



VCU

July 28, 2015

STARS Steering Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
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Dear Committee Members:

It is with great pleasure that Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) submits its second Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) *Summary of Results* report. We are proud of our accomplishments and progress to date, and look forward to using STARS as a roadmap to continue our journey toward the goals described in the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, those laid out in our strategic plan, *Quest for Distinction* as well as goals outlined in our first university-wide *Sustainability Plan*.

In just seven years of engagement, VCU has made substantial progress in regards to sustainability. During this time, we have completed our first Climate Action Plan, developed and implemented the first Certificate in Sustainable Innovation and were cited as having outstanding sustainability programs in the Princeton Review as well as the Sierra Club's Cool Schools program. We have also certified the first LEED for Existing Buildings Operations and Maintenance (EBO&M) higher education building in the state of Virginia.

VCU proactively looks to engage the Richmond community in our sustainability planning endeavor, and the results have been truly remarkable. We have been drafting our first university-wide Sustainability Plan, based on feedback received from faculty, staff and students as well as members of surrounding communities. Additionally, the Division of Residential Life and Housing has been instrumental in developing VCU's inaugural Eco-Reps program, by empowering students to make each residence hall on campus more sustainable.

Our student-led projects have included establishing a Learning Garden on our Monroe Park campus that will donate fresh, healthy produce to underserved, at-risk citizens both within the university as well as in our surrounding communities. While these individual projects are significant, what has truly been rewarding for us is the clear demonstration of compassion and commitment by our students, who aspire to improve not just VCU's sustainability posture, but their own and that of the surrounding communities as well.

We appreciate your time and effort in the development of STARS. We look forward to receiving regular updates from you, as well as using STARS as a tool to gauge our on-going sustainability efforts.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Michael Rao
President