

Proposed Resolution Concerning the New UF Central Energy Plant Project

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Central Energy Plant Project, the new co-generation power plant proposed over Summer of 2021, will operate on natural gas, which primarily consists of the powerful greenhouse gas methane;

WHEREAS, this plan was decided with limited input from most of the UF community, including students, staff, and faculty;

WHEREAS, the enactment of this power plant plan will commit the University of Florida to a path with an anticipated outcome that prevents the university from achieving carbon neutrality until its decommissioning (claimed to be decades from now) due to both methane leaks associated with transport of natural gas and its combustion;

WHEREAS, the University of Florida community (faculty, staff, students) is currently producing an updated Climate Action Plan (UF CAP), and the results of this effort should be considered when finalizing the design of the Central Energy Plant;

WHEREAS, providing the University of Florida's electrical and heating/cooling and humidity control needs with natural gas will expose the University to unnecessary financial burden associated with the high volatility of natural gas availability, rising natural gas -and- prices, and increasing scarcity of natural gas and risk becoming a stranded asset soon after its commission given the rapidly dropping price of renewable energy;

WHEREAS, prospective students, staff, and faculty increasingly consider the sustainability of an institution when making education and employment decisions, leading to the possibility that the University of Florida will limit its local and national reputation and potential talent pool moving forward;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the University of Florida calls for a delay in committing to any Central Energy Plant plan involving natural gas-based power generation until concerns are addressed and further study from external consultants and internal experts in relevant fields can be made that will incorporate the goals of the updated UF CAP and other community input. We advocate for a broader plan that includes a transition to alternative energy sources and major increases in energy-use efficiency.