STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Funding Application – Student-Led Projects (Under $10K)

Funding Criteria

A. General Rules

1. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to submit requests for funding. Student-led projects require a faculty or staff sponsor in order to have funds awarded.
2. Funding can only go to university-affiliated projects from students, faculty, staff, and departments.
3. All SSC projects must make a substantial impact on students. This may be a direct impact or an impact through education and engagement. All SSC funding is 100% from student green fees, so the projects funded by the students must benefit them.
4. SSC encourages innovation and new technologies – creative projects are encouraged to apply.
5. Unless a type of expense is specifically listed below as having restrictions, SSC can generally fund it. The items referenced below should not be taken as comprehensive list.

B. Things SSC Can Fund, On A Case-By-Case Basis

1. SSC can fund feasibility studies and design work; however, it must work toward ultimately addressing a sustainability need on campus.
2. SSC can fund staff positions that are related to improving campus sustainability. Strong preference will be given to proposals receiving matching funding from departments and/or plans for maintaining continuity of the position after the end of the initial grant.
3. SSC can fund outreach events with a central theme of sustainability, provided their primary audience is the general campus community.
4. SSC discourages funding requests for food and prizes but will consider proposals on a case by case basis that prove significant reasoning.
5. SSC can fund repairs and improvements to existing building systems as long as it works toward the goal of improving campus sustainability; however, a preference is shown to projects utilizing new or innovative ideas.
6. SSC can provide departments with loans for projects with a distinct payback on a case by case base. Loans will require a separate memorandum of understanding between SSC and departmental leadership pledging to repay the award in full and detailing the payback plan.

C. Things SSC Will Not Fund:

1. SSC will not fund projects with a primary end goal of generating revenue for non-University entities.
2. SSC will not fund personal lodging, food, beverage, and other travel expenses.
3. SSC will not fund any travel expenses.
4. SSC will not fund tuition or other forms of personal financial assistance for students beyond standard student employee wages.

Your funding application should include this application and any letters of support.

Please submit this completed application and any relevant supporting documentation by the deadline listed on the SSC website to Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu. The Working Group Chairs will be in contact with you regarding any questions about the application. If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the Student Sustainability Committee at Sustainability-Committee@illinois.edu.

General & Contact Information

Project Name: University of Illinois Investment Database
Total Amount Requested from SSC: $1,000

Project Topic Areas: ☐ Land & Water ☒ Education ☒ Energy
                       ☐ Transportation ☐ Food & Waste

Applicant Name: Gabriel Kosmacher
Campus Affiliation (Unit/Department or RSO/Organization):   Students for Environmental Concerns
Email Address: gkk2@illinois.edu

Check one:
☐ This project is solely my own *OR*
☒ This project is proposed on behalf of (name of student org., campus dept., etc.):   Students for Environmental Concerns

Project Team Members

Name	Department	Email
Gabriel Kosmacher	Students for Environmental Concerns	gkk2@illinois.edu
Faith Marie Losbañes	Students for Environmental Concerns	flosba2@illinois.edu
Amit Sawhney	Hack4Impact	sawhney4@illinois.edu
Arman Rafati	Hack4Impact	arman3@illinois.edu

Student-Led Projects (Mandatory):
Name of Faculty or Staff Project Advisor: Yu-Feng Lin
Advisor's Email Address: yflin@illinois.edu

Financial Contact *(Must be a full-time University of Illinois staff member)*
Contact Name: Ms. Karen Hartman
Unit/Department: Prairie Research Institute
Email Address: khartman@illinois.edu

Project Information
Please review the proposal materials and online content carefully. It is <u>highly recommended</u> you visit a working group meeting sometime during the proposal submission process.

Please provide a brief background of the project, its goals, and the desired outcomes:
We want to know: What is your project? What does it concretely produce, accomplish, or solve? Why is this project needed on campus?

The University of Illinois has over $230million invested in companies that profit from the extraction, transportation, or combustion of coal, petroleum, or natural gas. The possession of these assets opposes the University's stated values of "enhanc[ing] the lives of people in Illinois, across the nation, and around the world" and "dedicating its [the University of Illinois'] brightest minds and resources toward prioritizing the environment." In 2019, students voted with an overwhelming majority for the divestment of fossil fuels.

A decade into the fossil fuel divestment campaign, Students for Environmental Concerns has assessed a knowledge deficit regarding University of Illinois investments and their negative impact on our environment as an obstacle to remedying the ongoing climate crisis. We believe that an accessible and transparent web interface will shrink this knowledge gap; in turn informing the local and extra-local communities of environmental harm done by UIS investments, leading to the collective expansion of a fossil fuel divestment movement. Furthermore, this web interface can serve as a portal to *anyone* interested in analyzing institutional investments and will thus serve as a tool in providing public oversight to a historically opaque institution.

