

February 29, 2024

To: Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education and Princeton Review

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Vanderbilt University is honored to participate in the Princeton Review Green Colleges ranking through the AASHE STARS reporting tool.

In 2019, the university set a goal to power its campus entirely through renewable energy and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. In 2021, Vanderbilt University reached carbon neutrality, decades ahead of its initial goal. A collaboration with the nonprofit organization Climate Vault allowed the university to address the full extent of its carbon footprint through offsets for FY19–20 and FY20–21.

In FY21–22, Vanderbilt University continued to offset its carbon footprint by investing in the development of solar energy projects that will expand access to clean energy in the Southeast with Clearloop, a Silicon Ranch company. Vanderbilt's investment with Clearloop initially supports a solar farm in Panola County, Mississippi, in the town of Batesville—a community at the intersection of the Mississippi Delta and the Appalachian foothills. This solar farm will provide access to clean energy to approximately 1,000 Panola County homes.

Vanderbilt also opened its first solar farm through the Green Invest Program, the Vanderbilt I Solar Farm, in April of 2023. The pioneering agreement with the Tennessee Valley Authority and Nashville Electric Service allows Vanderbilt to procure off-site large-scale renewable energy to mitigate the campus' greenhouse gas emissions. The renewable energy generated from the 350-acre solar farm offsets approximately 70 percent of the university's annual indirect greenhouse gas emissions from electricity purchased through Nashville Electric Service, or the equivalent of enough power to help serve more than 6,000 homes for one year.

Beginning in FY22–23, a portfolio approach will enable Vanderbilt to continue its carbon neutrality. Carbon neutrality will be reached with a combination of offsets from Clearloop solar farms and Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) from the Vanderbilt I Solar Farm.

The Green Invest collaboration developed by Vanderbilt serves as a model for other organizations, and Vanderbilt was awarded the 2021 TN Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award for this initiative.

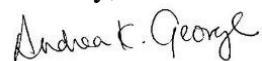
Vanderbilt is also advancing sustainability through the development of on-site clean energy, decreasing the carbon footprint from vehicles, developing more green spaces on campus, reducing consumption and waste generation and sustainable buildings and infrastructure investments.

In addition to efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, Vanderbilt hosted multiple events that focused on student engagement with sustainability. Vanderbilt University served as the host campus for the Clinton Global Initiative University March 3–5, 2023. The gathering was an opportunity for students from around the world to collaborate with influential leaders, experts and innovators on solving humanity’s most pressing challenges including climate change, reproductive rights for girls and women, protecting human rights, health equity, and more. This year, the Wond’ry, Vanderbilt’s Center for Innovation, launched the first ever Commodore Cup, a design thinking challenge that was funded through one of Vanderbilt’s Sesquicentennial Grants, which resulted in teams showcasing their ingenuity with proposed sustainability improvements for Vanderbilt’s campus.

We are excited to provide the attached report highlighting these innovative and impactful efforts improving the sustainability of Vanderbilt and our local region as well as our progress over the years.

Thank you to AASHE for your tireless efforts furthering sustainability and supporting the university community!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea K. George".

Andrea K. George PhD, BCEEM, CHMM, PMP Assistant Vice Chancellor, Environmental Health, Safety, and Sustainability