



To the University Community:

This semester, in continuing UConn's longstanding tradition of Metanoias, or periods of reflection and conversation, the University is sponsoring a Metanoia on The Environment. On more than a dozen occasions since 1970, (appropriately, the year of the nation's first annual Earth Day celebration), UConn has devoted intensive discussion to topics of great concern to our community. The Metanoia this past fall focused on race in America.

This semester's Metanoia will engage students, faculty and staff at all UConn campuses in a series of events and activities designed to raise awareness and explore the interactions between our environment and society. We'll discuss environmental issues and challenges that affect us all, as amplified by recent climate-related natural disasters, and we'll encourage people to "think globally and act locally," in order to be a part of solutions that sustain, protect and preserve natural resources.

The Steering Committee for this Metanoia is planning a series of events leading up to Earth Day on April 22nd. The committee is currently soliciting proposals from throughout the University. Additional information about the Environmental Metanoia, including instructions for submitting proposals, may be found at <https://theenvironment.uconn.edu>.

UConn has advanced this commitment to sustainability by endorsing a [Climate Action Plan](#), which sets goals and milestones on the path to a carbon-neutral campus, and a follow-up [2020 Vision Plan for Campus Sustainability and Climate Leadership](#), which has more specific interim metrics for accelerating that journey. Significant energy efficiency measures alone over the past five years have already saved millions of dollars in energy costs and reduced UConn's carbon footprint by nearly 20%, despite the continued growth of the Storrs campus.

Many of you have helped lead the way: our dining halls are all [Green Restaurant Certified](#), dozens of new construction and major renovation projects are high-performing green buildings ([LEED Gold](#) registered or certified), faculty and staff in more than 50 offices have ensured that their workplace meets the criteria of UConn's [Green Office Certification Program](#), and our state-of-the-art [Reclaimed Water Facility](#) conserves water by recycling as much as 400,000 gallons a day. Meanwhile, dozens of student groups dedicate themselves to environmental and sustainability causes.

Thanks to efforts like these, UConn is consistently ranked among the top ten most sustainable universities nationally and globally. This trend continued in published rankings for 2017, like [Green Metric](#), [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), and [STARS](#). This recognition should be a source of pride to us all, and more importantly, motivation - because, now more than ever, colleges and universities must play a leadership role in addressing environmental challenges.

We hope you are able to participate in this valuable discussion this semester.

Sincerely,

Susan Herbst, President
Jeremy Teitelbaum, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs