



**Michigan
Technological
University**

Office of the President
Administration Building 500A
1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton, Michigan 49931-1295
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June 26, 2020

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
2401 Walnut Street Suite 102
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Re: Michigan Technological University STARS Submission

Dear STARS Committee Members,

Michigan Tech is a globally recognized technological university that educates students, advances knowledge, and innovates to improve the quality of life and to promote equity for all people within the state, the nation, and the global community. Our university seeks to create solutions for society's challenges by delivering action-based undergraduate and graduate education, discovering new knowledge through research, and launching new technologies through innovation. Michigan Tech has committed to sustainability and sustainable practices on campus to accomplish this mission.

Sustainability is a top priority at Michigan Tech, and with the creation of the Sustainability & Resilience group, one of nine Tech Forward Initiatives supported by the Office of the President, we have committed to making our campus as sustainable as possible. Sustainability is a powerful and transformative concept with the potential to change the way we educate students, conduct research, and address societal needs. Both sustainability and resilience are essential concepts and practices for students and the university, as we aim to be at the cutting edge of innovation and education for the 21st century. Michigan Tech contributes a significant amount of resources to further implement sustainable practices on and off campus.

One of the greatest accomplishments that Michigan Tech has completed related to improving campus sustainability, is the successful creation of a Sustainability Demonstration House. The Sustainability Demonstration House provides students with the opportunity to become involved in sustainable living within the community of Houghton. Residents of the house are encouraged to recycle and compost, while exercising good habits of sustainability by being mindful of power and water consumption. Residents work with the Alternative Energy Enterprise to show that sustainability can be extraordinarily successful, even in Houghton's harsh climate.

A key achievement in our STARS report is our integration of sustainability into research programs, which is evidenced by the large percentage of individual faculty and departments who engage in sustainability-related research. Furthermore, the breadth and depth of our commitment to sustainability education is showcased in the significant number of sustainability-focused courses across disciplines. The Sustainable Futures Institute (SFI) (<https://www.mtu.edu/sfi/>) is one of many educational efforts on our campus. The SFI distinguishes itself by developing and leading research and education projects that are large scale, interdisciplinary, and provide solutions to sustainability challenges.

We are proud that Michigan Tech's energy portfolio includes 50% renewable energy from wind through Michigan's Wolverine Power Cooperative. A 20Kw solar system at the Keweenaw Research Center and an 8.6 Kw system installed at the Sustainable Demonstration House further supports our commitment to renewable energy.

I would not want to overlook calling attention to a grass roots student effort to increase recycling and composting in our residence halls, which is supported by a grant from the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) department of the State of Michigan. Recycle containers and a large composting system were funded and are now implanted in our residence and dining halls. We plan to increase recycling from our current 15% diversion rate to 25% with these improvements alone.



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Michigan Tech's first and foremost goal for future submissions is to reach a campus sustainability level that allows our university to achieve a Gold rating from the AASHE STARS program. In order to achieve a Gold rating, Michigan Tech plans to work on multiple submission categories, specifically AC – 6: Sustainability and Literacy Assessment, EN – 6: Assessing Sustainability Culture, and EN – 9 : Staff Professional Development. Improving these categories will make Michigan Tech a more sustainable institution overall and target areas where sustainability is often not a primary focus.

It is with great pride and no hesitation that I endorse and validate Michigan Tech's STARS submission as a true and accurate reflection of the sustainability initiatives and progress to date on our campus.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard J. Koubek, President
Michigan Technological University