



STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Funding Application – Step II

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 Step 2 funding application should include this application, the supplemental budget form, and any letters of support.

Please submit this completed application and any relevant supporting documentation 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: Illinois Organic Internship

Total Amount Requested from SSC:

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

Applicant Name: Carmen M. Ugarte

Campus Affiliation (Unit/Department or RSO/Organization): Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences

Email Address: cugarte@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.):

Project Team Members

Name	Department	Email
Carmen M. Ugarte	NRES	cugarte@illinois.edu
Michelle M. Wander	NRES	mwander@illinois.edu
Martin Bohn	CPSC	mbohn@illinois.edu
Name	Department/Organization	Email Address

Student-Led Projects (Mandatory):

Name of Faculty or Staff Project Advisor:

Advisor's Email Address:

Financial Contact (Must be a full-time University of Illinois staff member)

Contact Name: Kelly Sullan

Unit/Department: NRES

Email Address: sullan@illinois.edu

Project Information

Please review the proposal materials and online content carefully. It is highly recommended 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:

You may copy and paste your Step 1 application answer if nothing has changed.

This project seeks to promote educational opportunities for students interested in sustainable agriculture and environmental quality. In a two-year period, we envision to host four student interns that will be involved in the research projects the PIs lead, and will conduct an independent project. The internship is specially targeted to recruit underrepresented students interested in research opportunities. Through this experience, the internship will provide close opportunities to learn the about research in modern organic food production, soil health, and corn breeding techniques for organic systems. Furthermore, we aim to provide the academic preparation, support, and professional opportunities that pave the path to a successful career in environmentally related topics. Given the changes that Campus has been experiencing with COVID-19, we will delay student recruitment through August 2020. Consequently, this project will start in August 2020 and run on its initial phase through August 2022. Student recruitment for the internship will make use of various mailing lists from the College of ACES and iSEE, the Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Program website, as well as announcements shared by departmental academic advising coordinators. With the help of one of the three PIs, who will take the role of mentors, selected students will design a project within the umbrella of ongoing projects conducted at an organic farming study established at the University South Farms. Specifically, students will:

- learn about diversified food production systems and their implications for sustainable soil management.
- examine the influence of organic management practices on soil organic matter, which is fundamental to promote soil health, C sequestration, and soil resilience.
- be exposed to an organic corn breeding program that is testing the agronomic characteristics of various lines of food-grade corn produced under low-input systems, which tend to reduce the use of synthetic chemicals and pesticides and rely on fertility provided by the use of cover crops.
- gain experience conducting research in crop production and environmental science
- improve science communication skills through content development for social media outlets and presentations at University sponsored events, and scientific meetings.

In the short term, this project will provide educational opportunities to underrepresented students in Campus. In the long-term, it will increase awareness about the capacity built within the University to conduct research in organic food production, provide opportunities for new research and educational opportunities, and contribute to Campus efforts to achieve long term sustainability.

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.

This project will design activities to be conducted with facilities located in the College of ACES. Specifically, student interns will be hosted in the Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and Crop Sciences.

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.

This is an interdisciplinary project that will be directed by the three co-PIs listed in Page 2 whose home departments are Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and Crop Sciences.

How will this project involve and/or benefit students?

This includes both direct and indirect impact.

This is a student-centric project that seeks to develop educational components for students through an internship program. The project seeks to involve students from underrepresented groups starting in their sophomore or junior year in a 2-yr research focused internship. Through this experience, students will learn to lead a small research project, collect and analyze data, and present it at Campus events, and at a scientific conference (i.e., Soil Science Society of America, Agronomy Society of America, Ecological Society of America, Soil Ecology Society).

Engaged students will have the opportunity to gain experience in topics related to soil assessment for crop production and environmental stewardship, organic food production practices at the local scale, plant breeding research, science communication.

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

In addition to publicizing experiences from this internship through SSC, we will also write short articles to publish at the Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Program website (<https://agroecologyandsustainableagriculture.org>) and the College of ACES news site (<https://aces.illinois.edu/news>). In addition, students will share their research at poster presentations organized by the College of ACES and through the team's Instagram account (@cornandsoilhealth). As stated before, we also intend to sponsor students to present their individual projects at off campus scientific conferences.

Financial Information

In addition to the below questions, please submit the supplemental budget spreadsheet available on the Student Sustainability Committee [website](#). Submission of both documents by the submission deadline is required for consideration of your project.

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

X

If this project is implemented, will you require any ongoing funding required? What is the strategy for supporting the project in order to cover replacement, operation, or renewal costs?

Please note that SSC provides funding on a case by case basis annually and should not be considered as an ongoing source of funding.

Upon the completion of this initial 2-yr program, the Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Program will support the continuation of this project. The Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Program mission is "to build and sustain an organization that empowers the on and off campus community working to advance sustainable and organic food and farming systems in Illinois". Dr. Michelle Wander, one of the co-PIs in the project is the Director of the Program, which has continually been funding scholarships for students doing research in organic and sustainable systems. In this proposal, we are requesting funds to cover wages for student interns in a two year period at 700 hrs/student (350 hrs per student per year) and printing materials for presentations. Consumables and materials for project development and execution and travel to a scientific meeting will be covered by the mentor's program.

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.

For the duration of this initial 2-yr program, we are only requesting funds from the SSC.

Environmental, Economic, and Awareness Impacts

How will the project improve environmental sustainability at the Urbana-Champaign campus? If applicable, how does this project fit within any of the [Illinois Climate Action Plan \(iCAP\)](#) goals?

Organic management is generally regarded as an alternative form of agriculture that promotes C storage in soils through the use of a diversified crop rotation, the use of fertility sources that enhance soil organic matter, and the reduction in the frequency and intensity of tillage. Support for this project will help us evaluate C stocks at two fields used for organic agricultural research on Campus. By quantifying the C stocks from U of I managed fields we will contribute to efforts to achieve sustainability in campus and the goal of carbon neutrality.

How will you monitor and evaluate the project's progress and environmental outcomes? What short-term and long-term environmental impacts do you expect?

Some examples include carbon emissions, water conservation, green behavior, and reduced landfill waste.

In the short term, we will demonstrate practical methodology to evaluate C stocks in fields managed for research and raise awareness of the Campus capacity to conduct research on sustainable practices for food production. Future work will lead to 1) additional C assessments in other grounds managed by the University, 2) soil conservation, and 3) transition to more diversified food production systems.

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

Results from this project will be presented at University sponsored events and hope that this motivates additional conversation to expand work for soil stewardship and sustainable food systems.

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