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### Pathway to Platinum: The University of New Hampshire 2017 Sustainability Report

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# Pathway to Platinum

## The University of New Hampshire 2017 Sustainability Report



Prepared by the  
**University of New Hampshire**  
**Sustainability Institute**

September 2017

*Updated March 2018*



**UNH Sustainability Institute**

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## I. OVERVIEW

In September 2017, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) at Durham became one of only three institutions of higher education in the country to earn a STARS Platinum rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). This recognition places us at the highest level of sustainability performance among colleges and universities.

UNH's Platinum rating was made possible through a concerted, university-wide effort that engaged faculty, staff, and students over the past year. This undertaking built on a 20-year foundation of work to advance sustainability at UNH that included participating in the original STARS pilot group in 2008 and attaining a Gold rating in 2011 and 2014. This progress inspired UNH's Sustainability Institute to conduct an initial analysis and present a proposal to pursue a "Pathway to Platinum" status to university leadership in the summer of 2016.

As a result, a Presidential Task Force was convened in fall of 2016 to inform and guide this effort. With input from the campus community, the Sustainability Institute submitted the UNH STARS (Sustainability Tracking and Rating System) Report to AASHE on July 27, 2017. (See [Appendix A](#).) This submission communicated our collective progress toward sustainability over the past three years.

This report offers a snapshot of the metrics that underpin UNH's accomplishments with regard to sustainability, the benefits that have come from the submission process, and a candid assessment of the challenges and opportunities that lay before us as we continue to work toward our shared vision of sustainability at UNH.

## II. ABOUT STARS

Used by more than 800 institutions of higher learning, STARS is the most widely respected and comprehensive system to assess sustainability performance at colleges and universities in the world. STARS ratings are based on objective, transparent, self-reported data from five spheres of university life: academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation. These data are used not only by AASHE to highlight campus sustainability efforts, but also by organizations including U.S. News & World Report Rankings, Princeton Review, and the Sierra Club that publish widely circulated and referenced annual lists of the most sustainable schools.

