



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Office of the President

September 16, 2015

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

Dear Ms. Zahniser:

As a leading public research institution, the University at Buffalo's model of sustainability focuses on finding solutions to global challenges through research, educating individuals about these challenges, setting the bar high for sustainability in our own operations, and partnering with the broader communities we serve. Through an integrated and collaborative approach, UB has become a leader in sustainability in higher education. Our commitment spans over 35 years—from the origins of the environmental movement at Love Canal to the innovative operational measures we take that continue to save the university millions of dollars a year. We strive to evolve, build resilience and minimize our environmental footprint, as most potently illustrated by our aggressive commitment to become climate neutral by 2030.

Groundbreaking, impactful research and transformative education are at the heart of what we do. With more than 275 sustainability courses embedded in over half our academic degree programs, infusing sustainability across our curriculum has become integral to fostering the next generation of leaders who are equipped to address global challenges. Building on a long history of environmental research, UB recently launched RENEW (Research and Education in eNergy, Environment and Water)—an ambitious, university-wide, interdisciplinary research institute that focuses on the most difficult and complex environmental issues, as well as the social and economic issues with which they are intertwined. One of the most expansive initiatives launched in recent years by the university, RENEW will harness the expertise of more than 100 faculty across the university, with the goal of hiring 20 more outstanding faculty. To further leverage the universities interdisciplinary strengths, three additional Communities of Excellence have been established: Global Health Equity, Sustainable Manufacturing and Advanced Robotic Technologies (SMART) and The Genome, the Environment, and the Microbiome (GEM).

We strongly believe our work doesn't stop at our campus borders. The university works in partnership with sustainability-centered community organizations to help drive and advance the sustainability conversation in Western New York, and we appreciate the importance of supporting a strong and resilient Buffalo-Niagara. UB has provided key community leadership (recently earning the 2014 Best Collaboration Award by USGBC) to create, implement, and provide ongoing strong leadership and collaboration to the Western New York Environmental Alliance (an umbrella group that strengthens the work of our region's environmental community) and the Sustainable Business Roundtable (the region's green business group).

In 2007, UB was one of the first 100 institutions of higher education to sign the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. A subsequent Climate Action Plan, created under the direction of UB's Environmental Stewardship Committee, provides a roadmap for identifying and implementing opportunities to reduce our environmental impact while continuing to

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grow. Over the first few years of implementation, the university has witnessed a 9.4% reduction in its energy use index (as measured by the New York Power Authority) and is moving forward with a host of carbon reduction strategies.

While we are proud of this record of leadership, we are committed to building on our history of environmental stewardship, recognizing that sustainability is not a goal to be achieved but rather a strategy for creating a better future. As we evolve our model of sustainability, we're focused on embedding a culture of sustainable thinking and practice deep into all aspects of day-to-day activities and long-term plans for our university.

Building on the success of the Environmental Stewardship Committee, the university has created a Stewardship Council focused on creating an integrated and innovative sustainability strategy and plan that incorporates best practice from our national peers. As part of these efforts, we were pleased to take part in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)'s Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) report, which has served as a valuable resource in helping us gauge our current efforts, plan for continued improvements and future priorities, and guide our evolving sustainability strategy.

On behalf of the university community, I am pleased to endorse and submit UB's second STARS report. This report demonstrates that UB has made great progress in the past three years moving from a STARS Silver rating in November 2012 to a STARS Gold rating with the submission of this report. While taking pride in the achievement this designation represents, it also serves to motivate and inspire our campus community as we continue to work toward fulfilling our commitment to become climate neutral by 2030.

As the University at Buffalo advances our commitment to sustainability as a vital element of our campus culture, we appreciate the work done by AASHE and by the hundreds of other colleagues in higher education who share our commitment to creating a better future through sustainability. STARS has been a valuable tool for assessing the current state of UB's sustainability and identifying our next steps and goals for the future as we continue to build even further on these strengths.

Sincerely,


Satish K. Tripathi
President