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Respondent

5

Leon Liebenberg

21:31

Time to complete

1. Today's Date *

3/11/2025



2. Your Name *

Leon Liebenberg

3. Your Email Address *

leonl@illinois.edu

4. Project Name (exactly as it was named on the original Award Letter) *

Reimagine our Future (ROF) Sustainability Contest

5. Date (or semester/year) of project's original award *

December 4, 2023

6. Current expiration date of award *

You can find this information on your original Award Letter or Scope Change Approval Letter (whichever is most recent).

December 3, 2025

7. Enter the amount of the award, including any budget increases as a result of a previous Scope Change. *

\$33,800

8. How much (in dollars) of your award (including previous approved budget increases) is remaining? *

\$18, 849.63 (plus a gift of \$4500 which was transferred to the SSC account in Feb. 2025)

9. Briefly describe the goals of your project. *

Undergraduate students from UIUC have the opportunity to collaborate with peers from other universities on sustainability challenges. In teams, students select a sustainability topic and develop solutions through the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The teams are supported by a group of 100 volunteer advisors. Teams submit their ideas in the form of fact sheets. Around 35 judges evaluate the submissions, selecting the top 12 or 13 entries. Cash prizes, ranging from \$2,000 to \$500, are awarded to the winners in various categories, with the total annual prize pool amounting to \$8,500.

10. Have you submitted one or more required Semester Project Reports for this project prior to this Scope Change request? *

NOTE: Timely submission of Project Reports are required to remain in compliance with the Terms and Conditions of your award.☒ Yes☐ No

11. Type of Scope Change requested (select all that apply) *

☐ Budget Increase (Net Additional Funds, Only)☒ Project Direction☐ Project Timeline

12. How much additional funding (in dollars) are you requesting? **NOTE: This amount should only reflect the **NET ADDITIONAL** amount you are requesting from SSC. If you are only changing individual items in your budget but do not require ADDITIONAL funds from SSC (i.e., beyond that of your award), please complete the Project Direction section instead. ***

[Enter N/A if not applicable](#)

We do not require additional funding. We are however requesting that the allocated funds be differently used. Specifically, we are requesting that a total of \$8500 be used to pay annual award winners, not only \$4000 as per current agreement.

13. Provide a detailed explanation for the requested Budget Increase. *

[Enter N/A if not applicable](#)

N/A

14. Provide a detailed explanation for the requested change in Project Direction. *

[Enter N/A if not applicable](#)

This scope change is necessary due to a series of significant developments that have impacted the competition's leadership, structure, and financial planning. The key factors driving this request are outlined as follows:

1. Passing of Prof. Robert McKim (July 2024): Prof. McKim, one of the co-founders and a member of the competition organizing committee, played a crucial role in all aspects of the competition. His untimely passing has left a substantial void in the leadership and coordination of the event.
2. Promotion of Prof. Liebenberg (November 2024): Prof. Liebenberg's recent promotion to Associate Director of the College of Engineering's MEng (Energy Systems) Program means that he will no longer be able to dedicate the significant amount of time previously committed to the competition. This includes his involvement in coordinating activities, securing funding and gifts, marketing, liaising with competitors and the online platform organizers (HeroX), organizing award ceremony, and overseeing student assistants.
3. Development of Learning Materials: In collaboration with Professor Julia Myatt from the University of Birmingham (UK) and supported by the UIUC's BRIDGE program, Prof. Liebenberg is also working on developing educational materials to support instructors integrating the Reimagine Our Future competition into their coursework. This initiative will further contribute to the growth and sustainability of the competition.
4. Growing Participation and Increased Support: The competition is expanding, with UIUC students now interacting with peers from 11 other universities. With active support from the Center for Global Studies and the Office of the Vice Provost for Global Affairs & Strategies, there is a need for a revised strategy for managing student awards, among other logistical changes. The competition webpage, hosted by HeroX (<https://www.herox.com/reimagine2024>), has 21,700 followers, prominently displaying the SSC's support on the webpage and in all promotional material. Last year, we also launched a competition Instagram site which this year will help students from international universities to team up with UIUC students.
5. CGS Award: The competition coordinating committee has received a grant from the Center for Global Studies (CGS) to fund undergraduate and/or graduate assistants for 2025 and 2026. This grant will alleviate some of the pressure on the SSC funding and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the competition.
6. SSC Funding and Award Deficit: The Student Sustainability Committee (SSC) has approved a (reduced) annual award payout of \$4,000 from SSF funding, rather than the \$8,500 typically allocated to competition winners. Given the competition's expanding scope and other factors outlined above, the organizing committee currently does not have the capacity to secure additional gifts before the April 2025 launch to cover the gap between the SSC-approved \$4,000 and the usual \$8,500 in awards. (However, to address the 2024 award payments, the committee transferred a \$4,500 gift to the competition's SSC account in February 2025.)

Considering these developments, the competition coordinating committee is actively seeking new members to help fill the leadership void left by Prof. McKim's passing. Additionally, recognizing Prof. Liebenberg's reduced availability, the competition is being streamlined to allow for a graduate student to assume the coordinator role. While this adjustment may not immediately resolve the challenges for this year's competition, it is intended to enhance the long-term sustainability of the contest. We are also in discussions with the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and the Environment (ISEE), with the hope that some of their staff can assist with the competition's functions.

15. What is your new proposed project completion date? *

[Enter N/A if not applicable](#)

N/A

16. Provide a detailed explanation for the requested change in the Project Timeline *

[Enter N/A if not applicable](#)

N/A

17. Please complete the Scope Change Budget and Timeline spreadsheet (link to file is below) and upload the updated version here.

Download the file here: <https://studentengagement.jllinois.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/SSC-Budget-Timeline-SCOPE-CHANGE-template.xlsx>

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 [SSC-Budget-Timeline-SCOPE-CHANGE-Reimagine ou Leon Liebenberg.xlsx](#)