



Office of the President

January 28, 2015

Meghan Fay Zahniser  
Executive Director  
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability  
in Higher Education  
1536 Wynkoop St., Suite 901  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Zahniser:

I am pleased to present the inaugural Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System report from the State University of New York at New Paltz, and to endorse this endeavor on behalf of the entire campus community. I have reviewed the information and a companion plan for continued improvement developed by our Sustainability Committee, which is leading this effort. SUNY New Paltz is proud to have been recognized in 2011 by our regional accrediting body as having established a strong "culture of assessment." The STARS initiative provides an excellent set of metrics and benchmarks to help us assess our current strengths and shortcomings and chart our course for improvement in multiple areas of sustainability.

SUNY New Paltz is a signatory on the American College and University President's Climate Commitment. In 2013, the College hired our first Sustainability Coordinator and established the Office of Campus Sustainability. Our Sustainability Committee is a formal faculty governance committee, so constituted because we recognize that educating citizens about sustainable living is among the most important ways we contribute to building a sustainable future; sustainability concepts and approaches are infused throughout many areas of the curriculum in the natural sciences, business, social sciences, and the arts. A group of faculty is developing a plan for a sustainability living-learning community in one of our residence halls. Our students are actively engaged in multiple sustainability initiatives, and our campus administration recently awarded two years of funding for student internships and other initiatives within our Office of Campus Sustainability. The campus, including our Campus Auxiliary Services, works closely with sustainability interests in the local community, and partners with state agencies and utilities to improve our performance on issues as diverse as renewable energy, facilities improvements, recycling, composting food waste, and water quality and conservation.

These and other efforts underscore our commitment and the broad directions of our work. The STARS initiative gives us valuable tools to develop goals, focus our efforts, and increase the pace of our improvements. Thank you for providing us with such valuable support and direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald P. Christian".

Donald P. Christian  
President

✓ Copy: Lisa Mitten, Sustainability Coordinator