden.
- Due to restrictions of produce available because of seasonality, focus on buying food when it is in season. Additionally, increasing storage capacity through the purchase of a “flash freezer” or implementation of a canning process
- Buy greater quantity of non-perishable items locally (currently 75% of wheat is local, why not 100%?)
- Integrating the Organic Garden and local food issues into curriculum
- During picnics and outdoor events, use biodegradable plates that could be composted or reusable dishes
- Join forces with other colleges that are making progressive reforms to focus on locally grown food. In spring 2006, Grinnell College conducted a class on local
foods in which a small group of students evaluated their college’s purchase of local foods and the opportunities for increasing the purchase of local foods. Such a class can and should be conducted at Whitman. It is likely that, as was the case at Grinnell, students’ research would show ways that dining services could increase their purchase of local foods while reducing the overall cost of their food purchases.

Furthermore, reevaluating what types of food are offered and where our food comes from is an excellent opportunity for media attention and PR. The choices we make as an institution about the food we eat are vital to overall campus sustainability.

7. Groundskeeping

Groundskeeping at Whitman College is done with care for the environment, aesthetics, and the health of the campus community in mind. The Grounds Crew at Whitman has been very responsive to requests, recommendations, and inquiries of both the Trees & Landscaping Committee and the Conservation & Recycling Committee. The hard work of the Grounds Crew has had marvelous results for the campus without exposing the Whitman community to fungicides or insecticides, or excessive herbicides or fertilizer. Herbicide use on campus continues to decrease (a 40% reduction in spending between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006), and is limited to Round-up which is applied to tree rings, shrub beds, fence lines, and bare ground areas as needed. No herbicide is applied to weeds in lawns. The Grounds Crew has also increased its use of mulch as a weed deterrent, which continues to drive down the use of Round-up. Fertilizer is applied only once a year to Ankeny and Harper Joy and is used nowhere else on the main campus, though the athletic fields receive 3-4 treatments of fertilizer a year. The xeriscaped plantings at the Science Building and the new Welty Center, as well as the composting of the campus’s fallen leaves at Bob Bile’s farm are also worthy of note.

Because of the Grounds Crew's careful practices in terms of chemical use and leaf disposal, the main areas to address in terms of contributions to global warming are water use, mowing, and leaf-blowing. In addition to the xeriscaped plant beds, much of the water used for irrigation on campus is gray water resulting from the well that feeds the Science Building’s geothermal HVAC system, but there is room to reduce the amount of water used for irrigation on campus. Whitman should, wherever possible, replace the grass on campus with low-irrigation grasses such as those planted at the new health center. Similarly, as new plant beds are created and old ones redesigned, the College should increase its xeriscaped beds and replace sprinkler systems with drip irrigation or equally efficient watering systems that will help to keep the mulch down.

The College should also establish a new purchasing policy for Grounds Crew vehicles similar to that recommended for the rest of the College's fleet. The grounds crew’s vehicles and mowers should be replaced over time with more fuel-efficient, hybrid, or plug-in machines that are quieter and produce fewer emissions. Our campus is rightly
considered one of the most beautifully landscaped in the country, but there are times when that aesthetic is not maintained with consideration for the ideals or larger goals of the College. During the growing season, the lawns across campus are mowed with loud riding lawnmowers on a nearly weekly basis (a different part of campus is mowed everyday) that disturb those working and relaxing outside and often prevent professors from taking their classes outside; the effects of the leaf-blowers during the fall are the same. Of course, so long as our campus has lawns they must be mowed, and the leaves must be cleared, but these tasks should be done with the greater purpose of maintaining a campus that is not only beautiful to look at, but inviting: comfortable, safe, and quiet. When we align the campus aesthetic with the campus ethics and the high desert environment in which we live, we provide opportunities for environmental education and enhanced public relations, and we recommit to the mission and Environmental Principles of the school.

8. High Tech – WCTS

We are pleased to know that Whitman not only purchases its computers from one of the more environmentally responsible companies, Dell, but that the College also recycles the computers it decommissions if they are not donated elsewhere. We also know, however, that most of the computers around the campus are left on 24 hours a day. The computer lab machines are left on every night overnight because they need to do network updates at some point during the night. There must be a better way to do this that could significantly reduce Whitman’s energy consumption. WCTS claims that because the computer monitors are so energy efficient leaving the computers on overnight in a kind of sleep mode requires a negligible amount of energy. This policy should be examined using energy meters in some of the outlets to which the computers are attached and multiplying it out across the campus.

Tufts University has worked particularly hard on reducing energy consumption as a result of their campus’s computers.

