SIU Sustainability Council Project
Final Report

Name:	
Department:	
Contact information:	
Faculty advisor:	
Project title:	
Project I.D. #:	ID number 15SP107
Award date:	04/20/2015
Completion date:	August 2015
Funds used:	$4.500
Funds Awarded:	$3,800

Brief write up of project/project experience (not to exceed 250 words):

Proposed Project:	IT Day Sustainability Presentation/Master Class
Purpose of Project	To make IT professionals (as well as educators, the business community, higher-ed, K-12 technology administrators, and students) aware of the correlation between IT efforts and sustainability. Through pre-conference research, we recognized that people do not make the connection between their use of technology tools and the degradation of the environment, depletion of resources, and consumption of energy—not to mention the human toll. We engaged Richard Hodges, of GreenIT, an expert in green/clean IT practices to speak at IT Day and lead a master class on sustainability. While planning the event with Richard, we explained that our audience wasn't even thinking "green/clean" and that his presentation was to open eyes and minds. He prepared a customized presentation, which included specific facts about SIU Carbondale's sustainability efforts to date. We believe the nut has been cracked. None of the people in attendance can now shirk their "green responsibilities" without remembering what they heard or saw during Richard's presentation. This is the beginning of awareness and opportunity for our IT department with regard to green/clean IT practices, and a base on which we can build.
Event Attendance:	280

Best things learned/produced from project:

1) That despite our belief that people are aware of sustainability as it applies to paper, glass, and other resources, they have a blind spot with regard to technology and its impact on resources, people, and the environment.
2) Attendees made the connection between their smart phones, computers, printers, TVs, etc. and the fact that resources to build technology devices may be acquired in less than socially and environmentally responsible. They also learned that technology becomes non-biodegradable tech trash every time they replace their technology devices.

   Specifically, attendees learned:

   - IT has a direct connection with sustainability—both in it consumption and in providing future solutions to the issues surrounding sustainability.
   - IT professionals hold responsibility for the impact of technology on the environment and people.
   - Less than 15% of technology devices are recycled.
   - Technology use put the highest demand on electricity—and thus has a huge carbon footprint.
   - Sustainability can be addressed through mindful planning, procurement, implementation, dematerialization, ongoing use, and longevity practices.
   - That SIUC is an active and recognized "green" campus.

How do you define sustainability?
Balancing today's use of resources with the needs and well-being of generations to come.

Has this changed over the course of your project? If so, how?
Yes. When I first polled people, asking, "What do you know about sustainability and IT?" there were two standard replies: "That means we get to keep our jobs, right? and "We recycle paper, and I think we recycle print cartridges." The idea of overwhelming consumption of resources or tech trash was never mentioned.

I believe anyone who attended Richard Hodges keynote, is now keenly aware of the connection between technology, sustainability, and social responsibility. They have learned facts that they cannot "unknow." Eyes and minds have been opened. We have taken a step forward.

What do you see as the next step for the project?
We would like to put a sustainability graduate research assistant in place to deepen our understanding of technology and sustainability, and to initiate green/clean practices. We would like to develop a shorter presentation that can be presented on campus and in schools.