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Respondent

8

Shari Effert-Fanta

1160:18

Time to complete

Final Project Report

1. Date of this final project report submission *

November 7, 2025

2. Name of project exactly as it was listed in your award letter *

Decreasing Energy Usage in the INHS Fish Collection

3. Date (or semester/year) of original award letter *

April 1, 2023

4. Expiration date of award as listed on original award letter or approved scope change letter - whichever is more recent *

October 17, 2025

5. Enter the amount of the award, including any budget increases as a result of a previous scope change. *

\$171,600

6. What is your project's 6 digit fund account number created for this project and to which the SSC allocation was transferred?

Please ask your project's financial contact for this information if unknown.

1-304718

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

\$148,761.26

8. Briefly describe the goals of your project. *

The Natural Resources Building (NRB) was constructed in 1939, and all exterior windows are the original single-pane design. The building lacks central air conditioning, and climate control is achieved through window-mounted A/C units. Because of the inefficiency of both the windows and the A/C units in the rooms housing the Fish Collection, the units must operate nine months of the year to reduce the room temperatures and humidity levels. Ineffective temperature and humidity control make mold growth a constant threat to these invaluable specimens. To mitigate this risk, six industrial dehumidifiers run continuously.

The goals of the project were to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption in the Fish Collection rooms by:

1. Removing the inefficient window A/C units and industrial dehumidifiers.
2. Installing new interior window inserts to increase the R-value of the existing windows.
3. Installing new high-efficiency external split air conditioning units and associated ductwork.

9. Did you complete your project as it was outlined in the original award letter or in a subsequent approved scope change? *

- ☐ Yes, the project was completed as originally outlined.
- ☒ No, the project was not completed as originally outlined.

10. On what date did you consider the project finished or that you stopped working on it? *

October 17, 2025

11. Describe, in detail, the challenges / obstacles your project faced. *

The project was significantly delayed due to critical building code compliance deficiencies that complicated design planning for the F&S architectural and engineering team. As a result, we did not receive the construction documents until November 15, 2024, followed by the Construction Services Project Pricing Proposal on March 19, 2025. Project pricing was approved on April 8, 2025, and the work order was generated the following day. On May 13, 2025, we were informed that the HVAC equipment would be subject to a 20% tariff-related price increase, which raised costs well beyond the scope of the SSC award and the departmental funding available to cover the remainder of the project budget. Since then, the project has been on hold as we seek supplemental funding to cover these unanticipated costs or for federal tariff conditions to change.

12. Describe, in detail, the successes your project experienced. *

Unfortunately, the delays described above, stemming from circumstances beyond our control, have not allowed the project to advance to the construction phase. As a result, there have been no measurable outcomes to date in improving energy efficiency or reducing energy consumption in the NRB rooms housing the Fish Collection.

13. Describe, in detail, how your implemented project addressed sustainability. *

As noted in the response to Question 12, the project did not advance to the construction or implementation phase necessary to achieve its sustainability goals.

14. Describe, in detail, how your project integrated student involvement and community outreach. *

Energy efficiency enhancements to these spaces would have had a significant positive impact on undergraduate and graduate students who use the specimens for coursework, as well as those who work with the collections under the mentorship of PRI staff. In addition, the improvements would have benefited the many tours and outreach events regularly hosted in the Fish Collection rooms for key stakeholders and members of the public.

15. Describe how the project engaged individuals from underrepresented groups and/or how it promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion. *

The University of Illinois community is highly diverse, and the undergraduate and graduate students, visitors, and staff involved with the Fish Collection represent a wide range of underrepresented groups. The Fish Collection provides equitable access to its specimens, data, and expertise for researchers and educators at the University of Illinois and beyond, supporting broader participation in research and education while helping to reduce barriers to engagement. In addition, graduate students and staff associated with the Fish Collection participate in the INHS Safe and Inclusive Working Group, which focuses on developing and implementing strategies to better support and accommodate individuals from diverse backgrounds in research activities both on and off campus.

16. What key takeaways should the campus community know about your project? *

We were very excited about the opportunity provided by the SSC to advance sustainability efforts in the Natural Resources Building. The rooms housing the Fish Collection account for a significant proportion of the building's energy use, primarily due to the need to regulate temperature and humidity to prevent mold growth and preserve specimens. The project aimed to reduce the NRB's overall energy consumption and lower its ranking on the campus energy consumption report, contributing directly to the university's iCAP goals.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, the project was unable to move forward in a timely manner. While we missed the critical deadline for requesting a project extension, we plan to reapply for funding next semester to complete the work.

Even though the project could not be implemented, it provided valuable insights into the building's infrastructure needs and challenges associated with retrofitting historic facilities to meet modern standards. These lessons will inform future planning efforts within PRI and F&S as we continue working toward more sustainable campus operations.

We would also like the campus community to know that it has been a privilege to collaborate with the students and leadership of the SSC. Their dedication, passion, and commitment to environmental stewardship have been inspiring, and we look forward to future opportunities to work together in pursuit of shared sustainability goals.

17. Describe the marketing material developed for promotion of your project, including but not limited to advertising (including digital) and/or signage related to this project. All marketing must include SSC's logo and/or a statement of which fee funded the project. Projects must coordinate with SSC to ensure the promotion appropriately highlights the SSC's contributions to the project. *

Not applicable, as the project did not proceed to implementation. However, our plan was to develop and display informational materials within the Fish Collection to highlight the SSC's contribution and the project's intended impact on energy efficiency and sustainability. We intend to revisit this effort if the project moves forward in the future.

18. Upload project marketing and/or media not previously submitted in semester progress reports. *

 [Question 18 Response Shari Effert-Fanta.docx](#)

19. Complete and upload the semester financial documentation for your project. You should reflect all expenditures since your last semester project report. **We strongly suggest that you also upload supporting financial transaction reports from Banner for your award's CFOP. Talk to your project's financial advisor for more information on generating this report.**
<https://studentengagement.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/SSC-Budget-Timeline-SEMESTER-PROGRESS-REPORT-template.xlsx>

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NOTE: Any unused project funds remain the property of SSC and will be transferred back to SSC when the project has finished or when the award expires, whichever comes first.

 [SSC-Budget-Timeline-SEMESTER-PROGRESS-REPORT- Shari Effert-Fanta.xlsx](#)