



**Environmental Studies Program  
Department of Biological Sciences**

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Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, & Rating System Steering Committee  
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education  
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 100  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear STARS Steering Committee:

It is my pleasure to confirm that the University of Cincinnati's Environmental Literacy Certificate of Achievement (ELCA) program for staff members meets the AASHE STARS criteria for Innovation credits.

I participated in the ELCA as a guest presenter for the topic of hazardous chemicals, particularly those that pose a daily chemical exposure risk. As the Director of the Environmental Studies program at the University of Cincinnati, I can attest that the ELCA program is a unique and new approach to staff training and environmental education. I am particularly impressed with the level of attention paid to the specific needs of these adult learners. Sessions, for example, are held at a time and location designed to accommodate the work schedules of the target audience. This consideration signals respect and was likely a factor in the positive engagement I had with the class. For busy adults, offering a convenient and comfortable small group setting is undoubtedly critical to program success.

A strong component of ELCA is that the goal is not to simply train staff members on the university's sustainability projects, but rather to raise awareness using relevant, applicable, environmental information and topics. Instructors focus on the everyday decisions participants make in their lives, with the goal of increasing sustainable actions both at home and at work. According to survey data collected at the final session for the first class, 84% of participants reported changing their behavior in at least one way as a result of the ELCA sessions. Nearly two thirds of the participants said they spoke to at least one other person about what they learned in the sessions. By engaging with staff members in a meaningful way, rather than provide yet another simplistic training module, I believe the ELCA is an innovative and effective approach to increasing environmental literacy and fostering sustainable behavior change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Jodi Shann'.

Jodi Shann, PhD  
Director, Environmental Studies Program  
Professor of Biological Sciences