STARS Steering Committee Update
RE: Rationale for including standards and programs in STARS
April 4, 2011

Overview
In the process of preparing credit improvements for STARS 2.0, it has become clear that we need a sound rationale to share with the public as to how certain standards or programs make their way into STARS. A few examples include referencing Green Seal for OP credit 11, Cleaning Product Purchasing or referencing LEED in OP credits 1 and 2, Buildings Operations & Maintenance and Building Design & Construction. Several organizations have approached us about having their program referenced in STARS and developing a clear process that we can share with such groups will be helpful and add to our transparency.

Proposal
If an organization approaches the STARS Team with a request to have their standard or program included in STARS, following is a process that will be followed to determine the response to such a request.

Step 1: STARS Team will respond to the request and ask for a written proposal for how the program or standard could be incorporated into STARS.

Step 2: The proposal will be shared with the STARS Technical Advisors for the appropriate subcategory. The Technical Advisor Work Group will discuss the proposal with the STARS Content Specialist and consider the following questions:
  - Is the standard or program widely used in higher education?
  - Are the criteria for recognition under the standard or program transparent?
  - Does the standard or program have a transparent governance system with representation from relevant stakeholder groups?
  - Does the standard or program have mechanisms for ensuring that data it uses are accurate?
  - Is the standard or program supported by relevant social and environmental organizations?
  - Is the standard or program comprehensive in scope?
  - How does the standard or program compare with other standards or programs addressing the same issue?

Step 3: The Technical Advisor Work Group, with input from staff, will come to a conclusion as to whether including this standard or program would add value to STARS, and make a recommendation to the STARS Steering Committee.

Step 4: The STARS Steering Committee will review the recommendation from the Technical Advisor Work Group and decide on the appropriate response.

Step 5: The STARS Team conveys the outcome of the Steering Committee discussion back to the Technical Advisors and responds to the organization who posed the request.