



**ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE
TECHNOLOGY CENTER**
PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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University of Illinois Student Sustainability Committee
284 Illini Union, MC-384
1401 W. Green Street
Urbana, IL 61801

Members of the Student Sustainability Committee,

ISTC is pleased to offer this letter of support for the SSC Step 2 proposal entitled “Illini Gadget Garage: Education through Electronic Product Life Extension.” ISTC has worked with multiple campus entities to reduce waste and create a more sustainable campus community. This is part of our mission to encourage and assist citizens, businesses, and government agencies to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources, and reduce waste to protect human health and the environment of Illinois and beyond. Through our Sustainable Electronics Initiative (SEI), ISTC has worked to foster a more sustainable system for the design, manufacture, and end-of-life management of electronic devices since 2009. During that time, SEI has provided unique experiential education projects, such as the International Sustainable Electronics Competition, and collaborative courses, such as the spring 2014 ENG 498 course entitled “Sustainable Technology: Environmental and Social Impacts of Innovations.”

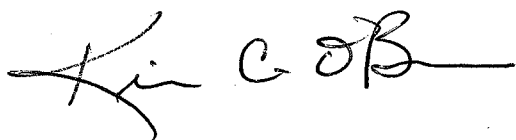
The proposed electronics repair center will provide additional educational opportunities for students and staff, by empowering them to extend the useful life of their electronic devices. This in turn will reduce the need for purchasing new devices, the manufacture of which entails large investments in terms of energy, materials, and human resources. Extending the useful life of electronics is also important in addressing our nation’s growing e-waste problem, and may reduce the rates of turnover of electronics and of unwanted electronics sent for recycling among members of our campus community. This is important for the State of Illinois, since our current electronics legislation has resulted in budget shortfalls for manufacturer supported electronics recycling programs. By engaging students and staff in discussion and activities related to the ease with which electronic devices can be dismantled and repaired, this project will help UI students understand the importance of considering a product’s entire life cycle during the design and manufacture phases—information they may take with them as they leave our campus and become members of industry, hopefully to help make future generations of technology more sustainable.

ISTC will provide \$10,000 worth of matching funds, to help cover expenses such as, but not limited to, graduate student and staff salaries in other departments, expenses for courses associated with the repair center, travel funds for a graduate student to participate in the iFixit

technical writing symposium, and operational expenses associated with space for the center. The commitment of such funds is predicated on the project receiving the requested seed funding of approximately \$95,000 from SSC. While the recovery of costs for a portion of ISTC staff time dedicated to the project is included in the proposed budget, it should also be noted that contingent upon SSC seed funding, the project and its activities will be promoted via the SEI web site. That site is hosted by ISTC and maintained by its staff. This service constitutes an in-kind contribution equivalent to at least \$1680, based solely upon a minimum time commitment from Joy Scrogum, SEI coordinator, throughout the course of the project period.

We look forward to participating in this important education and waste reduction effort for the campus, and hope you will also recognize this effort as a worthwhile investment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin C. O'Brien", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin C. O'Brien, Ph.D.
Director, Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC)