CLIMATE RESILIENCE ACTION FRAMEWORK
Recommendations for Dickinson College
Revised September 2026, Submitted to October 8, 2026

To: Senior Leadership, Resources & Planning Committee, Sustainability Subcommittee
From: Climate Resilience Working Group
Co-Chairs: Lindsey Lyons, Executive Director, Center for Sustainability Education
Jon Brighton, Managing Director, Campus Operations

PRIORITY:
Immediate = initiate within 0–12 months; High = initiate within 12–24 months; Medium = initiate within 24–36 months

COST: *(Least Expensive) $, $$, $$$, $$$$ (Most Expensive)*
Planning-level placeholders as estimates of cost to be validated before implementation.

TIME: (*Least Time Intensive) I, II, III, IV (Most Time Intensive)*
Planning-level placeholders as estimates of time investment to be validated before implementation.

---

1. Design and Implement a Climate Health and Well-being Resilience Plan

Priority: Immediate 0-12 Months	**Cost:** $$ **Time:** III	**Lead Divisions:** Human Resources Student Life Finance & Administration

- Develop and approve extreme heat and air quality policies for Dickinson with defined thresholds and authority to modify, adapt or stop activities particularly for outdoor employees (Grounds crew, coaches, outdoor research, farm workers etc.), activities and athletics.
- Implement heat-risk and air-quality exposure prevention, protocols and policy education for students, all employees, athletes, field programs and study-abroad participants.
- Identify and address indoor air quality, mold, smoke, allergens, communicable disease and clean-water/public-health risks with response plan and timeline.
- Add psychological resilience, trauma-informed response, counseling surge capacity and climate-anxiety/community-support programming.
- Identify populations with elevated vulnerability and ensure accessible communications, cooling spaces and support services.

2. Climate-Proof and Decarbonize Physical Infrastructure

Priority: Immediate 0-12 Months	**Cost:** $$$ **Time:** III	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration Academic Affairs

- Engage engineering experts to assess building, utility and site vulnerabilities to climate hazards such as heat, flooding, wind, fire/smoke, power loss and water intrusion.
- Create a multi-year risk-mitigation plan with decarbonization focus that is integrated with deferred maintenance, inspections, capital renewal and budgeting annually that shifts campus energy and transportation sources to cleaner energy technologies that reduce vulnerability.
- Prioritize remediation of older residence halls, high-occupancy spaces, critical academic facilities and buildings with recurring mold, ventilation or indoor-air-quality issues.
- Adopt resilient, low-carbon design, sustainable procurement, green infrastructure, and materials standards and policy for new construction and major renovations.
- Implement operational energy measures including building controls, set points, shutdown practices, efficient lighting and transparent monitoring.

3. Establish an All-Hazards Climate Emergency Response and Crisis Command Plan

Priority: Immediate 0-12 Months	**Cost:** $$ **Time:** II	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration Student Life

- Define incident-command roles, decision authority, activation triggers and on-site/remote staffing for floods, heat, severe storms, wildfire smoke, blizzards and extended outages.
- Develop and communicate evacuation routes, shelter-in-place locations, accessible transportation and reunification procedures.
- Conduct tabletop exercises and periodic drills involving academic affairs, residence life, student life, dining, wellness, facilities, communications and Public Safety functions.
- Maintain redundant communication channels and pre-scripted, accessible alerts for uncertain or fast-changing conditions.

4. Strengthen Continuity of Essential Services and Academic Operations

Priority: Immediate 0-12 Months	**Cost:** $$ **Time:** III	**Lead Divisions:** Academic Affairs Student Life Finance & Administration

- Identify key decision-makers, resource allocators, existing committee chairs and communications leads to establish working groups across divisions.
- Evaluate the current state of continuity planning for all essential administrative functions (dining, housing, transportation, non-academic student services etc.)
- Develop continuity strategies for campus food supply and strengthen local sourcing and supplier diversity.

- Update the academic continuity plan for classes, assessments, grading, digital learning, academic support and campus-space access during disruptive events.
- Set minimum service levels and backup arrangements for dining, food, potable water, housing, health care, disability services, transportation, payroll, IT and other essential functions.
- Develop vendor, staffing, supply-chain and mutual-aid contingencies and identify alternate service locations.
- Include explicit protections for essential workers and students during unsafe weather.

5. Governance, Implementation and Resilience Commitment Reporting

Priority: Immediate 0-12 Months	**Cost:** $ **Time:** I	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration Academic Affairs

- Seek internal and external support and collaboration for funding and implementation of comprehensive action plan.
- Submit to sustainability subcommittee, Planning & Budget and trustees for approval and implementation.
- Assign responsible individuals and establish measurable milestones.
- Fulfill resilience commitment reporting requirements to external partners.
- Continue to connect Dickinson's plan to resilience planning with the Borough of Carlisle and Cumberland County.

