

December, 1 2009

## Letter of Inquiry for Student Sustainability Committee

The Solar Decathlon is a prestigious bi-annual competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Only twenty teams of college and university students are selected from around the world in each competition. Each student team designs, builds and operates an energy efficient, solar-powered home for this competition. Teams are required to meet specific criteria, demonstrating their ability to design and build an innovative, entirely solar-powered, 800-square-foot home from scratch. Each house must produce enough electricity and hot water to perform all the functions of a home. The house will be judged in ten specific areas of competition: architecture, market viability, engineering, lighting design, communications, comfort zone, hot water, appliances, home entertainment, and net metering. Solar Decathlon is truly a multi-disciplinary project and provides an exceptional opportunity for students to interact with a team composed of members from many disciplines. The Solar Decathlon event is a highly publicized national event. The 10-day showcase of each team's design, on the national mall in Washington D.C., is a highly visible event that advocates public education and research advancement for solar energy, home systems efficiency, and green building design and construction. There were hundreds of thousands of people, including many congressmen, to observe the powerful combination of solar energy, energy efficiency and home design. In addition to the great learning experiences for hundreds of students involved in this unique multi-disciplinary project, it is also a great opportunity to promote University of Illinois and highlight the achievements at Illinois in national media.

The University of Illinois previously qualified and competed in the Solar Decathlon in 2007 and 2009. The Illinois team won the 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 2009 competition. As Chancellor Herman wrote in his letter of congratulations to the team: *"Finishing in the top two among the very best in the nation and Europe is an achievement that has made the entire Illinois family proud. ... The creativity and hard work you each contributed to this effort shows how the interdisciplinary approach at Illinois can lead to amazing accomplishment."*

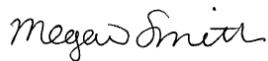
Currently, students and faculty of the university submitted a proposal for submission to the U.S. DOE to compete in the Solar Decathlon 2011 (we will be notified by December 18<sup>th</sup> as to our acceptance). Each team invited to participate in this international contest receives \$100,000 start-up funds from the U.S. DOE to design, build and operate an energy efficient, fully solar-powered home. Approximately **\$700,000 additional funds** will need to be raised in order for the Illinois team to compete. It should be emphasized that the Solar Decathlon is a student design competition and that students will be responsible for the workload regarding the design and building of the home. There were hundreds of students involved in the solar decathlon projects in past years, and will continue to be on the 2011 house. These students come from many of the different colleges including ACES, Architecture and Engineering. The house was visible on

campus during the summer of 2009 and is now located on the I-Hotel property. The hope for the 2011 house is to construct it on campus, creating more awareness while classes are in session.

We are requesting to be considered for a **flexible** grant amount, hoping to receive a minimum of **\$40,000** from the Student Sustainability Committee to help fund the cost of various different materials and educational needs that will arise. This amount includes, but is not limited to the partial cost of, Solar Panels, Sustainable Design Materials, Sustainable Design Consultants, Energy Calculation Software, and Educational Awareness Days (these days will be co-sponsored by the Illinois Extension Program). Additional Funding will be needed throughout the 2 year project and will be addressed through future petitions/proposals addressing the specific needs at that time.

There is a strong belief that without the partnership with the Student Sustainable Committee, the 2011 competition will lack the necessary means, both financially as well and through your advising role, to compete in the upcoming competition. This will thus retard the momentum acquired from the previous four years of work. Thank you again for your support in this past competition. We look forward to having the opportunity to work with you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Smith".

Megan Smith