



June 8, 2017

AASHE STARS Steering Committee  
2401 Walnut Street  
Suite 102  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear AASHE STARS Steering Committee:

I am delighted to take this opportunity to provide a letter affirming that our "Student Sustainability Leadership Forums" meet all the criteria for a STARS Innovation Credit.

As Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer, I am responsible for overseeing the university's Office of Sustainability. Charged with coordinating the implementation of the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment and Sustainability Plan, the Office of Sustainability spearheads all aspects of our Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Program. Virginia Tech is committed to being a leader in campus sustainability and we are making tremendous progress on many fronts.

One of our primary goals is to find ways to engage our faculty, staff, and students and to provide opportunities where everyone can learn about opportunities for adopting a more sustainable lifestyle. The Student Sustainability Leadership Forums, designed and implemented by the Office of Sustainability's Graduate Assistant, are directly focused on connecting all of these key players, as well as important stakeholders from the Blacksburg community, in order to achieve this goal. The forums focus on bringing together important leaders from a variety of student organizations so they can work together to create better quality, as well as a higher quantity of, sustainability outreach events and programs both on and off campus.

We have already seen this program as a great benefit to the campus, as the response from participating students, faculty, and staff has been extremely positive. They even requested an increase in the frequency of the forums hosted. When we started this program, we held one forum per semester. Due to the level of interest the forums have generated, we now hold two forums each semester with approximately 60+ guests in attendance at each forum. Furthermore we have seen a great increase in the success rates of the events and programs hosted by these sustainability leaders after coming together to brainstorm during the forums. This is especially evident in the campus's annual Earth Week events. Additionally, the forums have been especially successful for the Office of Sustainability as a number of student leaders from other organizations later

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joined the Office of Sustainability's internship program after having worked with the office through these forums.

While the Office of Sustainability leads the implementation of the forums, the Office of University Relations is fully engaged in its promotion and university governance is supportive of the initiative through the Energy and Sustainability Committee. In conclusion, the Student Sustainability Leadership Forums are a perfect example of a STARS Innovation Credit.

Sincerely,



Chris Kiwus  
Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer