

SIU Sustainability Council Project
Final Report

September 13, 2013

Project title: **Antarctica: Imagined Geographies Initiative (Online Community Outreach & Education)**

Project I.D. #: **41202**

Award date: May 5, 2012

Completion date: August 9, 2012

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

From March 19 - May 4, 2012, a multidisciplinary collaboration took place at SIU Carbondale, and throughout the region – the *Antarctica: Imagined Geographies Initiative* [AIGI]. AIGI's aims were to capture the imaginations and inform participants about Antarctica: its role in climatic variance; data it harbors regarding Earth's past; ways Antarctica inspired explorers and artists; the Antarctic form of shared international governance. AIGI brought together SIU faculty and students as well as scientists, artists and educators from around the country for on- & off-campus activities (Carbondale, Marion, and Harrisburg). Altogether, nearly 1000 persons participated in our 22 events. Thousands more received our brochure and publicity materials. In our view, along with that of most participants, faculty, and SIU higher administration, AIGI was a great success.

Initially, the basic website we created served to distribute information about events. When it became clear we would continue this initiative into 2013, we sought Green Fund support to achieve two basic aims: 1) redevelop our media platforms – primarily AIGI website and social media - to serve future endeavors; 2) reorganize and upload AIGI materials to the revised website (speaker-related resources, supportive materials, video tapes of events). Both aims were accomplished during the grant period, and continued to expand in our second year of operation; including redeveloped website, establishment of blog, Morris Library resource, Facebook, Twitter. The temporary glitch with university shift of websites to the re-branded, university-wide template is being addressed, and AIGI materials will be restored in the near future. In the meantime, other platforms continue to function, and are accessible at:

<http://mcma.siu.edu/research-creative/imagining-geographies/index.html>

<http://imagininggeographies.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ImaginingGeographies>

<http://libguides.lib.siu.edu/antarctica>

<http://news.siu.edu/2012/03/031612par12029.html>

Best things learned/produced from project:

What do you see as the next step for the project?

As our web project continued to develop, so did university interest in the kinds of scholarly collaboration and community engagement facilitated by AIGI. In response, our goals for the website were adjusted. Rather than simply extend the life of AIGI through continued web presence, we broadened the scope of the project to incorporate an entire series of similar initiatives over several years – with a focus on Southern Illinois for the foreseeable future. Our 2012-13 effort was devoted to our new series - *Land, Lives, and Arts of Southern Illinois*. Because of the Sustainability Council’s generous award, we are working to incorporate the Antarctica documents and resources under the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts website. This permanent home and format will provide continuity and access previously beyond our reach.

How do you define sustainability?

Has this changed over the course of your project? If so, how?

While the issues addressed by our initiatives often relate to ecological sustainability, we are equally committed to sustaining relationships over time: between the SIU and Carbondale communities; between SIU faculty, students, and campus organizations; and between the Southern Illinois community and the world. Since the close of our first two initiatives, “Antarctica” and “Land, Lives, and Arts of Southern Illinois”, multiple wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters have plagued the United States, forcefully demonstrating the need for continued outreach and education regarding the many problems that humankind must face and the solutions we must develop. Our goal is to continue to foster relationships between academy and community, and facilitate critical awareness regarding these and other issues.