

“Climate Neutrality” is the Buzz Phrase on U.S. Campuses

By Nihit Aurora

Our planet faces imminent environmental threat due to global warming. Average global temperatures have increased by around one degree Celsius since the last century. Much of this warming has been attributed to human activity and the industrial revolution. Businesses, manufacturers, and scientific institutions around the world are focusing on a variety of measures to combat global warming.

There is growing awareness around the globe of the need to cut back on greenhouse gas emissions. Common sources of greenhouse gases include thermal power plants and automobile exhaust. Currently, automobile emissions comprise around 20% of all greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere in the United States. Independent efforts have been undertaken by a number of bodies and institutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt climate-friendly processes.

This month, principals, presidents, and chancellors from more than 284 academic institutions decided to ink an agreement to prevent global warming by adopting climate-friendly measures. Some of the universities that abstained from signing the agreement were Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Other Ivy League institutions, public and private universities, and community colleges opted to sign the pact.

These universities plan to adopt “climate-neutral” policies capable of addressing global warming within a two-year period. However, most institutions will take decades to implement the pact’s requirements in their entirety. Some institutions will also require the elimination of significant portions of their present infrastructures, as they do not meet the environmental standards set by the agreement.

Specific plans include the purchase of environmentally friendly equipment, the use of environmentally friendly standards for construction, the use of renewable energy, the avoidance of excessive air travel, and the use of public transportation.

Global warming has become a serious environmental concern, and universities across the United States are joining hands to fight this threat to humanity.