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

Dear Meghan:

It is with great pleasure that I verify that California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) has completed its second submittal to the AASHE Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS), and that these responses are complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am proud to report that CSUDH is submitting for a higher rating of Silver after achieving a Bronze rating with our first-ever submittal less than two years ago. I believe this submittal demonstrates the extraordinary and rapid progress we have made to embrace sustainability as a core value of our university and represents an important milestone on our path to Gold and Platinum ratings in the future.

In the short time since our last submittal, our nascent efforts to establish the next generation of student sustainability leaders has blossomed into a thriving student internship program. This academic year, we had 13 student interns and dozens of student volunteers engaging literally thousands (2,490 to be exact) of their on and off-campus community members in sustainable behavior change campaigns and education. Even our physical grounds and buildings are serving as living laboratories to engage our campus community in developing sustainability solutions that benefit us all.

One such example is our Campus Urban Farm, which provides hundreds of pounds of produce for our most in-need students, serves as a hub for engaging our local communities and K-12 institutions in urban gardening, and has emerged as a venue for harnessing sustainability practices that not only benefit the planet, but combat regional food desert issues and support student success. It is, however, only one piece of a larger campus system that exemplifies the ingenuity and collaborative nature that defines our Toro students, faculty, and staff. In addition to the Farm, CSUDH has evolved a unique approach in using its sustainability initiatives around food to fundamentally address the basic needs of our students and ensure their success. This includes a robust food recovery program featuring a CSUDH chapter of the national Food Recovery Network that is one of the most active in the state, a weekly EBT-friendly Farmers Market providing Market Match benefits to CalFresh recipients, and even partnering with a campus-developed app which notifies students directly of extra food at campus events.

As a campus that embraces innovation, it should be no surprise that our buildings also exemplify cutting-edge technologies and best practices that are leading the state in the drive towards carbon neutrality. While new buildings such as our LEED certified Science and Innovation building are certainly contributing towards a more sustainable future, it is our existing buildings that are leading the charge. Our state of the art monitoring systems, analytics, and adoption of new technology has created a perfect testing environment to demonstrate new innovations in the pursuit of net zero energy buildings, and even now are the focus of active case studies for the California Energy Commission and the California State University System as a whole to show the world a more sustainable path moving forward.

CSUDH prides itself on its educational mission. This involves not only providing transformative high-quality education and scholarship in the traditional sense, but also providing the support necessary to create socially and environmentally responsible global citizens regardless of their major and background. We aim to use our resources to not only engage our campus community in sustainability leadership, but our regional and global communities as well. We hope this small snapshot into our efforts shows the rapid progress we are making towards this mission, and we look forward to sharing the continued growth of our sustainability efforts in the near future.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Parham, Ph.D.
President