



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 20, 2022

AASHE
2401 Walnut Street
Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Re: Colorado State University STARS 2.2 Report Submission

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Colorado State University, I am pleased to forward our institution's 2.2 Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. We are very proud to submit our fourth provisional STARS platinum report.

Colorado State University's reputation as an innovative national leader in sustainability is core to our University mission, values, and brand. It is why many of our students first become interested in our University and why many of our faculty choose to make this their academic home. Our commitment to sustainability is woven throughout our academic, research, operations and engagement programs and is a deeply embedded part of our culture that has spanned the tenure now of several University presidents and CSU System chancellors. I note this because I am writing in my capacity as Interim President of Colorado State University as our Board of Governors completes its search for our 16th president. No matter who becomes the next permanent president, Colorado State's commitment to and prioritization of sustainability in all its dimensions will remain a priority for the institution, as it is for the Board itself. For 152 years, Colorado State has conducted leading-edge environmental research in fields ranging from atmospheric science to climate-wise agriculture and provided a rich academic environment in which students learn, embrace, and foster the value of sustainability from an environmental, social, and economic lens.

This STARS report highlights work of Colorado State University's faculty, staff, and students that has been ongoing for many years, as well as some projects that are coming to fruition after many years of planning. Colorado State has not rested since its 2019 STARS report. I am pleased to draw your attention to our three points of distinction for 2022:

Sustainability Curriculum Integration:

Sustainability is deeply woven into CSU's curriculum with more than 500 undergraduate courses that focus on or incorporate sustainability and nearly 300 graduate courses that focus on or include sustainability content. All 59 of CSU's academic departments offer at least one course that is inclusive of sustainability and 64% of CSU students graduate from a sustainability-focused academic program and/or complete at least one course that is focused on sustainability. Each of Colorado State University's eight colleges offers at least one sustainability-related major or minor, along with multiple concentration and certificate options. The School of Global Environmental Sustainability offers several multidisciplinary minors open to any student at the university, including Global Environmental Sustainability, International Development, Sustainable Energy, Sustainable Peace and Reconciliation, and Sustainable Water.



To empower faculty members to develop new sustainability courses and integrate sustainability into existing courses, the School of Global Environmental Sustainability and the President's Sustainability Commission partner to sponsor Sustainability Curriculum Innovation Grants, which are open to all instructors each fall and provide funding as well as coaching and resources. Proposals that integrate environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability as well as interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged. Instructors can submit proposals individually or as part of a team. In 2021, seven proposals were funded.

Local and Global Food Security Services, Research, and Engagement

Colorado State's integrated approach to addressing food security spans on-campus resources for students and employees, regional outreach across Colorado, and global research and engagement efforts.

On campus, the Rams Against Hunger program provides a menu of services that support students, employees, and community members experiencing food insecurity including an on-campus food pantry, a meal-swipe program in the dining centers, pocket pantries across campus, a food recovery program after catered events, and in-person assistance with navigating federal aid. The University's Agricultural Research, Development, and Education Center (ARDEC) hosts a student-run farm that started in 2020 and produces thousands of pounds of fresh produce for the CSU food pantry and local food bank. In 2021, students grew 6,200 pounds of produce to support food security efforts on campus and in the local community. The goal for 2022 is 10,000 pounds!

CSU Extension offices across Colorado sponsor the Grow & Give program that taps into the Colorado Master Gardener Program and volunteers across the state to raise and donate fresh fruits and vegetables for statewide distribution to community members experiencing food insecurity. The Grow & Give project launched in 2020 in response to skyrocketing food needs as unemployment and pandemic hardships impacted many communities. In 2021, 704 volunteer gardeners grew and donated more than 55,000 pounds of produce in 32 Colorado counties. The produce went to food banks, pantries, homeless shelters, and senior centers.

CSU's new SPUR Campus in Denver features the Terra building, which provides a no-cost opportunity for K-12 students and community members to engage with agricultural researchers testing temperature, humidity, and carbon dioxide variables to maximize crop yields in growth chambers, take a community cooking class in the teaching and culinary kitchen, tour the green roof and greenhouses, and observe scientists assessing meat, dairy, fruit, and vegetable products in food labs. Middle school and high school students can enroll in CAM's Ag Academy to explore complex problems and potential solutions around food security and agriculture.

On a global scale, scientists in CSU's Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory conduct studies evaluating long-term impacts of agronomic practices on crop yields and livestock forage, agro-ecological constraints to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and unique land and water management approaches in dynamic, global agricultural systems. Sustainable solutions for local and global food challenges depend upon practical synthesis of this research and engagement with agricultural communities and farmers large and small. The outcome of this work enables farmlands, rangelands, and other food production systems to thrive in a changing world, along with the people who depend on them for food, fiber, and livelihoods.



Geoexchange System at Moby Complex

In 2020, Colorado State University installed one of the largest geoexchange systems west of the Mississippi. This GeoX system puts the Moby Complex, a 375,000 square foot multi-purpose athletic facility that includes Moby Arena where the CSU basketball and volleyball teams compete, in alignment with the University goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040. The Moby Complex previously relied on heating from the steam system supplied by natural gas boilers. The building's cooling came from old chillers. These outdated systems were carbon-intensive, aging past their useful working life, and inefficient. This project replaced the steam and cooling lines throughout Moby with a new, six-pipe, geoexchange system.

The GeoX system uses 342 wells, 550 feet deep, with more than 70 miles of piping under the intramural fields, where the Student Recreation Center hosts Sports Clubs, Intramural Clubs, and multiple student activities on a daily basis. The GeoX system is a closed-loop underground system that now provides the energy from the ground to heat and cool the building. Since the GeoX system was installed and the building HVAC systems were updated, total energy use for Moby has been reduced by more than 50%. Also, natural gas is no longer used to heat the building. Colorado State University and the local utility are committed to 100% renewable electricity by 2030, putting this facility on a path to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. In 2021, CSU's GeoX system was recognized by ENR (Engineering News Record) Mountain States as Project of the Year.

These are highlights, but only a small part of the work done at our University every day to become more sustainable, to promote sustainability education, and to advance the science of sustainability. Like other STARS-reporting institutions, we are passionately committed to addressing these issues, developing solutions, and generating new ideas that will offer all of us hope moving forward.

I am confident the score contained within this report – compiled and vetted by a cross-campus team and reviewed by a third party – accurately represents the sustainability efforts and values of Colorado State University. We believe it is a fair and comprehensive assessment of our progress.

Finally, on behalf of Colorado State University, I offer my appreciation and thanks to AASHE for its leadership in assessing the sustainability performance of our institutions of higher education.

Sincerely,

Rick Miranda
Interim President