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# The Imperative for Climate Action at Portland State University

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# THE IMPERATIVE FOR CLIMATE ACTION AT PSU

11/5/2021

Dear Campus Community,

We can no longer wait to act on climate change. While world leaders gather in Scotland for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, it is imperative that we as a campus community begin the urgent work to determine how Portland State will show up for change. We have a unique opportunity to determine how we will be distinctive in our climate work, and how we can join with partners in this region to bring a collective approach to climate action.

I believe that our university can be a leader in addressing the most complex and important challenges that face our society. Racial justice and equity remains my central strategic priority for Portland State. We know that the harm caused by climate change falls on traditionally marginalized communities and that any successful response to climate change will have equity at its core. As a community and *with* our community we can show leadership and press for innovation and solutions.

We can do this by educating our students, joining hands with our partners, and looking critically at our own operations. We will amplify the work of PSU's leading climate and social justice experts, making new connections between disciplines and staying focused on our core values. Collectively, we are uniquely poised for community-oriented climate impact.

I am grateful for the vigilance of PSU students who demand climate action. I recognize it is the younger generations that will bear the brunt of climate change. We have a unique opportunity to find solutions and equitable strategies to generate opportunities for our graduates and enhance the quality of life in our community, region, state and beyond.

Our experience at PSU tells us that we are most successful in creating impactful initiatives when the people who will implement them are actively engaged in initial explorations and planning. Therefore I am calling the campus to dialogue in multiple venues and with diverse stakeholders.

This week I am announcing a steering committee to lead us in this process. The committee members are:

- Co-chair: Jennifer Allen, Portland Professor of Environmental and Natural Resource Policy, Hatfield School of Government
- Co-chair: Todd Rosenstiel, Dean, College Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Cynthia Gomez, Director of Community & Civic Impact, University Relations
- Lindsay Romasanta, Associate Vice President, Global Diversity and Inclusion
- Theodore Van Alst, Tilikum Professor of Indigenous Nations Studies

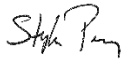
This committee will collaborate with the Deans who will host climate conversations relevant to their schools and colleges. Additional dialogues will be organized among students, researchers, potential community partners, and a group to explore the intersection of social justice and climate action. Through these conversations, we will map our existing climate-related activity, surface opportunities to further our impact, and forge new connections across the university and within our community. The committee will use this input to design a Winter Symposium that builds opportunities for additional engagement as well as identifying promising strategies.

Portland State has an exceptional array of climate-related assets — knowledge, expertise, practice, science, public health, and humanities and so many other disciplines — all of which, together, place us as a high-impact leader for this region.

I look forward to embarking on this exciting initiative with all of you to define PSU's best opportunity to make a difference, and to plan our collective action on climate change.

Sincerely,

Stephen Percy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Percy".

PSU President