



February 10, 2016

To: AASHE STARS

From: Maria A. Curtin, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and
Dean of the Faculty

Re: AASHE STARS Innovation Affirmation

Since its establishment, The Farm at Stonehill has been a catalyst for social change and sustainability at Stonehill. Through The Farm, many faculty members have found ways to engage students on issues such as poverty, food deserts, sustainability and the environment. As Bridget Meigs, The Farm manager says “The Farm is a living laboratory to teach sustainability through a number of different lenses”.

Last Fall (2015) it was apparent that faculty and students were working with The Farm and Bridget Meigs on many different initiatives that were structured not only for the benefit of the students in these courses but also managed to engage the Stonehill Community and the surrounding communities. I remember an evening late in the fall walking around campus after a meeting on my way to a concert on campus. Typically these concerts are scheduled in Alumni Hall so I automatically went there. It was amazing! Instead of the concert, I encountered in Alumni Hall a large group of students and some faculty attending a workshop on canning, fermentation, and food preservation. They were very interested in the process and very engaged. This was one among many of the initiatives that was funded by the Campus for Environmental Stewardship grant program last fall.

The “Down to Earth” Exhibition at the Carole Calo Gallery, was also funded by the CES grant. It was an inspiring way to learn about how artists embrace an environmental issue and use their work to bring awareness to the viewers/audience.

Other initiatives that I found intriguing but did not have the opportunity to participate in included: A knit-in that allowed students and faculty not only to learn more about knitting but also to contribute by knitting hats for premature babies for the UMass Memorial neonatal intensive care unit. A lecture on edible insects as a potential protein-rich foods and included a cooking competition also generated a lot of interest in the community.

There were so many ways that students were engaged throughout the semester especially in the courses that were inspired to be part of, and were able to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the CES grant. The whole campus benefitted from the energy and excitement of these activities and efforts.