

# A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:

## A Statement from Mason's Sustainability Council

In 2007, George Mason University's then-President Alan Merten signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. This committed Mason to carbon neutrality by 2050 and resulted in the creation of the Office of Sustainability (OoS). Since 2007, much has been done. Mason is regularly featured in the Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges, in Sierra magazine's "Cool Schools" ranking, and even earned a Silver certification (the Arlington campus is Bronze) from the League of American Bicyclists. In 2010, Mason released its first Climate Action Plan (CAP) designed in collaboration between students, faculty, and staff that charted a green course for the university. And, in 2014, Mason became the first university in the state of Virginia to earn a coveted "Gold" rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). In 2019, the OoS released its CAP Progress Report demonstrating the University's commitment to sustainability while highlighting the progress that's been made such as the 30% decrease in energy use from non-renewable electricity and natural gas per building square foot from 2006-2016. Although such amazing progress has been made, still more remains to be done.

At the October 18th, 2019 Fridays for Future Climate Rally organized by numerous student organizations Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration Carol Kissal, with the full support of Interim President Anne Holton, made another historic commitment: Mason's Sustainability Council will lead the development of Mason's first-ever Strategic Plan for Sustainability and will update the Climate Action Plan originally completed in 2010. The Strategic Plan for Sustainability will map out a vision for Mason's sustainable future including goals, objectives, and key performance indicators. The Climate Action Plan will translate the Strategic Plan for Sustainability into action by providing students, faculty, and staff with opportunities and resources to make a difference. We know that your voice matters. And that's why both plans will be collaboratively developed with significant input from the campus community. To exemplify our commitment to campus involvement, Dr. Dann Sklarew is leading a design workshop in the spring of 2020 titled "Sustainability Planning for Communities" (EVPP 490-008 & EVPP 692-004) that will inform the planning process and both plans.

Although, the planning process hasn't started yet, we'll be sure to let you know when and how to participate. If you'd like to get involved with sustainability at Mason before the planning process begins, there are plenty of options: enroll in a Green Leaf course or program; complete research with world-class faculty; submit a Patriot Green Fund proposal; live in the Environment and Sustainability LLC; volunteer at Mason's Greenhouse; join a "green" student group; check-out the Sustainable Mason Map; subscribe to the Sustainable Scoop newsletter; and much more!