To whom it may concern,

I am writing to provide a letter of affirmation regarding a recent innovative practice related to sustainability at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. A multidisciplinary team at our university received support from the National Foliage Foundation, Green Plants for Green Buildings, and McCaren Designs to replicate and extend research on the impact of foliage on a variety of measures of college student well-being and their academic performance as measured by the grade received. Drs. Terry Ferriss (Plant and Earth Science), Travis Tubré (Psychology) and David Trechter (Agricultural Economics) working with undergraduate students Alison Miotke (Psychology) and Brittany Rootes (Horticulture) administered measures of workspace satisfaction, psychological restoration, academic self-efficacy, student worry, and indicators of mood during fall semester in two classrooms that were similar in size, location and other factors. Statistical tests found no significant differences across the measures between the two classrooms. Between semesters, a “greenwall” system was installed in one of these classrooms. The greenwall is a series of foam panels, approximately six feet tall by twelve feet long, with a drip irrigation system. Plants are embedded in the foam to create a wall of living plants.

During spring semester, the same psychological measures were administered to students in the two classrooms. In addition, four multi-section classes with the same instructor were selected to be placed in these classroom – one section in the control room and one in the greenwall room. With respect to the psychological indicators, the research team found that there were no statistically significant differences in the control classroom between fall and spring. In contrast, all indicators improved from fall to spring in the greenwall room. Furthermore, for the spring semester data, students in the greenwall room scored significantly higher on workspace satisfaction, psychological restoration, and mood, and significantly lower on student worry. In addition, for the paired spring classes, academic performance was significantly better in the greenwall room than in the control room. These results both confirm earlier studies on the beneficial psychological impact of living plants and provide preliminary evidence in our ongoing longitudinal studies that plants can also improve students’ academic performance.

Thus, our project has led to a measureable outcome relating to student well-being (and potentially that of faculty working in the space as well). Based on the outcomes of our project, we have recently secured additional funding to create a replica of the wall as the key exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair’s Eco Hall. This recognition emphasizes the value and innovation of the Greenwall installation in an academic setting.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions about the project.

Sincerely,



Travis Tubré, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair of Psychology