



AJCU *Laudato Si'* Commission: Advancing a Shared Agenda for our Common Home

White Paper

“Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

“Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal. . . .

As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us.”

— Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

AJCU Faith, Justice & Reconciliation Assembly 2024: Creation of a Hope-filled Future

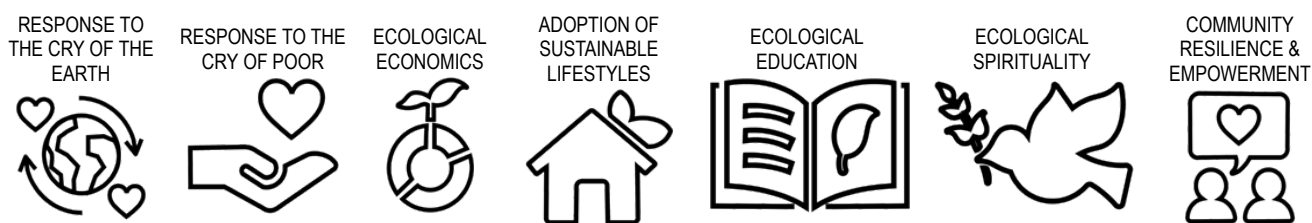
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Laudato Si' Goals and University Action Plans

On May 24th of 2015, Pope Francis released an historic encyclical letter: *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. Addressed to all people of goodwill, this foundational document focused on the urgent need to address climate change, pollution, injustice, and human suffering. In response to these challenges, the Encyclical calls for transforming human-environmental relations in ways that foster care for nature and all people, and engages broader questions about the relationships between God, humans, and the Earth.

The Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development celebrated the conclusion of the 5th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* by announcing a yearlong celebration. The celebration culminated in a watershed event that launched the Laudato Si' Action Platform, and started a process of developing seven year action plans by local churches, communities, businesses, healthcare facilities, and education institutions, who are drawing on the Encyclical's message to inform concrete actions. The Laudato Si' Action Platform offers tools and support for Pope Francis' *7-Year Journey* towards total sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology.

In recognition that "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" (Laudato Si' 14), and to remain faithful to the Encyclical's commitment to integral ecology, the Dicastery identified 7 Laudato Si' Goals. These goals guide us toward institutional and personal renewal, offering a holistic approach for transformative action.



Soon after the launch of the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP), and with support from University Pathways, college and university presidents began signing commitment letters and enrolling on the LSAP by October 2021. In Year 1 of the *7-Year Journey*, universities were asked to take these 7 Laudato Si' Goals and 1) see how current actions are already addressing them, 2) identify additional transformative actions to generate further positive outcomes for the natural world and human society, and 3) bring current and new actions into a Laudato Si' Action Plan to be published, monitored and adjusted for the next six years.

As of June 2024, 24 of the 28 colleges and universities in the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) have signed the commitment letter, enrolled in the LSAP, and started Pope Francis' 7-Year Journey towards integral ecology. Several have already completed the first year of planning and published their action plans; others are still in the planning stage.

Universities and colleges are privileged locations for teaching, research, and service in ways that exemplify Integral Ecology. This privilege is especially true of institutions founded by the Society of Jesus and inspired by the Jesuit's Universal Apostolic Preferences:

1. Showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and their practice of discernment
2. Walking with the poor, the outcasts of the world, and those whose dignity has been violated, in the mission of reconciliation and justice
3. Walking together with young people, to build a hope-filled future
4. Working together to care for the earth, our common home.

The AJCU Laudato Si' Commission's Charge

The Commission's charge encourages us to hear the urgent cry of the Earth and its poor, find inspiration in Pope Francis' vision of an integral ecology, respond to the urgent call from the Society of Jesus and Pope Francis to be in solidarity with all creation, and then ask ourselves how can we make environmental justice and sustainability a hallmark of our Jesuit colleges and universities in their operations, academic affairs, community formation, and civic engagement. Specifically, we were asked to present at the AJCU Faith, Justice, & Reconciliation Assembly 2024 a set of Laudato Si' inspired transformative actions that would clearly demonstrate a Jesuit university's commitment to making environmental sustainability and justice a hallmark of each institution's operational and educational mission. These transformative actions must, in various ways, challenge and engage the college or university; and, at the same time, the actions must be doable within and across AJCU Universities. This work will establish AJCU colleges and universities as leaders in responding to the urgent climate crisis and its associated injustices.

