



November 13, 2013

Dear members of the AASHE STARS Review Team,

I write to commend the tremendously important, critical involvement of Ithaca College in the development of the Sustainability Center, which opened in downtown Ithaca in May 2013. Ithaca College representation was integral to furthering the development of the Center concept from the outset. Ithaca College has been integrally involved as the Center moved from simply the "bright idea" of a few interested and committed souls to an exciting new component of the vibrant, robust sustainability scene in and around Tompkins County.

An important part of the Center's gallery offerings are displays provided by local institutions, municipalities, businesses and organizations. Ithaca College was the very first entity to provide such a display, and the College's poster about their comprehensive sustainability education efforts has enjoyed "*pride of place*" in the Center's gallery space since we opened. Two Ithaca College School of Communication interns produced a couple of short documentaries, interviewing and capturing on video a number of influential local sustainability activists and thought leaders, which are in active use as media resources in the Sustainability Center. Ithaca College has been generous about providing resource support for the Center as well, allowing us access to its printing services to prepare promotional and display materials, for example, and even helping furnish the Center space with surplus furnishings. Ithaca College faculty are now beginning to think about ways in which they can additionally support the Center's educational efforts by incorporating exhibit design projects into campus coursework.

The idea of the Sustainability Internship component of the Center's programming was in fact first articulated by Ithaca College, as the institution at that time lacked its own in-house service learning placement and support function. Until the Sustainability Center began to offer the internship program, the Sustainability Initiative at Ithaca College had been trying to handle on an *ad hoc* basis such "match-making" efforts between interested IC faculty and students and local organizations and business eager to take advantage of knowledge and skills from the higher education organizations. As an aside, while Cornell's Public Service Center generally handles service-learning support and placements for that university's students, the PSC admitted it did not have the extensive connections and deep reach into the local sustainability community to direct its own students toward sustainability-related internship projects.

In the five semesters that the Sustainability Internship program has been operating, dozens of students from Ithaca College, Cornell and Tompkins Cortland Community College have been placed with local sustainability-minded business and organizations to support their "*sustainable development*" projects and programs. The internship program enhances student learning by giving them tangible, hands-on experience and an opportunity to make a positive difference to their temporary home-town as well as increasing "*town-gown*" relationships among the three higher educational institutions in the areas and the local community.

Again, I attest to the deep support we have enjoyed from Ithaca College since our inception to help the Sustainability Center come into being and develop into the important community sustainability resource it is today. We literally could not have "*done it*" without Ithaca College.

Sincerely,

Jackie Mouillesseaux-Grube, Director