



**November 6, 2015**

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of American Farmland Trust and Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS), I am delighted to offer my strong support for University at Albany's application for an AASHE STARS innovation credit for the campus team's work on Farm to SUNY. University at Albany has developed a model Farm to College program on campus and played a leadership role in the Farm to SUNY initiative.

Farm to SUNY launched as a demonstration farm to college pilot at four State University of New York campuses – University at Albany, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Oneonta, and SUNY Oswego. Managed by American Farmland Trust's Farm to Institution NYS (FINYS) program, the project was designed to address barriers to increasing sales of New York State-grown fruits and vegetables to SUNY and other college and university campuses across the state. The goal of the project continues to be to scale within the SUNY system and other colleges and universities.

The two pronged project focused on local procurement progress in the Dining Halls and student engagement through Sustainability team and student-led coordinated marketing initiatives. University at Albany's Sustainability team took the lead in managing coordinated marketing initiatives across the four campuses including:

- Coordinating monthly Marketing Team Calls
- Creating shared resources including the Farm to SUNY Google Drive and group listserv
- Designing the Farm to SUNY logo
- Coordinating the Campus Crunch which went beyond the pilot to include 17 NY colleges. The Campus Crunch took place on National Food Day. During the crunch students and faculty members simultaneously took bites out of New York-grown apples.
- Keeping the four campus Sustainability teams on track with initiatives such as National Kale Day events, Day of the Mushroom and general Harvest of the Month promotional activities.

As part of the pilot, the Sustainability team coordinated a host of student activities including tabling, sharing info. via social media, securing speakers for events, showing documentaries, and developing marketing materials in partnership with Sodexo's marketing team. The team also worked with the campus Farm to SUNY interns to administer a before and after student survey. The purpose of the surveys was to measure student "local food literacy" or awareness and perceptions of local food efforts on campus and local food in general.

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Finally, the University at Albany collaborated with peers from the sister pilot schools to educate other sustainability and university professionals about the project and share project results at various stages of progress. Events included:

- Hudson Valley Farm to Institution Summit, October 16, 2014
- Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference (NESAWG), November 11, 2014
- Farm to Institution Northeast Summit, April 7-9, 2015
- Northeast Campus Sustainability Conference, April 9-10, 2015
- Annual Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Annual Conference, 2014 and 2015.

Mary Ellen Mallia's and Mary Alexis Leciejewski's leadership helped create a cohesive team across the four campuses that led to successful collaborations. American Farmland Trust/FINYS strongly supports University at Albany's submission for a STARS innovation credit for the university's major contributions to the Farm to SUNY project which not only led to tangible results on campus, but a model for sustaining the Farm to SUNY Marketing initiatives over time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Grace', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Christina Grace  
Co-coordinator, Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS)  
American Farmland Trust