### III. BENEFITS OF REACHING FOR STARS PLATINUM

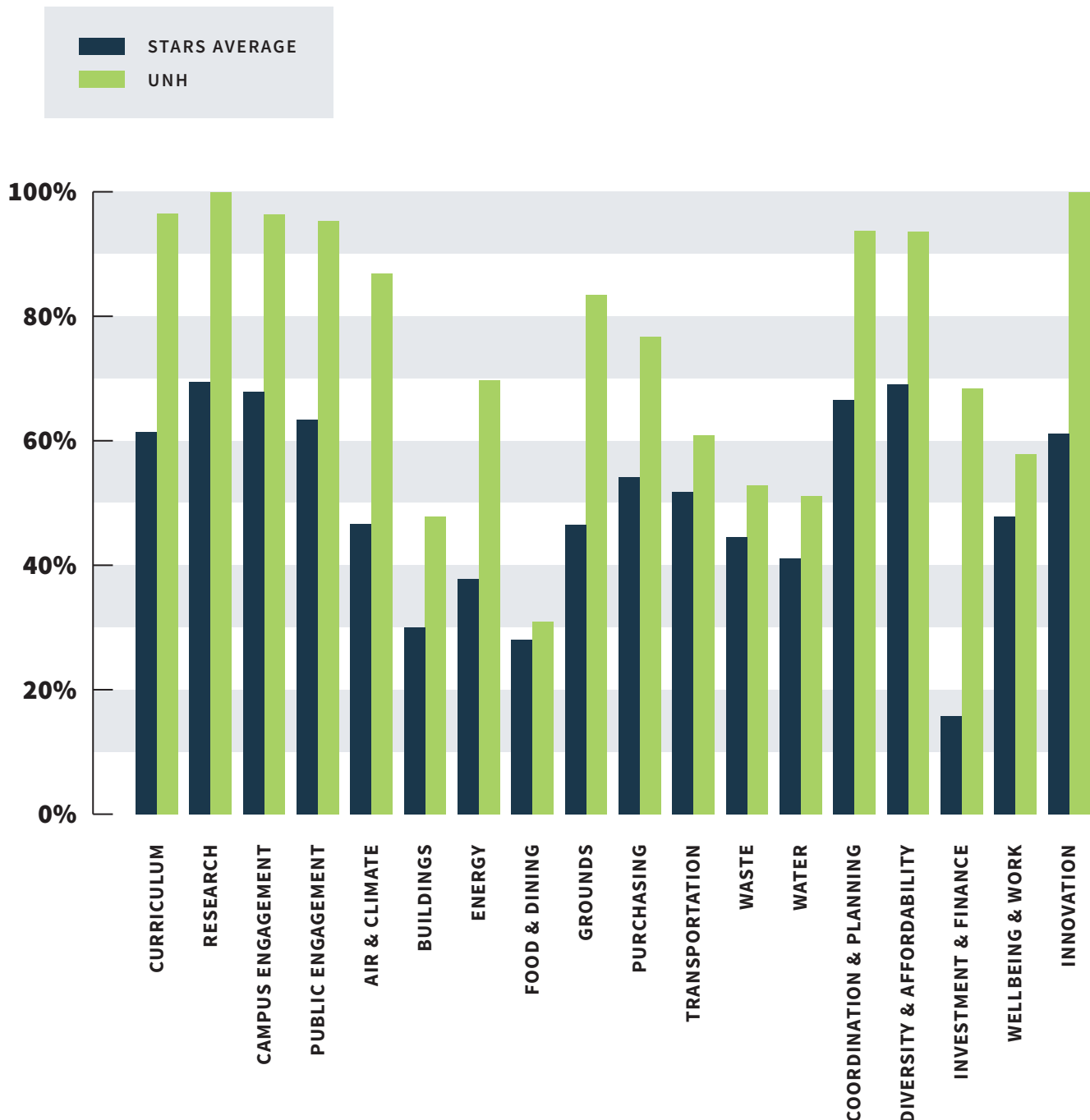
Achieving Platinum status required a significant, collective effort. (See [Acknowledgements](#).) This shared commitment has benefited the UNH community in many tangible ways. It also furthers our ongoing goal of reinforcing sustainability as a core value and identity at UNH in a variety of ways, including the following.

- ▶ **Responds to student interest in sustainability and thereby improves undergraduate recruitment and matriculation**
- ▶ **Provides a competitive career advantage for students**
- ▶ **Better positions our faculty for research funding**
- ▶ **Creates a platform for our university to address grand challenges**
- ▶ **Engages staff and faculty in strategic initiatives to foster a positive working climate**
- ▶ **Recognizes staff and administrators as important members of our sustainable learning community who educate our students and each other**
- ▶ **Makes operations more efficient and cost-effective over the long term**
- ▶ **Streamlines benchmarking and reporting of related and integrated activities**
- ▶ **Provides a framework to create a campus-wide vision for sustainability**

## IV. OUR STARS SCORE

To garner a Platinum rating, the University of New Hampshire scored **165.65 POINTS—OR 86% OF THE TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS**—across STARS’ 63 credit categories, which are organized into 18 domains that span academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation. UNH scored better than the national average in every domain. Figure 1 presents the percentage of credits obtained by UNH for each domain, as compared to STARS-published international averages. (See [Appendix B](#) for a tally of UNH’s score for all 63 credit categories.)

FIGURE 1.



## V. SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS AT UNH

The University of New Hampshire's STARS submission process helped us emphasize and bolster existing areas of strength and advance new initiatives over the past three years. These include, but are not limited to, the following programs and accomplishments.