The Commission's Process

Called together for the first time at Santa Clara University in April 2023, the *Laudato Si'* Commission for the 2024 AJCU Faith, Justice & Reconciliation Assembly consists of twenty-one faculty members, sustainability coordinators, staff, and administrators from Jesuit institutions across North America (see membership list, Appendix 2). As part of realizing the Commission's charge, we aimed to generate proposals, resources, and relationships to help AJCU colleges and universities make environmental sustainability and justice a hallmark of their institutions.

To start, the Commission created working groups that developed proposals for transformative environmental sustainability pedagogies and actions within five categories of university life: business operations, academic affairs, community formation, civic engagement, and networking. To help Commission members incubate ideas early in this process, the Commission created a *Summer Reading Handbook* that included a variety of resources, including: University Pathways, STARS, and examples of other climate and sustainability initiatives in higher education such as the University of California's cross institutional sustainability and climate leadership initiative.

The Commission's five working groups drafted twelve proposals (please see the details here) by November 2023. In short, the proposals included: (1) required integration of environmental sustainability and justice into educational curricula, (2) science-based greenhouse gas reduction targets, (3) renewed commitment to integral ecology, (4) climate action workshops, (5) environmentally sustainable gift policy, (6) environmental justice resource hub, (6) AJCU delegations to UN Climate Week 2024, (7) federal grant funding workshop, (8) simple living communities, (9) annual eco-retreat, (10) accelerate global adoption of integral ecology, (11) environmental spirituality creation-themed liturgies, and (13), supporting more AJCU institutions peer-to-peer learning. To discuss and evaluate these proposals and identify next steps, the Commission engaged in an Ignatian Group Discernment with experienced guidance from Dominic Chai S.J.. The Commission members believed that each proposal was valuable and noted that several overlapped. In the months leading up to the 2024 Assembly, the Laudato Si' Commission Co-Chairs facilitated a participatory process to rework, integrate, and prioritize the twelve proposals. As elaborated below, we arrived at five transformative, actionable recommendations for making integral ecology a hallmark of our Jesuit colleges and universities.

The Commission's Research Findings

The proposals derived from our research on existing programs and best practices, and an analysis of the strengths and gaps in existing programming. The Commission initiated a research process that consisted of soliciting information from all AJCU institutions concerning their existing actions within four categories: institutional operations, academic affairs, community formation, and civic engagement. Through four iterations of edits and additions with university representatives over the course of one year, the AJCU Eco-Social Engagement Report (ESER) grew into a substantial 90 page self-reporting inventory of what AJCU schools are doing to address environmental sustainability (see [AJCU Eco-Social Engagement Report](#)). The Commission also pursued complementary research, launching the AJCU's First Rapid Scan of Climate Emissions and Commitments to quantify carbon emissions, reduction actions, and climate commitments. The team also reviewed databases, such as the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System \(STARS\)](#), the United Nations' [Race to Zero](#), Second Nature, and surveyed participating universities.

