

May 25, 2017

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear STARS Committee:

Keene State College is pleased to submit its STARS self-assessment reflecting information for academic year 2015-2016. As President of Keene State College, I affirm that the information submitted to STARS by the College's many contributors across campus is an accurate representation of our sustainability efforts.

This STARS update reflects important planning and administrative changes at the College. In 2015, Keene State College completed extensive planning initiatives that identified sustainability as a high priority in the resulting *Keene State College Strategic Plan* and the *College-Wide Learning Outcomes*. The College committed to a specific Objective of attaining STARS Gold by 2020.

This expanded emphasis on sustainability is already being felt across the campus through policies and projects with outcomes that begin to be reflected in this STARS report. As a result of our campus-wide commitment to sustainability and well-being, we were recently awarded the prestigious Green Ribbon School designation from the US Department of Education.

As New Hampshire's public liberal arts college, Keene State College has a mandate to serve the needs of our community. Included in this responsibility is stewardship of our shared resources, a strong commitment to social justice and equity, an emphasis on civic engagement, and the adherence across all areas of the College to the principles and practices of sustainability.

Keene State College's efforts to promote sustainability can be found far beyond our recycling bins and award-winning student-led recycling program. We embrace a systems-approach to sustainability so that all areas measured by STARS are engaged. Critical planning and administrative policies and guidelines encourage innovative sustainability curriculum and leading edge operations. Our strong commitment to campus and public engagement is recognized through our receipt of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and leadership participation with the American Democracy Project.

Sustainability curriculum continues to expand on campus and students can take a sustainability focused class in over 90% of the departments. Our sustainability research portfolio also is broadening. Through our signature sustainability majors and our emphasis on civic engagement, students gain classroom knowledge that is bolstered through hands on experience. Examples include:

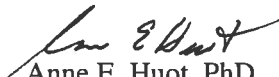
- Award-winning partnership with a local land trust and environmental education center;
- Integrative Studies Program required of all students that emphasizes diversity, ethics, global issues, and social and environmental engagement;
- Architecture "Communicorps" that engages students in designing energy efficient buildings for regional non-profit organizations;
- Building Excellence in Science and Technology (BEST) Program that is designed to help students succeed in the sciences;

- Community service days, Adopt-a-Street, and Green Up Keene programs that involve students as stewards of their community;
- Close to 30 students employed by the Sustainability Office gain real-world experience as Eco-Reps, student recyclers, researchers, and in communications and other engagement projects; and
- Active participation in the American Democracy Project that prepares engaged students as “Stewards of Place.”

Keene State College continues projects that support the campus as a living laboratory. This is evident in our commitment to green building and organic grounds management. Keene State continues to move aggressively towards our commitments as a signatory to the Carbon Commitment (formerly American College and University President’s Climate Commitment). In partnership with our local utility and community organizations we are exploring/implementing ways to diversify our energy portfolio through vigorously improved energy management, stepped up energy efficiency measures, and research on low-carbon/carbon-free ways to heat our campus.

Updating our STARS report has engaged faculty and staff across Keene State College in summarizing progress of the last two years. A small dedicated team of sustainability and affiliated staff led the process and reviewed the data prior to submission. Keene State College’s commitment to sustainability deepens with the release of the College’s Strategic Plan and Learning Outcomes. These goals are met with demonstrable actions across campus that are documented in this STARS report. We appreciate the framework AASHE provides with STARS and join alongside other colleges and universities in supporting the health of our environment while confronting climate change challenges.

Sincerely,


Anne E. Huot, PhD
President