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University of Missouri earns STARS Gold Rating for Sustainability Achievements

Columbia, MO – The University of Missouri has earned a STARS Gold rating for the second time 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. [Mizzou's STARS report](#) is publicly available.

Established in 2009, the MU Sustainability Office submitted its first STARS report and released its first climate action plan in 2010. The university has been aggressively pursuing its sustainability goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050 ever since. Nearly 40 percent of its energy portfolio comes from renewable sources such as biomass, wind and solar energy. In addition, MU has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 51 percent since its 2008 baseline year.

As sustainability manager, Srinivasan "Raghu" Raghavan, along with his student staff, identified 341 undergraduate and graduate sustainability courses offered at Mizzou and nearly 2,000 courses that include sustainability topics. Additionally, more than 70 percent of MU's faculty and staff researchers are engaged in sustainability research.

"The University of Missouri embraces its role in providing a healthy and safe learning environment for its students, faculty and staff," said Gary L. Ward, vice chancellor for Operations and interim vice chancellor for Student Affairs. "Consistent with MU's mission and values, we are committed to demonstrating local and global environmental stewardship."

MU is the only university recognized twice—in 2004 and 2017—as the International District Energy Association’s system of the year. Also in 2017, MU was recognized by the EPA’s Green Power Partnership as a national leader in the development and use of renewable energy. The university consistently ranks among the top EPA Green Power Partnership producers of on-site generation of green energy, currently ranking sixth, only behind Apple, Walmart, the U.S. Department of Energy, the State of California and the University of California System.

For the STARS submission, the university reported the greatest improvement in the curriculum and research categories.

More than 400 institutions have earned a STARS rating, making AASHE’s STARS program 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 & Administration, and 5) Innovation & Leadership.

“STARS was developed by the campus sustainability community to provide high standards for recognizing campus sustainability efforts,” AASHE Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser said. “The University of Missouri has demonstrated a substantial commitment to sustainability by achieving a STARS Gold Rating and is to be congratulated for its efforts.”

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 and comparisons with similar institutions.

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

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.