MIT UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

THE UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION COUNCIL CALLS ON MIT SENIOR LEADERSHIP to TAKE BOLD CLIMATE ACTION

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Whereas The 2021 MIT Climate Action Plan represents one of the most important actions the Institution will take in the next five years to address the climate crisis; and

Whereas in 2007, MIT did not add a Standing Committee on Investor Responsibility (SCIR) to the MIT Investment Management Company (MITIMCO) because of the existing roles of the temporary Advisory Committee on Shareholder Responsibility (ACSR) and Corporation Joint Advisory Committee (CJAC); and

Whereas the ACSR has not convened since 2008, and the CJAC's role is not to discuss socially responsible investing issues; and

Whereas MIT is the only school out of more than twelve peer schools, including Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Oxford, and Cambridge, to have no Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing principles or committee to address ESG issues; and

Whereas establishing the Standing Committee on Investor Responsibility (SCIR) and ESG investing principles, as described below, is separate from the question of divestment vs. engagement and does not endorse either; and

Whereas establishing the SCIR and ESG investing principles does not necessarily require the Corporation to create a carbon-neutral commitment, although that may be an option for the Corporation; and

Whereas establishing the SCIR will leave a permanent legacy of sound decision-making, making it so the next time MITIMCo and the Corporation consider any urgent environmental or humanitarian issue, including the question of divestment vs. engagement, the decision-making process will be more transparent, accountable, and systematic, guided by overarching principles held throughout the MIT community beyond senior leadership; and

Whereas many of our peer institutions have established bold on-campus sustainability goals, and their sustainability reports detail how they plan on achieving the same; and

Whereas the University of California-Berkeley has set a net-zero goal (Scope 1 and 2) for 2025, a goal for reduction in water usage by 36% by 2025 (compared to 2006-2008 benchmark) and is on track to achieve its zero waste by 2020 goal, where zero waste is defined as 90% diversion of municipal solid waste from landfills; and

Whereas here in Cambridge, Harvard has set a goal to become fossil-fuel neutral by 2026, a water reduction goal of 30% (from 2006 benchmark) by 2020, and a waste reduction benchmark of 50% (from 2006 benchmark) by 2020; and

Whereas these universities produce research of similar caliber and volume as MIT, taking the #4 and #1 spots, respectively, among the North American research institutions on the 2020 Nature Index (compared to MIT's #3), and possess similar amounts of space dedicated to laboratory research, one of the most energy-intensive building types: UC-Berkeley has 4 million square feet and Harvard has about 5.5 million square feet, while MIT has 7.9 million square feet of "academic" space, including teaching spaces; and

Whereas based on a survey of other institutions' sustainability commitments, the on-campus sustainability targets described below are technologically feasible and only require a proportionate commitment of resources by the Institute; and

Whereas goals like those described below will put MIT on par with peer institutions and provide a framework to achieve Institute-wide decarbonization and such targets will show that sustainability is a fundamental value for MIT, allowing MIT to lead the way for campus sustainability for leading research institutions worldwide; and

Whereas many professors at MIT understand the severity of the climate crisis and the need to educate students about it and the biggest obstacle they face is the lack of time and funding required to change their curriculums to address environmental issues; and

Whereas it is important that more sustainability-related classes are offered, especially in the most common majors, given that of the 3,557 students with designated majors, 1,343 are pursuing a degree in course six and 377 in course 18; and

Whereas looking at the course catalog for IAP/Spring 2021, there are only three course six classes (6.929[J], 6.934[J] and 6.061) and one course 18 class (18.352[J]) that are even somewhat related to sustainability; and

Whereas even with MIT's current offering of classes, it is often difficult to determine which classes in the course catalog are focused on environmental topics; and

Whereas this consensus decision is the beginning of a longer and broader conversation and course of action amongst our community; and

Whereas the membership of the Undergraduate Association Council represents all dormitories, fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups, as well as off-campus students, effectively representing the whole undergraduate student body; and

Whereas the Undergraduate Association Council Bylaws Article V., Section A., Part 1b. grants the Undergraduate Association Council the right to issue a "consensus decision" which manifests as a "written statement of policy position" with issuance wherever deemed necessary; and

Whereas the current Undergraduate Association Council voted affirmatively to release a consensus decision on March 16, 2021 with direction toward the Massachusetts Institute of Technology senior leadership whose role is uniquely qualified at the Institute to enact the policy raised in the undermentioned resolve; Now, therefore, be it

