



July 31, 2014

Dear STARS Review Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of the University of California Santa Barbara's submission of their Interdepartmental PhD Emphasis in Environment & Society program as a STARS Innovation Credit. After reviewing the program in detail, it is clear that this endeavor is unique and innovative in its broad collaborative nature as an interdepartmental effort, its transdisciplinary approach to sustainability studies and its systems thinking approach to pedagogy and research dissemination. In particular, I would draw your attention to the IEES's focus on bridging the natural and human systems through integrative thinking and interdisciplinary methodological approaches to problem solving.

UCSB is forging new ground bringing together natural sciences, social sciences and humanities in a rigorous program of study that goes well beyond the established interdisciplinary studies programs that are limited to one college/area or to a shared methodological proclivity for problem solving.

By awarding UCSB's Interdepartmental PhD Emphasis in Environment & Society program an Innovation Credit, STARS will be acknowledging the difficulties and successes of integrating systems thinking into the academy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Cook".

Dr. John J. Cook

Director of Sustainability
Co-Chair of the UC Sustainability Academic Task Force
Adjunct Professor in Public Policy
University of California Riverside
900 University Avenue
Riverside, CA 92521
(951) 827-1270