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Elida Erickson
Sustainability Office
UC Santa Cruz
1156 High St. Kerr Hall 118
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

To the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education:

I am writing to share my strong support for considering the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) for an Innovation credit in the 2016 AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) submission. UCSC's technology-focused and weight-based waste tracking and billing system is a unique initiative that can serve as a model for other institutions of higher education wishing to advance campus zero waste and sustainability goals.

Cascadia Consulting Group (Cascadia) is an industry leader in providing data-driven solutions, practical strategies, and on-the-ground implementation assistance to reduce waste and enhance sustainability objectives. We have been pioneering waste reduction solutions nationwide for over 20 years in partnership with valued clients including higher education institutions. Our expertise covers the full materials management life cycle, from downstream waste characterization studies and technical assistance to upstream planning and behavior change initiatives.

Cascadia first connected with UC Santa Cruz (UCSC) while working on a waste management operations improvement project with UC Berkeley (UCB). UCB pointed to Brad Angell and UCSC as a notable example of a university that is using innovative approaches to optimize its on-campus operations. We subsequently invited UCSC to serve on a panel at the 2015 WasteExpo conference and share lessons on the benefits of integrating new technologies into existing waste collection and processing operations. We had the pleasure of visiting the UCSC campus to gain first-hand exposure to its operations, and recently submitted an abstract together for the California Resource Recovery Association's 2016 conference. This CRRA panel will explore how technological improvements in the waste and recycling industry are promoting the behavior change needed to move towards a sustainable zero waste future.

Through these interactions, we have been particularly impressed with UCSC's transition to a cutting edge weight-based charge system, which leads to several triple bottom line benefits including:

- **Labor cost reductions** as collection operations switch to an on-demand service model.
- **More accurate service charges**, where departments and buildings are billed for the true, weight-based cost of collecting materials generated rather than the less accurate, industry - standard volumetric, static pickup method. This also helps campus users reduce the total amount of waste and recycling materials generated.
- **More accurate monthly reporting** on each individual department or building's progress towards attaining campus-wide zero-waste goals.
- **The ability to free up labor** for complementary activities such as UCSC's new on-campus composting operation, which employs existing personnel.

- **A resulting agency budget model** that embraces the economics of conservation, where operations do not suffer catastrophic losses as users reduce their "unsustainable" activities.

Cascadia is thoroughly impressed with the innovative work that Brad and his team at UCSC are doing to advance zero waste and sustainability goals. Their willingness to integrate and tailor emerging technology solutions is exactly what the waste and recycling industry needs to become more efficient and better reflect the realities of our customers. This model has the potential to drastically improve the way zero waste operations are conducted, and set a new direction for the industry as a whole.

UCSC's technology-focused and weight-based waste tracking and billing system meets the criteria to earn a STARS Innovation credit. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Thank you for your consideration.



Amity Lumper, Co-President

Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc.

amity@cascadiaconsulting.com