

January 7, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of University at Albany's Department of Residential Life, I am pleased to offer my support for the AASHE STARS innovation credit for our campus's work on integrating sustainability into the Department of Residential Life's institutional practices. As the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, I've been excited to witness the positive and continuous impact the program has made in the lives of our students and staff.

The University at Albany has created a model for how sustainability can enhance Residential Life objectives. Todd Jones, the Assistant Director of Facilities for Residential Life, and Karla Jamie-Benitez, the Assistant Director for Programming and Staff Development, began working with the Office of Environmental Sustainability in fall 2012. Within a few months, the program constructed the foundation for making sustainability a key component of the Residential Life framework, an undertaking that goes far beyond many existing EcoRep and peer-to-peer education programs on other campuses. The central features of this work include: a Residential Life Professional Staff Committee for Sustainability, Residential Life student representatives on the Student Sustainability Council, and a sustainability programming requirement for all Resident Assistants (RAs). The three were created with the intention that they would strengthen and support one another, thereby ensuring the overall success of the program.

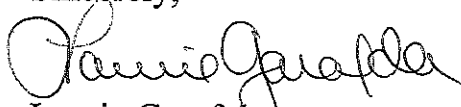
The outcomes of the program are prolific. From the work of the Professional Staff Committee, the University at Albany has instituted:

- an annual formal sustainability training for all Residential Life student staff
- a variety of annual events that have a strong Residential Life component, including the Trashion Fashion Show, Green Your Space, the Harvest Fest, the Food and Arts Festival
- the co-sponsored Bike Share Program, which is overseen by the Office of Environmental Sustainability, though run out of the Residential Life facilities and staffed by Residential Life Wellness Assistants
- an expanded move-out waste diversion program
- a vehicle for a portion of the financial savings from a the Energy Campaign to be utilized and enjoyed by the student residents

In addition to the outputs of the Professional Staff Committee, the contributions of the Residential Life student representatives have been invaluable to expanding the work of the Office of Environmental Sustainability into the residence hall and campus apartments. These selected students have served as liaisons between the office and their living areas by regularly reporting at all-staff meetings, posting bulletin boards related to sustainability, and reporting the sustainability news to their superiors. Furthermore, the sustainability program has given each RA hands-on experience with the foundational concepts of the field of sustainability. This comprehensive model was presented at the 2014 AASHE Conference in Portland, Oregon.

I strongly support this program, and I trust that the creativity and dedication merits recognition through the AASHE STARS innovation point credit system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laurie Garafola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laurie" being more prominent and larger than the last name "Garafola".

Laurie Garafola

Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
University at Albany