

The Climate Action Plan—An Imperative for Mt. San Antonio College

An imperative? That seems like a strikingly strong statement to make for a community college. In fact, there are many reasons that climate action is both an imperative for Mt. SAC and a very appropriate application of the college's commitment to our mission.

Knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding the environment are essential for student learning across almost every area of our curriculum. Environmental issues are hotly debated in our current race to select the next Governor of California—a topic for political science and economics. Architectural design has moved from environmental sustainability as a best practice to an essential feature both for compliance and for cost effectiveness. Solutions to water and air pollution require both theory and practice of the sciences. Wildfire, floods, and other climate related disasters influence practices from prevention measures to incident response to insurance rates—raising the bar for training everyone from inspectors to first responders to social workers to insurance agents. Mt. SAC must have not only specific programs in Climate Action but must integrate its impacts throughout our curriculum.

As a community college, Mt. SAC not only must teach sustainability but must be an active demonstration site for its implementation. Our planners, staff, and students are employed daily in water conservation, energy efficiency, sustainable building design, environmentally friendly maintenance practices, and pollution reducing facilities such as electric vehicle charging stations and on-site clean energy generation. By the way, the curriculum reflects these active learning opportunities by employing student interns on almost all the facets of campus sustainability.

The value of education is not just based on providing students with employable skills but also in assuring that our graduates are responsible citizens of society. Weaving this social awareness of the environment into our classrooms and laboratories and into our college operations is our responsibility as well. The future of our planet—and the quality of life we experience—require both an informed and motivated electorate to push public policy and a cadre of citizens who live their day-to-day lives utilizing practices that conserve and protect our environment. “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” is not just a slogan, it is a way of life.

The urgency of Climate Action cannot be understated—heat waves, fires, floods, hurricanes are in the news daily. Taking action now is imperative. And so is it imperative that Mt. SAC take action in our teaching, in our business practices, and in our social advocacy. This Climate Action Plan is our template and our commitment to do so.

Bill Scroggins, President & CEO
Mt. San Antonio College
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