



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Office of the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Division of Administrative Affairs**

P.O. Box 160020 Orlando, FL
32816-0020

March 9, 2021

Dear members of the STARS steering committee,
As the Vice President of Administration for the University of Central Florida (UCF), I am pleased to affirm the accuracy of our 2021 STARS submission.

UCF is one of the nation's largest metropolitan research universities, and we believe in harnessing the power of scale and excellence to impact lives and livelihoods. Founded in 1963 to foster talent for the burgeoning US space program, UCF has grown to 13 colleges with 230 degree programs working to make a better future for our society. We have made access to world-class education the cornerstone of our mission, cultivating the skilled talent needed to advance industry for our region, state, and beyond. Our Fall 2020 enrollment saw nearly 72,000 students, of which 48.5 percent were minorities. We leverage partnerships at every level to amplify our academic, economic, social, and cultural impact and reputation.

Even as our young university has rapidly grown to serve our community, we have reduced our emissions by nearly 60 percent per 1,000 square feet. In 2007, we committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. Since then, recognizing the urgency of the climate crises, we adopted two additional goals to meet the challenge: achieving 'Zero Waste' and integrating sustainability into all disciplines. With these goals in mind, we venture to build a workforce for the 21st Century while minimizing our environmental footprint.

Students can experience academic achievement in 20 LEED Gold and 7 LEED Silver buildings, including District Energy Plant IV, designed in line with our commitment to using our campus as a living laboratory. Students in our Arboretum's Learning by Leading program oversee nearly 1000 student volunteers each year who cultivate our organic community garden program. In addition to teaching valuable urban agriculture skills, the program provides fresh produce daily to the student-run Knights Helping Knights Pantry.

The ongoing collaboration between academics and operations led to innovations in maintaining safe drinking water and an annual decrease of 25-30 million gallons of potable water use. The Smart Infrastructure Data Analytics Laboratory and the Digital Grid Laboratory take advantage of campus buildings, systems, and data, rather than entirely simulated environments. Our faculty and staff are also working toward solving tomorrow's most challenging societal problems in transdisciplinary research teams such as Resilient, Intelligent and Sustainable Energy Systems (RISES), Sustainable Coastal Systems, and Renewable Energy and Chemical Transformation (REACT). Our STARS v.2.2 submission is a testament to our successes. At the same time, we recognize achieving a sustainable campus is an iterative process and will continue to seek new and better ways to achieve our goals and lessen our impact on the environment.

Sincerely,

Misty Shepherd

Phone: 407.823.2351 • Fax: 407.823.5533

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