



# BLACK HILLS

STATE UNIVERSITY

April 13, 2023

Greetings,

Now in my fourth year as the President at Black Hills State University, I am pleased to continually 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 South Dakota. One of the most impressive accomplishments is our success with solar energy. The campus is on pace to generate 1.3 Megawatts of solar power, saving \$150,000/year.

The University has involved the entire community through the Sustainability and Biodiversity Committee. BHSU, the city, and various businesses and organizations in the area have and continue to find ways to collaborate in ways that benefit environmental, social, and economic factors throughout the region.

Network services deployed a campus wide printer fleet which eliminated hundreds of personal printers on campus. This move greatly reduced the number of environmentally unfriendly toners used as well as lessened our printing footprint.

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 two charging stations, recycling over 65 tons of material every year, continuing to grow food for the community in the campus garden, establishing a medicine wheel ethnobotanical garden, or being designated as a Tree Campus USA 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

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