

## Executive Summary

As anthropogenic greenhouse gases have accumulated in the atmosphere for more than two centuries, it is clear that near term climate change is unavoidable and thus will require a global shift toward a climate resilient world to reduce and reverse the impacts, inequalities, and injustices that climate change engenders. Additional atmospheric accumulation will further intensify climate change in the long run, so the world must mitigate these threats by moving to a net-zero carbon society, justly and equitably.

To achieve these ambitious goals requires innovative science; a rethinking of social norms and market structures; the development and deployment of transformative technologies; policies to advance new approaches to finance markets; cultural and behavioral change; an educated workforce literate in climate resilience, energy transformation, and justice; and scalable models of success.

A key question is what role should Duke University play in addressing this crisis and contributing to the solutions to it? All too often the narratives associated with climate change have been ones of despair and doom. A more positive, solutions- and impact-oriented perspective is needed. In this spirit, Duke will become **The Climate University** and focus on creating sustainable and equitable solutions to the climate crisis that will place society on the path to a resilient, flourishing, net-zero carbon world by 2050. Duke will do this by engaging every part of the University's mission:

- In **education**, Duke will aim to create a climate and sustainability literate student body that not only understands the origins of this crisis, but can address them through the development and implementation of creative, scientifically informed, just, and responsible solutions.
- In **research**, Duke will prioritize investments in areas in which the University has a distinctive comparative advantage—transforming energy, creating a climate resilient future, and building data driven climate solution strike teams.
- In **operations**, Duke will continue to work toward carbon neutrality in a transparent way through campus development, energy use, transportation systems, and waste management. The University will also look beyond 2024 to develop the next level sustainability and climate vision.
- In our **partner communities** of Durham, Beaufort, and around the globe, Duke will seek to connect authentically so community insight and wisdom can help create more durable social and economic solutions that recognizes our mutual interdependency.

This is an unparalleled opportunity for a world-class university to commit itself to the betterment of society and the healing of the planet. To make progress Duke needs to:

- Secure enabling investments to advance student climate and sustainability literacy as well as the University's research ambitions
- Convene a multi-stakeholder Climate and Sustainability Implementation team to oversee and guide this critical work
- Develop a Duke specific framework to ensure the principles of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion are centered throughout planning and implementation of this entire strategy
- Communicate more transparently about what is already happening across campus and amplify new commitments and actions while being accountable to measurable outcomes and reporting back to the Board of Trustees, the campus, and the community

Climate and sustainability are topics at Duke that stretch across disciplines, interconnect operations and academics, cross campus boundaries, reach into the community, and around the world. As the University embarks on its second century, it is imperative that it address the global challenges posed by climate change with sustainable solutions that challenge existing paradigms to not only benefit current society but create a just and equitable world for future generations.