

February 13, 2015

To the AASHE STARS board,

As an associate professor of Economics at Ohio University, I would like to verify that the Sustainable Investing Advisory Committee (SIAC) at Ohio University is a new and innovative program. I am independent of SIAC, which is a student committee advised by the Ohio University College of Business and the Office of Sustainability. I have relevant financial experience through my work with the World Bank and microenterprises throughout the developing world. In addition, I serve on the advisory board of the Center for Campus and Community Engagement where I head the committee for Service Learning. I am involved with training Ohio University faculty to intentionally integrate public and community service into their coursework. I teach a course called the Economics of Altruism in which students give away \$10,000 to a local non-profit organization based on criteria related to effective philanthropy.

SIAC is a student team at Ohio University dedicated to providing guidance for management of a \$4 million portfolio according to environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices. SIAC was founded in the spring of 2014. The current SIAC initiative is believed to guide the largest student-managed ESG portfolio on a college campus in the United States. As stewards of The Ohio University Foundation Endowment funds, SIAC students represent their initiative at professional and academic conferences as well as in student and other media outlets.

SIAC is an exciting and unusual opportunity for Ohio University students. While there are other student investing groups and other sustainability-focused investing groups throughout the country, it is rare to find a student-led, sustainability-focused, group that has been entrusted with large sums of money from an endowment. The students in this group are not only enriched by their exposure to financial, sustainability and communications concepts while creating investment guidelines, but they are expected to exercise fiduciary responsibility over the funds and to create positive returns on their investments, as would actual investment professionals.

Currently, over \$1 million of the \$4 million pledged by The Ohio University Foundation has been invested in vehicles chosen for their ESG profiles. An additional \$3 million will be invested in the coming year. More information about SIAC can be found on their website at www.ousiac.com.

Other STARS credits address sustainable investments by the university, or sustainable extracurricular activities for students, but this is a very specific and exceptional opportunity for

students to learn about sustainable investing in a real-world context. It is deserving of an innovation credit apart from the other STARS credits.

Not only is this program a unique stand-alone opportunity for students, it fits squarely into Ohio University's institutional mission of transformational learning. Its innovative nature, outstanding leadership team, and adherence to university objectives ensure widespread and long-lasting institutional support. Thank you for your consideration of the SIAC student group for an innovation credit in STARS.

Sincerely,

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