



A College of the State University of New York
4585 West Seneca Turnpike Syracuse, New York 13215-4585
(315) 498-2622 www.sunyocc.edu

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Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
STARS Program
213 ½ N. Limestone
Lexington, KY 40507

To Whom It May Concern:

Onondaga Community College's Sustainable Landscape Master Plan is innovative and meets the criteria for the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) innovation credit.

Onondaga's Sustainable Landscape Master Plan provides goals and strategies for incorporating sustainable practices into the management of the College's grounds. The Sustainable Landscape Master Plan identifies opportunities for protecting wildlife habitat and open space, effectively managing stormwater runoff, promoting pedestrian access and bicycle ridership, and reducing emissions related to maintaining turf grass.

The Sustainable Landscape Master Plan was developed with input from the campus community with the assistance of a consultant. The Sustainable Landscape Master Plan includes strategies such as growing meadows across campus instead of mowing grass, using native and low-maintenance plant species, and installing green roofs, vernal ponds, and rain gardens. The College is currently implementing the recommendations of the Sustainable Landscape Master Plan for all future and current facilities and Capital projects which will include growing meadows, utilizing native plants, rain gardens, naturalized areas, and preserving the natural landscape when possible. The designated no-mow zones have greatly reduced fuel and labor associated with turf grass maintenance. The initiative has also provided a learning opportunity for the campus and community members.

The Sustainable Landscape Master Plan is a separate document from the College's Facilities Master Plan. Supporting sustainable landscaping with a stand-alone, high-level master plan document is very unique among college campus and other institutions. Onondaga has presented at a statewide conference, has been highlighted in local sustainability-focused media coverage, and has answered questions from community agencies about best practices in sustainable landscaping management related to the College's Sustainable Landscape Master Plan. This unique sustainability initiative meets the criteria for a STARS innovation credit.

Sincerely,

Jim Kelly

Grounds Coordinator