



February 9, 2021

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

This month, our university embarks on *St. Thomas 2025*, its new institutional strategic plan, where Living and Working Sustainably becomes an even more highly visible, ongoing priority:

Every member of the St. Thomas community will engage in sustainable practices, and our students will be sustainability leaders as we fully implement our sustainability strategic plan. We will participate in global Catholic networks to care for our common home. A new sustainability hub will foster collaboration among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners, supporting research, curriculum, and practice to accelerate scalable and equitable solutions to global sustainability challenges. Every student will be offered multiple pathways for engagement, skills development, and professional experiences across academic disciplines, preparing them to advance sustainability in any career.

Importantly, *St. Thomas 2025* also prioritizes our goal to achieve a STARS gold rating by 2025, obtain a minimum of LEED silver certification for new buildings larger than 25,000 square feet, and reduce annual carbon emissions while working toward a goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.

Several of these themes were first introduced in the university's 2016 plan, *St. Thomas 2020: Living Our Mission, Expanding Our Horizon*, and its first sustainability strategic plan, which was published in summer 2019. These strategic plans have inspired exciting progress:

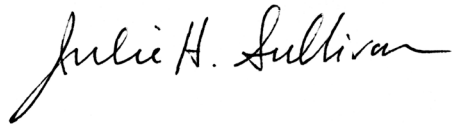
- In November 2019, we opened a multimillion-dollar Center for Microgrid Research, one of just a handful of premier research and educational facilities of its kind in North America.
- In December 2020, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) awarded its highest rating to a new residence hall on our St. Paul campus. Tommie East is the first building in its category in the Midwest to achieve the LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) v4 Platinum certification. It's also the sixth U.S. building in its category– and seventh in the world – to achieve this rating.

- Our renewed undergraduate core curriculum now features a theme-based learning community, Environmental Sustainability, within its First-Year Experience program, and incoming undergraduates are now required to complete a sustainability orientation session.
- We formalized a sustainable purchasing policy, implemented an integrated pest-management program for campus grounds, transitioned four acres to organic management practices and expanded the collection of compostable materials on campus.
- We launched Tommie Shelf to combat food insecurity in our community.
- We expanded our support of sustainable transportation, installing new charging stations for electric vehicles, bike repair stations and indoor bike parking.

In collaboration with staff and faculty throughout our institution, preparation of our STARS assessment was led by assistant director of campus sustainability, Amir Nadav, M.E.M. (Master of Environmental Management) and the faculty director of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives, Elise Amel, Ph.D. (professor of psychology). We are confident that it accurately reflects the university's commitment, practice and remarkable progress.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie H. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie H. Sullivan, Ph.D.  
President