**Template Press Release**

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**XYZ Institution Receives STARS (Reporter, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) Rating for Sustainability Achievements**

**City of school, STATE**– XYZ Institution has earned a STARS (Reporter, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) rating 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.

XYZ Institution’s STARS report is publicly available on the STARS website:

[Insert URL]

[Info about school’s participation here (when, why, goals, importance, history of previous sustainability efforts, etc).]

[Quote from college/university rep here (ideally a chancellor, president or sustainability director).]

With more than 800 participants in 30 countries, AASHE’s STARS program is 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: 1) academics 2) engagement, 3) operations, 4) planning and administration, and 5) innovation and leadership.

“STARS was developed by the campus sustainability community to provide high standards for recognizing campus sustainability efforts,” said AASHE Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser. “XYZ has demonstrated a substantial commitment to sustainability by achieving a STARS (XXXXXXXX) Rating and is to be congratulated for their efforts.”

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.

[“We are very proud to have achieved a STARS rating for our sustainability accomplishments. We look forward to watching our sustainability efforts grow and improve through the STARS program,” said XYZ Institution spokesperson.]

**[About XYZ Institution here:]**

**About AASHE:**

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).

For more information about the STARS program, visit [stars.aashe.org](http://www.aashe.org/stars).

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**Key points to remember when communicating about STARS:**

* "Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System" is the complete name for STARS. Use an ampersand (&) and no comma between “Assessment” and “Rating.” Use the acronym “STARS” in subsequent references.
* STARS is a program of AASHE, The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.
* STARS is a “rating” not a “ranking” system.
* STARS is a sustainability-focused system, it does not only assess environmental factors but also social and economic factors.
* An institution’s STARS score is based on the percentage of applicable points it earns across four main categories of credits (i.e. Academics, Engagement, Operations, and Planning & Administration). Any Innovation credits earned are then added to the final percentage, determining the total STARS score.
* STARS ratings are earned based on the total score achieved by the institution. Ratings are not awarded for the score achieved in an individual category (i.e. If an institution earns 50% of applicable points in the Engagement Category, it does not achieve a STARS Silver Rating in the category).
* STARS has been developed by the higher education community through a transparent and inclusive process. STARS is designed to:
  + Provide a framework for understanding sustainability in all sectors of higher education.
  + Enable meaningful comparisons over time and across institutions using a common set of measurements developed with broad participation from the campus sustainability community.
  + Create incentives for continual improvement toward sustainability.
  + Facilitate information sharing about higher education sustainability practices and performance.
  + Build a stronger, more diverse campus sustainability community.
* STARS is a “self-assessment system.” Language implying that AASHE gives, assigns, certifies, or grants STARS ratings should be avoided.
* STARS incorporates [data accuracy processes](https://stars.aashe.org/pages/support/stars-report-accuracy.html) that protect the credibility of the program and provide a fair and transparent means for resolving questions about the accuracy of reported data.
* Please see the [STARS Technical Manual](https://stars.aashe.org/pages/about/technical-manual.html) for a more in-depth overview of the credits included in STARS and how they are scored.