



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH  
COLLEGES

Office of the President

March 1, 2020

Dear Members of the STARS Steering Committee,

Hobart and William Smith Colleges have long been committed to the conservation of natural resources, advancement of sustainable practices and environmental leadership. This year, our community celebrates “Year of Water” in recognition of the Finger Lakes Institute’s 15<sup>th</sup> year on campus. A significant series of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary events highlight one of HWS’ assets – the lake and the watershed, and all the academic work that is built on and contributes to the survival of those assets. The program emphasizes engagement with the broader community in the region to discuss the value of and threats to the watershed and develop partnerships to address them. Year of Water is just one of many examples of how our community actively engages with issues in the environmental arena both on a local and global scale.

Our report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) reflects the progress of our ongoing efforts, and affirms our confidence in the accuracy of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) submission. As a member of AASHE, the Colleges are dedicated to upholding and advancing our collective work around sustainability and planning across campus, ranging from co-curricular experiences and student life to operations and outreach. In 2007, with assistance from a student-led effort, HWS became a charter member and signatory of the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, pledging to achieve climate neutrality (net zero emissions) by 2025. Since then, the Colleges formed a Climate Task Force, conducted several comprehensive greenhouse gas inventories, cut energy consumption and created robust recycling and composting programs. Other points of distinction have included:

- Developing a state-of-the-art water analytical facility, which will make HWS home to one of only four labs in the region to meet New York State certification standards;
- Ranking among the nation’s leading colleges and universities in sustainability and environmental stewardship in *The Princeton Review*’s 2020 list of “25 Best Schools for Making an Impact” and the 2019 edition of “Guide to Green Colleges;”
- Earning LEED Gold for the Gearan Center for the Performing Arts, 65,000-square-foot building at the center of campus;
- Establishing two local solar farms, which are delivering up to 50% of the Colleges’ electricity. One of the largest solar installations at any institution of higher education in New York State, the combined arrays can provide up to five megawatts of electricity;

- Becoming the first small liberal arts institution in New York to be powered solely by wind;
- Integrating sustainability outreach and education into Orientation, with EcoReps taking a significant role of sharing information about sustainable practices and programs;
- Launching the Sustainable Living and Learning Community program, a First-Year Seminar focused on sustainability education and community building;
- Welcoming the Office of Diversity and Inclusion which fosters dignity and respect for all members of the community and across a range of areas including education, advocacy and policy;
- Remaining dedicated to service and civic engagement, a cornerstone of distinction at HWS, with students volunteering more than 80,000 hours annually, including efforts connected to sustainability.

The Colleges are a dedicated stakeholder in the health of our local community and region. We recognize our responsibility in achieving long-term sustainability and fostering innovative solutions to environmental challenges. We are proud of our progress, and are eager to continue our partnership with AASHE.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joyce P. Jacobsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joyce P. Jacobsen  
President