Resources/Contacts:

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Tufts Climate Initiative  
www.tufts.edu/tci  
http://www.tufts.edu/tie/tci/pdf/Computer%20brochures.PDF

9. Responsible Endowment
Whitman’s Endowment should be part of its public image because it demonstrates Whitman’s commitment to certain companies and the practices and ideals promoted by those companies. While the endowment exists for the sole purpose of increasing funds for the college, the companies invested in should reflect the values of the College. By making investments, Whitman is giving its implicit approval of the actions and standards of these companies. Whitman should evaluate the investments it holds right now and take into consideration the social and environmental impacts that the chosen companies generate. As part of the Whitman family these companies are also part of the college’s carbon footprint. We strongly recommend that the college invest in companies that will not only benefit the college financially, but whose practices also do not violate Whitman’s dedication to the environment. It is valuable for the integrity of the College to have a socially and environmentally responsible endowment, which is a powerful tool in marketing the College. As a socially and environmentally progressive college, it is Whitman’s responsibility to reflect these values in its investments and to make these decisions public to the broader Whitman community.

For more information contact the Sustainable Endowments Institute: http://www.endowmentinstitute.org/index.html

Sustainable Endowments Institute
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10. On-Campus Energy Production

Whitman should expand its investment in on-campus energy production such as the solar panels on the Outhouse, which serve as a fabulous demonstration to Whitman students and the surrounding community. By making environmental technologies accessibl, we increase the potential for Whitman faculty, staff, students, and community members to consider investing in their own renewable energy projects. Whitman might consider putting up a demonstration wind turbine on campus, especially as the school continues to increase its purchase of wind power.

Section Two:
Fostering a Climate Friendly Community

1. Environmental Curriculum

Global climate change is not simply an environmental issue; it is a political, social, economic, scientific, international, environmental, legal, justice and human rights issue.
In order for Whitman to succeed in pursuing climate neutrality, the entire campus must be committed, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators. To engage all of these groups we recommend several ways to foster discussion on campus regarding climate change. So far Whitman has built a fantastic Environmental Studies department; Whitman has also made a demonstrated commitment to furthering curriculum that deals with diversity issues. We commend these developments, but feel that it separates the complexity of international concerns into specific departments. To fully educate about global concerns, a curriculum must include aspects of all the disciplines of study listed above. We recommend that Whitman pursue a global studies curriculum that builds the interdisciplinary connections related to global issues. We encourage seminar classes like "Whitman and the Global Food System" and "Racism and Latinos in Washington" that encourage community engagement through student projects. We support the implementation of faculty seminars on climate neutrality, which would promote interdisciplinary thought and intellectual exchanges among faculty of different divisions. The success of the recent "Wine and Global Warming" symposium illustrates the connections between faculty expertise and climate change.

We would also like to recommend specifically that the next hire for Environmental Studies be an individual with expertise in environmental law and policy. This is an important part of environmental studies that is not covered by the existing program, and it is an area of study that will become increasingly important with advent of legislation pertaining to global warming.

2. Community Outreach

There are several key organizations that Whitman should reach out to and engage in its efforts to achieve sustainability. By reaching out to these organizations we will not only garner support for our efforts in Walla Walla, but we will also increase the likelihood that we will achieve our goals. By spreading the word in the community we also reinforce our efforts by encouraging others to reduce their global warming emissions, ensuring that our efforts will not be demeaned by others’ failure to act.

The town of Walla Walla (and surrounding area) boasts a large network of environmental organizations including: the Sustainable Living Center, Walla Walla 2020, The Walla Walla Watershed Council, Backyard Stream Team, Kooskooskie Commons, The Native Plant Society, Blue Mountain Land Trust, Tri-State Steelheaders, Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, and The Walla Walla Rotary Club, among others. As a college, it is advantageous to collaborate with these organizations not only to achieve our sustainability goals but to encourage others to reduce their contribution to climate change as well.

3. College Networking
The benefits of college networking will come most directly through signing onto the Presidents Climate Commitment. The signatories of the Commitment form a network of schools across the country that will, over the coming years, develop methods, technologies, and strategies for achieving climate neutrality, and these institutions will share these ideas and resources most freely with the other Commitment signatories. As a member of this larger movement the College will also gain media attention for its efforts. Signing onto the Commitment rather than developing an independent strategy is also advantageous because it will provide Whitman with a clear path and defined obligations: it is a formula that will save the College some time in developing its own specific plan and budget. In essence, through the Presidents Climate Commitment, Whitman will have the advantage of a network of colleges and universities striving towards a common goal without the pressure to conform to common deadlines.

College networking can and should be extended beyond the Climate Commitment signatories to include consideration of the actions and programs carried out by our peer institutions, especially those included in our Panel of 14. For instance, while neither Swarthmore nor Grinnell have yet signed onto the Commitment, Swarthmore has committed to purchasing 35% of its electricity from wind power, and Grinnell is seriously considering building two wind turbines near the campus that would supply 60% of Grinnell’s electricity. Similarly, Colby has not signed the Commitment, but it has partnered with Clean Air-Cool Planet to address global warming on Colby’s campus. Several of these colleges are also capable of providing guidance on the establishment of an Environmental Coordinator position on the Whitman campus as Carleton, Colby, Grinnell, Oberlin, and Pomona already have analogous positions.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our suggestions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us; we have many resources we would be happy to share with you.

Sincerely,

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Whit-ling Our Emissions
Whitman College Campus Climate Challenge 1