The team's analysis of the [AJCU Eco-Social Engagement Report](#) preliminary findings from the AJCU's First Rapid Scan of Climate Emissions and Commitments, and reflections from colleagues who shared experiences during meetings and conferences, identified several strengths of existing environment and sustainability plans, programs, and actions within the AJCU network:

- There is an impressive and wide range of innovative eco-social projects underway across the AJCU Institutions, especially in the areas of:
 - sustainability offices and committees
 - commitment to Pope Francis' 7-Year Journey Project
 - institutional sustainability plans
 - efficient energy & lighting practices
 - water & recycling management
 - sustainable food & dining practices
 - sustainable transportation options
 - sustainable buildings & grounds practices
 - undergraduate environmental curricula & degrees
 - environmental centers & institutes
 - environmental student groups
 - environment-focused community formation programs, projects & events
 - civic engagement at the local level
- All but four AJCU Institutions have joined the Laudato Si' Action Planform and pledged to begin the seven-year journey toward Integral Ecology. Most have launched action planning processes, and several could lead toward transformative change.
- All universities that have responded to our survey (27 out of 28) have multiple programs in each of the programmatic areas (institutional operations, academic affairs, community formation, and civic engagement) with the strongest areas being academic affairs and community formation.
- Most AJCU institutions are reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that exacerbate climate change and supporting a more sustainable adaptation. Some have invested in a just transition away from fossil fuels. There are multiple ways to work towards these common goals, and excellent organizations, such as the [Catholic Climate Covenant \(CCC\)](#), that can support colleges and universities as they start from diverse places and resource endowments. Several AJCU institutions (8 of 28) have joined the UN's Race to Zero, which is a Paris Agreement-aligned campaign for non-state actors.

In addition to identifying the aforementioned strengths, the Commission also identified several significant gaps and challenges which provide opportunities to our shared effort to power up the AJCU's Laudato Si' commitments:

1. The findings of the Eco-Social Engagement Report and an initial assessment of the preliminary findings from the AJCU's First Rapid Scan of Climate Emissions and Commitments suggest opportunities for growth in these areas:
 - completing Laudato Si' Plans, and investing in the structures and staff for implementation,
 - addressing the lack of campus support and/or coordination efforts at many institutions,
 - adopting science-based greenhouse gas reductions and prioritizing fundraising to achieve them,
 - moving further ahead in campus energy, waste and water use reduction actions,
 - continuing to advance native, edible, and sustainable farming and landscaping strategies,
 - adopting sustainable investment policies and plans to divest from fossil fuels,
 - holding eco-retreats, establishing integral ecology / environmental justice focused living & learning communities, and promoting intersectional diversity, equity & inclusion work,
 - supporting and promoting environment and sustainability related research conferences; seminars & workshops, service learning/immersion experiences; academic courses, programs, projects, & events; grants and award; and publications,
 - fostering civic engagement at the state, national, and international levels.
2. Although there are several notable exceptions among the AJCU colleges and universities that have signed-up to the Laudato Si' Action Platform, most have not yet incorporated environmental justice, sustainability, and integral ecology work into their leadership, governance structures, and strategic planning. Most have not reached carbon neutrality or a decarbonization status where no greenhouse gasses are being emitted.
3. The level of investment within the AJCU institutions is highly uneven. Some universities have mission and ministry staff, sustainability offices, and multiple faculty and staff working to advance environmental justice, campus sustainability and/or integral ecology, while others do not have any full time staff members or university wide committees or support for this mission-aligned work.
4. In general, the least developed programs were in civic engagement for environmental justice, and cross-institutional networking, like partnerships with other AJCUs to advance integral ecology.
5. In contrast to other university systems, like the University of California, there is no coordinated effort to systematically measure, integrate, communicate, share best practices or otherwise leverage AJCU affiliated institutions to address climate change, waste, advance integral ecology or foster environmental justice and sustainability.

Proposals for Change

In the spring of 2024, the Commission Co-Chairs bundled the twelve initial proposals from Fall of 2023 into four groups: teaching, research, community life & spirituality, and operations & institutionalization. Commission members participated in the groups and then reviewed this prioritization and contributed to the following five thematic proposals, summarized below:

Teaching



With few exceptions, AJCU institutions are doing an adequate job of educating students in environmental science and the environmental dimensions of studied areas across the entire undergraduate and graduate curricula. All AJCU institutions have courses and curricula related to environmental sustainability and justice, including environmental studies and science degree programs. A growth point in this area is elevating the importance of using an *integral ecology* pedagogy, drawing from environmental degree programs, sustainability sciences, and a wide diversity of resources to integrate environmental and justice learning across the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. To this end the Commission proposes that

