



September 27, 2012

AASHE STARS program
Letter of Verification

To Whom It May Concern:

I am cofounder and director of Dominican University of California's Venture Greenhouse, an innovative business accelerator for environmental and social entrepreneurs. It is rare for a small, non-technical college or university to have a business incubator of any type. Ours is specifically oriented toward launching innovative businesses that address environmental and social issues. One of our initiatives is the Venture Greenhouse Learning Lab, which matches projects from various Dominican classes with Venture Greenhouse clients. We fulfill the following "Innovations" credit criteria:

Innovation credits are reserved for new, extraordinary, unique, ground-breaking, or uncommon outcomes, policies, and practices that greatly exceed the highest criterion of an existing STARS credit or are not covered by an existing STARS credit.

The Venture Greenhouse, launched in February 2011, has already assisted in the launch and/or growth of about 25 "green" companies. About 25% of the companies were launched by Dominican students or graduates, and most of the companies have benefitted from student involvement in Venture Greenhouse Learning Lab projects (e.g. in spring 2012, 50 students from 8 courses were involved in projects with Venture Greenhouse clients).

Outcomes, policies, and practices that are innovative for the institution's region or school type are eligible for innovation credits.

As mentioned, it is rare for institutions of our size (2400 students) and focus (liberal arts with small professional programs) to have any type of business incubator. To my knowledge, there are only a few small non-technical university business incubators in the country that have a focus on environmental or social entrepreneurship.

Please visit our website at venturegreenhouse.org for more information about our program.

All the best,

John Stayton
Director, Venture Greenhouse



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