### ENHANCING OUR ENERGY PROFILE



- ▶ UNH's greenhouse gas footprint is **DOWN 51%** from 2001 baseline.
- ▶ Our CoGen plant fueled by local landfill gas prevents thousands of tons of harmful methane emissions annually.
- ▶ We've invested heavily in renewables, including **100% RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY**.
- ▶ Our partnership with three New Hampshire micro-hydroelectric plants supports renewable energy generation.
- ▶ We have **INVESTED MORE THAN \$500,000** through a revolving energy efficiency fund each year.

### TRANSFORMING EDUCATION



- ▶ New faculty course incentive fund supports sustainability pedagogy.
- ▶ **453 undergraduate and 121 graduate courses** integrate sustainability-related content.
- ▶ **105 UNDERGRADUATE and 34 GRADUATE COURSES** are sustainability-focused.
- ▶ UNH offers **THREE SUSTAINABILITY-FOCUSED MAJORS**.

### ACCELERATING RESEARCH



- ▶ New Library Open Access Incentive Fund supports faculty and student researchers in making their research more widely accessible.
- ▶ **1,800 STUDENTS** participate in the 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference.
- ▶ **308 faculty** from all colleges, schools, and institutes conduct sustainability-related or -focused research.
- ▶ **UNH RANKS SECOND** in North America for ecology research productivity.

## MAKING TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENT

:



- ▶ **84% OF STUDENTS** use sustainable transportation for commutes to campus.
- ▶ UNH is the **LARGEST TRANSIT PROVIDER** in New Hampshire.
- ▶ Nearly one-third of the UNH fleet is powered with low-carbon alternative fuels, including our entire Wildcat Transit fleet.

## INVESTING IN SUSTAINABILITY

:



- ▶ A new Committee on Investor Responsibility advises and supports the UNH Foundation's sustainable investment strategies.
- ▶ UNH now makes a snapshot of its investment holdings available to the public.
- ▶ Granite Guarantee **IMPROVES COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY** for New Hampshire students.
- ▶ UNH investments in the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund surpass \$3 million.

## LEADING INNOVATION

:



- ▶ UNH becomes **FIRST NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY** to join the U.S. Department of Energy's Smart Labs Accelerator initiative with a commitment to reduce laboratory energy use by at least 20% over the next 10 years.
- ▶ UNH Dining Services **REDUCES BEEF PURCHASES BY 20%** between 2015 and 2017 to improve the sustainability and health of campus cuisine.
- ▶ UNH becomes **ONE OF THE FIRST CAMPUSES** to calculate its nitrogen footprint by developing SIMAP (the Sustainability Indicators Management and Analysis Platform), paving the way for other universities to follow.
- ▶ UNH's Dairy Bar was the **FIRST RESTAURANT IN THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE** to become three-star certified by the Green Restaurant Association, and today UNH is home to four of the five restaurants in the state that are three-star certified green.



## **PROTECTING ECOSYSTEMS**



- ▶ Real-time monitoring and comprehensive 10-year management plans are in place for woodlands and several agricultural areas.
- ▶ UNH coordinates research and practice to **ENHANCE HABITAT FOR SEVERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES**, including the New England cottontail rabbit and native bees.
- ▶ UNH's Stormwater Center **PROTECTS WATER RESOURCES** by advancing understanding and use of green infrastructure and other low-impact development strategies on campus and around the country.

## **STRENGTHENING OUR COMMITMENT TO ENGAGEMENT**



- ▶ 7,766 undergraduates contribute 348,878 **COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS** in 2017 to help strengthen UNH and surrounding communities.
- ▶ The Green Office program **ENGAGES UNH EMPLOYEES** to implement practices that help meet sustainability goals within their departments.
- ▶ UNH conducts its first survey of undergraduate students, faculty, and staff in spring 2017 to assess culture and perceptions around sustainability.
- ▶ On behalf of UNH, President Huddleston joins mayors, governors, college and university leaders, businesses, and investors as signatories on a [declaration to continue climate action to meet the Paris Agreement](#) in March 2017.

