

April 14, 2022

Ms. Meghan Fay Zahniser  
Executive Director  
AASHE  
2401 Walnut Street  
Suite 102  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Ms. Zahniser:

As a premier public research institution, UB is focused on finding solutions to global challenges through research, education and innovation. We are setting and meeting high expectations of efficiency and effectiveness within our campus community. We are collaborating with our broader community to encourage more circular, regenerative and inclusive systems. We are listening to our researchers, who caution us that we must respond to the increasing pace and severity of climate change. Not least of all, we are educating our students to serve the greater good as tomorrow's thought leaders and change makers.

Through our integrated and collaborative resource planning strategy, UB is [recognized nationwide](#) as a model of higher education leadership in sustainability. Our commitment spans more than five decades—from the origins of the environmental movement at Love Canal to today's operational measures, which save the university millions of dollars every year while dramatically reducing our environmental footprint. Our successful approach to sustainability entails stewarding our natural resources; empowering our students, faculty, staff and community by advancing [diversity and inclusion](#); and creating smart, long-term, financially efficient strategies.

Simply put, sustainability at UB is focused on building a better world for future generations. We are committed to creating meaningful change through our teaching, research and engagement mission. Our efforts are exemplified by student-focused initiatives including [Education and Leadership Fellows in Sustainability](#), our entrepreneurial projects [Erie Hack](#) and [World Challenge](#) and innovative pedagogical tools such as our new [GRoW Clean Energy Center](#). All of our work—in classrooms, labs, in the field and beyond—is anchored in teaching and research that aligns with the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), 17 global commitments aimed at, among other things, ending all forms of poverty, fighting inequalities and hunger, and tackling climate change. With hundreds of sustainability courses offered, UB has more than 200 faculty researchers addressing the SDGs, and half of our academic departments are working to integrate these goals into the curriculum.

Because we appreciate the importance of supporting a strong and resilient Buffalo-Niagara region, our work doesn't stop at our campus borders. UB partners with sustainability-centered community organizations to help drive and advance conversations about sustainability throughout Western New York. Central to our engagement with the community is playing a key leadership role in establishing the [Western New York Sustainable Business Roundtable](#) (the region's green business group), the [Western New York Environmental Alliance](#) (an umbrella group that strengthens the work of our region's environmental community) and our regional sustainable development plan, known as [One Region Forward](#).

Recognizing the existential threat that climate change poses to our planet, UB has redoubled our commitment to become climate neutral within the next decade. To that end, we have taken a holistic approach to our climate action work with [UB's 10 in 10](#)—a roadmap of 10 innovative steps we are taking to increase climate action throughout the university and put us on a path to net-zero emissions by 2030. This strategy engages our broader community while leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals.

These 10 initiatives represent a synthesis of ideas expressed by a diverse array of stakeholders through a robust campus engagement process. They also form a framework for our implementation efforts, as each of the 10 categories corresponds to a working group that is advancing action within its respective area. While we have much work in front of us, we have achieved great success: Indeed, over the past three years, the University at Buffalo has reduced its carbon footprint by 33%. We have accomplished this milestone mainly by focusing on the university's electricity source and transitioning 100% to clean and renewable sources. This includes roughly 12,000,000 kWh of [new solar energy being produced on our campus](#), making us one of the largest universities producing clean energy onsite. Our work has been recognized by the Times Higher Education Impact Assessment, which ranked [UB #1 in the world](#) for taking climate action.

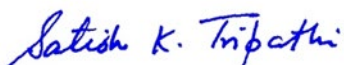
At UB, we have reaffirmed our commitment to address social justice through the [President's Advisory Council on Race](#). In June of 2020, I convened this university-wide council to guide UB's collective conversations and actions regarding racism and systemic inequality to ensure that we are equitable in our policies, programs, activities and traditions. In March of 2021, the council presented its [university-wide assessment and recommendations](#) in four key focus areas: Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Hiring and Retention; Student Recruitment and Retention; Curriculum and Teaching; and Community. The implementation committee has formed seven committees, whose members are working diligently to integrate this work across the university.

On behalf of the university community, I am honored to endorse and submit UB's fourth STARS report. As you will see, this report demonstrates the solid and sustained progress UB has made over the past three years in areas I touched upon in this letter. Here at UB, our STARS designation is a source of immense pride for all of us. Moreover, it serves to motivate and inspire our campus community as we continue to both fulfill our commitment to climate neutrality by 2030 and to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

We appreciate the work done by AASHE, and by our colleagues throughout higher education who share our commitment to creating the change our world demands. STARS is an invaluable tool for assessing the current state of UB's sustainability. More importantly, it helps guide us in identifying our next steps and goals for the future as we continue to build on our strengths.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Sincerely,



Satish K. Tripathi  
President