



July 24, 2017

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street
Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Sustainability Colleagues and AASHE staff:

On behalf of University of Montana students and employees, I am excited to share our 2017 Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) submission. Our sustainability officers collaborated with administrators, faculty, and staff across campus to compile this holistic picture of sustainability efforts at UM. As with our first report in 2014, a team of students performed most of the data collection and stakeholder communication required to complete the assessment. We are proud to have tentatively achieved another Silver rating. While we are proud of our progress to date, this rating motivates us to double down on our efforts to fully embed sustainably into our campus culture!

The last three years have seen a distinct strengthening of our campus commitment to sustainability in operations, culture, and student experience. Our students continue to push for initiatives that move our resource conservation efforts forward while our faculty and staff continue to advocate for sustainability in administration, teaching, research, and planning. Recently, UM adopted a new strategic vision that evolved from a year of comprehensive listening and research. The core principles outlined in this vision evidence our continued commitment to sustainability: respect for people and place, promotion of cross-boundary partnerships, excellence in place-based learning, and an ongoing commitment to diversity. The strategic vision also outlines not only our respect for natural settings, but also our commitment to collaborative partnerships that enact sustainable solutions for social and ecological challenges. Indeed, some of our strongest STARS credits were those that relate to partnerships and collaboration, as you'll see in our submission.

A few specific accomplishments of note:

- This last academic year was the first full year our new all-electric buses were in service. We are the first student-owned and operated university transportation office to put these buses to use.
- We are proud to have adopted our first Parking & Transportation Demand Management Plan this year, a critical step toward proactively managing commuting and campus access in a sustainable way.
- Sustainability research is another strong area for UM. Top researchers in climate science, behavior change, wildlife biology, and ecology continue to build the strong academic reputation of UM.

Office of the President

- Our Farm-to-College and Dining Sustainability programs continue to thrive. Our first campus garden has been so productive and well-received that UM Dining established a second campus garden this past spring. We continue to produce quality food on-site for our students and our catering department while providing educational opportunities for all campus constituents.
- UM has been at the helm of the Sustainability Partnership of the Northern Rockies for three years now, and continues to grow this regional collaborative. Co-led with Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, the network meets annually to offer support and resources to members.

Thank you for developing and sharing the STARS tool. We are grateful to be a member institution of AASHE, a STARS reporting institution, and a part of the international web of colleges and universities that prioritize sustainability. Thank you for your vision and leadership!

Sincerely,



Sheila M. Stearns
President
University of Montana

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