- Each AJCU institution help students practice informed ecological citizenship in the contemporary world by ensuring that all undergraduates and all graduate students, including those in law, business, medicine and engineering, acquire a knowledge of *integral ecology* and environmental justice through a core course, seminar, workshop, or other method.
- Provide willing faculty in each AJCU institution with regular opportunities to participate in professional development in *integral ecology* curriculum building and pedagogy.
- With AJCU support, each institution facilitate an ‘integral ecology exchange network’ where existing integral ecology curricula, co-curricula, and pedagogies are shared across AJCU institutions and globally within the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU).

Research



The research proposals are guided by all seven Laudato Si’ Goals associated with the Journey to Integral Ecology, especially goal #7 focused on community resilience and empowerment, as well as the second and third Universal Apostolic Preferences, focused on accompanying the excluded and youth working towards reconciliation, justice, and building a more hope filled future. Inspired by these goals, the research group calls upon AJCU campuses to leverage our different locations and expertise for collaborative work addressing climate change and environmental justice, asking ourselves and university leaders to commit to:

- Continue and expand investments into research on sustainability, justice, and integral ecology, and expand support for community-engaged and participatory action research approaches.
- Collaborate on cross-institutional grant proposals to advance shared goals. There is particular interest in proposals that use transdisciplinary approaches to address sustainable food systems, food security, and livelihood issues in the context of climate change, conflict and other hazards.
- Organize and co-market a series of 2-4 webinars across AJCU institutions on lessons learned about eco-social research initiatives, and on collaborative federal research funding opportunities.

Community formation and spirituality



While community formation takes place at many locations and levels in Jesuit institutions, less than 30% of Jesuit college and universities support such things as on-campus sustainability living and learning communities, projects that address environment-related diversity, equity, and inclusion, ministry & spirituality programs such as eco-retreats, and participation in Pope Francis-endorsed global multi-faith ‘Season of Creation’ event. Community formation and fostering spirituality are necessary to realize the third Universal Apostolic Preference of Journeying with Youth, especially in these times of great environmental challenge and eco-anxiety. Providing youth with more community formation and spirituality opportunities would respect the wisdom of Pope Francis, who teaches in *Laudato Si* 225 that

An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyles and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence must not be contrived but found, uncovered.

In this spirit, the Commission proposes that all AJCU college and universities commit to

- exploring the creation of a student on-campus environmentally sustainable simple living group such as a residential community, a student organization, or another mode of its own design.
- developing and presenting an annual student eco-retreat.
- participating in the annual September global multi-faith ‘Season of Creation’ event.
- adding a *Laudato Si* inspired element to faculty and staff orientation and mission-formation programming.

Climate action



In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis called us to develop integrated science-based and ethical responses to the climate crisis as we listen to the “cry of the earth” and the “cry of the poor.” Eight years later, Pope Francis lamented needing to write *Laudate Deum* because “responses have not been adequate” (no. 2), a conclusion supported by the scientific literature showing that greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, adaptation finance remains woefully inadequate, and the dominant political economic models have put society on a path towards increasingly dangerous and irreversible environmental risks and increased human suffering (*IPCC 2023*). Some universities have taken extraordinary strides, with ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals, climate action investments, and implementation plans. Although AJCU universities are differently situated in their expertise, priorities, and resources, many of us could - and should - do more.