## VI. OUR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

UNH's STARS Platinum rating is a significant accomplishment, one that reflects a sincere commitment to sustainability. By definition sustainability is an aspirational endeavor, and the international community's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals underscore the transformational challenges and opportunities before us. We have much work to do before UNH can truly and comprehensively embody the vision of a sustainable learning community. The collaborative process and dialogue that was spurred by traveling the Pathway to Platinum helped us identify focus areas in which additional strategic effort will help UNH to move much closer to that aspiration.

The following list—which is neither exhaustive nor exclusive—points to significant opportunities for us to work collectively to enhance sustainability. Some of these are areas in which we already excel and wish to build upon; others have proved more challenging. We must tackle them all in order to fully demonstrate sustainability as a core value of our community and provide leadership as an institution of higher learning.

### **SUSTAINABILITY PEDAGOGY**

We must work together to develop systems that support transformative, integrative sustainability pedagogy across campus. This will go beyond bringing best practices to campus; we must re-think how we prepare our students to lead meaningful lives and careers that contribute to a more sustainable world.

### **ACCELERATE INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

We need to continue to foster an environment conducive to robust interdisciplinary practice across the university by defining and inspiring shared purpose. Changes are needed in both culture and structure to better support and reward interdisciplinary research and education across UNH.

### **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

While we scored well in this STARS domain, we recognize the need to do better. We have an ongoing commitment to support and sustain an educational community that is inclusive, diverse, and equitable. These values are inextricably linked to our mission of teaching and research excellence, and we must embrace them as critical to development, learning, and success. They must be shared, embraced, and integrated by all individuals and organizational units across the university.

### **UNH AS A PREFERRED WORKPLACE**

A recent employee survey indicated that 81% of staff and faculty are satisfied or very satisfied with being an employee of UNH. This level of satisfaction reflects an effort on behalf of the university to continuously improve working environments, benefits, and professional opportunities. In that spirit, the university will continue its efforts to be an employer of choice by creating an environment where employees are able to thrive.

### **WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING**

Our goal is to build and promote a culture of “zero-waste.” We will make significant investments in personnel, infrastructure, and systems that support waste minimization, reuse, and diversion.

#### **LONG-TERM ENERGY VISION**

Energy has long been an area of strength for UNH. Our next leadership opportunity is to first imagine and then build the clean-powered, resilient campus energy systems that will take us into the second half of this century.

#### **COMPREHENSIVE PROCUREMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

We must continue to centralize and streamline UNH procurement activities and incentivize the purchase of the most efficient, effective, and low-impact products available. This is vital to reducing our institutional impact and using our financial resources wisely.

#### **ENHANCED CAMPUS PLANNING FOR BIODIVERSITY**

We will concentrate more effort on linking day-to-day decisions and practices to low-impact development and ecosystem management policies.

#### **ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING**

Socially responsible investing is financially savvy investing. UNH will continue to build on its current foundation to become a leader in making investments that support strong communities, reduce exposure to risk, and reflect the forward-looking values of the institution.

The work to achieve Platinum status also identified several “process” strategies that will be needed both to build momentum for new projects and maintain our existing strengths. The most important of these include the following.

- ▶ **Engage all three UNH campuses in sustainability initiatives**
- ▶ **Develop tracking systems for sustainability-related activities on campus**
- ▶ **Publish a yearly, transparent report on the state of sustainability at UNH**
- ▶ **Implement a coordinated sustainability communications plan**
- ▶ **Identify individuals and departments who can facilitate shared leadership to address gaps**
- ▶ **Develop mechanisms for accountability and recognition to empower leaders**
- ▶ **Ensure that long-term sustainability considerations are embedded and integrated into relevant planning efforts**
- ▶ **Engage our new president early in her/his/their tenure**

## **SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL FOOD PROCUREMENT**

We will develop feasible solutions to increase local and regional produce procurement in UNH dining halls by enhancing or developing new relationships with farms, food hubs, and distributors.

## **VII. SUSTAINING OUR MOMENTUM**

Reaching Platinum status is a significant achievement for any college or university, and our rating is valid until September 2020. That does not mean that we can pause in our efforts to enhance sustainability at UNH. We must build on our recent efforts and continue to refine and realize a shared vision of sustainability at UNH, one that is informed by our history and values and motivated by our aspirations.

In this, we have the experience of our STARS submission to help guide us. The process highlighted both our strengths and those areas we know we can improve; it heightened our understanding of where we need to commit significant resources to do better; and it provides direction for how we can nurture our current areas of excellence.

In the near future, the Sustainability Institute will work with stakeholders across UNH's three campuses to realize our collective potential as leaders, educators, scholars, and practitioners of sustainability. Our Pathway to Platinum has been a collaborative experience, and we are thrilled to continue this work as we continue to shape our sustainable learning community.

## **VIII. THE SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE: A RESOURCE FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

The Sustainability Institute works to foster a culture of sustainability that permeates the civic, professional, and personal lives of members of the UNH community. This mission embraces a range of initiatives and programs at the University of New Hampshire and beyond, including the STARS submission. The recently published Sustainability Roadmap outlines a plan for how the institute will support the university over the next five years.

For more information about the Sustainability Institute, its roadmap, the STARS process, or to view a

particular STARS credit in more detail, please contact us at:

Sustainability Institute  
107 Nesmith Hall  
131 Main Street  
[sustainability@unh.edu](mailto:sustainability@unh.edu)  
(603) 862-8564

## IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals directly contributed to the STARS effort over the past year. We recognize that there may be others not listed here who contributed to the effort. Please contact the Sustainability Institute if you know of anyone else who should be acknowledged.

### PRESIDENTIAL STARS PATHWAY TO PLATINUM TASK FORCE

#### CHAIRS

Mim Nelson, *Director, Sustainability Institute*

Jan Nisbet, *Senior Vice Provost for Research*

#### FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS

Jennifer Andrews, *Sustainability Project Director, Sustainability Institute*

Kim Babbitt, *Associate Dean, COLSA*

Doug Bencks, *University Architect and Director, Campus Planning*

Heidi Bostic, *Dean, COLA*

Chris Clement, *Vice President, Finance and Administration*

Michael Durkin, *Director, Procurement Services*

Victoria Dutcher, *Vice President, Enrollment Management*

Debbie Dutton, *Vice President, Advancement*

Deborah Kinghorn, *Professor, Theatre and Dance [Resigned January 2017]*

Ted Kirkpatrick, *Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Students, Student Life*

Rick MacDonald, *Director, Business Affairs*

Bill McNamara, *Executive Director, Hospitality Services*

Kathy Neils, *Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, HR*

Jaime Nolan, *Associate Vice President, Community, Equity and Diversity*

Matt O'Keefe, *Director, Energy and Utilities*

Dante Scala, *Chair, Faculty Senate, COLA*

Joel Seligman, *Associate Vice President & Chief Communications Officer, Communications and Public*

*Affairs (CPA)*

P.T. Vasudevan, *Senior Vice Provost, Academic Affairs*

#### **STUDENT MEMBERS**

Daryn Clevesy, *Undergraduate Student, Environmental Conservation and Sustainability, COLSA*

Emily Dutton, *Undergraduate Student, Environmental Conservation and Sustainability, COLSA*

Jennifer Wilhelm, *Graduate Student, COLSA*

#### **UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**

Mark Huddleston, *President*

Nancy Targett, *Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs*

#### **UNH COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR STARS**

##### **STAFF AND FACULTY**

John Aber, *Professor, COLSA*

Lynn Beaver, *Senior Administrative Assistant, Student Life and Dean of Students*

Sue Bennett, *Director of Administration and Contracts, Facilities Services Administration*

Tracey Bentley, *Senior Producer, CPA*

Dave Bowley, *Utility Systems Manager, Energy and Utilities*

Megan Brabec, *Coordinator, Civic & Community Engagement*

Anne Broussard, *Associate Dean, CHHS*

Joanne Burke, *Thomas W. Haas Professor in Sustainable Food Systems, COLSA*

Dan Carchidi, *Associate Director of Academic Technology*

Sue Chalifoux, *Assistant Manager for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost*

Paul Chaloux, *Interim Manager, Grounds and Events*

David Clark, *Space Utilization Specialist, Campus Planning*

Brian Cournoyer, *Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator, Environmental Health and Safety*

Diana Couture, *Senior Administrative Assistant for Vice President of Research*

Faye Cragin, *Extension Specialist, Learning & Instructional Design, Cooperative Extension*

Pam Doherty, *Project Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Cooperative Extension*

Kristin Duisberg, *Editor-in-chief, CPA*

Eleta Exline, *Scholarly Communication Librarian, Library*

Mike Ferrara, *Dean, CHHS*

Nate Fitch, *Senior Lecturer, Outdoor Education, CHHS*

Kevin Gardner, *Professor, Environmental Research Group*

Martie Gleason, *Director, Compensation & Benefits, HR*

Jim Graham, *Manager of Leadership Communications, CPA*  
Erik Gross, *Associate Vice President, Advancement Treasurer, UNH Foundation*  
David Hill, *Director, Dining Hall Operations*  
James Houle, *Outreach Coordinator and Program Manager, Stormwater Center*  
Bill Janelle, *Associate Vice President, Facilities Administration*  
Scott Jones, *Director of Client Services, CPA*  
Tracy Keirns, *Assistant Director, Survey Center*  
Adam Kohler, *Campus Energy Manager, Energy and Utilities*  
Dawn LaPanne, *Information Systems Technical & Business Analyst, Facilities IT Group*  
Neil Larson, *Digital Communications Manager, CPA*  
Ken La Valley, *Dean and Director, Cooperative Extension*  
Valerie Lester, *Producer, CPA*  
Dovev Levine-Leung, *Assistant Dean, Graduate School*  
Rochelle L'Italien, *Nutritionist, Dining Services*  
Brad Manning, *Director, Environmental Health and Safety*  
Erika Mantz, *Director of Media Relations, CPA*  
Loren Marple, *Assistant Producer, CPA*  
Kim Marsh, *Benefits Manager, HR*  
David May, *Associate Vice President, Business Affairs*  
Sean McKinley, *UNH Survey Center*  
Leigh Ann Melanson, *Associate Provost, Finance and Administration, Office of the Provost*  
Deborah Merrill-Sands, *Dean, Paul College*  
Jean Mitchell, *Housekeeping Manager, Housekeeping*  
Cari Moorhead, *Interim Dean, UNH Graduate School*  
Catherine Overson, *Associate Director, Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching and Learning*  
Stephanie Parsons, *Project Manager, Facilities*  
Kim Persson, *Project Director, Institute for Health Policy and Practice*  
Steve Pesci, *Special Projects Director, Campus Planning*  
Pete Pekins, *Department Chair, Natural Resources and the Environment, COLSA*  
Janice Pierson, *Administrative Coordinator, Community, Equity and Diversity*  
Jo Porter, *Director, Institute for Health Policy and Practice*  
Beth Potier, *Research Communications Manager, CPA*  
Jean Richard, *Central Administration*  
Scott Ripley, *Senior Producer, CPA*  
Richard Rouleau, *Project Manager, Facilities*  
Paula Salvio, *Professor, COLA, Education, Culture and Sustainability*  
Jeff Schloss, *Program Team Leader, Natural Resources, Cooperative Extension*

