

October 14, 2021

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

Dear members of the STARS Steering Committee,

We are very pleased to complete our 2021 STARS submission and are encouraged to see an increase in our scoring within the STARS framework.

While the global pandemic continued to dominate headlines this year, the escalating risks of the climate crisis have also grown in public consciousness—the impacts of extreme weather, drought and wildfires could not be ignored. The pandemic has exposed and heightened many pre-existing challenges in our society such as social and economic inequities. In the same way, the climate crisis compounds existing inequities, creating additional hardships for already marginalized groups. Our response to the pandemic has demonstrated that as a society we can collectively mobilize on an existential threat, a lesson we should apply to the challenges of the climate crisis.

As communities and societies look to rebuilding in a post-pandemic world, we have a real opportunity to address global challenges in ways we haven't before.

In this global context, environmental sustainability and addressing the climate crisis remain a key priority for the University of Waterloo, more than ever.

Our STARS submission highlights this commitment. Since our last submission in 2018, we have not only continued to expand sustainability programs and services, Waterloo's new Strategic Plan also includes sustainability as both a cross-cutting theme and a specific set of objectives.

This year we continued to reinforce our commitments to address climate change, including through the launch of *Shift: Neutral*, the University's plan to achieve carbon neutrality; our climate emergency declaration; and recommendations from the Board of Governors to integrate climate change into investment decisions.

Waterloo has also continued to strengthen our partnerships to mobilize sustainability solutions, from participation in local climate action networks, to growing national effort on the SDGs as host of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada, to being a founding member of the University Global Coalition.

There is considerable work to be done to build a sustainable future, on campus and across society. We are grateful for the AASHE STARS framework as one tool to help us reflect on our own institutional progress, and to identify areas for growth and improvement.

Thank you for considering our submission and for AASHE's ongoing support for sustainability across the sector.

Sincerely,



Vivek Goel, CM
President and Vice-Chancellor



