Draft 23 Jan 2022

**University of Maine Survey on Campus Carbon Emission Issues**

The University of Maine [Faculty Senate Environment Committee](https://umaine.edu/facultysenate/committees/environment-committee/) is considering several motions to pursue in regard to meeting the long-standing UMaine campus goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. A short [whitepaper](https://umaine.edu/facultysenate/whitepaperonumainecarbonemissions23jan2022/) has been prepared and reviewed by numerous physical, social, and climate scientists, engineers, economists, and additional UMaine faculty members. The white paper provides background information on campus progress achieving net-zero carbon emissions to date and how the long-term goal might be achieved.

To familiarize yourself with the terminology and many of the issues raised in the survey questions that follow, we recommend that you first read the whitepaper with particular attention to comments and citations in the footnotes.[[1]](#footnote-1)\*

Responses to this survey will help inform the Faculty Senate on the opinions of campus community members and help construct the motions to be included at the end of the white paper. That is, some of the following proposed actions are under consideration for incorporation into motions to be considered by the University of Maine Faculty Senate. These potential survey items are derived from the whitepaper or suggested by committee members.

**(1) Supporting Campus Actions Responsive to Climate Science Findings**

It's important for the University of Maine to do its part in helping the state and nation to keep the world within 1.5 to 2°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(2) Building a Campus-wide Societal Problem-Solving Reputation**

The University of Maine should strive to become a destination campus for students from across the state, nation and the globe that want to “make a difference.”

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(3) Building a Campus-wide Sustainability Reputation**

The University of Maine should strive to become a magnet for students, researchers, educators, and industry partners that are interested in working collaboratively and from multiple disciplinary perspectives to comprehensively address the technological, social, economic, and environmental challenges of climate change and sustainability.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(4) Staying the Course in Achieving the UMaine Zero Carbon Emission Commitment**

The University of Maine should abide by its 2007 widely publicized and annually confirmed long-term commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2040.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(5) Ensuring Annual Progress**

The University should decrease greenhouse gas emissions each and every year at a rate consistent with the required annual minimum or greater to achieve the 2040 commitment or should expend the funds for carbon sequestering or carbon offsets to achieve yearly targets.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

(**6) No Expansion of Campus Carbon Footprint: Building Design and Cost Obligations**

New campus construction and renovation projects should not cause expansion of the campus carbon footprint.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(7) No Expansion of Campus Carbon Footprint: State and Federal Matching Fund Opportunities**

The University of Maine administration and the UMS Board of Trustees should ban the use of any state or federal funds for any new construction or reconstruction that expands the University carbon footprint.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(8) Hypothetical Deployment of Clean Energy Infrastructure for All versus a few New Clean Energy Buildings**

Hypothetically, if the campus administration and UMS Board of Trustees were to acquire $500 million in State of Maine bond funding for campus capital improvements, the funding should be used primarily to upgrade as many current buildings as possible to supply them with zero carbon emission energy rather than to construct several new clean energy buildings with at least one going to each college.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(9) Decreasing versus Not Enlarging the Campus Carbon Footprint**

Decreasing the carbon footprint of the campus should be made a design and funding requirement of each and every campus building and infrastructure project.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(10) Banning Addition of Any Fossil Fuel Connections**

Similar to the Columbia University pledge, the University of Maine should not install fossil fuel connections to any new campus construction or renovation projects.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(11) Regular Tracking of Campus Progress**

The Faculty Senate should create a *Climate Change Audit Committee* under the auspices of the standing *Environment Committee* to closely track and aid the campus in achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. It should regularly communicate and coordinate with the University of Maine *President's Sustainability Council* and the *UMaine Climate Action Plan Working Group*.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**(12) Divestment of Fossil Fuels**

Following the lead of State of Maine Legislative Bill LD99 (2021) that now bans new public investments in fossil fuels and full divestment within 5 years, the University of Maine System should formally commit to stopping any new investments in fossil fuel companies and fully divest funds in fossil fuel companies within 5 years.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**Respondent Relation to the University of Maine**

(For student version of the survey)

(13) My primary relation to the University of Maine is best described as:

\_\_ undergraduate student

\_\_ graduate student

\_\_ other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_\_

(14) I am most closely affiliated with the following college.

\_\_ College of Education and Human Development

\_\_ College of Engineering

\_\_ College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

\_\_ College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture

\_\_ Maine Business School

\_\_ All, none, or Other

(15) I am pursuing my academic program(s) primarily through:

\_\_ On-campus attendance

\_\_ UMaine Online

(For faculty/staff version of the survey)

(16) My primary relation to the University of Maine is best described as:

\_\_ faculty member

\_\_ adjunct faculty member

\_\_ administrative staff

\_\_ research staff

\_\_ academic unit head (e.g., department or school)

\_\_ research unit head (e.g., organized research unit)

\_\_ upper-level administrator (i.e., dean or above)

(17) I am most closely affiliated with the following college.

