

July 19, 2011

Dear AASHE STARS Program Staff,

As Canada's Green University™, the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) is committed to being a leader in renewable energy thought and practice. Located in the heart of BC and in the forest-reliant community of Prince George, UNBC has adopted a significant role in the economic diversification and sustainability of the region, by utilizing bioenergy.

In 2009, UNBC installed Canada's first university-owned wood pellet heating system, which showcases the use of bio-energy as a sustainable, carbon-neutral energy source. With an energy efficiency of over 85%, compared to 75% for the previous natural gas system, the wood pellet system has resulted in a savings of 140 tonnes CO₂e/year. Beyond its operational function, the facility serves as a valuable demonstration site for public education, with more than 700 political leaders, industry officials, and community residents visiting during the first year alone.

In 2010, UNBC to expanded its involvement with bioenergy to include a Biomass Gasification System which now provides heat to the core campus buildings and is offsetting about 85% of the previous natural gas consumption. This project was funded by the federal and provincial government and fuel is being provided by a local, family-owned sawmill in Prince George. In addition to being carbon-neutral, the cost of acquiring the sawmill residue is only 35% of the cost of natural gas.

UNBC's bioenergy projects are creating an array of innovative educational and interdisciplinary research opportunities that are of great value to forest-based communities across Canada. Both projects illustrate that universities can serve as important demonstration sites for renewable energy systems. Through the success and innovation of its bioenergy projects and the integration of its core functions – teaching, research, operations, and public engagement – UNBC is demonstrating excellence in sustainability while providing leadership to communities in the transition to renewable energy sources.

Sincerely,



Doug Carter, CTech
Capital Projects Manager
University of Northern British Columbia