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January 20, 2014

Steering Committee
Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System
AASHE
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 100
Denver, CO 80202

Steering Committee Members:

On behalf of the Eastern Mennonite University community, I am pleased to submit our university's first Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Report.

The campus-wide undertaking of accumulating this benchmark data proved cause for reflection and introspection. We were reminded how our efforts toward a more sustainable campus are rooted in our university's mission to serve and lead in a global context. Graduates of EMU are required to participate in cross cultural study, where living and studying in the homes of families in Asia, Africa, and Latin America cultivates a deeper understanding of our inter-connected world.

From these experiences we understand that the effects of climate change will disproportionately impact those who have contributed to it least and who are least-equipped to adapt to the predicted environmental, social, economic, and political changes. And we understand our responsibility to act as an institution; whether it be our new three LEED-Gold certified dormitories; our initiative to collect all the university's recycling by bicycle; our successful implementation of a sustainability emphasis in our core curriculum; our housing of one of the largest solar arrays in Virginia; or our Center for Justice and Peacebuilding training over 2,500 attendees from more than 120 countries in conflict transformation, trauma healing and restorative justice, including 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah Gbowee.

Completing our first AASHE/STARS report is another step as we move forward with new knowledge of our strengths and an understanding of the opportunities we have to find creative solutions to challenges we are just beginning to tackle.

On behalf of our entire community, many thanks to AASHE for their advocacy and support of the urgent issues of climate change and sustainability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Loren".

Loren E. Swartzendruber
President

