



National Wildlife Federation®  
**CAMPUS**  
ecology®

**Kalamazoo College  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Spring 2008, Climate Action Plan**

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Campus Profile**

Kalamazoo College, often referred to as “K,” is located in Kalamazoo, Michigan. It is one of the oldest academic institutions in the country. Its nationally recognized Green K-Plan emphasizes a challenging curriculum, career-development projects, study abroad and the senior individualized project (SIP), an in-depth research project done during the senior year. The college is small, with enrollment at only 1,340 students. Approximately one-quarter of those students study abroad for three to nine months each year. The campus climate is one of “enlightened leadership” where students are encouraged to take initiative and become involved in on-campus groups and activities outside of academics. The college is committed to five key dimensions of intellectual and personal growth, among them social responsibility, defined by the college’s website as “a commitment to community service and a willingness to take on roles for the common good.”

### **Contacts**

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## **GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **Goals**

The goals of the Green K-Plan are to secure a commitment from the campus administration to reduce carbon emissions on campus and to raise awareness of the importance of individual actions in combating global warming. Strategies to meet this goal include (1) facilitating the purchase of clean energy on campus, (2) initiating campus-wide climate action projects to draw upon existing student support, and (3) engaging members of the community in the process through presentation of the Green K-Plan.

### **Accomplishments**

#### Facilitating the Purchase of “Green” Energy

College President Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran signed a commitment to carbon neutrality via the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment in the fall of 2007. In support of this initiative, NWF Campus Ecology Fellow Samantha Weaver went on to complete a carbon emissions inventory and neutrality plan as part of her senior thesis in environmental studies.

The project helped develop the “8 in ’08” campaign to divert cost savings from energy conservation toward the purchase of electricity generated from renewable resources. It was estimated that by turning all campus computers off for approximately eight hours per day, the college could save enough money to

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purchase 8 percent of its electricity from renewable sources in just one year. The Kalamazoo College administration has committed to funding the purchase of green electricity using the verified savings realized from student-led conservation initiatives. Facilities management will assist in the verification of the savings.

The 8 in '08 campaign will:

- Reduce campus energy use by about 1.5 percent.
- Allocate money saved to purchase 22,500 kWh of green power after the first month of the conservation program.
- Within the next year, purchase 8 percent of college electricity from renewable sources.

Judging from information available online, it would also help “K” become the first college in Michigan to make renewable energy purchases of this size.

### Initiating Campus-Wide Climate Action Projects

To further spread awareness about sustainability on campus, Samantha created and led a new student organization called the Campus Energy Group (CEG), whose mission statement is:

In an effort to confront the challenges climate change presents to our generation, the Energy Group seeks to create a base for education, research and promotion of energy awareness, conservation and environmental stewardship on the Kalamazoo College campus. To this end, the Campus Energy Group will implement projects to reduce the college’s carbon footprint in light of its recent commitment to carbon neutrality as a signatory to the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment”.

Activities of the CEG this year included:

- Two energy competitions among the residence halls. In many cases students were able to reduce their electrical usage by almost 10 percent.
- Energy-Free Friday—an annual event in which students, faculty and staff are encouraged to try to save as much energy as possible.
- A field trip to a wind turbine at the nearby Western Michigan University engineering campus. The professor who created and designed the turbine educated us about renewable energy technologies available in Michigan.
- Participation in Earth Day Fest and Spring Fling. Activities we provided included making biodiesel to power the campus bus and signing energy conservation pledges.
- A demonstration of how much energy a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) saves using an old exercise bike. The bike was hooked up to power an incandescent light bulb and a CFL. By flipping a switch, students could actually FEEL the difference in the amount of energy it takes to power an incandescent bulb versus a compact fluorescent bulb! We then handed out free CFLs to everyone who rode the bicycle.
- Coordination of a trip to Washington, D.C. for the first-ever Power Shift conference. Seventeen students from Kalamazoo College drove more than 600 miles to participate in the event.
- An event featuring Paul Toala Gualinga, a native of the Sarayaku province of Ecuador. Mr. Gualinga discussed the negative impacts of the oil industry on his community and indigenous culture. In the Ecuadorian Amazon, residents in his small community declared a state of emergency when they learned that the Ecuadorian government had awarded a concession of their territory to oil companies without their consent. Since October 2003, classes at the local school in the province have been suspended, and community members have armed themselves and gone out into the far reaches of their

territory to mark the limits of the land to prepare for the possible incursion by oil companies. The presentation was given in Spanish and translated by a faculty member of the political science department. The event was attended by over 100 Kalamazoo College students.

- Distribution of nearly 300 CFLs to students since January 2008.

### Presenting the Green K-Plan

The Green K-Plan: Toward a Carbon Neutral Campus was launched this spring. The event was attended by students, faculty and staff members. The report was completed during the summer and fall of 2007 and included an inventory of Scope 1 and 2 emissions on campus, as well as a plan for achieving carbon neutrality in the coming decade.

Final results showed that Scope 1 and 2 emissions sources emitted just over 11,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide–equivalent gas into the atmosphere in 2006. Additional conclusions of the project were that (1) Increased energy conservation is a vital first step. (2) Biomass boilers should be considered as replacements for the current natural gas boilers (due to be replaced in the coming year). (3) We can't manage what we don't measure, and therefore metering capabilities for campus buildings must be improved. (4) Future renovations and construction projects should take environmental impacts and energy efficiency into consideration, and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification should always be explored.

The sub-meters have been installed in all campus residence halls (the lack of sub-meters had previously made measuring usage very difficult and time consuming), and LEED certification is being considered for the renovation of the college's athletic center, which is to begin next fall.

As a signatory to the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, Kalamazoo College must adopt a carbon neutrality plan within the coming year. This project can serve as a stepping stone and significant contribution toward this effort.

## **ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

### **Leaders and Supporters**

The Campus Energy Group helped spread awareness about sustainability on campus. Kalamazoo President Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran signed a commitment to carbon neutrality via the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. Facilities management also played a key role in the success of this project.

### **Funding and Resources**

This project was funded through an NWF Campus Ecology Fellowship grant.

### **Campus Climate Action: Your School's Carbon Footprint**

As noted above, our results showed that Kalamazoo College emissions equaled just over 11,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide–equivalent gas into the atmosphere in 2006. Our commitment now is to reach carbon neutrality within the coming year.

### **National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology® Program**

The NWF Campus Ecology Fellowship helped support the large changes that took place on campus this year, including an administrative commitment to carbon neutrality as well as the purchase of green power.

## **CLOSING COMMENT**

The campus community has become increasingly eco-conscious over the past four years. This project would not have been successful without the unending support of facilities management staff, as well as college administrators and professors. Students remain the strongest proponents of sustainability on campus and are appreciated for their support of many projects.

The awareness-raising projects conducted by the Campus Energy Group program continue to be successful, and we hope that the campus climate stays “cool.”