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Respondent

20

Leon Liebenberg

17:32

Time to complete

1. Project Name: \*

Reimagine our Future (ROF) Sustainability Contest

2. Semester or date of project's original submission. \*

Fall 2023

3. Below please include a brief project summary and your requested changes. \*

The project is designed to demystify "sustainability" among undergraduate students and to elicit a broad-based discussion about sustainability. Students are challenged to generate novel ideas to address one or more of the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Students are also assisted by more than 100 voluntary specialist advisors from the UIUC and beyond. Students submit their ideas via fact sheets that are adjudicated by volunteer specialists from academia and beyond. Winning teams or individuals receive financial awards and are also mentored by a professional to help take their ideas further.

REQUEST: We request that the \$33,800 funds be reallocated so that the ROF competition can adopt the HeroX platform (instead of Word Press). We have maxed out the capabilities of Word Press and its mostly useless plugins. The Word Press platform cannot accommodate submission of hundreds of entries (which we had to receive via individual emails), nor does it facilitate the easy emailing to our contestants and advisors, and it also cannot help contestants to easily contact one another to form teams. The proposed new platform, HeroX, meets all of the above important requirements (which Word Press and other platforms like YouNoodle do not).

HeroX costs 18% of the total competition award money (\$6000) = \$1080.

HeroX will also pay all winners, instead of the laborious and exceedingly time-consuming process of asking our business offices to take care of that --- HeroX charges a menial \$500 to manage payout of the 7 winning teams' award monies.

We therefore request that a minimum of \$1080 + \$500 = \$1580 be reallocated so that we can purchase this platform and ask HeroX to manage payment of future winners.

However, HeroX can also do social media promotion of our competition, for which they are renowned. That crowd engagement component will cost \$9000. This service is sorely needed as Illinois Public Affairs and the Offices of the Provosts cannot help us with competition promotion.

If this additional (one-off) \$9000 is allocated, together with the required \$1580, we will not be able to appoint students assistants in 2025 using the current funds. We would need to apply for fresh SSC funding for 2025 support.

4. Date of Scope Change Submission \*

3/14/2025

5. Type of Scope Change: \*

- ☒ Project Direction
- ☐ Budget
- ☐ Timeline
- ☐ Project Advisor/Financial contact
- ☐ Project Lead

## 6. Please provide a detailed summary of the requested change in project and the new direction. \*

## ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES TO UTILIZE SSC FUNDING:

We initially requested funds to appoint student assistants and to afford prizes, focusing on the UIUC students working by themselves on sustainability projects.

Our student assistants would:

- Introduce the competition to all RSOs, encouraging submissions that might be fundable by the SSC. (This includes professional and pre-professional student organizations, discipline-focused student groups, student organizations that are focused on social causes, religiously affiliated student organizations, fraternities and sororities, and more.)
- Contact faculty, unit EOs, Deans (etc.) asking them to help to promote the competition and to use it in courses, where appropriate.
- Emphasize the range and variety of appropriate submissions.
- Lead the way as the SSC joins in promoting the competition.
- Help to plan the SSC student-organized events that will occur in conjunction with the competition.
- Take steps to integrate the competition into the work of the SSC.
- Take steps to enhance the impact of the competition across our campus and to integrate it into the life of the campus.
- Take part in meetings with the organizing team and with key supporters of the competition, as needed.
- Find creative ways to support the competition, to enhance its impact and to advise on its further development, with the aim of recruiting as many students as possible in the search for creative solutions to some of our most pressing problems. '
- Evaluate the impacts of the sustainability competition on students at UIUC (and at other participating institutions?); and analyze the participants in the sustainability competition (by major, year, team vs. individual, repeat entrant, etc.). (This last task might be best undertaken by a graduate assistant.)

## REVISED PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Instead of competitors from each university working alone on their chosen sustainability challenges, we would now like to give UIUC students the opportunity to participate with students from other universities.

In addition, instead of laboring our student assistants with menial administrative tasks (which could be automatically performed by the proposed new HeroX competition platform), we would rather allocate them to perform the mentioned outreach activities on the UIUC campus.

## 7. Additional comments (Optional) \*

For future competitions, we would like to give UIUC students the opportunity to work with students from other universities (in the USA and elsewhere) on collaborative sustainability projects. This will help situate the various sustainability challenges in a more meaningful manner and facilitate multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional exchange. This will significantly increase the impact of the competition.

We also would like our student assistants to rather focus on competition outreach and other important functions (described in the Original Project Objectives) on the UIUC campus, rather than being bogged down by an endless number of menial activities using Word Press, which could be automatically performed on the HeroX platform.

The proposed allocation of \$1580 + \$9000 = \$10,580 in 2024 to purchase the HeroX platform, to get HeroX to pay out winner's awards, and to get the HeroX organization to promote the competition will imply that we will not be able to afford appointment of students assistants for the 2025 competition. We will therefore apply for a new SSC grant to help afford that, in addition to reaching out to foundations and trusts (as we have done since the competition's inception).

Thank you for your consideration!