

Climate Emergency Declaration

The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo

The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, herewith, resolves to declare a climate emergency. In order to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change for future generations, faculty and staff members pledge to take responsible action to:

1. Support activities concerning Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) so that young people may become creators of and agents for change towards a sustainable future;
2. Promote Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) as advocated by the United Nations and others;
3. Work on issues of climate justice based on the Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change (2017) adopted by UNESCO, recognizing “that meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including the most vulnerable, is essential to effective decision-making to address climate change and its adverse effects”;
4. Design courses as well as extra-curricular learning activities on SDGs, with special focus on No. 13 of the Goals;
5. Take measures on climate change in collaboration with students, fully taking into consideration their opinions;
6. Put teachings from the classroom into practice by engaging in a whole-institutional commitment to sustainable resources across campus regarding energy, food, water, paper and waste;
7. Provide seamless learning opportunities for students and citizens to support a change in their values, behavior and lifestyles towards a sustainable future;
8. Impart knowledge and provide skills concerning action on climate change, and also actively offer opportunities to think deeply about climate justice through educational and research activities; and
9. Proceed with institutional management, actively taking environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues into consideration.

May 20, 2020

President
Toshiaki Koso

Background and Rationale

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution called Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The document lays out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Goal No. 13 concerns climate change and calls the whole world to urgent action.

In December of the same year, the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP21) was held, and the Paris Agreement, a new international framework aiming to reduce the emission of gases that contribute to global warming, was adopted. This Agreement sets an achievement goal, pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. In order to achieve this, we need to decrease carbon dioxide emissions substantially to zero.

The circumstances that led to setting these international common goals are the rise in serious natural disasters, such as extreme heat, drought, super typhoons, concentrated heavy rains, flooding, sea-level rise and large-scale forest fires. It is scientifically proven that human influence has made these disasters more severe.

In the midst of today's climate crisis, younger generations are standing up to take action. In September 2019, more than four million youths from 160 nations participated in climate strikes or marches, simultaneously with the UN Climate Action Summit 2019 held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. They are urging older generations to change the current development model now to ensure the future of today's youth.

In response to the voices of youth, the role of education must also be reviewed. It is now even more important to support and address the issues young students stand for, rather than simply providing them with knowledge on global warming and climate change. International Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) has been stipulated and efforts have grown worldwide. The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, has agreed to join this international effort and is committed to addressing the above-mentioned issues.