



January 4, 2024

STARS Steering Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear STARS Steering Committee members,

We are pleased to submit the University of St. Thomas' third report documenting our progress toward our sustainability goals. St. Thomas completed its first STARS report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education in 2018, its second in 2021 and this opportunity remains an essential tool for underscoring and advancing our commitment to sustainability.

St. Thomas 2025 is our institutional strategic plan where “Living and Working Sustainably” is a highly visible and central goal. The overarching vision for our Live and Work Sustainably Strategic Priority is that every member of the St. Thomas community will engage in sustainable practices and that all of our students will be offered multiple pathways for engagement, skills development, and professional experiences across academic disciplines, preparing them to advance sustainability in any career. St. Thomas 2025 also prioritizes our goal to reduce annual carbon emissions while working toward a goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.

Since our 2021 report, we have made significant progress:

- As of 2023, we have reduced carbon emissions by 50% below our baseline and are continuing to work toward carbon neutrality by 2035.
- **Buildings**
 - Received a regional leadership award from the US Green Building Council in 2021.
 - Achieved LEED® v4 Platinum Certification for Tommie East (now Frey Hall) in December 2020. Tommie East was the first midrise residential building in the Midwest to achieve this rating, the sixth building in its category in the U.S., and the seventh building in its category in the world to achieve this rating.
 - Achieved LEED® Silver certification for Tommie North in September 2021.

- **Curriculum and student engagement**
 - Included a sustainability module in our First-Year Experience course, Foundations for College Success, required for all incoming Freshmen.
 - Launched a Master's Certificate in Sustainability in our School of Engineering.
 - Launched a second-year Sustainability Living Learning Community (in addition to our first-year Sustainability Living Learning Community).
- **Campus engagement**
 - Developed an online Sustainability Essentials course that covers sustainability at St. Thomas and online Pollinator Path courses that introduce our Pollinator Path on campus for students, faculty, and staff.
- Our Board of Trustees approved a university commitment to divest our endowment from fossil fuels.
- As part of our commitment to deepening our engagement with Catholic climate movement organizations, we submitted our Laudato Si' Action Plan to the Laudato Si' Action Platform.
- Our future plans include the completion of a state-of-the-art STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) building, the Schoenecker Center. The building is still under construction, and we cannot include it for submission as we may only include facilities that have been completed during the reporting timeframe in this STARS report. However, we are delighted to have been able to design it to LEED® Gold standards and look forward to discussing its impact in our next STARS report.

Thank you for this opportunity to assess our work, continue to build on a strong culture of sustainability on our campuses, and determine new strategies to further strengthen our efforts.

Sincerely,



Robert K. Vischer
President