\_\_ College of Education and Human Development

\_\_ College of Engineering

\_\_ College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

\_\_ College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture

\_\_ Maine Business School

\_\_ All, None, or Other

(For both versions of the survey)

**General Comments**

(18) Please provide any additional comments you wish to make.

<medium size window for text entry>

**SUBMIT**

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded. Summary results will be made available on the FS Environment Committee website.

**APPENDIX**

**Suggestions by Reviewers to Date for Consideration by the Committee**

**Prior to Survey Deployment**

The comments below were submitted by committee members and corresponding faculty members. This appendix is under active development with further input being solicited from additional parties for improvement of the survey.

**Suggested Edits to the White Paper by Committee Members and Corresponding Faculty Members**

Reviewer Comment: The white paper needs a short paragraph introduction stating its purpose.

Response: This edit has been made. The current version of the whitepaper is dated 16 Jan 2022.

Reviewer Comment: A section needs to be added summarizing the findings to date of global warming scientists. The need for urgent action should be documented.

Response: This information has been added in a new Section II in the whitepaper.

Reviewer Comment: The pros and cons of potential biofuel use in the campus steam plant needs to be added.

Response: This information is now added in a new section V and a new Appendix 2 in the whitepaper.

**Suggested Edits to Survey Items**

Comment: The differences in what information is being sought from survey respondents from question to question is not clear.

Response: A heading for each survey item has been added and the previous headings for groups of questions have been dropped. Does this resolve the issue?

Comment: Remove the background information in survey items 1 and 2 and instead include that material in the whitepaper.

Response: The background information has been removed and a new section II has been added in the whitepaper incorporating the information. Previous items 1 and 2 have been combined into survey item 1 as illustrated above.

Comment: Shorten and simplify item 7.

Response: Done. Now number 6.

Comment: Shorten and simplify item 8.

Response: Done. Now number 7.

Comment: Item 9 is awkwardly worded. Rewrite.

Response: Done. Now number 8.

Comment: Shorten item 10 and reword it as a “requirement” rather than as a priority.

Response: Done. Now number 9.

Comment: Shorten and simplify item 13 and instruct UMS to adhere to the new law.

Response: Now number 12. Whether the University is included within the bounds of the legislation has not yet been confirmed. Wording is left as is for now until clarification is achieved.

**Suggested Eliminations of Survey Items**

Comment: Although item 3 (now item 2 above) is included in the whitepaper discussion in section V, this survey item does not relate directly to the campus climate commitment so it should be dropped.

Response: With the addition of the headings for each survey item, is the intent of this question clearer or should it still be dropped?

**Suggested Additions of Further Survey Items**

(aa) The University of Maine Machias campus should be added to the University of Maine commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2040.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

Response: no committee action yet taken to add or not

(bb) The President of the University of Maine should present annually an oral address open to the campus community and public at large on the *State of the University’s Climate Commitment toward Achieving Net-Zero Carbon Emissions by 2040*.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

Response: no committee action yet taken to add or not

(cc) Until such time as U.S. society resolves the issue of travel carbon emissions generally, the carbon emissions for each university-funded travel trip should be computed and the cost of offsetting/sequestering the carbon emissions should be applied to the university costs for the trip and actually spent for this purpose.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

Response: no committee action yet taken to add or drop this item

(dd) UMaine should avoid to the greatest extent possible any conversions to burning renewable biofuels on campus and instead go straight to full electrification of buildings and facilities powered by clean solar, wind, and other near-zero carbon emission energy sources.

\_\_ Strongly Agree

\_\_ Agree

\_\_ No Opinion

\_\_ Disagree

\_\_ Strongly Disagree

Response: no committee action yet taken to add or drop this item

**Further Item Suggestions**

(Sample wording for these items has yet to be prepared.)

A non-specific survey item suggestion was made to add questions in support of diversity, equity and inclusion.

A non-specific survey item suggestion was made to add an item about support for discouraging reliance on carbon offsets to meet carbon neutrality goals.

An item should be prepared on priority spending on long-term solutions (i.e., electrification powered by wind and solar) over stop gap solutions (i.e., dependence on the burning of biofuels that emit pollutants and greenhouse gases on campus).

1. \* If you are interested in suggesting edits to the white paper itself, please do so separately by sending suggested changes with your citations to Faculty Senate Environment Committee Co-Chair Harlan Onsrud, harlan.onsrud@maine.edu [↑](#footnote-ref-1)