



GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLEGE  
Office of the Provost

July 26, 2011

To whom it may concern:

In 2011 Green Mountain College achieved climate neutrality through emissions reductions, replacement of fossil fuels with renewables, and through the purchase of carbon offsets. As Provost and Vice-President of the College, I spearheaded action on the College's climate action plan and played a leadership role in developing the innovative educational process we used to purchase carbon offsets. Multiple courses and a wide range of campus community stakeholders were involved in a participatory process that ensured that our offsets purchased fit our mission and values. The process also engaged the community in debates about the legitimacy of offsets and the importance of the ACUPCC criteria for offsets purchasing. After interviewing five offset providers by phone and hosting three of these for campus visits, we decided to work with our local utility, Central Vermont Public Service, to verify offsets from one of the farm methane digesters in their cow power program and have them retired on the Chicago Climate Exchange.

Through my time as an AASHE board member, I have had many conversations about approaches to achieving climate neutrality, and I am not aware of other institutions that have used offsets purchasing as a campus-wide educational opportunity leading to the purchase of verified local offsets. In the process, we consulted with the executive director of the ACUPCC, Tony Cortese, and with David Hales, lead author of the ACUPCC offsets protocol and former president of the first U.S. college to achieve climate neutrality. Both encouraged us to write up our offsets purchasing process as a model for other campuses.

Green Mountain College engages students in learning about sustainability throughout the entire college experience, both in an integrated general education curriculum and in the experience of living on campus. The College makes its campus as a living laboratory for exploring the deeper meanings of sustainability and experimenting with approaches to community decision-making. The selection of carbon offsets is just one example of a successful experiment.

Sincerely,

William M. Throop  
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs