

February 10, 2020

Dear AASHE STARS Steering Committee,

I am pleased to verify that the information provided in this Sustainability Tracking & Assessment Rating System (STARS) report for the University of Massachusetts Amherst is an accurate reflection of our commitment to a sustainable and healthy campus community.

This is the fifth STARS report submitted on behalf of UMass Amherst. While recognizing that the latest report still requires validation by AASHE, I am proud to state that each of the previous four reports has resulted in a Gold Rating. Our continuing membership in AASHE and the frequency of reporting to STARS demonstrates our UMass Amherst commitment to sharing our sustainability progress with the international community as well as providing best practices and sustainability resources to our students, faculty, and staff.

UMass Amherst makes sustainability a priority in our policies and practices as well as the education we provide our students. We have undertaken the challenge of addressing the sustainability of our own practices and behaviors by launching three separate task forces to address carbon mitigation, resiliency planning and waste reduction. Each task force is charged with developing goals and plans to improve the sustainability of our campus and these efforts will result in investments in our long term sustainability.

This past fall, we conducted a Sustainability Survey to gather information to support the University's academic, research, and campus initiatives that promote collaborative, sustainable living practices. We queried students on their knowledge of sustainability topics and asked students, faculty and staff about their experiences with living and working sustainably. The responses we gathered have provided us with information that allow us to focus our efforts on those that are of the highest priority.

One avenue for educating our students about sustainability is through our groundbreaking online Sustainable Food and Farming degrees. The same work that we focused on in 1863 as the Massachusetts Agricultural College now reaches well beyond our campus and lives on in these students who work locally, nationally and internationally to make our food and food systems more sustainable.

Our need to confront the issues of sustainability with the broadest and most diverse audience possible has led us to innovations such as Paperbark Literary Magazine. This interdisciplinary print and electronic magazine is a platform for conversations around the currents of contemporary culture through the lens of sustainability, with themes ranging from climate change, policy, and science, to the meaning of place and the value of creative expression.

In summary, the efforts/successes achieved over the last four years at our campus are a testimony to the University of Massachusetts Amherst's commitment toward a more sustainable community and thus a more sustainable world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K Subbaswamy", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kumble R. Subbaswamy
Chancellor