# *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**.*

**Project Name:** Joint Pollinator Garden and Composting Systems to Offset Environmental Impact and Reinforce Responsible Stewardship in Research

**Date of Report Submission:** 10/1/2020

**Project Purpose:**

This project is installing three student-managed gardens areas on campus that will serve as pollinator and microfauna refuges as well as trench composting sites for student generated food waste. Students from three departments are installing and maintaining these garden-composting systems and reducing food waste greenhouse gas emissions and supporting endangered pollinators/microfauna in the process. This project fosters environmental stewardship among UIUC students, decreases wasteful practices through behavior changes and increases landscape resiliency on campus. These three gardens are an expansion of a pilot pollinator garden-composting system (“carbon garden”) installed at UIUC Davenport Hall in 2019.

**Detailed Accounting of Expenditures to Date:**

Plants: $2293.99

Greenhouse space and soil: $489.23

Student labour: $251.58

Total: $3034.80

Please see attached spreadsheet for details

**Project Progress to Date:**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic our project team has put in place the two garden installations scheduled for 2020 on time: Eastern Davenport Hall, and The Vivarium. The planned Vivarium plants that prefer an early mid-Spring planting will be installed in Spring 2021, ahead of the planned final garden installation at the Institute for Genomic Biology. Rain barrel, composting, website/signage and outreach to 4H, in particular, have been delayed by the pandemic.

**Student Involvement and Outreach to Date:**

Eleven students have been involved in the design and installation of the gardens, as well as the care of the plants in the greenhouse. Students are also involved in the development of SOPs to ensure safe transfer of food waste to the composting system, which will be expanded this coming Spring. This, in combination with the IGB and continuing Vivarium installations will recruit and involve dozens of students in the practice of garden planning, installation and care, and many more in composting. The pandemic has affected our outreach in that our plans for the project’s website and sign design are moving more slowly than expected, but both should be ready for launch this coming Summer.

**Marketing and Promotion Efforts to Date:**

The pandemic has slowed these efforts, in part because we could not place orders with F&S or get responses from F&S regarding signage for weeks over the Spring and earlier Summer due to the shutdown. The absence of students on campus in the Spring meant delaying in person onsite outreach efforts that were planned. We have been regrouping to figure out how to allow students to participate in the pollinator/composting system and use the garden for academic and artistic endeavours in a safe way. This means developing SOPs for participation. We are working on those now.

**Additional Comments:**

The pandemic has been a major challenge in every possible way – from the risk of infection, the campus shutdown, to the universal increased demands on individual schedules despite increased obstacles to completing daily tasks, any and all angst, and loss of loved ones. The involved students have expressed gratitude in being able to be involved in the design and planting of these gardens during this turbulent period. There is something reassuring in the resilience of these plants and the process of putting them in their native ground, I guess. It’s been a healing experience for my lab and other students, who have spent months socially isolated and very scared – so thank you to the SSC for the opportunity to safely work on this project.