



April 3, 2019

Dear President Fennes,

We, the undersigned student groups and organizations, urge the University of Texas at Austin to make a rapid and steady transition away from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy.

Every day, UT students and faculty work hard, hoping to build our futures, our livelihoods, and our families -- and climate change threatens all of that.

The science is clear that absent major reductions in carbon emissions our planet will experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events, sea level rise, mass extinctions, melting glaciers, and warming oceans (National Climate Assessment, 2018). Our generation will suffer the catastrophic effects of climate change, and it's up to us to look forward and start building a more sustainable world.

Universities are places of innovation. Many of our nation's brightest students and faculty dedicate their lives to global warming solutions, making groundbreaking developments in renewable energy technology. Now, as we confront the devastating effects of climate change, we need our university to step up to the plate.

In the face of federal and state inaction regarding climate change, it is up to our universities -- the places where leadership and innovation begin -- to lead the transition away from fossil fuels. UT should take the lead and start building the clean, green, sustainable world that we need by shifting to 100 percent renewable energy.

We are excited by UT's 2016 Sustainability Master Plan, and urge you to put the full weight of the administration behind its goals and recommendations. The plan calls for leadership in renewable energy investments, collaboration with Austin Energy on wind and solar energy, and developing a standard for solar array installations on campus buildings. But according to the most recent update of the plan, it does not appear that UT has achieved these goals (Master Sustainability Plan, 2016).

Thanks to UT's energy conservation and efficiency programs, we have reduced our campus' energy consumption by 20 percent over the last two years (Master Sustainability Plan, 2018). Yet, fossil fuels remain UT's primary electricity source. We have made great strides in sustainability over the past two years, but in the face of the climate change, we can do better.

Texas already leads the nation in wind power, and we have incredible potential for geothermal and solar energy. Shifting to 100 percent renewable energy, starting with achieving the goals of the Sustainability Master Plan, can encourage nationwide institutions of higher education to follow-suit, protecting our country for generations to come.

In order to build on the progress that has been made and ensure that we transition to a clean and renewable future, we call on The University of Texas at Austin to:

- Make a clear commitment to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for all operations -- including heating, cooling, and transportation -- no later than 2050.
- Set a benchmark of achieving 100 percent renewable electricity no later than 2035.

We thank The University of Texas for its leadership to date and stand ready to help achieve 100 percent renewable energy and put America on a path to a truly clean energy future.

Sincerely,

Emily Zhang
Texas Public Health
President

Claire Norris
Keep Austin Wizard
President

Peter Smith
Astronomy Students Association
Co-President

Rosa Fry
Student Historic Preservation Association
President

Elizabeth Schiller
Graduate Business Adventure Team
Co-President

Melanie Leason
Association for Women in Mathematics
President

Samraz Badruddin
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
President

Kayleigh Jones
Undergraduate Women in Physics
Vice President

Nicholas Wright
McCombs CleanTech Group
President

Josh Green
URES (Undergraduate Real Estate Society)
President

Desi Ortega
Texas TKD
Member

Dani Nwosa
ABC Residence Hall Council
President

Lillian Mauldin
UT Amnesty International

Jordan McGee
Urban Studies Society
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Sadie Lidji
The Cage

Association for Women in Science