**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:** Green Wall: Sustainability Education for Student Health and Well-Being

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:**

**Project Topic Areas:** [ ]  Land & Water [x]  Education [ ]  Energy

[ ]  Transportation [ ]  Food & Waste

**Applicant Name:** Samantha Lindgren

**Campus Affiliation (Unit/Department or RSO/Organization):** Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership

**Email Address:** salindgr@illinois.edu

**Check one:**

 [x]  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** |
| Samantha Lindgren | Education Policy, Organization & Leadership | salindgr@illinois.edu |
| Jon Hale | Education Policy, Organization & Leadership Curriculum and Instruction | Jonhale2@illinois.edu |
| Jeffry Royce | College of Education Facilities | jroyce@illinois.edu |
| Presley Fee | Education Policy, Organization & Leadership, Student | psfee2@illinois.edu |

**Student-Led Projects (Mandatory):**

Name of Faculty or Staff Project Advisor: N/A
Advisor’s Email Address: N/A

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

Contact Name: Amanda Brown

Unit/Department: College of Education

Email Address: acbrown1@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.*

The aim of our project is to build a “green wall” - a vertically built structure covered with plants and vegetation and a water filtration system - in the College of Education (COE) to create an environmental learning space that promotes and advances the merits of Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE). This space is additionally designed to improve the overall aesthetic and learning experience by providing a unique space that uses plant life to create a green environment to study, learn, and cultivate a grounded sense of well-being. Additionally, the wall itself is educational in its use of green technology and architecture that provides natural air filtration, thermal stability, and noise absorption to meet green climate standards set in the iCAP. The COE is a fitting place to build an innovative space intended for ESE.  Built in 1964, the building was designed as an experimental, open-space concept that mirrored the progressive social and political trends of the time. This period brought renewed research in experiential learning, collaboration, and centering students to advance democratic ideals - but not ESE. A green space reinvigorates the historic mission of the COE by providing innovative learning opportunities to advance ESE for on-campus students, engage students from across campus through informal learning, draw visitors, and make a visual commitment to the progressive social and climate goals advanced by the COE, embedded in the iCAP, and championed by current and future Illini.

**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.*

The green wall will be located in the South Atrium of the College of Education building located at 1310 S. 6th Street. The wall is opposite a south-facing glass wall which will allow the green wall to receive plenty of natural sunlight. Additionally, the space is currently occupied by a large art installation which is already illuminated by light fixtures which will be used for the green wall. Mechanicals, including electricity and water, exist in the wall making it a suitable place for the green wall.

Dr. Chrystalla Mouza, Dean of the College of Education, has encouraged us to apply for this funding and supports the installation of a green wall in the college’s South Atrium. Further, Jeffry Royce, head of the College of Education’s facilities, is part of the project team.

**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.*

The entire College of Education community has a stake in this project. The College will support the green wall’s on-going maintenance and pay for the added water and electricity costs. Moreover, the entire college community will have access to this space which will remain a lounge area that students, faculty, and staff use for studying and meetings. We hope that *all* students from across campus will feel welcome and that they will also use the lounge, particularly in the long winter months when campus is cold, dark, and not very green.

Indirectly, students in K-12 classrooms in Illinois and across the country will benefit as their teachers, graduates of the College of Education, will have learned some climate change or sustainability education during their course of study. As described on the last page of this application, an increase in sustainability education in wealthy countries like the United States has large implications for the reductions in carbon emissions through better decision-making and behaviors.

**How will this project involve and/or benefit students?**

*This includes both direct and indirect impact.*

In addition to the benefits and opportunities for students listed above, the green wall supports student well-being by providing an indoor greenspace. The improved mental health benefits of being in nature are many, unfortunately more than half of the academic year in Illinois occurs during months when access to outdoor greenspace is limited. Green walls have been called “restorative spaces” in the academic literature for their emotional and psychological benefits. Supporting the mental health of our students is a current campus priority. Lindgren is a current Faculty and Staff Mental Health Ambassador. The south atrium in the COE building is already a meeting and study space with sofas, tables, and chairs, providing students from across campus with a restorative space year-round.

Philosophically, Sustainability Education is a community-based and participatory field. As such, the design of the green wall will be a community endeavor and will be led by students. COE undergrads and grad students, as well as those interested across campus, will be invited to join a working group, facilitated by COE faculty and staff, to work with a green wall company on the design. Students in EPOL 421, a course created with iSEE’s support, will develop the text for signage and an associated COE webpage. The SSC will be acknowledged in name, and with its logo, on signage and the webpage.

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

The College of Education Communications team will write an article about the green wall in the weekly newsletter whose mailing list includes current staff, faculty, alumni, and donors. The Communications team will take photos and promote the wall on the college’s social media channels and website. We will also request that the Institute for Sustainability, Energy and Environment’s communication team announce it as well. We will also reach out to the campus News Bureau, which is part of the Office of Public Affairs.

In addition to press releases and social media updates, signage will be mounted on the wall next to the green wall describing its purpose. A QR code will be printed on the sign which when scanned, will take the user to the College of Education’s webpage for more information about Sustainability in the College. The SSC logo and an acknowledgement of SSC’s funding support will also be included on the sign.

