

25 January 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh is an innovative institution and leads the way for others in the field of sustainability. One of these sustainable initiatives has been the use of three aeroponic Tower Gardens in the Blackhawk Commons. These growing systems were introduced in July 2015 and have been managed by two students in the past months. These two young women were Jess Fede, a paid university dining worker, and Hallie Cuomo, an unpaid volunteer interested in gardening. Jess and Hallie have worked with the dining hall staff to turn the produce into meals and soon we hope to expand their role to include student education. The tangible results of this project are edible: up to six pounds of lettuce can be produced in a single week from these three towers. However, it is the intangible results through education and exposure that will have the biggest impact.

To my knowledge, UW Oshkosh is the first school in the University of Wisconsin system and the only public post-secondary school in the state to utilize the Tower Garden growing system on its campus. In looking across the nation, I have found no evidence to suggest that Tower Gardens are being used on other college campuses beyond the state. UW Oshkosh's tower garden program is significant in its local fame, but also to the planet through the use of local produce and the corresponding reduction in food miles.

In my opinion, the use of Tower Gardens at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh is an innovative practice that will benefit students and the school. The project has brought attention to local food and food production among visitors to the Blackhawk Commons. Additionally, the media coverage of these towers has informed many community members of these topics.

Sincerely,

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