



June 18, 2021

Dear STARS Review Committee:

On behalf of the University of Southern California (“USC”), I am pleased to submit documentation for the University’s sustainability self-assessment using the AASHE’s Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). The information provided is complete and accurate to the best of the University’s knowledge at the time of submission.

USC is one of the world’s leading private research universities with nearly 46,000 students from 135 countries. Located in Los Angeles, a global center for arts, technology and international business, USC’s diverse curricular and co-curricular offerings provide our students with extensive opportunities for study and collaboration with leading faculty and researchers.

In 2015, USC launched its Sustainability 2020 Plan to measure and guide the implementation of more sustainable practices on our campuses. The 2020 Plan established goals for energy conservation, greenhouse gas mitigation, sustainable transportation and procurement, waste diversion, water conservation, and community engagement. This enabled USC to successfully achieve the following:

- 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per square foot since 2014
- 41% of USC Hospitality’s food purchased from sustainable sources
- 75% of campus departments engaged in responsible purchasing practices
- 138 electric vehicle charging ports installed across campuses
- 1,500 solar modules installed on the Galen Center (athletics arena), producing 915,000 kilowatt-hours annually

In 2019, Dr. Carol L. Folt was appointed President of USC, and she immediately committed to leading sustainability advancements in education, research, and operations – all of which are fundamental to USC’s strategic vision. USC’s first STARS assessment provides a valuable opportunity to measure our sustainability efforts and share our progress. The results will be used to help guide implementation of the University’s strategic vision and mission in the years ahead.

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Additionally, with USC's Sustainability 2020 Plan now complete, leaders and advocates from across the University actively are working with President Folt and her senior leadership team to develop the USC Sustainability 2028 Plan. This new plan will include aggressive goals focused on carbon neutrality, zero waste, single-use plastics reduction, and enhanced sustainability curriculum and research. Data collected via the STARS assessment is providing critical insights to help inform the 2028 Plan goals and programs.

Examples include:

- [Sustainability Course Inventory \(AC-1\)](#) and [Sustainability Research Inventory \(AC-9\)](#)
  - USC faculty will set measurable targets for increased sustainability course offerings at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and will develop a process for tracking progress on sustainability research initiatives.
- [Community Partnerships \(EN-10\)](#) and [Participation in Public Policy \(EN-14\)](#)
  - The University will explore ways to further advance and align social, economic, and environmental sustainability through participation in public policy programs.

As we close out USC's first STARS assessment, we would like to thank AASHE for providing the tools necessary to engage in this effort. We believe in the importance of transparency and accountability in sustainability reporting, and we appreciate AASHE's efforts to facilitate information sharing on higher education sustainability practices.

Finally, I want to acknowledge our campus partners who worked tirelessly throughout the STARS data collection and reporting period. We are extremely grateful for the many students, faculty, and staff members who are actively supporting our commitment to advancing sustainability at USC.

Sincerely,



David Wright  
Senior Vice President Administration, USC