For Jesuit institutions, “Journeying with Youth . . . [for] a hope-filled future” (Universal Apostolic Preference, no. 3) amidst the climate crisis requires action guided by the best available science. Grounded in Jesuit values, and responding to *Laudato Si*’ Goals #1, 2, 4, and 6, AJCU-affiliated colleges and universities must stand as a unified coalition committed to science-based institutional climate action, guided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) scientific consensus. The Commission recommends asking all AJCU universities and colleges to:

- Commit to cutting a university’s direct Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions in half from 2019 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero carbon by mid-century, ideally 2030 at the latest (*IPCC’s 2023*)
- Include among their top priorities fundraising for climate emission reduction initiatives and investments supporting a just transition that incorporates climate justice for all.
- Set and achieve increasingly ambitious climate mitigation goals, that also address Scope 3 emissions (e.g., travel, food systems), and use science-based GHG accounting to track/share progress.
- Collaborate across higher education and with diverse partners (e.g., *ISN* and *CCC*) to innovate and advocate for ambitious climate mitigation goals, build resilience, and support sustainable adaptation.

Implementation and institutionalization

Some AJCU colleges and universities have taken extraordinary strides, with ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals, climate action investments, and implementation plans, comprehensive educational programs, and robust research and community engagement activities. Several institutions have established effective governance structures that enhance their institution's ability to integrate *Laudato Si'* principles into the fabric of their universities. However, even among these leading institutions - and certainly across those less committed to *Laudato Si'* - we have come to recognize that implementation often remains a challenge, and needs higher prioritization within university strategic plans.

The Commission's fifth proposal aims to bridge the knowledge-to-action gap, advancing pilot projects now, leveraging AJCU affiliated institutions' collective impact, supporting the implementation of all other proposals, and sustaining this work into the future. Specifically, the Commission recommends that:

- All AJCU institutions and this Commission partners with the AJCU leadership and the talented staff in their central office to create an Integral Ecology Secretariat. This Secretariat would support teaching, research, and community formation, track best practices, organize, track, and visualize climate, sustainability and environmental justice data, support updates of the AJCU Eco-Social Engagement Report, organize events, and facilitate collaborative grant writing. The new Secretariat would also develop and host a section of the AJCU website to communicate collective achievements (e.g., total climate emissions targets and reductions, celebrate innovation, make commission reports available, advocate for change (see for example the [Commission's Letter to the COP 28](#) climate meetings), and inspire future commitments. The AJCU's Integral Ecology Secretariat could start with a single staff member, support staff and a cross-institutional *Laudato Si'* Commission.
- All AJCU colleges and universities sign-up and actively participate in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, reporting and engaging in collaborative activities as part of the global movement. We also expect that each affiliated institution will institute a coordinating committee composed of administration, staff, faculty, and students, while also serving as a point of contact for the AJCU's Integral Ecology Secretariat. Members of the *Laudato Si'* Commission will offer support for the AJCU institutions that have pledged on the LASP, but face challenges developing robust action plans that are incorporated into their strategic plans, and substantive implementation activities.
- We, as members of the AJCU *Laudato Si'* Commission, remember that change starts from within. Thus, we are asking ourselves, and the institutions where we work, to recommit to the principles of *Laudato Si'* in our personal and collaborative thoughts, words, investments, and deeds. To support these dimensions of change, the Commission intends to share a collaboration and re-commitment letter during the forthcoming 2024 Faith, Justice & Reconciliation Assembly.

Conclusions

Developing and implementing serious individual university *Laudato Si'* Plans across the AJCU network is the responsibility of our institutions and each one of us. By collaborating as a network on best practices, developing innovative pilot projects, visualizing our collective impacts, and sharing resources in this imperative work, the AJCU colleges and universities will advance Pope Francis's and the Society of Jesus's calls to action to care for our common home. Demonstration that the AJCU Jesuit university's commitment to making environmental sustainability and justice a hallmark of each institution's operational and educational mission will attract students and faculty, and serve as a key differentiator to our universities.

A-1: Laudato Si' Commission Charter

Countering today's global climate and ecological crisis is a supreme challenge of our time. Piece-meal, short-term responses are not enough. As Pope Francis highlights in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, more of us must hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. As part of a response, all people of goodwill are further called upon to engage in an 'ecological conversion' to truly grasp nature's intricacies and intrinsic value, the links between social justice, environmental justice and spirituality, and the consequent responsibilities we have to Earth and each other. These are features of an integral ecology, the *Laudato Si'*-recommended, comprehensive orientation we need to heal our common home.

