



December 7, 2017

AASHE STARS Review Committee

To whom it may concern,

In fall 2014, a former Library staffer, Lisa Hoff, approached the director of the college's new *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* to inquire about Lisa's idea to repurpose a surplus library card catalog to create a community seed library. Center director Marian Brown was receptive to the idea and did some additional research into the concept, including contacting the coordinator of the long-standing, successful seed exchange program at *Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County*. Marian also approached the head of the Division of Plant Industry at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to determine state regulations regarding such programs since other states, notably Pennsylvania, had recently restricted such programs. Receiving a supportive response from the state, the Center director solicited donations of seed from various seed companies around the country. Six companies responded and donated seed to our new program.

In late winter 2015, Lisa Hoff worked with Marian Brown to organize and load over 400 donated seed packages into our old card catalog. Together, we created a seed exchange area in the main floor of our library, adjacent to our circulation desk so we could monitor traffic and answer questions from patrons. Our *Wells College Seed Exchange* is accessible whenever our campus library is open, a feature for which many patrons have expressed appreciation as our Library is open until late evening and over weekends. Librarians set out additional materials, including informational handouts on seed starting and seed saving, seed catalogs from our donor companies, and gardening reference books that seed exchange patrons could check out. This new seed exchange program has had the added benefit of exposing new members from the wider community to our campus Library resources.

Lisa Hoff designed a logo for the Wells College Seed Exchange and worked with the *Sustainability Center* director to develop small, customized envelopes in which patrons could dispense smaller quantities of desired seed, stretching the available quantities of seed. The intent was that gardeners patronizing the seed exchange would save seed from their harvest and help replenish the Seed Exchange in future years. Toward that end, we partnered in spring 2015 to host a free workshop on Seed Saving for the campus and local community.

In February 2015, the *Sustainability Center* promoted the seed exchange program to the campus and outside community through press and online media channels, and eager gardeners and growers immediately began to flow into our Library to check our offerings and procure seeds for the growing season. We set up a logbook to track patrons using our seed exchange – more than 150 members of the community checked out seed that first season. Within a month of being open and promoted, the Seed Exchange cabinet was completely empty.

While Lisa Hoff moved on the next year, the Long Library has continued to collaborate with the director of the *Center for Sustainability* to host the Seed Exchange, and we are happy to report that our program has only grown in the ensuing three years. In fall 2015, with more time to research seed companies to

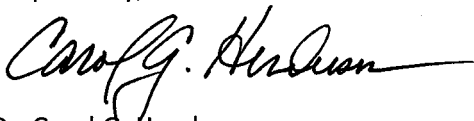
solicit, we received nearly 1,400 seed packets from twelve donors. In fall 2016, 19 companies donated over 1,700 packets of seed.

We reach out to local garden clubs, county master gardeners, and area school agricultural and science faculty to make them aware of our seed exchange program. Besides just supporting local gardeners, materials from our Seed Exchange have been accessed by the *King Ferry Food Pantry*, which provides gardening education, seeds and planting materials to its food insecure clients, helping to increase their self-reliance. We supported greenhouse food production by the local high school's *Future Farmers of America* club, and two farmers selling produce at the college-run *Aurora Farmers Market*, developed to further help address our local "food desert" conditions. Our Wells College Seed Exchange has also supported the development of new on-campus gardens created by students in the *Introduction to Gardening* course.

In November of this year, the *Center for Sustainability* director solicited seeds from nearly fifty seed companies; those donations are already beginning to arrive. Our expectation is that our *Wells College Seed Exchange* will be restocked and its reopening announced in late January 2018, with even more free seed available to the community than in past years.

This productive on-going partnership between our Long Library staff and the *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* has not only helped strengthen not campus community, but has also provided a valued mechanism to increase our visibility and foster positive perception of Wells College within our surrounding community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol G. Henderson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Carol G. Henderson  
Library Director