Andy Smith, *Director, Survey Center*  
Mica Stark, *Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs, CPA*  
Linda St. Cyr, *Procurement Manager, Procurement Services*  
Stephen Trzaskoma, *Department Chair, Classics, Humanities, and Italian Studies, COLA*  
Larry VanDessel, *Executive Director, Facilities Services Administration*  
Chris VanHorn, *Communications & Event Coordinator, HR*  
Cameron Wake, *Josephine A. Lamprey Professor in Climate and Sustainability, Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space*  
Cheryl Wheelock, *Scholarly Communication, Library*  
Barbara White, *Faculty Director, Discovery Program*  
Brenda Whitmore, *Director, Facilities Project Management*  
Fiona Wilson, *Clinical Associate Professor of Social Innovation, Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability, Paul College*  
Terri Winters, *Director of Academic Technology and Director of UNH Online*  
Jake Withee, *Assistant Producer, CPA*  
Jon Wraith, *Dean, COLSA*

#### INTERNS

Brandon Allen, *STARS Intern*  
Katie Bennett, *Nitrogen Footprint Intern*  
Whitman Constantineau, *Outreach and Engagement Intern*  
Dan Jacobson, *STARS Intern*  
Matt L'Heureux, *STARS Intern*  
Jordan Mrvos, *STARS Intern*  
Sophia Rodriguez, *STARS Intern*

#### UNH SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

Tom Kelly, *Chief Sustainability Officer & Executive Director*  
Megan Carney, *Program Coordinator with Sustainability Fellows*  
Jane D'Antonio, *Project Coordinator with Food Solutions New England*  
El Farrell, *Sustainability Project Director*  
Colleen Flaherty, *Communications & Information Coordinator*  
Michelle Fox, *Program Support Assistant*  
Erin Hardie Hale, *Research & Planning Associate with NH Food Alliance*  
Benjamin Hill, *Project Coordinator with NH Food Alliance*  
Allison Leach, *Graduate Student, Natural Resources and Earth Systems Science*  
Maureen Miller, *Business Manager*  
Stacey Purslow, *Program Coordinator with New Hampshire Farm to School*



## **X. APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A. STARS REPORT SUBMISSION LETTER**



Office of the President

105 Main Street  
Durham, NH 03824

V: 603.862.2450  
F: 603.862.3060  
TTY: 7.1.1 (Relay NH)

Presidents.office@unh.edu

July 17, 2017

Ms. Meghan Fay Zahniser, Executive Director  
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education  
2401 Walnut Street, Suite 102  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Ms. Zahniser and staff of AASHE,

As a STARS Charter institution, the University of New Hampshire is proud to submit our third STARS report. Built on decades of work and engagement with the entire campus community, we are pleased to submit at the Platinum level.

UNH is committed to being a leader in sustainability – for our students, staff and faculty, our alumni, our state and region, and our future. Sustainability is a core institutional value here, shaping our culture, informing our behavior, and guiding everything we do. As a nationally recognized leader in sustainability, UNH draws on the support of the Sustainability Institute to act as convener, cultivator, and champion of sustainability on campus, in the state and region, and around the world.

We would like to acknowledge the thought and care that has gone into developing the STARS framework. We found it enormously helpful as an organizing framework for bringing our entire community together – further reinforcing our collective values around sustainability. The information included in our STARS submission is accurate to the best of our abilities, and we will be using it to help guide our planning and program development.

UNH applauds and appreciates AASHE's efforts to collaborate with college and universities, non-profits and businesses, government agencies and communities to develop and further refine STARS. Your work helps us do ours. We look forward to our continuing collaboration with AASHE on the development of STARS and other efforts into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Huddleston', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Huddleston, President

Copied:

Nancy Targett, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Miriam Nelson, Director, UNH Sustainability Institute  
Tom Kelly, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Jan Nisbet, Senior Vice Provost for Research  
Debbie Dutton, Vice President of Advancement  
Chris Clement, Vice President of Finance & Administration  
Joel Seligman, Associate Vice President and Chief Communications Officer  
Erika Mantz, Director of Media Relations

