



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 North Lake Road
Merced, California 95343
(209) 228-4400

February 2, 2022

Meghan Fay Zahniser, Executive Director
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)
2401 Walnut St, Suite 102
Philadelphia, Pa 19103

Dear Meghan,

On behalf of the University of California, Merced (UC Merced), we are pleased to submit a Sustainability Tracking and Assessment Rating System (STARS) report that highlights the efforts the campus has made to maintain and integrate actions that prioritizes the social, environmental, and economic challenges of today.

The dedication of our faculty, students, and staff to lead from the forefront has enabled our institution to serve as a global model and practitioner of environmental stewardship. Through the multidimensional actions reflected in this STARS report, the university has worked to distinctively encourage the connectivity of a campus wide network that develops substantive solutions that have enabled success and has built confidence in conventional and unconventional measures.

The programs and actions highlighted in our STARS report have advanced our campus sustainability trajectory to ensure a thriving, holistic, sustainable community. The progress the campus has made have included;

- The achievement of UC Merced's zero net greenhouse gas emissions goal. The campus is the first public research university in the nation to announce university operational emissions are certified as carbon neutral.
- The completion of 11 newly developed campus facilities all certified LEED Platinum. UC Merced is currently the only institution in the nation to have all its buildings certified under LEED.
- The diversion of over two million pounds of food from the landfill through community partnerships.
- The existing campus hybrid telecommute work arrangement which reduced emissions associated with travel proceeding the pandemic and was instrumental during the pandemic in shifting members of our campus community to remote work flexibility.
- The consistent sustainability related course offerings provided by our faculty that total twenty-five percent (25%) of all campus course offerings and are held within ninety-three percent (93%) of campus departments.

To realize our efforts, the campus specific Sustainability Strategic Plan (2017-2022) was instrumental to bridge opportunities and identify short and long term immediate actions to stimulate the advancement of sustainable conservation. The integration of sustainability into the UC Merced first campus wide Strategic Plan, finalized in 2021 affirms the campus commitment to sustainability,



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and embodies the university founding spirit to awake opportunity in our commitment to the region, people, sustainability, justice, and planet.

These identifiably immersive and embedded strategies taken by our university community are empowering our faculty to engage in impactful scholarship. This shared knowledge expands our students' ability to enrich not only the campus sustainable environment, but the broader community. Staff counterparts are strengthening our campus efforts through coordinated joint action and project and program implementation.

While we embark on new and existing activities to accelerate and deepen our campus sustainable operational trajectory, we will creatively cultivate a community that is responsive, engaged, and aware of opportunities to demonstrate our commitment.

UC Merced leads from the front and builds forward. While more is still yet to be done, completion of the STARS report allows the university to share its sustainability progress to date and sets the stage for our campus to continue to chart the course for emerging sustainable solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patrick J. Lenz".

Patrick J. Lenz
Interim Vice Chancellor & Chief Operating Officer
The University of California, Merced