



Faculty Senate Select Committee on the Institutional Response to the Climate Emergency ([CIRCE](#))

Senate Executive Committee (SEC) meeting, March 17, 3:15-4:30pm ET

[ZOOM LINK](#) *(We have added a registration requirement in order to obtain access so as to track participation)*

With SAS, Wharton, Dentistry, & Medicine

Climate change is an existential crisis, and the steady drumbeat of climate related disasters has increased the concerns of faculty about our institutional response. To help us think about this topic, we have invited representatives of four schools that control the largest stocks of buildings on the campus and so have a natural leadership role in questions related to carbon action.

CIRCE has 3 sub-committees—Operations, Research & Education, and Community & Policy—as well as working groups on air travel and the hospital, all of which have framed questions for this discussion.

Climate Education

Faculty and student groups have voiced a need for more courses on climate change. What is your school doing to increase relevant offerings and programs?

What is the best way to coordinate development of new courses on climate?

Climate and Energy Research

What are currently the strongest areas of research related to climate in your school?

What is the strategic plan for the future of climate research in your school?

Climate Week

[Climate Week](#), the annual series of events on the climate emergency, is getting institutionalized with executive and advisory committees. How is your school grasping the opportunity of climate week to raise awareness among faculty, staff, and students?

Faculty Resolution

CIRCE is renewing its efforts to ask faculty to sign the climate resolution passed by the faculty senate last year, which asks faculty to commit to 5 simple actions to reduce their own carbon footprints. CIRCE members are preparing a short presentation for faculty meetings and other faculty groups to encourage people to sign. With whom in your schools should we work to arrange for these presentations?

Link to the climate resolution: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/articles/from-the-senate-office-resolution-on-the-individual-and-institutional-responses-of-faculty-in-the-university-of-pennsylvania-to-the-global-climate-emergency>

Air Travel

Air travel is a significant portion of the University's carbon emissions, so will have to be addressed to reach the university's [carbon neutrality goal by 2042](#). The plan being developed by the Procurement office (with a trial set for FY22) is to purchase offsets for air travel. Will your school participate in this initiative?

What is your school doing to reduce carbon emissions from faculty and staff air travel, and have you considered either of the following approaches?

Air travel “budgets” for faculty and staff

Virtual conferencing

Would you support air travel restrictions or transitioning conferences to virtual formats to reduce air travel emissions?

What issues would this pose for the faculty in your school?

Carbon Action Plans

Is your school developing a carbon action plan?

Do you have energy or carbon reduction goals for individual buildings?

Have you considered more ambitious goals for any of your buildings, such as net zero energy or carbon?

For Dean Jameson: The original carbon pledge signed by President Gutmann promised to extend the plan to all the units of the University. Will UPHS and CHOP also produce a carbon action plan?

Office Greening

Does your school encourage or support the [Green Office Program](#)?

Is there anything you can suggest for improving that program?

Would you consider making that program mandatory in your school?

Carbon Pricing

There are a number of proposals being discussed for carbon pricing internal to Penn, which range from publishing annual carbon footprints of individual buildings to a direct carbon tax (see attached list).

Would you support some form of internal carbon pricing/reporting to increase incentives for action by or within your school?

Would you consider carbon pricing/reporting incentives for individual units within your school?

Types of Internal Carbon Pricing (prepared by Angela Pachon, Kleinman Center)

Reporting and Disclosure

Many organizations are reporting their environmental impacts to the CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) and Dow Jones Sustainability Index, among others. Reporting through the CDP has been linked to improved energy management and greenhouse gas reductions. Reporting and disclosure is a first step towards some sort of carbon market implementation. By publicly disclosing their emissions, corporations can show how climate committed they are. The disclosure is also a first step for corporations that want to start to measure their emissions to enable an action plan to reduce them.

Shadow Price

Shadow pricing applies a cost per carbon emission to investment or purchasing decisions. By applying it, it is expected that low carbon investments will have a more favorable cash flow than similar projects with a higher emissions profile. For purchases, the shadow price will make the carbon intensive purchases more expensive. The shadow price is not ultimately charged but used as a tool to encourage more responsible procurement.

Carbon fee

A carbon fee is a charge for the carbon emissions incurred by different entities (in the case of Penn Schools or Organizations) operating within the corporation

Market mechanisms for carbon pricing that internalize the societal cost of carbon from operations decisions. These mechanisms can help the university prepare for potential city, state, or federal prices on carbon or emissions reductions standards associated with meeting COP21 commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the CDP Carbon Price Report, a next logical step beyond goal-setting and reporting is setting an internal carbon pricing

Carbon Cap

Because emissions from air travel at universities are so high, some universities are experimenting with capping total mileage to limit emissions. For example, Santa Clara University has proposed limiting air travel reimbursements and capping travel budgets to a certain percentage reduction from the prior year