

## Wilkes Commits to Climate Neutrality

**I**n 2007, I joined college and university presidents across the country in signing the Presidents Climate Commitment. Recognizing that global warming will shape the way we, our children and our grandchildren live in the 21st century, 588 college presidents have pledged to lead their communities in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. This commitment will help reduce emissions that contribute to global warming and, more importantly, increase our capacity to prepare the next generation to deal with these challenges by integrating sustainability into the curriculum and the way we operate as an institution.



Student Andrew Bookin harvests chard at the Fenner Farm Annex. PHOTO BY KIM BOWER-SPENCE

Experts agree that global warming will have adverse health, social, economic and ecological implications that could threaten the viability of civilization. I also share their view that global warming also provides extraordinary opportunities for our institutions and students to create green technologies that will lead to significant economic growth. Americans can show the world how to improve our collective quality of life without sacrificing our natural resources.

With scientific consensus asserting that society must reduce emission of greenhouse gases by at least 80 percent by mid-century, we must begin to act now.

While daunting, Wilkes' goal is to achieve climate neutrality and demonstrate to the greater community how to reduce emissions. For the purposes of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, "climate neutrality" means having no net greenhouse gas emissions. I believe that with much effort we can achieve that goal by minimizing emissions and using carbon offsets or other measures to mitigate emissions.

While we may incur costs for some initiatives, we should also realize savings from reduced energy use and more efficient use of resources. As our first step, we've completed an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions. This will serve as a benchmark and help us chart our course.

You can read more about this and other initiatives in our cover story, starting on page 8. These are small steps to start. But start we must. Stay tuned as we ramp up these efforts in the future.

**Dr. Tim Gilmour**  
*Wilkes University President*

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