

Boston University Sustainability

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STARS Program

AASHE

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RE: IN-2 Sustainability Ambassadors

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to submit this letter of affirmation that the information presented for credit IN-2 is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. The *sustainability@BU* app is a new, high-impact social network for the Boston University community that allows users to engage in sharing with peers their environmentally-conscious actions and achievements on a regular basis through multimedia.

Launched in August 2016, this app is the first mobile platform available to the BU community that is dedicated entirely to fostering a virtual space for the sharing of tips, habits, and accomplishments regarding sustainable lifestyles. Users of the application can "buzz" or share photos and short captions that reflect how they incorporate environmental & social consciousness into their day-to-day life. The interface engages users further with a newsfeed of their shared activities similar to Instagram, and participants are encouraged to buzz with the consistency of Twitter. Users can even engage their social media friends by co-posting to Facebook and Twitter directly from the *sustainability@BU* app.

With each buzz, participants receive points. Such allows them to climb the leader boards as they compete against friends, colleagues, and other members in either local or national challenges. In-app challenges target sustainability issue areas including water usage, waste, energy, and transportation, among others and BU-specific challenges range from an Earth Week Challenge to a Dorm Energy Challenge. As individuals log more actions, their personal dashboard changes to highlight and quantify how much their decisions impact reductions in CO₂ emissions, water consumption, and waste diversion. They also gain easy access to tips, videos, yearly impact projections, and/or links to outside resources on sustainability with every buzz. This initiative stimulates participants with a social media-style platform to discover how they can participate in a larger sustainability community and use resources without using them up.

The *sustainability@BU* mobile application is not only a tool for the BU community, but also a key component to how *sustainability@BU*, Boston University's sustainability office tracks engagement in campus and personal sustainability initiatives. It has replaced the previous *Join the Challenge* campaign, which asked BU community members to make an online pledge in exchange for a reusable water bottle or LED light bulb.

Now, community members are asked to download the app and buzz to receive either of the items at community-wide events, such as the Sustainability Festival. Once users have the app, they can challenge themselves with over 120 distinct actions or view their friends' posts for inspiration. Since its inception, usership of the app has grown to over 1,900.

The *sustainability@BU* app takes social media to a whole new level. Through this effort, it has become significantly easier for the BU community to earn and be recognized for their achievements, track progress, and be social.

Sincerely,
Boston University



Lisa Tornatore
Assistant Director, Sustainability