



July 26, 2019

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

Dear STARS Administrators,

It is my great pleasure to present the inaugural STARS report of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In the fall of 1969, Wisconsin Governor Gaylord Nelson proposed the concept of a national teach-in on the environment, an event which culminated in the first Earth Day held on April 22, 1970. We are proud to submit this report on the 50th anniversary of that globally-unifying idea. Earth Day led to world-wide collaboration, innovation in research and technology, and a shared understanding of the preciousness of our common home.

Since its early days, UW-Madison has been at the forefront of sustainability. The campus is situated on the ancestral home of the Ho-Chunk Nation, and their enduring commitment to the community, the land and the lakes continues to shape the university. “Our Shared Future” is inscribed on a heritage marker that was recently installed on the UW-Madison campus to recognize and honor the 13,000-year history of the Ho-Chunk people on this land, and is also a calling to work together to address challenges in our future. Our legacy is further grounded in the ideas and actions of prominent Wisconsin figures such as John Muir, Aldo Leopold and Charles Van Hise, each of whom recognized the importance of stewarding the environment.

The UW-Madison is a model for our community, our state and our world. We educate nearly 45,000 students annually, offer thousands of courses and programs in over 150 departments, with 2,000-plus faculty experts. The university is a national leader in research, ranked 6th in the U.S. for annual research expenditures by the Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey - and more than half of our departments conduct sustainability research. Most importantly, we serve as a committed partner for communities across the nation to address issues

Chancellor Rebecca M. Blank
Morgridge Friends Distinguished Chair of Leadership
Bascom Hall University of Wisconsin-Madison 500 Lincoln Drive Madison, Wisconsin 53706
608-262-8967 Fax: 608-262-8333 TTY 608-263-2473

of poverty, ecological imbalance, public health and other critical concerns. We bring together great minds from all disciplines to develop solutions for complex problems.

This is the heart of our mission, which we call the Wisconsin Idea: the principle that the educational and research work of the university should reach far beyond the boundaries of the campus. This report exemplifies the Wisconsin Idea throughout and reflects widespread, vibrant sustainability engagement across campus and beyond. Our students embrace sustainability through service learning and volunteerism, with 550,000 hours of service logged during our reporting year. Our IceCube Neutrino Observatory in Antarctica is host to researchers from 50 institutions representing twelve countries conducting astrophysical research and providing detailed ice core measurements which inform climate records. The Institute for Research on Poverty has been addressing societal inequities for over five decades with partner institutions across the nation.

Our Badger community is the embodiment of empathy and humility, relentless curiosity, intellectual confidence and purposeful action. This is a momentous and dynamic time in human history. UW-Madison is privileged to serve as a leader in sustainability by incorporating into what we do the knowledge that we have, while simultaneously leveraging the incredible intellectual capacity of our campus and community as we strive for continual improvement.

On behalf of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I affirm the accuracy of the data in this report and am pleased to submit our STARS report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Blank". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and "B".

Rebecca M. Blank
Chancellor