UNH Rates STARS Gold For Sustainability Leadership

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UNH Rates STARS Gold For Sustainability Leadership

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DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire has received a gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) program. UNH is one of just 20 campuses in North America to receive STARS gold to date.

STARS is the only program of its kind that involves publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or university’s sustainability performance. Unlike other rating or ranking systems, STARS is open to all institutions of higher education in the U.S. and Canada, and the criteria that determine a STARS rating are transparent and accessible to anyone. AASHE developed STARS with broad participation from the higher education community, including UNH, which piloted the program.

“Our STARS gold rating is reflective of the breadth and depth of UNH’s commitment to being a sustainable learning community,” says Tom Kelly, UNH’s chief sustainability officer and founding director of its endowed sustainability program, the UNH Sustainability Academy. “Piloting and then becoming a charter participant in STARS is one way UNH is using its history and experience in sustainability in collaboration with other higher education institutions to move sustainability forward.”

UNH received credit in STARS for its many sustainability achievements, including:

- A wide range of sustainability academic programs and courses, such as the dual major in EcoGastronomy
- Sustainability internships, study abroad, student organizations, and other co-curricular sustainability learning for students
- A comprehensive diversity and inclusive excellence strategic plan, office, and faculty, staff and student engagement and programming
- A wide variety of sustainability outreach communications on and off campus, including speakers and the website www.sustainableunh.unh.edu
- Operational best practices including a climate action plan, local and regional food purchasing, a landfill gas-to-energy project and revolving energy efficiency fund, alternative-fueled transit and campus vehicles, sustainable purchasing, green cleaning, green IT, and more.

UNH’s STARS gold rating data and information can be found at https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/university-of-new-hampshire-nh/report/2011-08-02/

“STARS was developed by the campus sustainability community to provide high standards for recognizing campus sustainability efforts,” says AASHE executive director Paul Rowland. “UNH has demonstrated a substantial commitment to sustainability by achieving a STARS gold rating and is to be congratulated for their efforts.”

STARS participants report achievements in three overall areas: education and research; operations; and planning, administration and engagement. To date, 286 campuses have registered for STARS, and ratings range through bronze, silver, gold, and platinum (not yet achieved by any institution). Because STARS is
based on credits earned for specific actions, it allows for both internal comparisons as well as comparisons with similar institutions. More information is at www.stars.aashe.org.

Chosen to be one of 60 STARS pilot campuses in 2008, UNH become a charter participant in 2009 and is also in the leadership circle of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. Home to the oldest endowed sustainability program in U.S. higher education, the UNH Sustainability Academy, UNH is an award-winning leader in integrating sustainability across curriculum, operations, research and engagement. Learn more at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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Photographs available to download:

- http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/unhcampus.jpg: UNH Photographic Services
- https://stars.aashe.org/media/seals/STARS-Seal-Gold-FINAL.jpg: Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education STA

Caption: The University of New Hampshire is one of only 20 campuses in North America to date to earn a STARS Gold Rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

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