



April 17, 2017

Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating
System (STARS) Steering Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Members of the AASHE STARS Steering Committee:

On behalf of the James Madison University (JMU) community and at the recommendation of JMU's Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World Executive Council, I am pleased to endorse JMU's submission to the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). Development of our report involved over 100 faculty, staff, and students with participants from all divisions of the university. The report was completed following STARS Technical Manual version 2.1, administrative update one, May 2016.

In the three years since our first STARS report, JMU has expanded our sustainability work. 2014 marked the start of a bold new strategic plan, the Madison Plan 2014-2020, which aligns with sustainability in the areas of engagement; student learning opportunities; access, inclusion and diversity; and, facilities. Civic and community engagement, which are essential to sustainability, are part of JMU's vision of being the national model for the engaged university: engaged with ideas and the world. I am a signatory of the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement and a Board Member for Campus Compact. As the action statement affirms, at JMU "We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world," and "We embrace our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically."

Highlights of JMU's STARS submission include:

- Sustainability-related courses were available to all students through General Education. Four environmental minors, five environmental concentrations within majors, and 115 sustainability-related courses were offered in 2015-16. In addition, sustainability is a focus of JMU's undergraduate engineering program.
- JMU's ethical reasoning program, which is introduced to students during a sequence of orientation programs, aligns with many of the principles indicated in the Earth Charter as a means to a sustainable community.
- 60% of academic department equivalents had one or more faculty members involved in sustainability scholarship.

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- 53% of JMU students participated in community service and contributed over 400,000 community service hours during the most recent one-year period.
- A Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was structured around the “Five E’s”: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation and Planning, and more than \$1.9 million was invested in infrastructure.
- Valley Scholars is an exemplary program that provides outreach activities to first generation middle and high school students with the goal of providing scholarships for students admitted to and attending JMU.

Thank you for your continued work to develop a framework that facilitates higher education institutions sharing their sustainability practices and performance. The framework and details about other institutions’ innovations and exemplary practices have informed JMU.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan R. Alger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'A'.

Jonathan R. Alger
President

JRA/isnwe