We aim to build an interactive and dynamic web interface to visualize the University of Illinois Systems' investment portfolio, with a focus on assets invested in corporations that profit from the extraction, transportation, or combustion of coal, petroleum, or natural gas.

The University of Illinois System (UIS) publishes investment data as an appendix to their annual report, which is the singular current source of publicly accessible UIS investment data. Ideally, these reports would be used to create a longitudinal relational database of UIS investment, which would require intensive data refinement and data integrity checking. Developers would also utilize publicly accessible API or web scraping techniques to update the database with additional relevant information regarding UIS assets, including but not limited to the participation in the profiteering from fossil fuels. A web interface would follow from this database, where users may interact with UIS asset data, while the interface provides accessible visualizations of relevant information pertaining to UIS assets.

Ideally, a general open source framework would be created to generate similar databases and web interfaces that may be extended to other institutions of interest (i.e. other public university systems may extend this platform).

Where will the project be located? Are special permissions required for this project site?
If special permission is required for this location, please explain and submit any relevant letters of support with the application. SSC cannot fund projects without prior location approval.

Currently, we aim to host this web interface at https://secsatuiuc.web.illinois.edu/, but would be open to integrating the interface into the University of Illinois' official web structure.

Other than the project team, who will have a stake in the project? Please list other individuals, groups, or departments affiliated directly or indirectly by the project. This includes any entity providing funding (immediate, future, ongoing, matching, in-kind, etc.) and any entities that benefit from this project.
Please attach letters of commitment or support at the end of the application.

Other than students directly involved with Students for Environmental Concerns and Hack4Impact, the computer science RSO which will build the database, students across campus and community members will be the primary stakeholders of this project. We envision this database to serve as a portal to any person interested in the University of Illinois' investments, and this web interface will be a valuable tool in providing investment transparency for one of the largest institutional investors in the state of Illinois.

We believe this project has the potential to be used to promote investment transparency for other universities and organizations as well.

How will this project involve and/or benefit students?
This includes both direct and indirect impact.

This project will benefit students by providing a public and accessible interface for students to understand where the University of Illinois invests its money, which will in turn allow students to effectively lobby for investment decisions that better reflect their values.

What are your specific outreach goals? How will this project inspire change at UIUC?

This project will inspire change at the University of Illinois campus by providing accessibility to public information that can inform the student body on how best to lobby the University of Illinois to build investment policy that reflects student and university values.

How will the project improve environmental sustainability at the Urbana-Champaign campus?

This project will provide the opportunity to improve environmental sustainability at the University of Illinois by effectively providing public information regarding how much the University of Illinois has invested in companies that degrade and oppose environmental sustainability on this planet. The University of Illinois can never reach its sustainability goals until the university, and the student body, know the full impact of environmental harm the University of Illinois, and its investments, cause.

If applicable, how does this project impact environmental injustice or social injustice?

Scope, Schedule, and Budget verification

What is the plan for project implementation? Describe the key steps of the project including the start date, target completion date, target date for submitting a final report, and any significant tasks or milestones. *Please be as detailed as possible.*

We will begin the project on January 17th, have a minimum viable product (MVP) mid way through the semester, and plan to have a public interface and a final report available by the end of the semester in May.

Since this past October, we have already started working out the scope of the project with Hack4Impact.

List all budget items for which funding is being requested. Include cost and total amount for each item requested.
Please be as detailed as possible.

The full $1000 grant will be used for the Hack4Impact Development fee.

If the project is implemented, will you require ongoing funding? What is the strategy for supporting the project in order to cover replacement, operation, or renewal costs?
SSC provides funding on a case by case basis and should not be considered as an ongoing source of funding

This project will require ongoing yearly funding to pay yearly cloud database fees. We expect to pay ~$100 annually in cloud database fees, but we will have a more accurate figure after the database is created and hosted.

Please include any other obtained sources of funding. Have you applied for funding elsewhere?
Please attach any relevant letters of support as needed in a separate document.

We have not applied for funding elsewhere.

Have you applied for funding from SSC before? If so, for what project?

I (Gabriel) have not applied for SSC funding before, but Students for Environmental Concerns has a long history with the SSC, most recently with the pumpkin composting project.

How will you bring awareness and publicize the project on campus? In addition to SSC, where will information about this project be reported?

Information for this project will be reported through Students for Environmental Concerns and Hack4Impact infrastructure. Additionally, we will seek to integrate the interface into existing University of Illinois web infrastructure.