



**PennState**

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

Dear Committee Members:

The Pennsylvania State University-University Park is pleased to submit its fourth STARS (Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System) report.

Sustainability is an integral part of Penn State's mission as a global leader in teaching, research, and service. We recognize that achieving sustainability represents one of the world's most pressing issues and that higher education can play a unique role in creating and modeling solutions and producing graduates who can lead society toward a more sustainable future.

Our last STARS report, submitted in 2017, helped the University to identify opportunities for improving our sustainability efforts in academics, operations, engagement, and planning and administration. Some highlights of our progress are that Penn State:

- Entered into a 70-MW Solar Power Purchase Agreement that will provide 25% of Penn State's system-wide electricity needs over the next 25 years, and developed an innovative process for site selection that minimized impacts on the environment;
- Worked to institutionalize sustainability by forming and engaging networks of designated sustainability champions throughout our colleges, campuses, and support units, as well as in our governance groups such as the University Faculty Senate and student government;
- Developed new sustainability-related courses across an expanded breadth of academic departments and provided new co-curricular opportunities for student engagement and learning;
- Continued to conduct groundbreaking research in many fields relevant to sustainability, with over 19% of our faculty who conduct research being involved in sustainability-related investigations;
- Continued our strong commitment to public engagement in sustainability, including community initiatives and events of the Sustainable Communities Collaborative, Student Farm, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, and a film series focusing on issues of environmental and social justice; and,
- Reduced our per capita greenhouse gas emissions by over 47% relative to a 2005 baseline and, just last month, became one of 37 international universities to endorse a letter drafted by the International Universities Climate Alliance urging world leaders to protect humankind from climate change.

I commend AASHE for providing a comprehensive, transparent assessment tool for higher education. Thank you for allowing us to share our story and strengths, identify areas for growth, and learn from others on our collective journey toward meeting the sustainability challenge.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Barron