

August 31, 2020

AASHE STARS Team
2401 Walnut Street
Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear AASHE STARS Team

I am honored to submit a letter of affirmation concerning Virginia Tech's transition to a successful Digital Earth Week for 2020. The Office of Sustainability and Environmental Coalition (EC) were essential in making this transition from the original planning we had done for the campus and surrounding areas.

Being the EC Earth Week Coordinator for the 2019-2020 academic year, I led the forums and small planning meetings for the eventful week to come. I began to meet with the Office of Sustainability starting in the first week of spring semester for an in-person Earth Week, as expected. This provided us a 4-month planning period for a campus wide, week-long, and 50th annual anniversary event which took numerous hours of planning, preparation, and collaboration across 20+ organizations at Virginia Tech. Despite the already invested work, we were able to completely shift our in-person planned events to a virtual format in a months' time.

Highlighting more on this accomplishment, it would not have been possible without the teams fast acting attitude and innovative, creative spirit. Since the university had never had precautions set upon us like this before, Earth Week became an overwhelming and daunting goal. Furthermore, all organizations that were originally planning events had ceased contact due to unforeseen circumstances and barriers, so we had to start from scratch. We continued to push through the challenges and new medium of advertisement for events to host 25+ events during the week.

Although virtual, we kept our values and mission for the week – to educate and engage the community on environmental topics and issues for a higher self, local, and global awareness. On top of that, we directly addressed four different UN Sustainable Development Goals: 4, 6, 11, and 17 by hosting documentary screenings and discussions, posting infographics on social media about water and food consumption and reduction opportunities, partnering with ROAM NRV for a free bike share program, providing an avenue and 'how-to' for calling your local governor, and much more. Keeping the UN Sustainable Development Goals in mind while planning was key to our success for Earth Week.

The Virginia Tech student body and faculty are rooted in our motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve). We strive to serve the Virginia Tech and NRV community through educating and providing ways to gather in community to learn more about the environment and Earth. We continued to do this despite many setbacks, which proves our innovative spirit and drive is impeccable.

Sincerely,



Jennylynn Johnson
President of Environmental Coalition
Former Environmental Coalition Earth Week Coordinator