*Please submit this completed application, the supplemental budget spreadsheet, and any relevant supporting documentation by the deadline indicated in your Step 1 notification letter to* [*Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu*](mailto: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 SSC Program Advisor, Micah Kenfield, at* [*kenfield@illinois.edu*](mailto:kenfield@illinois.edu)

# General Information

**Project Name:** Friday Forum: Elevating Environmental Issues in Fall 2017

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:** 30,000

**Project Topic Area(s):** Energy Education Food & Waste

Land Water Transportation

# Contact Information

### Project Lead

Applicant Name: Ross Wantland

Unit/Department: Diversity & Social Justice Education/Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations

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### Financial Contact *(Must be Full-time University of Illinois Staff Member)*

Contact Name: Ross Wantland

Unit/Department: Diversity & Social Justice Education/Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations

Email Address: wantland@illinois.edu

Phone Number: (217) 244-1814

Organization Code: 1-303135-822006-822001

### Facilities Management Contact *(If Applicable)*

Contact Name: Name of Applicant or Project Lead

Email Address: Preferred Email Address

**Primary Project Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Department** | **Email** |
| Ross Wantland | Diversity & Social Justice Education | wantland@illinois.edu |
| Catherine Yee | Intern at iSEE, President Students for Environmental Concerns | Cryee2@illinois.edu |
| Mary Jane Oviatt | Student member of Friday Forum Committee, member of Students for Environmental Concerns | Moviatt2@illinois.edu |

# Project Description

**Please provide a brief background of the project, the goals, and the desired outcomes:**

The Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations’ Diversity and Social Justice Education unit (DiversityEd), along with the RSO Students for Environmental Concerns (SECS), is pleased to present this application to help fund a portion of the honorariums for a sustainability-themed lecture series in the fall of 2017, partnering with the University YMCA’s Friday Forum Committee.

Friday Forum is a weekly lecture series held during the fall and spring semesters that strives to raise awareness about national and international trends and events. Friday Forum has been continuously running for 90 years at the University YMCA, adapting to the times while remaining committed to providing talks that address topics of relevance and urgency in our society.

DiversityEd will partner with the University YMCA to expand the scope and broaden the reach of the Fall 2017 Friday Forum series on environmental issues and solutions, ranging from climate change and policy to biomimicry and design. Our broad goal is to elevate environmental issues on campus and educate the campus community on how these issues intersect with social justice. We seek funding from the Student Sustainability Committee specifically for one or two high-visibility speakers, especially one keynote speaker, to elevate the 10-week series.

Our audience of the Series is the general campus community. Historically, Friday Forum reaches 800-1,200 campus community members during the course of the semester, and our primary desired outcome will be to reach 1,200 individuals in attendance. Specifically, our goal will be to host 300 students, 100 faculty and staff and some additional community members for our keynote speaker and 600 additional students during the rest of the Series. Some of these counts will include repeat students, but we will draw from a broad potential audience given DiversityEd’s broad reach within the student community. We will also leverage fellow campus entities to elevate the visibility of these programs, and funding to bring exciting speakers to campus is a critical component to a successful series.

We understand, however, that despite high visibility oftentimes lecture series fail to reach underrepresented student populations. DiversityEd regularly makes a concerted effort to reach out to our campus partners and colleagues in the other units within Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations. For example, if we are able to fund a speaker on indigenous issues, we will coordinate with the Native American Cultural House to include it as part of their “Chat ‘n Chew” series. We will also ensure the Series topics include discussions about environmental justice, racism, and a critical analysis of the inclusivity of the environmental movement.

Specifically, we seek critical seed funding to support the honorariums of two high-visibility speakers. We will leverage this funding with other campus and community organizations to support this Series, so the Committee will not be responsible for funding the entirety of the project. Proposed speakers include Bill McKibben on climate change, Van Jones on environmental justice and human rights, Shanondora Billiot (United Houma Nation) on indigenous connections to the land, and a few more. Topics include critically analyzing the environmental movement, addressing how to discuss shared values to reach across ideological lines, how environmental degradation impacts underserved groups, and the nexus between research, education, and policy.

As of late March, we have two confirmed speakers: David Ullrich and Kim Wasserman Nieto. Dave is the Executive Director or The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. Dave served as the Deputy Regional Administrator for USEPA Region 5 between 1992 and 2003, and Acting Administrator in the late 1990’s. He will speak on the current political climate and its impact on the fight for clean water in the Midwest. Kim Wasserman Nieto is Executive Director of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization and will speak about intersections of inclusivity and environment discussions. She is a member of the statewide climate table and a Goldman Foundation Fellow. Her talk will cover how to build an inclusive movement, what is being done to build that movement, and the obstacles that keep environmental justice from becoming mainstream. We are working with Kim to connect her with local activists in the campus community. Dave has graciously offered to come for free, and we are paying Kim a $500-700 honorarium.

