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Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Members of the AASHE STARS Committee:

I am pleased to present George Mason University's fifth submission to the AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). Mason is proud to achieve a STARS Gold rating for the fourth consecutive time. Our score shows 14% improvement from our previous submission, and is one of the top STARS scores for Virginia STARS schools. This rating is welcome recognition of our ongoing commitment to sustainability in research, teaching, operations, and community service.

As Virginia's largest public research university, Mason sets the standard for a bold, progressive education that serves our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the globe. Our faculty drives cutting-edge research with worldwide impacts. Our graduates are well-rounded scholars, engaged citizens, and prepared to act.

Sustainability is a core value for Mason: our *2023-2027 Strategic Plan* commits us to "Leverage existing, and establish new, initiatives and funding to further Mason's sustainability and climate objectives." The Strategic Plan also aligns our research and curricular goals with global sustainability challenges.

Since joining the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in 2007, and forming our Office of Sustainability the same year, we have pursued several significant achievements. We joined AASHE STARS as a Charter Participant in 2010. We became the first university in Virginia to earn a STARS Gold rating in 2014. In 2021, we earned an ArbNet Level II accreditation for the George Mason University Arboretum, an example of horticultural and arboricultural excellence reflecting the university's education, research, and service missions. In 2023, we achieved a Silver rating from the League of American Bicyclists for our Fairfax Campus, and a Bronze rating for our Arlington/Mason Square Campus. We also established a Living Lab program, which leverages our campuses as sustainability research and teaching assets, and which demonstrates our academic and operations teams working in unison to pursue sustainability.

Our work in sustainability extends beyond our campuses. In 2019, Mason launched the Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE), a multidisciplinary research institute that addresses the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The ISE faculty now has over 600 affiliate members and represents researchers from diverse academic departments. In 2023, Mason received federal funding to establish our new Virginia Climate Center (VCC). The VCC engages with Virginia's municipal officials, businesses, and community leaders to co-develop information and tools that inform municipal decisions, save tax dollars, and improve the productivity and profitability of Virginia businesses. This two-year, congressionally directed, community project seeks to increase Virginia's resiliency to climate change impacts.

While we recognize that further commitment and action are always required, the Mason community takes pride in our progress. We submit this 2024 STARS report to not only measure our sustainability performance, but to share Mason's story about creating and maintaining a truly sustainable university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory Washington', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gregory Washington

GW/sg