## APPENDIX B. STARS CREDIT TALLY

	Achieved	Available
<b>ACADEMICS</b>		
<b>CURRICULUM</b>		
Academic courses	12.61	14
Learning outcomes	8	8
Undergraduate programs	3	3
Graduate programs	3	3
Immersive experiences	2	2
Sustainability literacy assessment	4	4
Incentives for developing courses	2	2
Campus as a living laboratory	4	4
<b>CURRICULUM TOTAL</b>	<b>38.61</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>RESEARCH</b>		
Research and scholarship	12	12
Support for research	4	4
Open access to research	2	2
<b>RESEARCH TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ACADEMICS TOTAL</b>	<b>56.61</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
<b>CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT</b>		
Student educators program	4	4
Student orientation	2	2
Student life	2	2
Outreach materials and publications	2	2
Outreach campaign	4	4
Assessing sustainability culture	1	1
Employee educators program	3	3
Employee orientation	1	1
Staff professional development	1.25	2
<b>CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>20.25</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b>		
Community partnerships	3	3
Inter-campus collaboration	3	3
Continuing education	5	5
Community service	3.57	5

	Achieved	Available
Participation in public policy	2	2
Trademark licensing	2	2
<b>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>18.57</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ENGAGEMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>38.82</b>	<b>41</b>

## OPERATIONS

### AIR AND CLIMATE

Greenhouse gas emissions	8.56	10
Outdoor air quality	1	1
<b>AIR AND CLIMATE TOTAL</b>	<b>9.56</b>	<b>11</b>

### BUILDINGS

Buildings operations and maintenance	2	5
Building design and construction	1.83	3
<b>BUILDINGS TOTAL</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>8</b>

### ENERGY

Building energy consumption	4.6	6
Clean and renewable energy	2.37	4
<b>ENERGY TOTAL</b>	<b>6.97</b>	<b>10</b>

### FOOD AND DINING

Food and beverage purchasing	0.47	6
Sustainable dining	2	2
<b>FOOD AND DINING TOTAL</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>8</b>

### GROUNDS

Landscape management	1.34	2
Biodiversity	2	2
<b>GROUNDS TOTAL</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>4</b>

### PURCHASING

Sustainable procurement	2.5	3
Electronic purchasing	0.85	1
Cleaning and janitorial purchasing	0.67	1
Office paper purchasing	0.58	1
<b>PURCHASING TOTAL</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6</b>

	Achieved	Available
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Campus fleet	0.28	1
Student commute modal split	1.68	2
Employee commute modal split	0.3	2
Support for sustainable transportation	2	2
<b>TRANSPORTATION TOTAL</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WASTE</b>		
Waste minimization and diversion	3.36	8
Construction and demolition diversion	0.93	1
Hazardous waste management	1	1
<b>WASTE TOTAL</b>	<b>5.29</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WATER</b>		
Water use	1.58	5
Rainwater management	2	2
<b>WATER TOTAL</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>OPERATIONS TOTAL</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION</b>		
<b>COORDINATION AND PLANNING</b>		
Sustainability coordination	1	1
Sustainability planning	4	4
Participatory governance	2.5	3
<b>COORDINATION AND PLANNING TOTAL</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY</b>		
Diversity and equity coordination	1.89	2
Assessing diversity and equity	1	1
Support for underrepresented groups	3	3
Affordability and access	3.47	4
<b>DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY TOTAL</b>	<b>9.36</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>INVESTMENT AND FINANCE</b>		
Committee on investor responsibility	2	2
Sustainable investment	1.81	4
Investment disclosure	1	1
<b>INVESTMENT AND FINANCE TOTAL</b>	<b>4.81</b>	<b>7</b>

	Achieved	Available
<b>WELLBEING AND WORK</b>		
Employee compensation	1.49	3
Assessing employee satisfaction	1	1
Wellness program	1	1
Workplace health and safety	1.16	2
<b>WELLBEING AND WORK TOTAL</b>	<b>4.65</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION TOTAL</b>	<b>25.32</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>165.65</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>INNOVATION</b>		
SIMAP	1	1
Reduction of red meat	1	1
NEMS / Fellows	1	1
Micro hydro	1	1
<b>INNOVATION TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL PERCENT</b>	<b>86.00</b>	<b>100</b>