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University of Illinois at Chicago Receives Bronze Sustainability Rating, First Illinois University to Be Rated

Chicago, IL – University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) received a Bronze rating in a new program to encourage sustainability in all aspects of higher education. The program, known as STARS (Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment & Rating System), is administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

UIC is the first university in Illinois to file for a STARS rating. To date, over 240 higher education institutions have registered as STARS Participants and the first reports were due January 31, 2011. In 2008 UIC formalized its sustainability initiatives with the establishment of an Office of Sustainability and the Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy. UIC is a signatory to the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact, the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, and the Talloires' Declaration. UIC developed a Climate Action Plan in 2009, establishing goals and priorities for major campus sustainability initiatives in energy conservation, renewable energy, recycling, sustainable food, and use of active transportation.

"As we strive to be committed to environmental sustainability in all aspects of our mission and to consistently perform all university functions in the most sustainable ways possible, STARS provides UIC with a comprehensive tool to document our progress," said Cynthia Klein-Banai, Associate Chancellor for Sustainability. "We are proud to be starting at the Bronze level. With high points for planning, administration and engagement, I know we have the administrative support and plans in place to achieve Silver, or even Gold, in our next submission."

STARS is the only program of its kind that involves the public reporting of a college or university's comprehensive sustainability performance. Participants report achievements in three overall areas: 1) education & research, 2) operations, and 3) planning, administration & engagement. UIC offers courses in the sustainability area, has achieved 16% energy savings since 2004, installed renewable energy technologies on campus, installed green roofs on four buildings, received LEED Gold certification for Lincoln Hall, increased its recycling rate by nearly 20% in three years, and established an heirloom farm on campus.

Unlike other rating or ranking systems, this program is open to all institutions of higher education in the U.S. and Canada, and the criteria that determine a STARS rating are transparent and accessible to anyone. Because STARS is based on credits

earned, it allows for both internal comparisons as well as comparisons with similar institutions.

“We are looking forward to the enthusiastic participation from our students, faculty, and staff, as well as watching our sustainability efforts grow on campus as measured through the STARS program,” said Klein-Banai.

For more information about UIC, visit <http://www.uic.edu>.

For more information about the STARS program, visit www.aashe.org/stars.

To view the entire UIC STARS report, visit <http://bit.ly/e8n6Wo>.

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