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RE: Letter of Affirmation for Student Global Issues Conferences

Dear STARS Review Committee,

I serve as a Professor in the Department of Biology, the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics and Director of the Microscopy & Imaging Center at Texas A&M. Sustainability is a passion of mine and I work to implement it in all aspects of my life whether at home or at work.

I was delighted to have had the opportunity to participate in the poster session for Local Action: Global Impact - A global issues conference for students in grades 6-8. What particularly impressed me was the enthusiasm, energy and thought that went into the presentations. Animated discussions ensued on many occasions and overall it was a wonderful outreach activity. It is great to see young people caring for their environment. The Global Issues Conference has many outcomes which are important to share with students at a young age to cultivate champions of sustainability. I commend the conference on its objectives and outcomes which are below:

Objectives

- Engage Texas student in learning about sustainability and related issues.
- Make connections between local issues and a broader global view of issues.
- Lead students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers.
- Inspire Texas students to become global leaders.
- Introduce Texas students to the academic environment at Texas A&M University.

Outcomes

- Increase interest in sustainability issues and global education as a result of the workshops.
- Extended the university's area of community service to a wider audience.
- Improved research, writing and communication skills among middle school and high school students
- Provides an opportunity for exchange of ideas between TAMU students and conference participants

A further benefit of the program is how it engages Texas A&M students from the Academy of Future International Leaders to serve as conference coordinators. Overall, the Student Global Issues Conference is a wonderful outreach activity that fosters environmental engagement, and I fully support this initiative as an innovation for Texas A&M University.

Respectfully,

Dr. Andreas Holzenburg