



GBA Leading Strategic Planning Effort for Higher Education Climate Consortium of Pittsburgh with support of \$75,000 Henry L. Hillman Foundation Grant

April 26, 2022 (PITTSBURGH) - The City of Pittsburgh and the higher education institutions that call it home share people, infrastructure, research, goals, and more. Since 2008, the [Higher Education Climate Consortium \(HECC\)](#) of Pittsburgh has played a critical role in bringing the Pittsburgh region's higher education institutions together around climate action, while also putting intentionality behind advancing campus goals individually and collectively, to take advantage of city-wide scale and opportunity.

HECC has been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation to support the continued advancement of this collaboration on climate action. [Green Building Alliance](#) (GBA) is the grant managing organization and Steven Baumgartner of [BUSS](#) is leading this planning effort as a consultant to GBA.

A voluntary collaborative, HECC members include Carlow University, Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham University, Community College of Allegheny County, Duquesne University, Pennsylvania State University's Pittsburgh Center, Point Park University, Robert Morris University, and University of Pittsburgh.

The 2022 HECC Strategy and Action Plan for Equitable Climate Mitigation is focused on creating a strategic direction for the 14-year-old HECC collaboration, while simultaneously providing support to individual institutions with existing climate action goals and commitments. The strategic plan is being developed with an intentional equity lens – to understand how individual universities as well as the HECC as a collaborative can make their climate action planning efforts work for all Pittsburghers.

“Founded in 2008 as part of the Pittsburgh Climate Initiative, the Higher Education Climate Consortium of Pittsburgh has been a long-standing collaboration of Pittsburgh universities working together on climate action,” said Dr. Aurora Sharrard, Co-Chair of HECC and Executive Director of Sustainability at the University of Pittsburgh. “We are each and all excited about leveraging two grants to expand and accelerate individual and collaborative climate action in higher education throughout Pittsburgh.”

“We are grateful for the support of the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, which will help to invigorate HECC's efforts to bring all colleges in the Pittsburgh region together to collaborate around climate action,” said GBA Executive Director Jenna Cramer. “By collaborating, sharing information, and setting goals regarding research, education curricula, operations, outreach activities, and commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the universities in our region are achieving meaningful change locally while reinforcing the region's climate leadership nationally and internationally.”

In addition to the Hillman Foundation's support, Chatham University has received a \$10,000 grant on HECC's behalf through [Second Nature's](#) Acceleration Fund. A national nonprofit committed to accelerating climate action in and through higher education, Second Nature's Acceleration Fund is dedicated to supporting climate action activities driven by colleges and universities. The Fund supports projects that advance decarbonization

and/or campus-community partnerships and resilience goals. Announced at the April 2022 Climate Leadership Summit, the Acceleration Fund grant will support HECC graduate student fellows to advance the HECC strategic planning effort over the next year with various data, communication, and/or engagement.

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About the Higher Education Climate Consortium of Pittsburgh:

HECC's mission is to actively collaborate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Pittsburgh's higher education institutions; its vision is to strengthen this region's position as a leader in climate action by achieving carbon neutrality. Initially designated in 2008 as part of the Pittsburgh Climate Initiative (which evolved from the City of Pittsburgh's 2006-2007 Green Government Task Force and first Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan), HECC was convened by Green Building Alliance from 2008 through 2011. Still a voluntary collaborative, current HECC members are Carlow University, Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham University, Community College of Allegheny County, Duquesne University, Pennsylvania State University's Pittsburgh Center, Point Park University, Robert Morris University and University of Pittsburgh.

About Green Building Alliance: GBA positively transforms the world through the built environment for a sustainable, healthy, and just future for everyone. In addition to HECC, GBA supports several collaborative efforts, including the Pittsburgh and Erie 2030 Districts, the Green & Healthy Schools Academy, and the Greater Pittsburgh Center of Excellence on High Performance Building.

About BUSS: Baumgartner Urban Systems Strategy LLC (BUSS) is a Pittsburgh-based consultancy founded and led by Steven Baumgartner. Steven is an engineer and planner specializing in integrated systems solutions for campuses, communities, and cities. He leads projects focused on sustainability and climate action in higher education around the country and locally, including University of Pittsburgh's recent Climate Action Plan. Steven is member of the Riverlife Design Review Committee, Van Alen Institute's Council and ULI's Sustainable Development Council.

About Second Nature: Second Nature is a Commonwealth of Massachusetts nonprofit committed to accelerating climate action in, and through, higher education. From its founding, Second Nature has worked to expand higher education's ability to solve pressing sustainability challenges.