



14 July 2011

STARS Steering Committee  
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education  
213 ½ North Limestone  
Lexington, Kentucky 40507  
The United States of America

**RE: The University of British Columbia's STARS submission**

On behalf of the University of British Columbia, it is my pleasure to present our report for the AASHE Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System. It represents a substantial, campus-wide effort, led by the UBC Sustainability Initiative, to assess and report on the university's sustainability achievements. I can affirm that these answers are honest and accurate.

Sustainability defines UBC as a university. In 1997, it was the first post-secondary institution in Canada to adopt a sustainable development policy and, a year later, to open a campus sustainability office. A decade later UBC met its Kyoto targets within academic buildings, five years early and in spite of growing the building base by 35 per cent and enrollment by 48 per cent. In 2010, UBC announced its Climate Action Plan, committing the university to aggressive reduction targets for campus-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions -- by 33 percent by 2015, 67 percent by 2020, and 100 percent by 2050, compared to 2007 levels.

UBC has long embraced an interdisciplinary approach, and on campus the same thinking is applied to how the university addresses sustainability. In 2010 UBC launched one of its most significant innovations, the UBC Sustainability Initiative, tasked with integrating the university's teaching and learning, research and partnerships, and operational efforts in sustainability. The initiative champions two crosscutting themes: the campus as a living laboratory and the university as an agent of change.

Concerning the living laboratory, UBC has a unique role to play in leveraging the teaching, research and operations that are at the core of its existence to address the critical issues of our time. UBC is currently investing \$150 million in four projects to meet its climate change goals: a continuous optimization program for 70 core academic and ancillary buildings; the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS); a

Bio-energy Research and Demonstration Project; and a campus-wide steam to hot water conversion, one of the largest projects of its kind in North America.

Concerning agent of change, UBC believes that sustainability is the responsibility and commitment of the entire community. As a large, research-intensive university with considerable land, assets and utilities, UBC can take action in ways that others cannot by advancing debates, technologies, instruction, and discoveries that support a more sustainable future both on and off campus. To this end, UBC is establishing formal strategic partnerships with private, public and civil society sector organizations such as BC Hydro, the City of Vancouver, the National Research Council, our University Neighbourhoods Association and Honeywell. These partnerships allow UBC to apply discoveries and lessons learned on campus to the various communities with which it is engaged and to learn from its partners' activities in implementing sustainability.

STARS has proven to be a valuable tool for establishing a performance baseline, measuring progress and for challenging us to target highly ambitious, long-term goals. We look forward to providing feedback to STARS on ways in which we think the rating system can be improved.

The University of British Columbia is committed to participating in this external third-party sustainability benchmarking system and to working with the STARS Steering Committee as it refines and shapes the system.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Toope  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
The University of British Columbia