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## **Green Gigawatt Partnership Ramps Up Renewables in Higher Education**

*AASHE Teams Up with Multiple Organizations to Boost Green Power Purchases*

Minneapolis, Minn. (October 26, 2015) -- The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) recently announced the launch of the Green Gigawatt Partnership (GGP). The GGP seeks to catalyze one gigawatt of green power development by 2020 by recognizing colleges and universities who have signed large, long term contracts to purchase green power and help more campuses do the same.

A small but growing number of campuses have already executed large-scale, long term renewable energy purchases, but many schools face barriers. Although they are adept at sourcing conventional energy in short contracts, the renewable energy market is opaque and unfamiliar. Finding, analyzing and executing large-scale contracts for renewable energy is complex, and can be confusing, especially with insufficient market information and limited experience.

“New market conditions and purchasing strategies provide colleges and universities with a unique opportunity to ramp up renewable energy while reducing energy costs, controlling energy price risk, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions,” said AASHE’s Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser. “The Green Gigawatt Partnership is designed to help higher education take advantage of these new opportunities.”

A green power purchase agreement (PPA) is a commitment by a large energy user to buy power from a specific renewable energy project for a long period time. This contract provides developers the confidence needed to finance and construct their projects. As the productivity of wind turbines has risen and the cost of solar panels has dropped, electricity from these projects can now compete against conventional power from fossil fuels.

“With such a complex landscape of energy options, it is important to Cornell to pursue strategies that can responsibly steward our financial resources but also reduce our carbon footprint,” said Robert Bland, the Associate Vice President Energy and Sustainability at Cornell University. “We are excited to say that large-scale renewables are proving to be successful at achieving both.”

The GGP will foster replication of this renewable energy sourcing strategy by raising the visibility of success stories, providing national and regional workshops, and publishing how-to guides and procurement document templates; all designed to advance the use of renewable energy purchase agreements to catalyze one gigawatt of renewable energy in higher education by 2020.

Any college or university in North America that has signed a PPA to purchase at least one megawatt of green power for five years or more is eligible to join the GGP. In addition to providing recognition, training and information, GGP is offering participants access to no cost renewable energy purchasing services sponsored by Altenex LLC, the Partnership’s Market

Services Provider. Altenex provides comprehensive advisory and procurement services to enable large purchasers competitively procure renewable energy.

“After executing several power purchase agreements while I was the Director of Sustainability at American University, I know what it feels like to confront a complex web of renewable energy options. It is great to be in a position to help other institutions through this process,” said Chris O’Brien, Director of Higher Education Programs at Altenex.

The GGP includes a diverse coalition of supporters including: colleges and universities, sustainability advocacy organizations, industry and professional associations, and market service providers. GGP supporters include: the Association of Climate Change Officers (ACCO), the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), the National Wildlife Federation’s Campus Ecology program, Smart and Sustainable Campuses Conference, the Solar Energy Industry Association (SEIA), the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC), and the US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development.

### **About the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)**

AASHE empowers higher education faculty, staff and students to be effective change agents and drivers of sustainability innovation. AASHE enables members to translate information into action by offering essential resources and professional development to a diverse, engaged community of sustainability leaders. We work with and for higher education to ensure that our world's future leaders are motivated and equipped to solve sustainability challenges. For more information, visit [www.aashe.org](http://www.aashe.org). Follow AASHE on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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