Finally, an important desired outcome is to foster conversations and partnerships that create an ongoing impact on our campus. To do so, we will open the space for speakers to engage with stakeholders on campus to brainstorm projects, improvements, research and more. For example, should we receive funding for his honorarium, Bill McKibben has agreed to stay after his talk to work with students, and/or faculty and staff, thereby maximizing the funding impact of bringing him to the campus.

**How will the project improve the sustainability of the Illinois campus and how will the project go above and beyond campus standards?**

As discussed in depth below, we seek to achieve specific learning outcomes for students, University staff and faculty, and community members. We specifically hope to advance the iCAP goals of the University around outreach and education, but this project will go above and beyond by challenging the campus community to think more broadly about the definition of sustainability. Focusing on the nexus between social justice and the environment, this partnership will ensure topics of conversation often forgotten will be brought to the front of our student body’s minds.

We will not only elevate sustainability at the University of Illinois with this project, but also to ensure long-term impact from bringing speakers to this campus. For example, if funded Bill McKibben has agreed to work with smaller groups of students involved in social justice and environmental conversations on this campus to improve the capacity of their organizations and efforts. Because McKibben has vast experience working on campuses and on national issues, we envision that bringing him will go above and beyond typical lectures, which focus too much on the problem and not enough on concrete tools and actions we can take.

**Where will the project be located? Will special permissions be required to enact the project on this site? If so, please explain and submit any relevant letters of support with the application.**

The majority of the lectures will be hosted at the University YMCA, located across from Lincoln Hall at 1001 S. Wright Street. Some lectures might take place in other spaces more accessible to students of underserved backgrounds, such as Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center or the Native American House, depending on their available capacity.

In order to expand the capacity dramatically for the keynote speaker, we are in talks with a few potential campus partners. Potential spaces include Allen Hall (where over 300 people came to see Opal Tometi, co-Founder of Black Lives Matter, last year) and the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. Our goal is to find an open and safe space for students of all backgrounds to feel welcome and that the space is accessible to them.

**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 will be benefitting from this project. Please attach letters of commitment or support at the end of the application.**

Countless departments, cultural houses, and offices of the University will be affiliated directly or indirectly with the project. Affiliations include providing sponsorship funding for the Series, offering in-kind space donations, and more.

First and foremost, the Friday Forum Planning Committee not only includes a representative from DiversityEd, but also Jamie Singson, Director of the Native American Cultural House, students from Students for Environmental Concerns, Lan and Pam Richart (co-founders of the Eco-Justice Collaborative), and more. The Committee believes this Series is an opportunity for students to learn how to apply knowledge and science gained in the classroom to real-world problems, policies and actions.

We are currently in conversation with the Krannert Center for Performing Arts to work with us on securing a large, accessible space for a keynote speaker, along with space in the lobby to host an environmental fair so students can sign up to act on issues discussed in the Series.

The University YMCA has offered to contribute $5,000 to the semester Series (letter attached), along with the time and efforts to secure sponsorships. The Y has a history of garnering consistent support for Friday Forum from a broad range of University departments, including Political Science, Atmospheric Sciences, Urban Planning, African American Studies, Landscape Architecture, the LGBT Resource Center, Office of the Provost, Office of the Chancellor, Center for Advanced Studies, and more. Although sponsorship conversations begin in late Spring and early Summer, DiversityEd is confident that with this partnership we will be able to secure significant support for the Series.

**Please indicate how this project will involve or impact students. What role will students play in the project?**

Diversity & Social Justice Education will partner with the University YMCA, whose primary focus is on student leadership development, to ensure students are engaged with the project and have meaningful input. In addition, the DiversityEd will help elevate the visibility of the series to our highly engaged students who come from a wide range of backgrounds and are committed to the Conversation Café series.

The Friday Forum Committee believes this Series is an opportunity to hear what students care about and the topics they want to cover. For example, at the first planning meeting for the Series, students in particular expressed strong interest in hosting Bill McKibben, the author of the first book on climate change to a general audience and the founder of 350.org. We are also in the process of working through several avenues to invite students from the Indigenous Youth Council for a mutually beneficial visit at the request of students.

At the keynote speech and at as many other Friday Forums as allows, we will invite student groups to be present with actionable items with which attendees can participate. For example, the Student Sustainability Committee would be welcome to have a table to talk about funding opportunities for student groups. Other RSOs could have sign-up sheets and even make announcements before the lectures to promote upcoming events.

Friday Forum also regularly partners with departments and faculty across campus to encourage their students to attend through highlighting the lectures and offering course credit. Typically, half of the attendance is comprised of students. Our goal will be to host 300 students and 100 faculty, staff and community members for our keynote speaker and 600 additional students and during the course of the Series.

Finally, as mentioned before, we will ensure the long-term funding impact of this project by inviting students to special workshops or receptions with speakers we invite to campus. Our students find the opportunity to engage with speakers rewarding and a fantastic opportunity for education and growth.

# 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?**

This is DiversityEd’s first application to the SSC. Professor Brian Deal and the University YMCA applied for funding in Fall 2014 to expand the reach and impact of Dump & Run, a community recycling program.

