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UNH Earns Highest National Rating for Sustainability

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2017/09/27/UNH-EARNS-HIGHEST-NATIONAL-RATING-FOR-SUSTAINABILITY)

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire is one of only three higher education institutions in the world to have earned a STARS Platinum rating--the highest possible--in recognition of its sustainability achievements from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education.

“Earning platinum status affirms UNH’s place as a national leader in sustainability,” said UNH President Mark Huddleston. “It is an enduring core institutional value, shaping our culture, informing our behavior and guiding us. As home to the oldest endowed university sustainability program in the U.S., UNH has sustainability ingrained in all that we do across education, research and practice.”



UNH COURTESY PHOTO

Some highlights of UNH’s sustainability achievements:

- Main campus is powered 100 percent by renewable energy
- 85 percent of campus energy comes from recycled landfill gas
- Home to the first organic dairy research farm in the nation
- Composts 25,000 pounds of dining hall food waste a month
- Ranked second in North America for the study of ecology

In addition to the Platinum rating, UNH is a fixture on Sierra Magazine’s list of “Cool Schools” and is one of 24 universities to receive a perfect score on Princeton Review’s Green College Honor Roll. To learn more about sustainability at UNH, the STARS report (<https://sustainableunh.unh.edu/unh-pathway-platinum-report>) is publicly available.

“We are very proud to have achieved the STARS Platinum rating,” said Miriam Nelson, director of the UNH Sustainability Institute. “Our campus community champions efforts to grow and nurture sustainability and while we will celebrate our accomplishments we also look forward to watching our sustainability efforts grow and improve as a result of the STARS initiative.” Nelson noted that obtaining Platinum status required a university-wide effort by faculty, staff and students to document and expand the work being done.

More than 400 institutions have earned a STARS rating, making AASHE’s STARS program the most widely recognized framework in the world for publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or university’s sustainability performance. Participants report achievements in five overall areas: academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation and leadership. UNH participated in the original STARS pilot group in 2008, earning a Gold rating in 2011 and 2014.

“This accomplishment highlights all the great sustainability work happening at UNH,” said AASHE Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser. “We are pleased to recognize the substantial commitment that UNH is making to advance sustainability on campus and in the surrounding community.”

Unlike other rating or ranking systems, this program is open to all institutions of higher education, and the criteria that determine a STARS rating are transparent and accessible to anyone. Because STARS is a program based on credits earned, it allows for both internal comparisons as well as comparisons with similar institutions.

AASHE is an association of colleges and universities that are working to create a sustainable future. AASHE’s mission is to empower higher education to lead the sustainability transformation. It provides resources, professional development and a network of support to enable institutions of higher education to model and advance sustainability in everything they do, from governance and operations to education and research. For more information about AASHE, visit www.aashe.org (<http://www.aashe.org/>).

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

Editor's Notes:

PHOTO FOR DOWNLOAD:

<https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/starsplatinum-image.jpg> (<http://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/starsplatinum-image.jpg>)

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