



January 2, 2020

STARS Steering Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to submit this letter of affirmation that the information presented for Lehigh University's STARS Innovation Credit is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. This letter affirms that in the summer of 2019, the Lehigh Office of Sustainability held their first Sustainability Leadership and Innovation Institute for high school students.

The Sustainability Leadership & Innovation Institute enables current high school students to develop their skills as the environmental leaders of tomorrow during this week long program hosted by Lehigh's Office of Sustainability. Students have the opportunity for place-based experiences focused on sustainability, creative inquiry and environmental innovation. Using an entrepreneurial mindset and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals framework, students create solutions to local sustainability challenges within a global context. Interwoven with off-campus trips, discussions with Lehigh students and professors, and a self-designed capstone project, students gain valuable academic and leadership skills through practical application.

This program focuses on topics such as food systems, environmental policy, environmental justice, community engagement, sustainable infrastructure and renewable energy, and circular economies and zero waste. Students engaged in activities like biking and canoeing in the Lehigh Valley, attending local events like the Bethlehem Farmers' Market, touring the United Nations, and developing a project that cements the participants' understanding of sustainability using design thinking with support from Lehigh students, faculty and staff mentors.

Implementing this program emphasizes Lehigh's commitment to engage students in sustainable principles that go above and beyond the campus community. This program introduces high school students to sustainability, the Lehigh Valley community, the natural environment, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals framework.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katharine Targett Gross".

Katharine Targett Gross
Sustainability Officer

