



VirginiaTech

College of Natural Resources
and Environment

Office of the Dean

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TO Whom It may Concern

As someone with knowledge of the impact of transforming an entire college portfolio towards sustainability, I offer my endorsement and letter of affirmation for STARS Innovation Credit #2: **“Refocusing a College Portfolio towards Sustainability”**

I believe the transformation of our College of Natural Resources and Environment academic portfolio of programs meets all of the STARS Innovation Criteria, and especially reflects criterion #1: Innovation credits are reserved for new, extraordinary, unique, ground-breaking, or uncommon outcomes, policies, and practices that greatly exceed the highest criterion of an existing STARS credit or are not covered by an existing STARS credit.

Sometimes academia is slow to change. Traditional disciplines sometimes are hesitant to adopt new language and new approaches for new students who are clearly different in outlook and expectation than their professors.

The College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech took a comprehensive look at ourselves and then looked to the future. We have mounting global challenges in provision of clean water and air, biodiversity, renewable materials, energy and a host of other ‘grand challenges’ all framed by a growing global population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. Seeing ourselves as part of this global discussion and solution was the transformation we undertook that has resulted in an entirely new and innovative perspective on our relevancy and impact in the global sustainability arena.

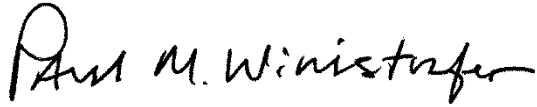
We have renamed ourselves from the top down – college and departments. And the new names are continuing to pull a change through our paradigm of what we were and what we will become. Our curricula has changed, our courses have changed, the expertise of our faculty has changed, our reach across our campus is changing, and our leadership of sustainability programming on our campus has clearly increased. We have adopted new vision and mission language to reflect our emphasis on sustainability (www.cnre.vt.edu). We asked stakeholders what are the important issues of the day – and have changed our programming to meet the needs of our student to contribute to a sustainable future.

Without wiping the slate of an entire college completely clean and starting over, we have transformed an already high quality portfolio into an even more meaningful portfolio with a focus on sustainability. Our new college tag line or brand statement is ‘Advancing the Science of Sustainability (www.cnre.vt.edu)’.

Invent the Future

I am confident that the transformative changes in our college portfolio with a focus towards sustainability represents a new and unique approach to sustainability challenges we face. We are very proud of what we have accomplished with the changes in the college and hope that you will recognize these changes as innovative and worthy of STARS innovation credit. Remember, academia is slow to change and what we have accomplished in the past three years with a focus towards sustainability is nothing short of remarkable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul M. Winistorfer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Paul M. Winistorfer
Dean