



**Pioneering University Helping Costa Rica Become Carbon Dioxide Neutral**  
*Atlanta Foundation Announces Progress for EARTH*

**September 4, 2007**, ATLANTA – EARTH University Foundation in Atlanta is proud to announce Costa Rica-based EARTH University declared it is neutral with respect to carbon dioxide emissions and positive regarding carbon dioxide sequestration. The University's report came shortly after Costa Rica's Minister of Environment and Energy, Roberto Dobles, announced the country's National Climate Change Strategy, which aims to make Costa Rica the first carbon dioxide neutral country in the world by 2030.

The University acknowledges the global impact that CO<sub>2</sub> has on the climate and makes a public commitment to Costa Rica and the world to offer a sustainable solution to this problem.

A University-funded study, "EARTH University: Carbon Neutral," shows that from its three installations -- the campus in Guácimo, the EARTH-La Flor campus in Guanacaste; and the EARTH University Foundation office in Atlanta -- the University emits 1,154 tons of carbon dioxide annually. The study found carbon dioxide is emitted through the use of vehicles, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) used by the cafeteria, laundry facilities, the Food Processing Lab, electricity usage, air travel and other equipment and machines.

Compensating for its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, EARTH studied its carbon mitigation and sequestration sources such as its forests, banana, oil palm, and heart of palm plantations, and other crop and livestock production systems. The results show that the environment is benefiting from these activities: the University has the capability to capture 4,448 tons of carbon annually, which equals 16,324 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. This means that the University captures 15,170 tons more CO<sub>2</sub> annually than it emits.

"Becoming neutral in carbon emissions further strengthens our commitment to sustainability," said EARTH University President Dr. José Zaglul. "This achievement compliments our reforestation and environmental conservation efforts, as well as our research program and the development of sustainable agricultural production practices."

In order to reach its goal of becoming carbon dioxide neutral, the University first identified its carbon emission sources and measured their carbon output. Next, it determined its carbon storage capacity. Lastly, it designed projects aimed at reducing or compensating for its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

EARTH has always stood out for its contribution to biodiversity conservation. It has adopted sustainable practices at its institutions, including the generation of biogas as an alternative fuel and electricity source, energy conservation, agrochemical reduction, improved waste

management, the use of electric vehicles, and changing some agricultural and operational practices, among other initiatives.

With this latest environmentally conscious initiative, EARTH becomes the first university in Costa Rica to be neutral in CO2 emissions. EARTH hopes to share its experience with other organizations and institutions interested in implementing this kind of project.

EARTH is following the agreement outlined by the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which established that global levels of carbon dioxide and other gases should be reduced from their 1990 levels by more than 5 percent by 2012. The University took this step to support Costa Rica's plan to become the first country in the world to be carbon neutral.

Environment and Energy Minister Dobles stated that Costa Rica intends to plant 5 million trees in 2007 and enact plans to reduce the impacts of global warming on the country's energy, transportation, industry, tourism, and agriculture sectors.

Costa Rica has sold carbon certificates since 1997 and, last year, it sold 558,000 tons of CO2 to the World Bank.

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### **About EARTH University**

EARTH University (<http://www.earth.ac.cr/index.php>) is a private, international, non-profit university located in Costa Rica, dedicated to education in the field of agricultural sciences and the rational use of natural resources, with the interest of contributing to the sustainable development of the humid tropics. Founded in 1990, EARTH University has approximately 400 students from 23 countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In keeping with EARTH University's mission to affect change in the areas in greatest need of development, 80 percent of students are granted full or partial scholarship. The University has graduated nearly 1,200 professionals and has an international faculty composed of 44 professors from 20 countries. EARTH University Foundation (<http://www.earth-usa.org/>), based in Atlanta, coordinates fundraising and special events for the University in the United States. Jane C. Black is Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Gian Rossi-Espagnet has served as the Executive Director.

### **CONTACTS:**

**Ann Elsas**  
The Ledlie Group  
[Ann.Elsas@theledliegroup.com](mailto:Ann.Elsas@theledliegroup.com)  
404-266-8833

**Tracie Ingram**  
Earth University Foundation  
[TIngram@earth-usa.org](mailto:TIngram@earth-usa.org)  
404-995-1235