

A Resolution of UMW's University Faculty Council Acknowledging the Serious Threat of Climate Change and Promoting a Transition to 100% Renewable Energy

Whereas, the world's continued reliance on fossil fuels is warming our atmosphere and creating severe threats to future human wellbeing, according to the U.S. government's National Climate Assessment,¹ the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,² and a multitude of scientific and academic organizations;

Whereas, reducing the risks of catastrophic levels of warming requires a timely transition to zero-emission renewable energy, which should begin now;

Whereas, the price of renewable energy has fallen dramatically, such that it is commercially viable at a cost equal to or less than that of carbon-emission producing fossil fuels;

Whereas, the University of Mary Washington has an ethical responsibility in this era of climate change to reduce its own carbon emissions in order to help protect the futures of its current and upcoming students;

Whereas, young people are increasingly interested in—and alarmed by—climate change, and UMW will therefore have a greater capacity to attract the very best students by becoming a local leader in the transition to 100% renewable energy;

Whereas, a transition to 100% renewable energy creates new opportunities for UMW faculty and academic programs to move beyond the classroom, practice community engagement, and otherwise create transformative learning opportunities for our students;

Therefore, be it resolved by the University of Mary Washington University Faculty Council that:

1. There is an urgent need for a transition to 100% renewable energy in Fredericksburg, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and beyond; and
2. UMW administrators and the Board of Directors are encouraged to enact an ambitious plan to produce renewable energy on campus and to develop other good climate policies, such as increasing campus energy efficiency, composting food waste, and adopting electric vehicles, as resources allow.

Progress towards this resolution should be reported to the UFC on an annual basis by the President and the President's Council on Sustainability.

In adopting this resolution, the University Faculty Council is taking an important step in recognizing the University's responsibility, both on campus and off, to promote a transition to renewable energy in order to help reduce the disastrous risks of unmitigated climate change.

¹ National Climate Assessment. 2018. Fourth National Climate Assessment Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation. Available at: <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

² IPCC. 2018. Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees Celsius. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>