

September 22, 2017

Re: Red Oak Rain Garden 2.0

To the members of the Student Sustainability Committee (SSC):

I am the Horticulture Extension Educator for Champaign, Ford, Iroquois and Vermilion counties. Extension administers both the Champaign County Master Gardener and East-Central Illinois Master Naturalists programs. Since spring 2017, both programs are part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Facilities & Services granting community volunteers permission to work in the campus Red Oak Rain Garden.

Our volunteers quickly realized that few of the original plantings remained in the garden. They collaborated with Cameron Letterly, who was a student intern with the Illinois Water Resources Center and a MLA candidate, to reimagine the garden design. Our members participated in two stakeholder meetings that further refined this design.

On behalf of the respective Master Gardener and Master Naturalist advisory boards, I'm writing to enthusiastically support Cameron's "Red Oak Rain Garden 2.0" proposal. This proposal has great potential to strengthen collaborative efforts between our campus units and the Champaign County community.

We are prepared to offer modest financial maintenance support for the project. Specifically, we offer \$150/year as long as the MOU is active. In addition, our volunteers will provide many hours of labor for installation and ongoing maintenance of vegetation within the garden area. When possible, we would love to work with student groups such as Red Bison to foster intergenerational volunteerism and education.

We look forward to seeing this garden fulfill its promise of a place filled with beauty and nature.

Sincerely,



Ryan Pankau
University of Illinois Extension Educator