**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*](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 Student Sustainability Committee at* [*sustainability-committee@illinois.edu.*](mailto:sustainability-committee@illinois.edu.)

**General & Contact Information**

**Project Name:** Solar Farm 2.0 Landscape Buffer

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:** $150,000

**Project Topic Areas:**  Land & Water  Education  Energy

Transportation  Food & Waste

**Applicant Name:** Brent Lewis

**Campus Affiliation (Unit/Department or RSO/Organization):** F&S

**Email Address:** bcl@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** |
| Morgan White | F&S Sustainability | mbwhite@illinois.edu |
| Ryan Welch | F&S Superintendent of Grounds | rbwelch@illinois.edu |
| Name | Department/Organization | Email Address |
| 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: Mike Alsip

Unit/Department: F&S

Email Address: alsip@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 goal of this project it to install a Landscape Buffer along Curtis Road from First Street to the railroad tracks. The plan includes a double row of ornamental trees; seasonal color in spring, summer, fall; bird and pollinator habitat and support; and a low row of shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses, to provide further aesthetic and wildlife benefit. The full landscape design, with details, is attached.

**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 be located on the north side of Curtis Road, between the Village of Savoy and the Solar Farm 2.0 project. Permission has already been approved by the Architectural Review Committee and the Chancellor's Capital Review Committee (CCRC), in conjunction with the Solar Farm 2.0 approval.**

**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.*

Only the project team.

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

*This includes both direct and indirect impact.*

**The landscaping design was developed over the last few years, by three graduate students in the Landscape Architecture department in Fine and Applied Arts, under the direction of the University Landscape Architect (Brent Lewis). Once the landscaping is installed and the solar farm is built, we will offer tours, and use it as an educational site for classes and researchers. This has already been the case for Solar Farm 1.0, and we are eager to promote appropriate planting around solar arrays, which was a lesson learned from the first solar farm.**

**Also, after our discussions with the SSC Working Group, we intend to provide an instructional sign for visitors, acknowledging the SSC funding and sharing appropriate links, such as to the Bee Campus USA page for campus.**

**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 the tours and class visits, we will offer annual open houses for the solar farm, which will include a visit and overview of this landscaped buffer. We will also include it on the Polllinator Pockets map online, and host Bee Campus USA events there. Finally, contacts for the Illinois pollinator friendly solar farm act intend to use our site as a model and demonstration for other solar farms in the state.

# 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?**

Yes. The most recent was an application for a green infrastructure based stormwater master plan, but we withdrew that application prior to Step 2.

**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.*

No. The maintenance will be handled by campus.

**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.*

The Solar Farm itself is being financed as a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). We have not applied for funding elsewhere for this Landscape Buffer. The Resilient Landscape Strategy (still in draft form) does recommend that campus establish a recurring funding allocation for landscape improvements, but that is still in progress and not yet available 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?**

This Landscape Buffer was required by the Chancellor's office, in order to proceed with the Solar Farm 2.0 project, because of their discussion with the Village of Savoy. Thus, this landscape buffer is contributing to meeting the 2015 iCAP goal for on-campus solar generation of 25,000 MWh/year. Also, additional pollinator-friendly areas will support our continued acknowledgement as a Bee Campus USA.

As a major component of Solar Farm 2.0, F&S is seeking for it to be officially designated as a “pollinator friendly solar array." Illinois law (525 ILCS 55) requires meeting a certain score on the “pollinator scorecard,” which is being developed at our University. Professor Dolezal, with School of Integrative Biology, assures us that the plants under the Solar Farm 2.0 along with this Landscape Buffer will make our solar farm a wonderful demonstration site for other solar farms hoping to achieve a high score on the scorecard.

Plants under the Solar Farm 2.0 will be done by the vendor: “Within the fenced areas, the Proposer shall establish and maintain a pollinator friendly groundcover beneath the solar arrays, and in all other areas that are not paved for access roads or utility equipment pads. The groundcover shall consist of a seed mix of a minimum of three varieties of a turf type tall fescue, plus dutch white clover (Trifolium repens), lanceleaf self-heal (Prunella vulgaris ssp. Lanceolate) and creeping thyme (Thymus serpyllum). Per 1000 square feet, seeding rate to be 4 lbs of tall fescue mix. Seeding rate for the perennial mix to be about 40 seeds per square foot.”

**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.*

**As a landscaped buffer, this planting will inherently increase the carbon sesquestration in the soils and in the plant biomass along Curtis Road. It will also assist in storm water infiltration in these soils with their deep root systems. Long term, the trees will be tracked in our tree inventory database (https://illinoisedu.treekeepersoftware.com/) which automatically calculates environmental benefits. This will allow for anyone to access our system and see these benefits as well. We will update the tree sizes at regular intervals in order to continue to track our progress in carbon sesquestration over time.**

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

**As the foreground of our new 54 acre solar farm, this project will further our reputation as a sustainability leader. Not only as a Big 10 institution leading with on-site solar energy, we are also doing it as environmentally friendly as possible. This project also serves to put proper landscape design on display, showing that aesthetically beautiful landscapes can also be composed of functional. When referring to the word "native" or the words "pollinator friendly", there can be preconceived notions and misjudgements on what that may look like. We hope to dispel these myths and illustrate that good design can meet the needs of different issues.**

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

**Though not necessarily applicable, there is an issue with solar farms taking over the use of quality farmland. In those instances, it is not uncommon for the entire site to be covered with gravel underneath the solar arrays. In doing so, this renders the landscape sterile and displaces most insect, avian or small mammal habitat. With our planting plans under the arrays and with the support of the landscape buffer, we hope to increase the diversity of this area in a more meaningful way for the support of local and migratory insect, avian and small mammal populations.**