



WPI

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Interdisciplinary and Global Studies

February 24, 2016

Association for the Advancement of
Sustainability in Higher Education
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 100
Denver, CO 80202

Subject: Letter of Affirmation – WPI STARS Innovation Credit

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves to demonstrate that the Energy Sustainability Project Center at WPI meets the requirements of the Innovation Credit for the STARS Survey. As Associate Dean of the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division, I am in a position to evaluate the significance of each aspect of our undergraduate educational program. This response is organized by the criteria for this credit.

This innovation credit describes a new, extraordinary, unique, ground-breaking, or uncommon outcome, policies or practice. WPI's Projects program, including both the "Major Qualifying Project" (MQP) in the fourth year and the "Interactive Qualifying Project" (IQP) in the third year is truly unique in higher education. The IQP is a major (3 course equivalents) part of students' programs that challenges all students to address problems that lie at the intersection of science and technology with society. The MQP carries equivalent academic credit and represents entry-level professional practice in the student's major area of study. The Energy Sustainability Project Center provides support for students undertaking both types of projects in the broad area of sustainable energy. Specific topics range from development of a program to help low income families weatherize their homes (an IQP) to research into the production of hydrogen using solar power (an MQP). Specific assistance provided by the Center includes: development of project topics, matching of topics with faculty advisors and students, financial support, and provision of periodic forums where the project groups present their work and interact. The Center also organizes a seminar series for the entire campus, bringing a wide range of speakers in the sustainable energy area.

The innovation credit is not already covered by an existing STARS credit. This program has never been included in any other STARS credit.

The innovative practice, program, or outcome has occurred within the past three years. The Energy Sustainability Project Center is currently in its third year of operation.

The institution has not previously received a STARS innovation credit for this specific practice, policy, program, or outcome. This program has not been previously reported for an Innovation credit, or any other STARS credit.

Sincerely yours,

Kent Rissmiller
Associate Dean, Interdisciplinary and Global Studies