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Letter of Affirmation: Reusable To-go Boxes Innovation Credits for AASHE February 8, 2016

This letter is to affirm, based on my expertise as a teacher, researcher, and consultant, that the Clarkson University (2015) Reusable To-Go Box policy for this credit is innovative, based on the AASHE guidelines (stars.aashe.org). The Clarkson policy involved a \$0.50 charge for the use of disposable take-away containers in the dining halls.

This had an immediate impact on solid waste that was visible around the campus, saving dozens of bags of waste every day. Much of the campus quickly switched over to reusable to go containers or plates, choosing to dine in. This saved campus dollars and labor resources.

Based on the five AASHE criteria that I am aware of, I believe this policy is innovative:

- 1. Is it new?** Yes. The concept was developed in 2014, the policy was adopted in 2015, and the program implemented in 2015-16.
- 2. Is it extraordinary?** Yes. This was a major change in university food service operations, required cooperation among multiple partners (student government, our outsourced food service provider), and resulted in significant shifts in student, staff, and faculty behavior.
- 3. Is it unique?** Yes. My understanding is that other schools have charged for using disposables. What makes the charge innovative at Clarkson is that the funds generated from the disposable tax are allocated to the Clarkson University Sustainability Fund. So far those funds have been spent to pay for an agroforestry project and for students to plant trees on campus. This policy teaches our community about environmental economics (where the polluter pays) as well as the triple bottom line for any good business model: people, planet, and profits.
- 4. Is it ground-breaking?** Yes. This project was driven by student-led innovation projects that sought to provide positively reinforcing policies that provided alternatives and incentives to shift cultural norms and result in significant reductions in waste.
- 5. Has it led to uncommon outcomes, policies, and practices?** Yes. Although there were several unexpected outcomes, there has been a significant shift in awareness and behaviors, and there are several similar policies now working their way through our political systems on campus. Several groups, including our Microfinance Club and multiple environmentally-focused groups on campus are using this as a living-learning tool for change. I personally have used this policy as an example of innovative policy in both my undergraduate Management of Technology course (Fall 2015 semester) and in my MBA Strategic Management course (Spring 2015 semester).

Conclusions: It is my opinion that this policy and program meet AASHE's criteria for innovativeness, or meets any other standard criteria for innovation. It's unique, it's novel, it fills a need, and it's been brought into the marketplace.

Qualifications for Assessment: I was not personally involved in either the development, approval, or direct implementation of this policy. I teach strategic management (with an emphasis on innovation) and sustainable supply chain at both the undergraduate, graduate, and executive programs at Clarkson University, and at our partner school, the University of Applied Sciences, in Konstanz, Germany. I am currently chair of the curriculum design group responsible for our school's undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Innovation and Entrepreneurship degree program. I am a faculty affiliate of our University's Reh Center for Entrepreneurship and have worked extensively with our Shipley Center for Innovation. I have published research pertaining to innovation and sustainable supply chain management, most recently in the Journal of Supply Chain Management in 2013. I have served as a consultant to a variety of for-profit and non-profit organizations on managing technology and innovation. I have a doctorate in Management Strategy and Policy from Michigan State University (2000), where my dissertation addressed structural activities that impact innovation within the pharmaceutical industry.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Wasserman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael E. Wasserman