



June 24, 2019

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The Association for the Advancement of  
Sustainability in Higher Education  
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To Whom It May Concern:

The University of Kentucky proudly submits this Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). As President of the University of Kentucky, I affirm the accuracy of this report and am pleased with the great strides we have taken in the three years since our last submission. Over the past decade, sustainability has become an even greater priority at the University and is evident in a broad set of initiatives, programs, and guiding documents.

Our role as Kentucky's flagship and land-grant institution allows us to be an example for the Commonwealth of Kentucky and set a precedent in prioritizing sustainability. The University of Kentucky constantly seeks new ways to carry out our responsibility to be environmentally conscientious, and our most recent efforts underscore this dedication.

In the last three years, the University of Kentucky developed its first Sustainability Strategic Plan and committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2025. Considering the University's multi-faceted mission of education, research, service, and health care, it is vital that all departments work together and prioritize sustainability to achieve our goal.

UK Athletics and UK HealthCare, for example, established sustainability leadership teams and committees and set goals to support UK's Sustainability Strategic Plan. The Tracy Farmer Institute for Sustainability and the Environment strives to shape a sustainable future for Kentucky's environment through engagement, interdisciplinary research, and education. Our Institute for Sustainable Manufacturing is a multidisciplinary collaborative research unit whose primary objectives are to develop and advance sustainable manufacturing principles and practices in Kentucky, the nation, and the world. Additionally, our Provost established a Faculty Sustainability Council to develop and implement a strategy to strengthen the integration of sustainability with curricula and research.

The University of Kentucky's Sustainability Challenge Grant program incentivizes teams to submit innovative ideas and transformational projects that fulfill the three pillars of sustainability on UK's campus: economic vitality, social equity, and ecological integrity. Through a highly competitive selection process, teams are awarded grants to pursue initiatives that engage students and use the campus as a living laboratory in pursuit of the goals mentioned above. Since its inception in 2014, the Sustainability Challenge Grant has awarded \$900,000 to 33 multidisciplinary teams from the UK community.

Our students have increasingly shown a deep interest in playing a role in sustainability on campus. At the beginning of the semester, students pay a small Environmental Stewardship Fee to sponsor short and long-term projects that support campus sustainability efforts. The Student Sustainability Council (SSC) represents a diverse cross-section of the University's student population and supervises the distribution of the Fee to responsibly advance the theory, practice, and reality of sustainability at the University. Any member of the UK community can submit a proposal for funding, and, in the past three years, the SSC has awarded nearly \$600,000 to campus sustainability projects proposed by students, faculty, and staff.

Moreover, we have garnered national attention for our dining initiatives and commitment to our role in growing a sustainable and resilient food economy for the state. We are accomplishing this goal by leveraging the University as a committed buyer of locally sourced products to develop and expand wholesale chains for Kentucky foods. In the first year of the University's dining contract—not including beverages—UK increased local food purchases by approximately 20 percent. UK is the only University in America with a global food partner who has made a multimillion-dollar commitment to growing the local food economy. We plan to continue to be "Kentucky Proud" and provide healthy, sustainable, and affordable dining options to all UK community members.

We recognize the magnitude of our role as an institution that serves our campus and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our Office of Sustainability has worked to facilitate multidisciplinary strategic efforts to achieve our goals. While the examples in this letter highlight only a few of the ways the University of Kentucky has reinforced our commitment to sustainability in the past three years, the enclosed STARS report details our progress. The STARS process further allows us to identify areas that need improvement and challenges us to find innovative ways to promote our progress.

The University of Kentucky will continue to build upon successful projects and programs, and we look forward to improving. Thank you for your steadfast dedication to promote a more sustainable future for higher education institutions, those we teach, and those we serve.

Sincerely,



Eli Capilouto  
President