



## STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

### Semesterly Report

*Thank you for your commitment to green initiatives at the University of Illinois. One of the ongoing requirements listed in the terms of the funding agreement for your project is the submission of semesterly reports with key information about your project. In addition to this form, please provide additional financial documentation and/or progress photos if available.*

*Please be as accurate as possible in describing the project (including possible setbacks or challenges in meeting the initial goals of the project). Not fully meeting your project's goals will not disqualify you from making future funding requests as long as your reports are as complete and accurate as possible. If you have any questions, please contact the Student Sustainability Committee, at [sustainability-committee@illinois.edu](mailto:sustainability-committee@illinois.edu).*

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**Project Name:** Idea Garden Solar Project

**Date of Report Submission:** 10/19/2020

#### **Project Progress to Date:**

This report covers progress from the 2020 spring semester and 2020 Fall semester. When the COVID-19 crisis hit campus in March 2020, we were on the F&S schedule for solar panel installation in April. All the underground infrastructure and the power box in our shed was already installed and working. As the pandemic unfolded and employees began work from home, solar panel installation was further delayed until August when F&S was able to install the panels. We had a few additional complications related to the electrical infrastructure inside our shed, triggering the submission of a few change orders. As of September, all of the solar array and supporting infrastructure is installed and working.

We still need to install an insulated storage cabinet. This we delayed as we waited for the electrical infrastructure inside our shed to be finalized. We just found a used cabinet that will work well and have already started to modify a countertop so it will fit.

Our educational sign about the project is not fully complete. We have poured a foundation and set the sign frame in place, however the sign itself has not been printed. To keep consistent with other signage at the Arboretum, we have had to work with Arboretum to order the sign frame and sign from their vendor. Right now, we are waiting for the Arboretum to coordinate a larger order of sign materials. This coordinate will save us all money in the long run. Right now, the sign text has been written and a few figures to go with it have been designed, but we are waiting for a final draft from the vendor.

Finally, we do still have an educational event focused on the solar project to plan. We have been waiting for the sign to be completed before holding this event. The pandemic has also complicated the planning of in-person events. Right now, we are looking toward next spring for this event, likely in April when the weather warms up. Currently, the inside of our shed is still

disorganized while we wait to get the final cabinet installed. We thought this event would be best attended if we waited until nicer weather in 2021 to organize it. We plan to advertise the event for students as well as community members and will be sure to highlight the great support we've received from the Student Sustainability Committee. We will focus on the solar project, but also plan to highlight other sustainable practices at the Idea Garden. In recent years, our Master Gardner Program has been focused on sustainability and we have growing number of examples at Idea Garden.

**Marketing and Promotion Efforts to Date:**

To date, we have not done any marketing. Once our educational sign is installed, we do plan to hold an educational program at the site, which will be open to the general public and marketed on campus to students and faculty. We will also invite the CU community with marketing and outreach efforts in local newspapers and social media sites.