> *Resolved*, That the Undergraduate Association Council calls upon MIT to:
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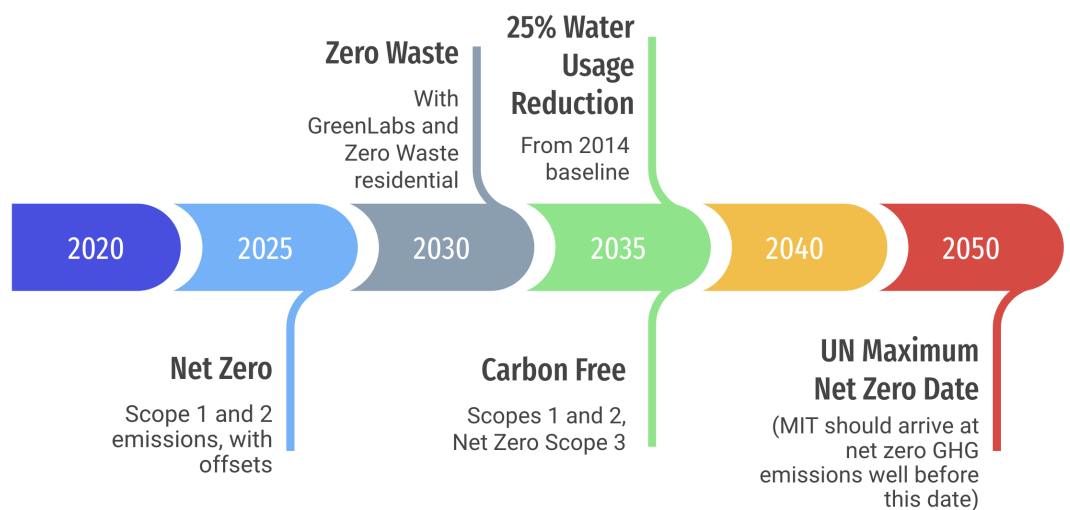> (1)   Implement Climate Action Plan Goal-Setting and Achievement-Tracking

a) Emphasize three guiding values for collaboration on the Climate Action Plan: accountability, representation, and transparency (or "ART"); and

b) Create a new MIT Climate Council, a diverse governing body based on consensus-building that can set and implement ambitious, innovative goals for MIT's role in sustainability and climate action. The governing body should consist of a steering council as well as subtopic committees, with key stakeholders and broad community representation in committees; and

c) Implement an iterative drafting process, for this spring and future Climate Action Plan updates,

    i) Include publications of drafts and solicitation of community feedback in the iterative drafting process, and include in the plan detailed goal setting with subgoals, budgets, and actors assigned to carrying out each goal; and

d) Treat the Climate Action Plan as a living plan, which can be frequently updated and revised,

    i) Information should be readily accessible to the community via a centralized location in order to make sure the plan is representative of community concerns;

    ii) Goals should be allowed to be adjusted by council committees based on new information or technology availability. Goals should remain ambitious and provide significant strides in MIT sustainability; and

(2)   Strengthen Public Sector Engagement on Climate Policy

a) Regularly convene climate policy-forward programs and researchers at MIT to share insights and connections.

    i) Create a staff position in an office such as the Priscilla King Gray Center or the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR) that is purely focused on bringing together these efforts. The staff member's responsibilities could include (i) developing and maintaining an "engagement database" detailing relationships with

climate policymakers, (ii) planning an annual climate policy conference for research to be presented beyond MIT, and (iii) hosting monthly discussions on current engagements that are open to students, staff, and faculty; and

    b) Ensure MIT climate researchers have access to expanded opportunities for presenting relevant research to key public sector decision-makers,

        i) Create a parallel position to that formerly described, but in the MIT Washington, D.C. office, focused on finding opportunities for MIT researchers to inform climate policy. Such work may include liaising with legislators, congressional committees, White House offices, and other federal bodies and agencies who could learn from MIT's research on climate, policy, and solutions; and

3) Create a framework for sustainable investing and accountability

    a) Incorporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing principles and climate-oriented goals into the decision-making framework of the MIT Corporation and MIT Investment Management Company (MITIMCo),

        i) Add a Standing Committee on Investor Responsibility (SCIR) as a sixth standing committee to the MIT Corporation's existing decision-making structure that follows a similar structure to existing committees at our peer schools and that which was previously proposed by the UA and GSC in 2007. The SCIR would solely address socially responsible investing issues, with at least two undergraduate, graduate, and alumni representatives, at least one faculty representative from every department of MIT, every Officer of the Corporation, at least two Life members, and at least two Term members; and

        ii) Task the SCIR with creating, revising, and publicly committing to climate and ESG investing goals, making timely decisions on urgent ethical, humanitarian, and environmental issues, and incorporating community input. The SCIR will meet

at least bimonthly, with more frequent meetings called when addressing urgent issues. Meeting minutes and a written record of recommendations or decisions made by the SCIR should be available to the MIT community through Kerberos access; and

b) Make a form available online for community members to submit feedback and proposals ahead of SCIR meetings.

4) Strengthen Private Sector Engagement on Climate Policy

a) Implement standards of engagement with private sector partners that are motivated by a higher benchmark than previously adopted; and

b) Refine the standards through a transparent community-engagement process; and

c) Regularly update the success of the engagement, as determined by a third party, to a central online location; and

5) Set ambitious, quantitative Institute goals for reduction in campus greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation and water usage,

a) Actively pursue the establishment of ambitious, quantitative goals for reduction in GHG emissions, waste generation and water usage.

b) Follow a timeline of goals for MIT like that in the Figure below.

Zero Waste
With GreenLabs and Zero Waste residential

25% Water Usage Reduction
From 2014 baseline

| 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |

Net Zero
Scope 1 and 2 emissions, with offsets

Carbon Free
Scopes 1 and 2, Net Zero Scope 3

UN Maximum Net Zero Date
(MIT should arrive at net zero GHG emissions well before this date)

6) Increase Funding for Climate Courses & Classify Classes by Sustainability-Relation

a) Create a grant program for professors to use to rewrite their curriculums to incorporate sustainability if suitable.

a) Fund the development of sustainability-related electives in four of the most common courses at MIT that do not currently offer many sustainability-related classes: courses 6, 16, 18, and 20.

b) Classify classes as "focused on sustainability" or "related to sustainability" according to the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) guidelines.