



Office of the President

West Chester University | West Chester, Pennsylvania 19383 | 610-436-2471 | www.wcupa.edu

March 29, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

It is with pleasure that I write this letter to accompany West Chester University's 2018 submission of its *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System* report. Our Office of Sustainability team has been working with colleagues from across campus for several months to collect and analyze the data necessary to prepare this report and check it for accuracy.

This report highlights West Chester University's commitment to sustainability which we are proud to demonstrate in many ways.

- Sustainability is one of just five theme areas in our current strategic plan, *Building on Excellence*, and remains one of five priority areas in the update to our revision currently in development, *Pathways to Student Success*.
- In 2013, the university released its first Climate Action Plan which has guided our work by setting a carbon neutrality by 2025 goal and establishing seventy four objectives in six key areas of our university's operations: Energy and Buildings, Transportation, Purchasing, Solid Waste & Recycling, Dining, and Curricular / Co-Curricular / Research / Public Engagement.
- Our commitment to invest in district and independent geo-thermal systems has been successful at reducing our fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions and permitted us to decommission an on-campus coal-fired boiler plant in 2014. Currently 45% of building space is heated and cooled with our geothermal system and current plans are to increase that to over 60% by 2020.
- In 2017 West Chester University established an Office of Sustainability and is providing resources for a Director, Assistant, and graduate student interns who have expanded our ability to communicate with our students, faculty, and staff and to collaborate with community partners in the county and the region.
- The Office of Sustainability works directly with our Sustainability Advisory Council (SAC) to promote initiatives and policies to bring our commitment to sustainability into all aspects of the university's education mission.
- By fostering collaborations between the Office of Sustainability and the SAC and other offices and departments on campus, we are making good progress in many areas, including these:
 - using energy and material resources more efficiently
 - connecting our sustainability commitments to our curriculum
 - expanding sustainability-focused research and teaching
 - initiating a Guaranteed Energy Savings Agreement that is reducing our purchased electricity consumption

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- developing volunteer opportunities in our Gordon Natural Area
- partnering with local municipalities (West Chester Borough, West Goshen Township, Chester County, and more) and local civic and community organizations
- creating more sustainable food systems from our three on-campus organic gardens to our dining services and an on-campus Resource Pantry for students with financial need

Working with AASHE's *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System* has permitted our community of staff, faculty, students, and local partners to document our accomplishments, understand our strengths and constraints, and identify challenges that remain for us to address in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Christopher M. Fiorentino, Ph.D.
President