



April 29, 2021

Ms. Meghan Fay Zahniser
Executive Director
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Ms. Zahniser,

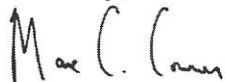
I am very pleased to write you in my first year as the eighth president of Skidmore College, on the occasion of introducing our STARS report. Skidmore's history of commitment to sustainability was a key factor in my desire to assume the leadership of the college. Preparing our students to emerge as future leaders in the crucial work of analyzing and developing reasonable solutions to sustainability-related issues is a key element in Skidmore's educational mission. As articulated in both our *Campus Sustainability Plan* and our institutional strategic plan, *Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore, 2015-2025*, Skidmore endeavors to enact environmentally responsible practices, grounded in economic and social equity, and through our actions to have a preserving and regenerating impact on our community and planet. Consequently, we include sustainability in all of our institutional decision making, and, in order to advance this effort, I am pleased to endorse our new submission to the AASHE Sustainability Tracking Assessment Rating System (STARS).

We have made significant, tangible strides in advancing sustainability through the collective work of our campus community. For example, through innovative renewable energy and energy efficiency projects we now get 43% of our electricity from renewable sources, use geothermal energy to heat and cool 37% of our campus, and have reduced our energy use for heating and cooling per student and per square foot by 42% and 52%, respectively, from our 2000 levels. These efforts have also resulted in a 52% reduction in our scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions from our normalized 2000 baseline. We have made significant improvements in our waste streams, too. We currently divert 41% of our waste from routine operations and have reached a 51% diversion rate on special projects. And we continue to engage in efforts around access, diversity, and wellness that have helped us create a more inclusive and healthy campus environment. Additionally, creative curricular and co-curricular initiatives are helping us build a living and learning environment that immerses our community members in sustainability issues and a suite of possible solutions.

We are rightly proud of all we have accomplished. But sustainability work, like diversity and inclusivity work, is never-ending and requires constant vigilance and rededication. Indeed, the earth in 2021 may well cry out like Blake's in "Earth's Answer," "Break this heavy chain, / That does freeze my bones around." In preparing our STARS submission, we continue to learn more

about how Skidmore can further the cause of sustainability, and our shared conversations throughout the STARS effort and the STARS framework itself continue to help us establish the priorities that will guide our sustainability-related work in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc C. Conner". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Marc C. Conner

President, Skidmore College