

## X. CONCLUSION

This is an exciting time for Xavier University and the world; humanity is at a crossroads. Working on these complex issues together will build our communities and our ability to reduce the long-term effects of global climate destabilization. It will also promote our community's resilience so that we are well-situated to weather the effects of destabilization that cannot be mitigated.

We see this as an opportunity to grow and learn. Over the last two years, the committee and the University as a whole have learned a tremendous amount about the complex nature of sustainability work. It involves systemic and holistic change, not just small incremental changes. As Einstein famously stated, "We can't solve problems using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." As a result, Xavier is entering a new phase of systemic and creative adaptation. Minimally, we see four ways in which our University will likely be transformed.

First, in terms of academics, sustainability calls upon us to learn across disciplines. We will need to continue to promote such opportunities in our teaching and research. We will also need to ensure that our campus and neighboring communities are laboratories for engaged learning around built environments, alternative transportation, gardening, energy use and alternative energy, among many other topics.

Second, within four to five years as this Plan is being re-evaluated, a more holistic approach to sustainability planning and funding will be necessary. This will involve moving beyond the rubric of the climate commitment and its assessment tools, i.e., an ecological footprint assessment (see Appendix). This assessment would take into account other environmental factors, such as water usage and the amount of landfill space used, in addition to greenhouse gas emissions.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, we foresee planning and budgeting becoming a long-range undertaking that allows us to include resource conservation, educational benefits, building life cycles and other measures, alongside the more-typical short-range financial measures. The combination of long-term planning and thinking, and an ecological footprint assessment will mean that we take the future of our planet and our students' grandchildren as seriously as we take our educational quality, our enrollment numbers, and our endowment.

Finally, as David Orr has stated, "Successful sustainability work, no matter where it takes place, requires total institutional commitment because of its holistic nature and because of the gravity of the ecological crisis we face." We have been gratified by the University's support of sustainability work up to this point and foresee a strong need to build on this success, until we reach the point in which sustainability is as much a part of our mission as educating students for solidarity, success and service. Xavier University has made great strides in promoting a more sustainable campus over the last few years and is poised to take the next steps, as outlined herein.

