



January 13, 2023

Meghan Fay Zahniser
Executive Director
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Ms. Fay Zahniser,

It is with great pleasure that East Carolina University (ECU) presents its third STARS report. I am proud to report that ECU has maintained its previous STARS rating of Silver, which also accomplishes a unit objective laid out in the *ECU Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Capture Your Horizon*. Participating in STARS has also led to ECU being included in the Princeton Review's Guide to Green Schools and their Guide to the Best Colleges for the fourth year in a row.

The University's Mission is *to be a national model for student success, public service and regional transformation* and we accomplish our mission through education, research, creative activities, and service while being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. These commitments are integrated throughout our first ECU Sustainability Plan, which was put together by our University Sustainability Manager and many students, faculty, staff, and community members over the course of a year and adopted by our Chancellor and his Executive Council in October 2018. Through the planning process, a powerful vision of ECU anchoring the region emerged: *"to provide leadership in fostering a culture of sustainability at ECU and demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of a very diverse people and environment in eastern North Carolina."* It is this vision for sustainability and the ECU strategic plan commitments that you will see reflected in the programs and practices described in our STARS report.

We are proud to have made significant progress in each credit category except for Engagement, but that was primarily due to the impacts of COVID-19 and not having the full complement of students, staff, or faculty on campus for nearly 18 months. However, ECU did much better on Academics credits such as sustainability courses, learning outcomes, and research. In addition, ECU improved our scores on most Operations credits and submitted our first comprehensive inventory of Food and Beverage Purchasing. Regarding the Planning and Administration credits, we are very proud to have

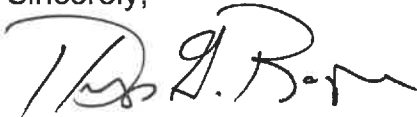
received additional points for our work to improve Diversity and Affordability as well as Wellbeing over the past three years.

The past three years have been a very difficult time for the entire world, especially higher education. The pandemic reached our shores here in America shortly after our last STARS submission and life as we knew it changed drastically. From closing campus and sending students and employees home to hybrid work and learning arrangements as well as contact tracing and implementing social distancing and other safety protocols, our community persevered through the highs and lows. There were a few silver linings of COVID-19 when it comes to campus sustainability. First, we did see significant reductions in energy and water consumption as well as waste production on campus. Next, we learned that some jobs can be done from home and not all conferences, meetings, and events need to be attended in person, which lowered GHG emissions associated with commuting and outsourced travel. Finally, the sustainability-related student groups on campus thrived rather than just survived the pandemic. In fact, ECU added multiple new sustainability student organizations in the past three years and a few of the sustainability groups won the highest awards for student organizations just last year.

Much like our first submission, this second STARS report also highlights where there is room for improvement and a need for additional programs, policies, and initiatives so that we can continue to advance the culture of sustainability at ECU. The transparent and accountable framework of STARS has been a valuable tool that has allowed us to establish baselines for a variety of sustainability metrics and identify key areas for improvement, which we will attempt to address for future submissions.

As Chancellor for East Carolina University, I affirm that the information in this submission has been thoroughly checked for accuracy. I thank the many faculty, students, and staff that were involved in collecting data and reporting information, without which this STARS submission would not have been possible. I look forward to continuing this journey along with other colleges and universities who have made the commitment to campus sustainability, especially our peers in the state of North Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip G. Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "R".

Philip G. Rogers, EdD
Chancellor