

August 10, 2018

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 the Lehigh University's STARS Innovation Credit is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. This letter affirms that in 2016 Lehigh University has begun a tree inventory on its main Asa Packer campus, and much of the eastern portion of the main campus is now complete. The purpose of this tree inventory was to identify significant trees of Lehigh and campus efforts to manage and develop these irreplaceable natural resources. A tree interest group composed of 27 faculty, staff, and students meets a few times a year and hosts an active online group discussion list. Lehigh also recently transitioned its part-time arborist/consultant to a full-time position, which was partly due to one of the goals in [Lehigh's Path to Prominence](https://www1.lehigh.edu/path-prominence) (<https://www1.lehigh.edu/path-prominence>). The goal is for the arborist to help preserve trees during all the new capital project construction activity and plan for future plantings to offset any lost trees.

In addition to the tree inventory itself, an exhibit known as "Trees of Lehigh: A Living Legacy" was created at E.W. Fairchild-Martindale Library to educate Lehigh faculty, staff, students, and local community members about the trees on campus. There is now an expanded [online exhibit](http://go.lehigh.edu/lutrees) at [go.lehigh.edu/lutrees](http://go.lehigh.edu/lutrees) which includes new topics, links to local and regional historical documents and photos, a slideshow of unique tree species on campus, an online resource list, and more. This is the second most popular exhibit in the Lehigh Digital Library collections.

Among the thousands of trees across Lehigh's three campuses are trees notable for their beauty, age, uniqueness, and historical significance. Every species native to Pennsylvania and diverse species from other regions of the U.S. and the world are found here -- well over 100 species. The abundance and variety of trees exceed the criteria required to be a certified arboretum.

Trees are an integral part of the Lehigh experience, and throughout history, Lehigh's leadership has developed and preserved the trees and green spaces on campus and the surrounding forests. The natural beauty of Lehigh's mountainside campus and its wildlife are irreplaceable assets to the community, to be enjoyed and celebrated. The historic trees also play an important role in the wider ecosystem. They are large carbon sinks and they store rainwater and release it gradually over time, which helps to address stormwater runoff challenges on a mountainside campus like Lehigh. In addition, the historic trees also benefit indigenous biodiversity by providing food and shelter for different types of animals. This enriches the fauna of the surrounding environment.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Stacey Kimmel-Smith  
Library & Technology Services  
Lehigh University