

February 27, 2020

I am writing to endorse this report to the Association of the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education on behalf of the leadership of Houghton College.

Shortly after arriving in 2006 as the president of the college, we established a task force of faculty and staff to give leadership to campus-wide efforts to make our campus more sustainable. While this initial task force has long since been incorporated into more permanent campus structures, the key leadership of campus sustainability efforts has remained constant. Mr. Brian Webb, our Sustainability Coordinator, brings creativity, energy, and the benefit of a national and even international network of connections in the world of sustainability here at our college in Western New York.

As president, I believe that the work of sustainability is core to our identity and mission as a rural college and as a liberal arts college. We want to steward well our location and provide a model for those in our surrounding region, as well as prepare graduates who carry with them into the larger world both the commitments and skills to become agents of sustainability.

Over the past 10 years we have worked to incorporate sustainability into our institutional identity at Houghton College. While there remains much progress to be made, we are proud of our initial efforts as indicated in this first STARS report. We'd especially like to highlight several key achievements, including the following:

- The student engagement efforts pioneered by the newly founded Center for Sustainability, and especially for the ways in which the Center uses student interns to guide our sustainability education and outreach.
- Our 10-year history of greenhouse gas reporting and the progress we have made in expanding renewable energy on campus through our large solar installation (which accounts for 40% of our annual electricity usage).
- The broad level of support for sustainability among the faculty, as evidenced by the diversity of sustainability-related courses and research undertaken across a broad spectrum of academic departments.
- The establishment of an 11--acre solar array adjacent to the campus completed in partnership with both state and national organizations. We obtain nearly half of our electricity through solar energy. At the time, it was the largest array in the state of New York adjacent to a college or university campus.
- The institution of such annual events as the celebration of Earth Day and the revival of Arbor Day thus incorporating sustainability into our college calendar.

Our aim is to submit another STARS report in 2022, with the goal of obtaining Silver STARS status. Several efforts anticipated over the next couple years should help make this achievable including a new Environmental Studies academic program, expanded student engagement efforts, new operations policies, a more thorough analysis of sustainability research and courses, and the development of a sustainability master plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shirley A. Mullen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shirley A. Mullen
President