Universities and colleges are privileged locations for teaching and exemplifying Integral Ecology. This privilege is especially true of institutions founded by the Society of Jesus and inspired by the Jesuit's Fourth Apostolic Preference: 'Caring for our Common Home: Collaborate, with Gospel Depth, for the Protection and Renewal of God's Creation.' Knowing the urgent cry of the Earth and its poor, inspired by Pope Francis' vision of an integral ecology, and assigned by the Society of Jesus and Pope Francis to be in solidarity with all creation, how can we make integral ecology a hallmark of our Jesuit colleges and universities in their operations, academic affairs, community formation, and civic engagement?

The purpose of the *Laudato Si'* Commission for the AJCU Faith, Justice & Reconciliation Assembly in 2024 is to show "how Jesuit colleges and universities can respond to some of our society's deepest concerns" and "propose specific steps for that response." In the months leading up to the 2024 Assembly, the *Laudato Si'* Commission will work through and winnow submitted ideas until arriving at a set of transformative, actionable recommendations for making integral ecology a hallmark of our Jesuit colleges and universities.

A -2: AJCU Laudato Si Commission Members

First Name	Last Name	Role/Title	Institution
Christopher	Bacon	Co-Chair, Associate Professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences Dept., Environmental Justice & the Common Good Initiative	Santa Clara University
Nicole	Bouvier-Brown	Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry and Director of Environmental Science Program	Loyola Marymount University
Douglas	Christie	Professor of Theological Studies	Loyola Marymount University
Yolanda	Cieters	Associate Director of Sustainability	Seattle University
Dan	DiLeo	Associate Professor and Director, Justice and Peace Studies Program	Creighton University
Jennifer	Eagleton	Associate Director, Georgetown Environmental Justice Program	Georgetown University
Julie	Gafney	Assistant VP, Strategic Mission Initiatives, Executive Director of Center for Community Engaged Learning	Fordham University
Tracy	Harvey	Sustainability Director	Loyola University Maryland
Mary	Haskins	Professor, Biology	Rockhurst University
Brian	Henning	Professor, Philosophy & Environmental Studies, Director, Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment	Gonzaga University
Lindsey	Kalkbrenner	Director Office of Sustainability	Santa Clara University
Alice	Kaswan	Professor in the School of Law	University of San Francisco
Cathy	Liebowitz	Director of Sustainability	College of the Holy Cross
Mark	Mackey, SJ	Assistant Professor in Environmental Sustainability	Loyola University Chicago
Susan	Margulis	Professor of Biology and Animal Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation	Canisius University
Chad	Raphael	Professor of Communication and Co-Coordinator, Environmental Justice & the Common Good Initiative	Santa Clara University
Jeanette	Rodriguez	Professor of Theology and Executive Director for the Institute of Catholic Thought and Culture	Seattle University
Thomas	Ryan	University Chaplain and Professor of Theology and Ministry	Loyola New Orleans
Mike	Schuck	Co-Chair; Professor, Theology & School of Environmental Sustainability	Loyola University Chicago
Nancy	Tuchman	Dean, School of Environmental Sustainability	Loyola University Chicago
Mariah	Webinger	Associate Professor of Accounting	John Carroll University

A-3: Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the Co-Leaders of the Laudato Si' Commission, Christopher Bacon and Michael Schuck for their leadership and drive. Thanks to the many active members of the commission who took leads at different moments during the process, and to you for making substantive contributions. This includes the team of members that took leads during the first process of group formations Julie Gafney for leading the civic engagement working group, Chad Raphael for leading the pedagogy working group, Jennifer Eagleton for leading the academic affairs group, and so many other substantive contributions to this process. Also, our thanks to those who remained engaged, making key contributions to the second operations and institutionalization group that worked through June 2024, including Alice Kaswan, Brian Henning, Yolanda Cieters, Jeanette Rodriguez, and Lindsey Kalbrenner. Special thanks to Nancy Tuchman for her sage advice. Thanks also to Fr. Dominic Chai, SJ for facilitating our discernment process. Finally, we would like to thank the Santa Clara University student research assistants who helped conduct the first rapid assessment of the climate change actions across the AJCU, including Annika Sodergren, Wanyu "Mary" Xiang, and Katie Duffy. The Santa Clara University Office of Mission and Ministry and the AJCU helped support our effort. Send questions and edits to Chris Bacon cbacon@scu.edu

