



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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STARS Committee
Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
1536 Wynkoop St., Suite 901
Denver, CO 80202

Dear STARS Committee,

I am pleased to affirm that the 20-year Sustainability Strategy, an integrated framework to guide sustainability at UBC, demonstrates innovation and sustainability leadership. As a sustainability planning professional with over 10 years of experience, I was particularly inspired by the ambitious vision of regenerative sustainability, the commitment to deeply embed sustainability across all aspects of the university and the multiple levels of engagement that helped inform the strategy.

I am not aware of many other institutions that have committed to moving beyond net-zero and doing 'less harm' to ambitiously exploring and defining net-positive strategies for not only environmental, but also human wellbeing. This transformative approach redefines current concepts of sustainability and will ultimately help advance our planning practices by setting new goalposts for the future and putting the University to the challenge of reaching these new goals.

Further, the eight-month long community engagement process for developing the strategy demonstrated institutional leadership by providing a platform for new and open discussions around strategic directions for sustainability across teaching, learning and research, operations and infrastructure and community. UBC Sustainability Initiative's close involvement of students, faculty, staff and municipal, First Nations and community partners ensured the strategy is informed by diverse viewpoints. The process also provided leadership opportunities to for students, faculty and the community members and a venue through which the voices of those not-commonly involved were heard. Overall, I am encouraged by how these conversations not only shaped the strategy, but already delivered, in part on, the proposed aspirations to strengthen connections across our community and establish new collaborations.

Finally, it gives me confidence that, as a living document, the strategy, will remain innovative and will ensure UBC's approach remains adaptive amid uncertainties. It provides a framework that will guide the University as it prepares students for the challenges of the future and as we continue to develop a model sustainable community. Presented to the UBC's Board of Governors in Fall 2014, the strategy acknowledges our responsibility to address critical issues and demonstrates the University's continued thought leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aviva Savelson'.

Aviva Savelson, MCIP, RPP
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