



9 December 2015

Members of the Roosevelt Community and the AASHE/STARS Evaluation Team:

We at Roosevelt University are pleased to submit our first Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) data set. This is a watershed moment in our institution's ongoing efforts to green its physical operations; expand sustainability education and research opportunities for students, faculty, and staff; and live out our historic mission of promoting social justice in an age of ecological crisis and economic inequity.

The task of envisioning and creating a truly sustainable world is immense and complex. Colleges and universities are not only well suited to engage in this important work through innovation, education, and community engagement, they are obliged to do so. Such a worthy task is before us at Roosevelt, a distinctive urban university long committed to advancing social justice and cultivating progressive leadership in its home bioregion of Chicago and beyond.

As a natural outgrowth of Roosevelt's greening efforts and sustainability innovations the last several years, a volunteer group of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni assembled in the fall of 2014 to develop an historic first for our institution: a comprehensive Strategic Sustainability Plan that documents our accomplishments and sets important goals and priorities for the work we will undertake over the next several years. An inclusive collaborative effort that began as a research proposal by one of our talented undergraduate students, the Plan was finished in November 2014; endorsed by the University Senate in January 2015; and unanimously approved for implementation by the President's Executive Council in February 2015.

Among the Plan's high priority short-term goals was a rigorous and comprehensive self-assessment of our sustainability efforts throughout every facet of the university's operations. We began in the spring of 2015 by again marshaling one of Roosevelt's greatest strengths: our students. In a Sustainability Studies special topics undergraduate class, "The Sustainable Campus," 19 students formed research teams in all four STARS assessment categories -- Academics, Engagement, Operations, and Planning/Administration -- developed research plans/timelines, reached out to key university staff and faculty, and gathered data for the assessment. This project gave them hands-on experience using the STARS assessment tool and galvanized widespread campus interest in the project within every office and department from the Advising Center to the Math Department to the Registrar.

This fall, a STARS Reporting Team of students, faculty, and staff painstakingly reviewed and edited these data in preparation for submitting this official report on behalf of RU to AASHE for STARS certification. The team consisted of Rebecca Quesnell (Sustainable Operations

Coordinator in Physical Resources), Maria Cancilla (STARS Student Intern), Shannon Conway (Environmental Sustainability Student Associate), Brennan Morrow (Energy Management Student Associate), Mike Bryson (Professor & Director of Sustainability Studies), and Graham Pickren (Assistant Professor of Sustainability Studies). I thank them for their efforts on this important and time-consuming project.

This process of self-evaluation has been an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate our achievements of the last five years and reflect upon future goals. Notable among those achievements are the construction of the LEED-Gold Wabash Building in 2012, a sustainably-designed vertical campus that is the second tallest academic structure in the US; the founding of the Chicago region's first Sustainability Studies undergraduate program in 2010; the establishment of a prairie and wetland restoration as well as a community garden at our suburban campus in Schaumburg (2011), and a series of rooftop gardens at our downtown Chicago campus (2012); and the adoption of our aforementioned Strategic Sustainability Plan in 2015.

The timing could not be more apt for Roosevelt to make itself more environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially just across every facet of its operations and mission. We are situated in one of the world's great urban areas during a time when more than 50 percent of the global population lives in cities and suburbs. Metropolitan universities such as ours play influential roles in this time of rapid change and environmental crisis in developing new ideas for resource conservation, implementing sustainable practices, and cultivating creativity and leadership among our students -- the innovators of tomorrow.

As we move forward with our vision of creating a more sustainable Roosevelt, I know that the knowledge and insight gained from our first STARS report will be of immense value as a baseline of current practice and a guidepost for future improvements.

As Roosevelt's President, I attest to and affirm the accuracy of the information submitted by our STARS Reporting Team, and I relish the opportunity to lead our institution into a more sustainable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ali Malekzadeh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ali Malekzadeh, Ph.D.