6. Improve Electric Power Reliability and Resilience

Priority: High 12-24 Months	**Cost:** $$$$ **Time:** III	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration

- Assess and prioritize critical loads and backup power needs under short- and long-duration outage scenarios.
- Engage relevant experts to assess and prioritize back-up electric power needs for outage scenarios and evaluate generation, battery storage, microgrid, demand-response and efficiency options with preference for zero- or low-carbon solutions.
- Develop a multi-year strategy for funding and implementing highest-priority power resilience options.

7. Build Campus and Regional Engagement, Education, Transparency and Feedback

Priority: High 12-24 Months	**Cost:** $ **Time:** II	**Lead Divisions:** Academic Affairs Marketing & Communications

- Continue engagement with students, faculty, staff, the Borough of Carlisle, Cumberland County and community partners.
- Advance research by faculty and students to develop/update local-climate baseline and planning scenarios for heat, rainfall, flooding, wind, drought, smoke and air quality.
- Create recurring educational presentations, curriculum and co-curricular opportunities, public progress reporting and an annual Climate Resilience Forum for updates.
- Establish consistent feedback channels across stakeholders and publish decisions, costs, timelines, metrics and progress through all-college reporting.
- Extend outreach beyond campus to share lessons and build regional support.

8. Advance Green Infrastructure, Stormwater Management, Tree Canopy and Biodiversity

Priority: High 12-24 Months	**Cost:** $$$ **Time:** III	**Lead Divisions:** Academic Affairs Finance and Administration

- Explore feasibility of green roof installations on existing buildings.
- Assess campus tree health and climate vulnerability; establish canopy baselines, expansion goals and annual tracking.
- Adapt tree planting, care and maintenance plans to address climate vulnerability.
- Prioritize best management practices for permeable pavement, bioretention, rain gardens, green roofs and other stormwater controls for all new construction and major renovations.
- Reduce heat and runoff impacts from parking and other impervious surfaces; explore permeable pavement and bioretention options.
- Expand the ecological program to native species, habitat connectivity, pollinators and climate refugia for vulnerable Pennsylvania species.

9. Develop a Resilient Mobility and Emergency Transportation Plan

Priority: High 12-24 Months	**Cost:** $$ **Time:** II	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration Student Life Borough/Regional Partners

- Plan accessible emergency transportation and evacuation routes for all students and employees.
- Update red alert communication systems to include extreme weather information.
- Incorporate accessibility, mobility, parking reduction, heat-island and stormwater objectives into future campus projects with a focus on emergency management.

10. Strengthen Financial Resilience, Affordability and Equity

Priority: Medium 24-36 Months	**Cost:** $ **Time:** I	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration

- Assess reserve adequacy for operations, insurance, emergency response, study abroad and capital recovery under climate scenarios.
- Set reserve targets and establish periodic review and adjustment to prioritize Dickinson's increasing financial needs for managing climate risks.
- Integrate greenhouse-gas inventory, offsets/RECs and utility-contract management with resilience funding in overall planning and budgeting processes.
- Apply affordability and equity safeguards so costs and service disruptions do not disproportionately burden students, employees or vulnerable groups.

11. Assess and Manage Endowment Exposure to Climate Risk

Priority: Medium 24-36 Months	**Cost:** $ **Time:** I	**Lead Divisions:** Finance & Administration

- Engage Investure regarding exposure to physical, transition, regulatory and fossil-energy risks.
- Explore stress testing the endowment portfolio under high-impact climate and regulatory change scenarios.
- Report annually to Dickinson community on climate-risk assessment, risk-management approaches, and Investure management approaches.

12. Manage Institutional Digital and AI Climate Impacts

Priority: Medium 24-36 Months	**Cost:** $ **Time:** II	**Lead Divisions:** Information Technology Academic Affairs

- Measure material energy and carbon impacts associated with institutional computing and AI use where data are available.
- Develop responsible-use guidance, procurement criteria and reporting practices that balance academic value, operational need and environmental impact.
- Incorporate digital-energy demand into power, cooling and infrastructure planning.

Recommended Implementation Sequence

Phase	Timing	Primary Focus
Phase 1 **Immediate Priorities**	0–12 months	• Climate Health & Well-being Resilience Plan • Climate-proof & decarbonize physical infrastructure • All-Hazards Emergency Response & Crisis Command Plan • Continuity of essential services & academic operations • Governance structure to ensure implementation & reporting
Phase 2 **High Priorities**	12–24 months	• Power reliability and low carbon backup systems • Engagement, education, transparency, and feedback cycles • Green infrastructure, stormwater, tree canopy, biodiversity • Mobility and emergency transportation plan
Phase 3 **Medium Priorities**	24–36 months	• Financial resilience, affordability, and equity safeguards • Endowment climate-risk management • Digital/AI energy and climate impact management