A-4: Definitions of key terms

Decarbonization - The ultimate goal for a just transition from a fossil-fuel based economy to a clean energy economy. Decarbonization is accomplished when an organization reduces its total fossil fuel consumption to zero through means of adopting clean energy infrastructure and retiring fossil fuel-consuming infrastructure, and thereby emitting no greenhouse gasses into the environment. It is a large step beyond reaching carbon neutrality or net-zero which is an intermediate goal wherein the greenhouse gasses emissions are “paid for” with carbon offsets. Decarbonization is the ambitious and final step in the transition to clean energy. Project Drawdown offers a set of science-based strategies for climate solutions to accelerate decarbonization.

Environmental Justice – A concept and movement that affirms the right of people of color and of low income, Indigenous peoples, women, other marginalized communities, future generations, and all species to thrive, rather than having their lands, homes, cultures, and lives poisoned or stolen. Includes efforts to reduce environmental burdens and increase benefits for communities and the earth; prioritize the meaningful participation of community members in decision-making; value diverse cultures, knowledges, and perspectives; and transform systems to create just and reciprocal relations. (Raphael and Matsuoka, 2024). Environmental justice is also a social movement response to environmental racism (EJNet 1991)

Integral Ecology – Integral Ecology highlights the interconnectedness that exists among God, humanity and creation, and recognizes how political, economic, cultural, social, and religious values and decisions are interrelated and affect the way people live with one another on the planet and use its resources.” (Catholic News Service). Although observational methods of studying ecosystems are well-known in science, integral ecology takes this a step further by adding ethical and spiritual aspects and attention to the common good (LSAP). Pope Francis offers: “Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” (LS’ 139)

Just transition - Just Transition is a vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. (Movement Generation, 2024, also see (Agyeman, Bullard, and Evans, MIT Press))

Net Zero (Greenhouse Gas Emissions) - Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions is a status that is accomplished by converting as much of an organization’s fossil fuel consumption to clean energy (for example, switching the source of electricity to solar and/or wind), then paying a carbon-offset fee to offset the rest of the organization’s greenhouse gas emissions coming from natural gas, coal, or petroleum oil use. Industry standards are that an institution must reduce at least 90% of its emissions from Scope 1 and 2 emissions and offset *up to* the remaining 10% (Science Based Targets Initiative). If it chooses to include Scope 3 emissions, it must reduce 90% and offset *up to* the remaining 10%. An actor reduces its emissions following science-based pathways, with any remaining GHG emissions attributable to that actor being fully neutralized by like-for-like removals exclusively claimed by that actor, either within the value chain or through purchase of “valid” offset credits.

Race to Zero - Race to Zero is the UN-backed global campaign rallying non-state actors – including companies, cities, regions, financial, educational, and healthcare institutions – to take science-based and immediate action to halve global emissions within this decade and deliver a healthier, fairer, zero carbon world in time to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. (UN Race to Zero 2023)

Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Emissions - “Scope 1 emissions are direct greenhouse (GHG) emissions from sources that are controlled or owned by an organization (e.g., emissions associated with fuel combustion in boilers, furnaces, vehicles). Scope 2 emissions are indirect GHG emissions associated with the purchase of electricity, steam, heat, or cooling” (Environmental Protection Agency). Scope 3 are all other indirect operational emissions.

Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System - STARS provides a standardized, comprehensive, and user-friendly platform for sustainability assessment and reporting that inspires urgent and transformative action by higher education institutions to create an ecologically healthy and socially just world. (**STARS 2024**)