

June 1, 2016

STARS Accreditation Review Committee

Re: San Jose State University: Green Ninja Project

Dear STARS Reviewers:

I am writing today to share my experiences and observations of the impact that the Green Ninja Project has had on San Jose State University and the local communities of San Jose. I have experienced the Green Ninja project (faculty and students) in four ways: as co-members of the SJSU Sustainability Board, as a teaching tool for college students, as an educational outreach activity for elementary/middle school students, and as a community educational outreach service.

The Green Ninja Project's organizers, Eugene Cordero and Ellen Metzger, are members of the SJSU Sustainability Board. It has been exciting to see the results of this creative partnership between faculty and students in the departments of Meteorology and Climate Sciences, Science Education, and Art & Animation take shape in the form of the Green Ninja animated series. The importance of the videos is the information on recycling, conservation, and energy-savings is shared in a fun animated series without being didactic, an important aspect of attracting a younger audience. At the Sustainability Board meetings, Eugene and Ellen share progress on the videos, and seek feedback from the group as they look for ways to improve their work. In turn, members learn about the latest videos and community projects which they can share with their students. The Green Ninja videos are an important teaching tool as members of the Sustainability Board represent faculty and staff from the eight colleges, student services, and campus administration.

Awareness of the Green Ninja videos has given me the opportunity as a guest lecturer to introduce students in SJSU's Art History 72 class to the importance of sustainable actions in a fun and easy way. Early on I realized that students would be more receptive to discussing the 3 E's of Sustainability, and the 7 LEED categories if they viewed the video, *Green Ninja: Footprint renovation*, first. I have been using this video the past year in six sections of this course. Each time, the students are surprised when I show them an animated video. Afterwards they have engaged in discussing the message of the video (changing light bulbs, saving water, replacing equipment with more energy efficient models, sorting out waste) in our discussion of sustainable buildings. The Green Ninja's video has been so effective, the instructor selected a new Green Ninja video, *Be Green Like a Tree-How Green Can Buildings Be* as a wrap-up activity

for her students. Using the Green Ninja videos to frame a class discussion is just one way to extend student understanding of the need for sustainability in our lives.

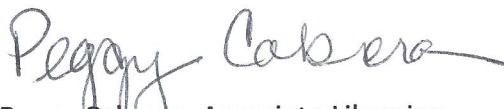
The Green Ninja project has also increased student awareness at the San Jose elementary and middle schools where students created their own Green Ninja videos on sustainability. In 2014, I attended a family and community night in the Department of Meteorology and Climate Science where the videos of these students were featured. The audience consisting of students, their teachers, and families who voted on their favorite videos and prizes were given to all participants. In addition to viewing the videos, everyone participated in decorating Green Ninja gingerbread cookies. It was a fun evening for everyone. The importance of these Green Ninja educational outreach activities is that they bring awareness of sustainability to entire communities within these schools. These children realize that they too can create content on important topics. By reaching out to these schools, the Green Ninja project helps grow young citizens who can make informed sustainable choices in our communities.

In October 2015 the Green Ninja was a featured guest during the King Library's annual Halloween celebration. Working with the project coordinators, SJSU students and the Green Ninja joined in the annual children's parade through four floors of the library to hand out organic candy to children and packs of CFL lightbulbs to their parents from the surrounding communities. The parents were very surprised and thanked the Green Ninja and the students for these unexpected gifts. Many children took their photos with the Green Ninja and his team! This Halloween parade is just one example of the community outreach activities that the Green Ninja Project engages in as they search for opportunities to spread this important educational work.

As you can see, I am a Green Ninja fan as a result of my observations and experiences. I hope you will agree that the Green Ninja Team has gone beyond the expected to create innovative, fun, and important ways to educate students and our local communities about our need to care for our planet ourselves.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Thank you,



Peggy Cabrera, Associate Librarian
Liaison to Environmental Studies, Humanities, and Philosophy Departments
San Jose State University
Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu / 408-808-2034