



News Room

[Press Releases](#)

[Media Guide](#)

[Press Kits](#)

[Today @ Mason](#)

[Daily Gazette](#)

[Broadside](#)

[About Media Relations](#)

[George Mason Facts](#)

[Speakers Bureau](#)

NEW CENTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION TO SHIFT GLOBAL THINKING

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FAIRFAX, Va.—Now that everyone is aware of the global warming crisis, how do you get them to do something about it?

Translating worry into action is what Edward Maibach is hoping to accomplish through George Mason University's new Center of Excellence in Climate Change Communication Research. By founding the nation's first research center devoted exclusively to addressing the communication challenges of climate change, Maibach and his team are researching how to shift global thinking to global action.

Though most people are aware that the Earth's climate is changing, research has shown the issue still has relatively low priority for most American families, businesses and policy makers, who view the problem as distant or uncertain.

"To avert the climate crisis, major behavior changes are needed from virtually everyone—a level of behavior change never before attempted, except possibly when personal or national survival was at imminent stake, such as during the last World War," says Maibach.

The center's efforts are focused on four strategic areas:

- Engaging a broad range of research experts and community leaders to identify the most pressing communication, marketing and behavior change research questions;
- Conducting communication, marketing and behavior change research to learn how best to educate, motivate and assist people and businesses in reducing their— and our nation's—"carbon footprint;"
- Providing technical assistance to a broad range of organizations to improve their climate change education, communication, advocacy and behavior change programs.
- Encouraging the development of similar initiatives abroad, especially in nations where effective societal responses are urgently needed to avert the climate crisis (such as China, India, Brazil and Russia).

Maibach has more than 10 years experience as a senior marketing and communication professional in government and industry, most recently as associate director of the National Cancer Institute. His edited book, "Designing Health Messages: Approaches from Communication Theory and

Public Health Practice" is widely used by academics and practitioners. He is one of Vice President Gore's "1,000 Voices" for climate change prevention.

About George Mason University

George Mason University, located in the heart of Northern Virginia's technology corridor near Washington, D.C., is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with national distinction in a range of academic fields. With strong undergraduate and graduate degree programs in engineering, information technology, biotechnology and health care, Mason prepares its students to succeed in the work force and meet the needs of the region and the world. Mason professors conduct groundbreaking research in areas such as cancer, climate change, information technology and the biosciences, and Mason's Center for the Arts brings world-renowned artists, musicians and actors to its stage. Its School of Law is recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the top 35 law schools in the United States.

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