

June 7, 2016

AASHE

Re. STARS report for Sonoma State University

I am pleased to certify this STARS campus sustainability report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). For over 10 years the University has consciously engaged in operational actions and academic engagements aimed at making the campus ever more sustainable.

In an effort to start a process for institutionalizing our sustainability efforts, in 2013 I approved the establishment of a Sustainability Executive Committee with membership of all key areas of campus led by Sonoma State's first-ever Director of Sustainability. Early on SSU began the practice of using reclaimed water for campus irrigation. We require that all new buildings meet LEED silver standards, though in an effort to control student costs we do not certify. Two years ago we formulated a new Strategic Plan, and campus sustainability is among the five strategic goals we identified to become one of SSU's foci. Our commitment to sustainability is evidenced most recently through a state-of-the-art approach in Dining Services to food procurement and service as well as waste management in the new Student Center which opened in November of 2014, the establishment of Sustainability in the Classroom and Campus as a Living Lab (CALLS) faculty grant programs, and the on-going development of our three wildland preserves through the Center for Environmental Inquiry, among many other efforts.

To this point we have not yet established a permanent position of a full-time sustainability director, though Professor Paul Draper does serve as our Director of Sustainability, now commencing his 4<sup>th</sup> year in that role.

In the spring of 2014 I approved a proposal sent to me by the Sustainability Executive Committee to set up a two-year STARS reporting process. This STARS report has been almost wholly generated by a team of undergraduate students working in cooperation with informants from our administration, staff, and faculty, working under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Baldwin. Our working group was able to complete the report we now present to you at the end of spring semester. While the students have been conservative in their reporting, we are concerned to guarantee the greatest accuracy possible. Towards that end, Dr. Baldwin has contacted all of the informants to the report and asked them to verify the information the student investigators gathered from them. We have now completed that process, and all corrections, a majority of which were additions to the original report are completed.

Next year our returning students and several new team members will continue the work of the STARS effort. Several administrators, staff, and faculty have already expressed an interest in pursuing practices and policies brought to their attention by the STARS process. Our student team looks forward to helping those efforts, but also to identify next steps revealed by the current report. Clearly one of the benefits of having this sustainability tracking and assessment function as a student effort is a growing awareness and excitement among this group of student leaders to promote sustainability from the ground up. Indeed, the student-driven undertaking in the STARS reporting process supports one of our key goals for academic engagement in sustainability at SSU.

Sonoma State University looks forward to continuing our efforts to create a more equitable society, a more biospherically friendly economy, and a more resilient environment – to continue our efforts to become a leader in these endeavors. Our on-going engagement with AASHE and with STARS is integral to those efforts.

Thank you for your efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Armiñana', with a stylized flourish at the end.

President Ruben Armiñana  
Sonoma State University