

# Eastern garners environmental designation

## DWIGHT BACHMAN

EASTERN CONNECTICUT  
STATE UNIVERSITY

WILLIMANTIC—Eastern Connecticut State University has recently been highlighted for its sustainability efforts in the “2019 Sustainable Campus Index.”

It was honored in a publication of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

The index highlights initiatives at colleges and universities that submitted a Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) report in the most recent calendar year.

The university was recognized as a “Highlighted Institution” for the Sustainable CT program managed by the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern, as well as for being among the highest scorers among universities in the “Food and Dining” sustainability category.

“We are pleased with this recognition of our progress on sustainability at Eastern, and we realize that we have a lot of work ahead of us to achieve our climate and sustainability goals,” said Lynn Stoddard, executive director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy and chairperson of Eastern’s Green Campus Committee.

“We are inspired by the sustainability accomplishments of our peers and continue to learn from each other.”

In 2018, the Institute for Sustainable Energy launched Sustainable CT, a voluntary certification program to support and recognize thriving and resilient Connecticut communities.

The program offers a menu of actions in nine broad categories, including equity and inclusion, local economies, arts and culture and environmental stewardship.

More than half of Connecticut’s municipalities partici-

pate in Sustainable CT and 22 towns and cities earned certification in the program’s first year.

In the “Food and Dining” category, Eastern was recognized as a top performer among colleges and universities.

Chartwells, Eastern’s food service provider, has introduced a number of environmentally conscious initiatives, including a tray-less dining room and donations of surplus food to the local food pantry.

A recent “Zero Waste” barbecue luncheon featured an environmental theme, which emphasized reusable, recyclable or compostable materials to minimize waste.

The event enhanced Eastern’s Green Campus Initiative and communities beyond Willimantic as well.

Waste from the luncheon was taken to Quantum Bio-Power in Southington, where it was processed and turned

into electricity to power Southington Town Hall and the Southington police and fire stations.

Chartwells has supported other sustainable food systems by making low-impact dining options available, educating customers about more sustainable options, offering meatless dining, and instituting sustainable food and beverage practices.

“Eastern’s dedication to environmental stewardship is evidenced by a range of sustainability efforts seen daily on our campus,” said Eastern President Elsa Núñez.

“We are happy to highlight Eastern Connecticut State University in this year’s Sustainable Campus Index,” said AASHE Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser.

*Eastern’s STARS report is publicly available on the STARS website: <https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/eastern-connecticut-state-university-ct/report>.*