

# Montreal's Dawson College - Carbon Neutral Forever

Press Release - Information Sheet

For immediate release – Dec. 3, 2018

In response to the 2018 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, which states the planet only has until 2030 to stem catastrophic climate change, the Dawson College Board of Governors unanimously adopted a motion to declare the College CARBON NEUTRAL FOREVER.

Dawson's bold commitment to *Carbon Neutral Forever*, models hope, action and leadership for the community it serves. It embodies Dawson's core value of well-being for all, sustainably.

The college is working with a non-profit organization, Taking Root, which employs farming partners in Nicaragua who cultivate trees. Tree growth is audited and farmers are compensated. Taking Root is a Montreal-based non-profit organization that was founded by Kahlil Baker, a Dawson College graduate. Baker first travelled to rural Nicaragua as part of fieldwork as a Dawson student.

Dawson College provides financial support that enables subsistence farmers in Nicaragua to plant thousands of native trees on marginal farmland and grow them to maturity. Growing trees in tropical climate zones is one of the most efficient methods available for removing carbon from the atmosphere. When the quantity of offset carbon *removed from* the atmosphere equals the amount an institution *puts into* the air the *net* carbon footprint becomes zero – and the institution is *carbon neutral*. Additionally, Dawson has a goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2021, based on a previous benchmark.

In addition to enabling Dawson to offset its diminishing annual emissions of carbon, the Taking Root model also boosts the income of individual farming families, provides economic stability to low-income rural communities and improves water retention and biodiversity on marginal farmland. For example, various species of summer birds you hear in the countryside in Canada now have more forests to thrive in during the winter. Not all carbon-offset models come bundled with these other beneficial impacts and this is largely why this particular offset program was chosen by Dawson College. Partnering with Taking Root is helping the College reach its goal of being a leading post-secondary educational institution in sustainable practices.

Dawson's sustainability efforts are an important pillar of the first major fundraising campaign of the College that will enable the College to build capacity in sustainability-related programs and share best practices with other educational institutions who are watching with interest from around the world.

Attestations:

*My sincere congratulations to the visionary staff and students of Dawson College on this historic achievement. Once again, Dawson blazes a trail for other Canadian educational institutions to follow.*

Matthew Chapman, National Campaign Coordinator  
The Climate Reality Project Canada

*Dawson's commitment to helping solve environmental and societal issues are defining a core value of this College: well-being for all, sustainably. I am proud to represent a community of positive action that simultaneously cultivates hope for the generation we serve.*

Richard Filion - Director General  
Dawson College

*Dawson and Taking Root sets the bar for post-secondary institutions to be environmentally responsible role models for Mother Earth and for their students.*

Dr. Alex M. McComber - Kahnawake Mohawk Territory  
Dawson Board of Governors

*Dawson College's bold commitment to socially responsible carbon neutrality FOREVER is inspiring and sets the standard for others to follow.*

Kahlil Baker, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Co-founder  
Taking Root

*We are proud to work alongside an institution that is committed to be a visionary role model for all other establishments. Dawson not only does good for its current students, but for the future of its community as a whole.*

Dawson Student Union Executive

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