

Greetings,

Since I arrived on the BHSU campus in July, I've been pleased to find enthusiasm and dedication for sustainability among the faculty, staff, students and the Spearfish community. The campus is located in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota and right next to thousands of acres of National Forest; there is a strong sentiment of environmentalism and commitment to protecting natural resources.

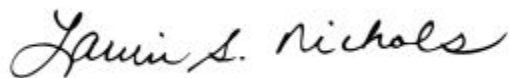
BHSU has taken the lead in sustainability among public higher education institutions in SD. One of the most impressive accomplishments is our success with solar energy. The campus is on pace to generate 1.3 MWh of power annually. BHSU anticipates saving over \$100,000 per year when the current installations are complete this spring.

BHSU has involved the entire community with Sustainability planning. A Climate Resiliency plan was developed jointly with BHSU and the City of Spearfish and included input from a number of organizations and key businesses in the region. Establishment of the committee has led to collaboration in other areas as well.

While I completely support sustainability efforts on campus, it is more important to note that the entire campus and community support the multitude of sustainability initiatives. Whether it's using an electric car and installing two charging stations, recycling more than 50 tons of material every year, using food waste for composting, installing LED Dark Sky Friendly outdoor lighting, or being designated as a Tree Campus USA, Bike Friendly Campus and a Bee Friendly campus, the dedication and commitment to sustainability is evident across the campus.

AASHE efforts to advance sustainability in higher education are impressive. The STARS rating system is an important tool that allows universities to benchmark successes and measure progress. I'm proud to support the submission of the BHSU STARS report and I look forward to continuing to advance our sustainability efforts.

Sincerely,



Laurie S. Nichols