**If this project is implemented, will there be 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.**

No ongoing funding will be required for this project, as its start date and end date will all occur within the Fall 2017 semester. We consider this application to the Student Sustainability Committee as a request for seed funding to maximize the reach by bringing a keynote speaker to this Series, but the University YMCA plans on contributing an additional $5,000 to the rest of the Series.

**Please include any other sources of funding that have been obtained or applied for. Please attach any relevant letters of support as needed in a separate document.**

DiversityEd plans to apply for the Student Cultural Programs Fee committee for support to provide free lunch to students who attend (when relevant). The University YMCA has committed $5,000 to support as many highly qualified and engaging speakers to come to the project as possible. Additional funding could be secured from sponsorships and partnerships across campus should this funding not be enough to complete the project.

# Environmental, Economic, and Awareness Impacts

*In addition to the below questions, please indicate specific measurable impacts as applicable on the supplemental budget spreadsheet.*

**Which aspects of sustainability does your project address, and how? Does the project fit within any of the iCAP goals? If so, how does the project go beyond the university status quo standards and policies.**

Education is listed as a key goal in the 2015 Illinois Climate Action Plan, both in curricular activities but also in the overall reach of sustainability on campus. Specifically, one of the strategies listed in the Chapter 11: Outreach section spells out the need to “Organize Three Major Sustainability Events Each Year” (page 74). Ideas include continuing to build Sustainability Week in October, where “participants could visit the University’s most sustainable sites, and watch intriguing presentations about environmental ideas” (page 74). Although the schedule will come more into light as planning processes and funding is secured, our Committee is in talks with the Institute for Sustainability, Energy and Environment to coincide a major talk with the Friday of Sustainability Week.

Although these goals in iCAP are important to meet, our project goes beyond the status quo standards by emphasizing the need to engage students beyond the lecture event itself. Should we receive funding for high-impact speakers like Bill McKibben and the Indigenous Youth Council, special efforts will be made to have private experiences for students to learn and get feedback on sustainability efforts on campus from these knowledgeable individuals.

Less direct but equally important is the goal for the campus community to have a broad discussion, outside of the specific behavioral impact of the students who attend the lectures. By bringing high-visibility speakers to campus, we elevate critical education events like Sustainability Week, reach thousands of more students via the Daily Illini, and have professors begin conversations about these issues in their classrooms launched from the excitement of these speakers.

**How will the environmental impacts of your project be measured in the near and long term? What specific monitoring and evaluation processes will you be using to track outcomes and progress?**

Please see the education portion of our application to assess our impacts, which are largely surrounding learning outcomes and behavioral impacts.

**What is the plan for publicizing the project on campus? In addition to SSC, where will information about this project be reported?**

We will continue using tried-and-true techniques from past Friday Forum and Conversation Cafes, while using our collaborations to further publicize.

Here are just a few of these methods we use successfully and will employ:

* Personally e-mail professors to announce and offer extra credit (or course credit) for attending;
* Post digital signs (can include the SSC logo if funded) in the residence halls and around campus;
* Engage student groups related to the speakers, partnering with them to promote while offering an opportunity for them to join an environmental action fair during the keynote event;
* Partner with sponsoring departments, which post the event in their classrooms or send via their newsletter;
* Send press releases and work with local media to cover the event; and
* Create a social media hashtag (such as “#McKibbenatIllinois”) and Facebook event where individuals can share and invite friends, using low-cost Facebook promotions directed at University of Illinois students to expand its reach.

**What are your specific, measurable outreach goals? How will these be measured?**

Our goals surround whether we can achieve a broad base of student attendance, and whether those students, faculty and staff, and some community members have achieved specified learning outcomes. For the keynote speaker, our goal will be to host at least 5-10 student environmental groups so students learning about major issues can get engaged.

Our goal is for students to be able to achieve the following learning outcomes:

* Explain how sustainability relates to their lives and their values, and how their actions impact issues of sustainability.
* Describe how to apply concepts of sustainability to the campus community and globally.
* Understand issues involving the intersectionality of social justice and the environment.
* Cultivate a sense of civic responsibility for learning more about environmental issues and acting in socially just ways.

More specifically, we expect and will set a goal to recruit over 1,200 students, faculty & staff and community members to the entire lecture series. For our keynote speaker, our goal will be to host 300 students and 100 faculty, staff and community members. We also hope to see enhanced media attention around the event, and our goal is to have one Daily Illini article and a News Gazette or Smile Politely article covering the topic.

**Do you have any additional comments or relevant information to aid in evaluation of this application?**

Our students involved in the project have close connections to indigenous youth working on pipeline expansion issues, and we are still in the process of talking with these youth. We recognize the equity issues of spending a large amount of funding for an overrepresented voice in the environmental movement; however, we have committed to partner with the YMCA and other departments to give indigenous youth everything they need to make it worthwhile for them to come speak with us. We see the funding for Bill McKibben as a way to launch the Series given his name recognition and high visibility so we can maximize the impact of bringing indigenous youth to campus.