December 23, 2010

Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability

Re: Response to Letter of Inquiry

Project: Natural Resources Building Prairie Restoration

Dear Gary,

On behalf of the Student Sustainability Committee for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, I would like to thank you for responding to our call for letters of inquiry to use funds raised by the student Clean Energy Technology and Sustainability Fees to implement a project that improves the sustainability of our campus. Each letter was evaluated based on its sustainability impact (i.e. energy or sustainability impact, campus presence, project longevity, and budget) and broader impact (i.e. education and creativity). The Committee has adopted a focus of supporting projects representing technology diffusion or capacity development in campus sustainability. Within this round, the Committee over 40 letters requesting a total of $3 million – several times our annual budget.

The Committee is pleased to inform you that your letter was selected to advance to the second stage of project consideration, and requests that you submit a proposal for funding of this project. Please use the provided template while preparing your proposal to the Committee and submit your proposal to us by January 30th. We encourage you to communicate with us during the proposal development process so as to create the best possible project, and to ensure that the goals of all stakeholders are met. Please note that the total dollar value of projects proceeding to this stage is over $700,000, and so all projects cannot be funded during this fiscal year. Based on received proposals, the Committee may choose to provide funding this fiscal year, to defer your project to the next fiscal year for reconsideration, or to deny funding. Examples of past proposals may be found on our website. All implemented projects will be expected to follow the relevant campus policies and procedures as well as any applicable State and Federal laws.

As part of your proposal, please connect with relevant F&S stakeholders and submit the necessary approvals for your project. Please also provide a detailed project implementation plan, site map and budget, including information about the species to be planted, removal of any non-native vegetation, and expected maintenance responsibilities after the restoration. Please also confirm that no future development is planned for the site for at least 10 years. Please clarify the exact siting given that the letter discusses the planting of woodland species (which are likely for the north side of the building), as well as prairie species (likely for the south side), but only discusses a single planting site.

We note that about half of the requested project costs are for implementation and half for documentation. The implementation component is fully within the committee’s mandate but the documentation component, as written, is not. Thus we ask that you make the following modifications –

 1) That the video/manual documentation be expanded to also discuss the restoration of prairie ecosystems so that future University departments without the Institute’s resources will be able to carry out similar projects, and

2) That the Institute work with students and other interested parties to develop a second stage plan that extend the proposed restoration around the remainder of the building. Such a plan would form the basis for securing campus approvals and other external fund-raising, as well funds from the Committee in the future.

Thank you again for your work to make the campus more sustainable and we hope to work with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Suhail Barot,

Committee Chair