



St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development • 143 Regional Development Institute • (715) 425-3479 • Fax (715) 425-4479

April 9, 2013

Dear AASHE STARS Team & To Who Else It May Concern:

The University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF) Climate Action Plan meets the criteria for a STARS Innovation Credit based on the criteria outlined in the Technical Manual.

To the best of our knowledge and research, UWRF is **THE ONLY** institution in the United States currently reporting to the American Colleges and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) with a *carbon-negative* Climate Action Plan. While some institutions have committed to an aggressive timeline for carbon neutrality and implied carbon negative intentions (and others loosely committing to far-off dates), UWRF has committed to becoming at least 10% carbon negative (sequestering or offsetting more carbon than it emits) by 2018.

With the best available science showing an already locked-in trajectory increase of 2 degrees C in global temperatures and approaching of 6 degrees C if we continue down our current projected or anticipated emissions trending, the only sane path forward is to commit to carbon negativity. Committing to carbon-neutrality is for all practical purposes simply maintenance of the status quo and is tantamount to hoping that a slower rate of degradation will eventually be enough. In the face of overwhelming scientific evidence, aspiring to chase carbon-neutrality is aspiring to mediocrity at best. UWRF has chosen to lead the rest of the universities in North America who have committed to the ACUPCC through our adoption of a carbon-negative Climate Action Plan, and our annual GHG footprint tracking back to 1990.

The UWRF CAPlan was drafted by the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Development, vetted through the Sustainability Working Group, and passed for “information and planning purposes” by the Faculty Senate on June 12, 2012. It was signed by Chancellor Van Galen soon after.

The aggressive goals of the UWRF Climate Action Plan and its adoption through the shared-governance system at the university, demonstrates the university’s commitment to leadership in this regard. It is our impression that such a position clearly meets the Innovation Credit criteria and is an exemplary innovative practice.

Sincerely,

Kelly D. Cain, PhD
Director, St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development
Professor, Environmental Science & Management