

January 19, 2022

STARS Steering Committee  
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education  
2401 Walnut St #102  
Philadelphia, PA, 19103, USA

Dear Steering Committee Members:

I am proud to share our recent accomplishments with you as an update on our progress in this, Mohawk College's third Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating Systems (STARS) submission to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). We continue to nurture a strong culture of environmental responsibility throughout our institution, supported by our Executive Group and Senior Leadership Team, coordinated by our outstanding and dedicated Sustainability Team, and practiced on a daily basis by Mohawk students and employees.

Since 2011, when Mohawk College became the first college in Ontario to introduce a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (EMP), we have been committed to taking on a leadership role in environmental stewardship. We have regularly updated and executed new Sustainability Action Plans. As a result, the Mohawk Sustainability team manages over 30 programs and initiatives each year that are dedicated to increasing the sustainability of Mohawk's campus and providing learning opportunities in sustainability for Mohawk students.

Today, we continue to set ambitious goals for ourselves and, as we undertake our new College Strategic Plan (2022-2025), one of our stated key aspirations is to *Make a meaningful impact on climate change*. We intend to further advance our leadership in sustainable learning and research; to leverage partnerships to lead a transition to a clean, resilient economy; and to work to integrate Indigenous learning and practices in sustainability and climate change initiatives.

Recently, Mohawk College's newest building, The Joyce Centre for Partnership & Innovation, was recertified for the third consecutive year for Zero Carbon Building – Performance by the Canada Green Building Council. The Joyce Centre became Canada's first zero carbon dually certified building in 2020, after receiving Zero Carbon Building – Design certification in 2018. The Joyce Centre has exemplified sustainable building operation for students, employees, community and industry partners. Our Facility Services team have continued to excel in the ongoing maintenance, calibration, and monitoring of this impressive facility.

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On our main campus, we have also replaced an existing natural gas-fired boiler with an electric boiler and upgraded two natural gas-powered boiler units. In addition, we have installed 3,296 solar panels throughout the main campus, enough to power 130 homes. As well, we have installed a trailer-sized battery storage system, capable of powering up to 1000 homes, that allows the college to reduce its draw on Ontario's electricity grid at times of excessive demand.

Through the Centre for Climate Change Management at Mohawk College (CCCM), we are leading a residential energy retrofitting program for the City of Burlington, Ontario, and are guiding the funding application for a similar program in the City of Hamilton, where our college is located. The CCCM continues to be an integral resource for community partnerships and climate action initiatives, with the Bay Area Climate Change Office located on our main campus.

Our Research Chair for Sustainability has joined forces with a number of partners in applied research projects in the community. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has allowed an applied research project, Cleaner Air for Schools, to provide beneficial solutions to provide greater efficiency and better air quality in elementary schools throughout Ontario.

In addition, Mohawk College has led the creation and administration of a pan-Canadian coalition of colleges, cégeps, institutes and polytechnics leading a climate-focused economic recovery – [Canadian Colleges for a Resilient Recovery](#). The coalition is collectively committed to advancing a sustainable, resilient economic recovery for Canada through workforce training, applied research and community leadership.

The STARS report has helped to highlight the sustainability initiatives that we are so proud to support. This report helps us to monitor and assess our progress in our efforts. Producing this submission has also allowed us to identify areas where we will strive to improve in the coming years.

I support the information presented in Mohawk's STARS report. Our team has diligently worked over the past several years to engrain sustainability in all elements of the student experience and to position Mohawk College as a national leader in sustainability. We are proud to have previously met the criteria for a Gold level rating, as validation of our ongoing commitment to be a leader of sustainability in Canada. Through our actions, our advocacy and our teaching we strive to promote, support and nurture a new generation of sustainability leaders, for the benefit of our students, our employees and the greater community.

Regards,



Ron J. McKerlie  
President & CEO