



STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Funding Award and Acceptance Letter

December 6th, 2021

Project: **Identifying the Campus Benefits of a Large-Scale Prairie Experiment (Part 2)**

Dear **Alexandra Harmon-Threatt**,

On behalf of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Student Sustainability Committee (SSC), we would like to thank you for initiating a project that improves the sustainability of our campus. SSC is pleased to inform you that your project will receive **\$34,000.00** in grant funding.

In order to remain eligible for this award, you must agree to the following conditions:

1. The project must be completed within two years. A final report of all work completed should be provided to the SSC Assistant Director by **December 6th, 2023**.
2. Project status updates and detailed account statements must be provided at the end of each semester, in the method requested, until the project is completed.
3. The Contact Person will be individually responsible for all official communication and the execution of this agreement.
4. The awardee will take the appropriate steps to create a CFOP with OBFS UAFR University Accounting Services. The CFOP provided for this award shall strictly be used for the money awarded in this proposal.
5. Any substantial modifications to project scope, budget, or timeline must first be approved by SSC. These requests must be submitted in a formal letter to the Chair and the Assistant Director.
6. All projects will be expected to follow campus policies and procedures as well as any applicable State and Federal laws.
7. SSC reserves the right to revoke funding if the project does not comply with the terms and conditions outlined in this letter.
8. Any press releases or educational/promotional materials involving the project should acknowledge SSC funding.
9. Any signage involving the project or events surrounding this project should include SSC's logo and/or a statement of which fee funded the project. Projects must coordinate with SSC to ensure promotion appropriately highlights the SSC's contributions to the project.

If you agree to the terms and conditions for the funding, please sign on the designated line at the bottom of this letter. If you have any questions regarding these requirements please contact the SSC, at sustainability-committee@illinois.edu. You will be notified when the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs officially approves this project. Again, thank you for your interest in improving the sustainability of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We look forward to working with you in the future.



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SSC Signatories

Jack Reicherts

Jack Reicherts, Chair
Student Sustainability Committee

Awardee Signatory

Alexandra Harmon-Threatt

Alexandra Harmon-Threatt
Applicant

**Faculty or Staff Project Advisor
(for Student-Led Projects)**

N/A

[First and Last Name]
Faculty/Staff Project Advisor

iSEE Signatory

Madhu Khanna

Dr. Madhu Khanna, Director
Institute for Sustainability, Energy & Environment

Student Affairs Signatory

Dr. Danita M. B. Young

Dr. Danita Brown Young, Vice Chancellor
Division of Student Affairs



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Project Information

Project: Identifying the Campus Benefits of a Large-Scale Prairie Experiment (Part 2)

Funding Source:

Cleaner Energy Technologies Fee (302571)

Sustainable Campus Environment Fee (303692)

Funding Amount: \$34,000.00

Receiving Campus Unit: Dept. of Entomology, School of Integrative Biology

Unit Financial Contact: Penny Broga

E-mail: broga@illinois.edu

Project Description:

Near campus exists an under-utilized living laboratory that could contribute significantly to student education and improve campus sustainability initiatives like iCAP. This 13-acre prairie experiment was established in 2018 with funding from a USDA grant. Across 96 plots, the project was designed to examine interactions between soil, microbes, prairie plants, agrochemicals, and bees with the goal of identifying best prairie restoration practices for habitat adjacent to crops. As an extension to this, this project proposes to have students lead efforts to understand differences in carbon sequestration across the plots and whether carbon sequestration aligns with other ecosystem services in the sites.

In 2021, this project was awarded partial SSC funding for a proposed two-year project to begin data collection on the site. With the one-years' worth of funding the SSC awarded, the team recruited 3 students that were vital to collecting data needed to assess the effectiveness of the site. Each of these students completed interesting independent projects of their own design: soil microbiology; translocation of agrochemicals in plant tissues; and impacts of agrochemicals on caterpillar/butterfly development. The team also collected over 300 soil samples for quantification of soil carbon stocks across this site.

With the additional 1 year of funding from SSC, the project will expand student involvement and research opportunities and will continue to quantify the dynamic carbon-offset benefits of the site. The group will make access to summer research more equitable by ensuring fair pay for students



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engaged. This should allow a more diverse group of students to participate. With supervised guidance, students will lead insect, soil, and plant sampling initiatives that will expose them to ecological and plant research techniques. Advanced students will also conduct independent research projects. The team will also repeat soil data collection efforts in 2022, allowing them to accurately assess accumulation of carbon sequestered across treatments, and enabling recommendations for future plantings. At the end of the project, the team will have valuable data on carbon sequestered across treatments, other ecosystems services within the plots, and recommendations for future campus prairie plantings.

This proposal directly funds:

- Site maintenance SU 22 (e.g. mowing, burning, mapping): \$5,000.00
- Student Workers in Summer 22- flat \$5000 stipend x 3: \$15,000.00
- Student Workers in FA 22 (\$12/h for up to 15 h/week): \$5,000.00
- Student Workers in SP 23 (\$12/h for up to 15 h/week): \$5,000.00
- Research budget per summer student (SU 22): \$3,000.00
- Drying tie in large soyFACE ovens (SU 22): \$1,000