# Financial Information

*In addition to the below questions, please submit the supplemental budget spreadsheet available on the Student Sustainability Committee* [*website*](http://ssc.sustainability.illinois.edu/?page_id=2087)*. 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?**

No, we have never applied for SSC funding.

**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.*

The wall does require regular maintenance. Water in the filtration system needs to be changed weekly, and plants need to be pruned semi-regularly. Maintenance will initially be performed by the company who installs the wall (TBD) under a standard and mandatory one-year maintenance agreement, however over time these responsibilities will shift to College of Education facilities team. The College of Education will cover the cost of replacement plants, lightbulbs, and the electricity and water costs.

**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 included some funding for a green wall in an Investment for Growth proposal. This funding from campus is highly competitive and we have low expectations about its success. Decisions will be announced by early summer. We have not applied for any other funding from any entity for this project.

# 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**](https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/) **(iCAP) goals?**

Increasing environmental stewardship is inextricably linked with education. The field of ESE strengthens the connections between knowledge, action, and responsible decision-making.

This project supports the iCAP goal of **Doubling Green Infrastructure Installations (4.2.3)**. Green walls provide indoor environmental benefits including:

* Better air quality
* Reduced noise pollution
* Thermal stability

This proposal **Broadens Sustainability Education (6.1)** by creating a new and innovative teaching and learning space as COE increases its ESE offerings. This wall will be used with COE students (future teachers and policy makers) to:

* Explore novel ways of teaching ESE within formal PK-16 classrooms (e.g., nature- and place-based pedagogies, hydroponics, food security, energy efficiency) thereby increasing ESE and stewardship for K-12 students in Illinois and nationwide
* Explore environmental justice issues (e.g., access to greenspaces, including green walls, during the school day is associated with better academic outcomes/attention, schools in impoverished or urban areas lack the greenspaces available to predominantly white schools)
* Connect students more deeply to nature
* Provide informal ESE learning opportunities to the broader campus community through signage and a website

Goal **Support Youth Sustainability (7.5)** is advanced by involving COE and campus students in the design and development of the green wall (below).

**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.*

We will monitor and evaluate the project’s progress in several ways, as described below for each short-term and long-term outcome.

Short-term:

1. Students plan and design the green wall:
* Attendance of students at design and planning meetings will be taken.
1. Students (and employees) engage with the installed green wall:
* Student baseline survey will be given to all College of Education students prior to installation inquiring about their mental health, sustainability behaviors, and habits while in the College of Education including preferred places to study. This survey will be repeated a month after the green wall has been installed, and annually thereafter.
* Security camera footage will be examined to compare the number of visitors to the green wall as compared to the number of visitors who examine the art that currently exists in the space.

Long-term:

1. Broadened Sustainability Education:
* All instructors of pre-service teachers methods courses will be surveyed annually to ascertain the extent to which sustainability has been incorporated into their courses.
* New Sustainability Education courses will be offered
* Enrollment in Sustainability Education courses will be monitored
1. Improved sense of well-being in the College of Education:
* Surveys and interviews with faculty and staff in the College of Education to learn about how much time they spend in the South Atrium and ask about their sense of well-being while in the College. Environmental attitudes surveys, including those that ask about climate change beliefs, will be part of this evaluation process.
* Collaboration with Grainger College of Engineering faculty and students on indoor air quality and noise reduction monitoring.

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

Our outreach goals are to orient the College of Education’s strategic planning toward sustainability. While the green wall provides a visual symbol of the College’s commitment, we seek to integrate principles of sustainability into all programs within the college. We will develop teaching guides for instructors with suggestions for how they make use of the wall in their instruction. We also intend to host indoor greening seminars appropriate for students (from College of Education and across campus), faculty, and staff to make them aware of the benefits (e.g., thermal stability, noise reduction, emotional well-being) that the green wall affords to those who work in, or visit, the space.

We intend to use the green wall to launch a new Sustainability Education initiative within the College of Education. At present, Lindgren teaches the only sustainability-related course in the College of Education which is untenable given the very necessary role that education can, and must, play in fighting climate change. Recent research tells us that if just 16% of high school students in high- and middle-income countries, the world would see a reduction in atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to more than 3 years’ worth of the United States’ carbon emissions (Cordero et al., 2019). Our teachers must be trained to teach about climate change, and our undergraduate and graduate students must explore the ways in which climate change impacts all facets of life, including educational research.

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

The green wall will address environmental and social injustice through our education initiatives. For instance, in our pre-service teacher methodology courses, students will learn about the benefits that access to greenspaces on student learning outcomes, attention, mental health and well-being, and improved test scores. Access to greenspaces in public K-12 schools varies with funding. Schools that are predominantly white have more access to green schoolyards and fields than urban schools. Predominantly white schools tend to be in suburbs and are associated with higher rates of funding (e.g., higher teacher salary, more extra curriculars, modernized buildings, access to necessary books and supplies). The wall will be used as a launching point in discussions about equity in education. In our curriculum studies courses the wall will be used as a centerpiece in learning about place-based pedagogies and the integration of environmental issues into the existing curriculum. Place-based learning is a strategy advanced by liberatory approaches to education and helps address social (and environmental) inequities in the classroom.