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March 25, 2015

University of Illinois Student Sustainability Committee
284 Illini Union, MC-384
1401 W. Green Street
Urbana, IL 61801

Members of the Student Sustainability Committee,

The Prairie Research Institute offers this letter of support for the SSC Step 2 proposal entitled “Illini Gadget Garage: Education through Electronic Product Life Extension.” The Sustainable Electronics Initiative (SEI) at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC) has resulted in valuable student engagement efforts within the last few years, and at one point, the Institute was considering a project in conjunction with SEI involving student assessment and repair of our departmental computers slated to be sent to University Surplus. Though that project was not funded, the basic idea, reimagined in the current proposal, of UI students reducing waste by extending the useful life of devices, while simultaneously learning hands-on skills and issues related to product sustainability, will surely be beneficial for our campus and state in terms of both education and environmental stewardship.

The project lead, Joy Scrogum, has been in touch with Institute leadership and our space committee. The Institute has recently completed a space assessment report, which we are currently in the process of reviewing and discussing. We have tentatively identified a space which may be suitable for the proposed electronic repair center, consisting of a main room of a little over 500 square feet, an adjacent work area of approximately 180 square feet, and adjacent office/storage space of approximately 500 square feet.

To be clear—at the time of this writing the Institute cannot promise the availability of this particular space for the Illini Gadget Garage. We must first complete considerations, both internally and with the University, of other potential uses for that space. Space is, of course, a limited resource on campus, and like any resource, it must be used wisely. However, if no other priority exists for the space in question, we would be happy to allow the Gadget Garage to use it, in exchange for a facilities usage charge. If that particular space is ultimately designated for other purposes, the Institute space committee will continue to work with Ms. Scrogum to identify other potential spaces, unless another space is secured within a different unit. The identification of a workable space by the beginning of the fall 2015 semester seems like a reasonable possibility, based upon input from our space committee. What I can assure you of at this time is the Institute believes the Illini Gadget Garage will be a beneficial project for our campus, and we would like

to provide a home for it, if we are able do so while meeting the needs of our staff and fulfilling obligations to the University.

We look forward to the continued development of this concept, and encourage you to provide the seed funding to launch it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary D. Miller". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Gary D. Miller, PhD.
Associate Executive Director
Prairie Research Institute
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign