

Green Fund Project Final Report

This report may be published on the SIU Sustainability website.

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Project Title: Environmentally Sustainable Paper Straw Usage at SIU Carbondale

Project ID #: 19SP102

Award Date: April 30th, 2019

Completion Date: March 1st, 2020

Total Funds Used: \$1,043.28

1. Provide a summary of your project/project experience.

The Green Fund grant provided SIU with the opportunity to offer SIU students paper straws in the Marketplace and Delyte's coffee. Plastic straws are detrimental to our environment and very unnecessary for human consumption purposes, especially when there are many alternative options to replace non reusable plastic straws, such as paper. There are 500 million plastic straws thrown away in the U.S. alone every day, and the number of plastic straws thrown away is enough to fill nearly 127 school busses bottom per day . Most of these straws end up in landfills, or worse, in the ocean.

We were delighted to hear that the grant had been funded. Once the fall 2019 semester began, we worked to get the promotional signage printed and the straws ordered. After approval from the Green Fund, the decision was made to order the straws from Gordon Food Service instead of Aardvark straws. The university was able to order more straws for the same amount, which will allow prolonged use of the paper straws at Southern Illinois University.

2. Provide a summary of your results (environmental, social, and/or economic) including quantifiable data as appropriate (ex. # of individuals reached, lbs. diverted from landfill, energy saved, etc.).

Survey

Pre paper straw surveys indicated that with 83.8% of student responses were in favor of using paper straws at SIU (approximately 708 responses). The most frequent reasons given for supporting the switch were that we need to reduce plastic waste, and that SIU should be one of the leaders inspiring other universities to adapt sustainable solutions.

Unfortunately, the post survey data was not statistically significant because we did not have enough participation (view question 5 for details on what to change for the future).

Inventory

SIU Campus uses approximately 22,000 plastic straws per year according to Kelley Wilkins, Assistant Director of Dining and Catering. This number is alarmingly high, especially since plastic straws take over 1,000 years to break down (not biodegrade).

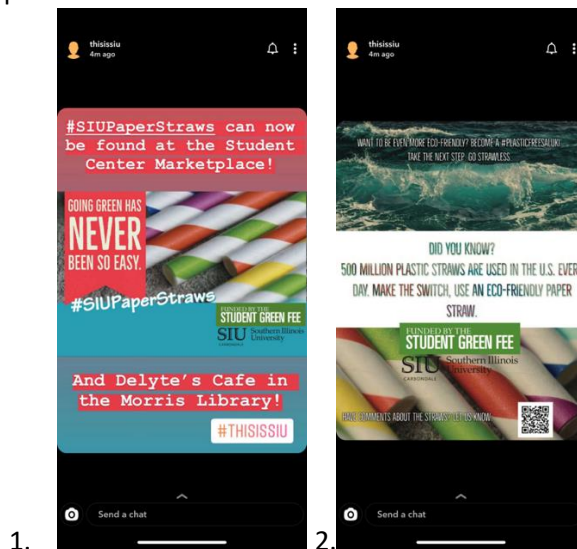
To combat this, we ordered approximately 38,400 paper straws (12 cases of 3,200 straws each). At this time, we still have 10 cases of paper straws available in the SIU dining facilities. This year we replaced 6,400 plastic straws with paper straws, which is approximately 30% of SIU plastic straw usage.

- 3. Summarize how your project promoted the Green Fee/Sustainability on campus including, but not limited to, flyers created, screenshots of website, signage, etc. Please include website links, if applicable. (Reminder: you are required to promote your project using at least 2 items from the awardee website promotion list.)**

This project was promoted in various different ways including but not limited to signage and social media.

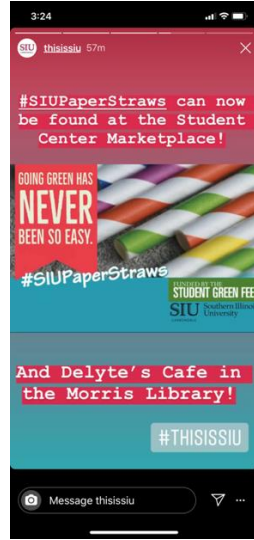
Promotional posters bearing the Green Fund marker were placed in three different locations around campus. Small 5x7" posters were placed next to the two straw bins in the Marketplace. While larger 8x11.5" posters were placed at each register in the marketplace, and at the coffee pick up station as well as the condiments station at Delyte's (View Section 4 for examples). Each poster also contained a QR code that users could access via their cell phone to take a survey over the quality and success of the paper straws. Also, promotional signage was placed around the four straw bins to display the difference between the plastic straws and their paper alternative (View Section 4 for examples). Furthermore, The SIU Social Media Team displayed the paper straw promotional posters on their Snapchat and Instagram accounts several times throughout the semester. Finally, I made a lengthy post on my personal Facebook account on the day that the paper straws launched, friends and family have posted about the straws as well.

- a. SIU Social Media Team
 - i. Snapchat



ii. Instagram

1.



2.



b. Personal Promotion

 Josie Taylor is with Lacy Webber Taylor and Mark Taylor. October 13, 2019 · 🌍 · 📍

Tomorrow is the day! Back in the spring I pitched an idea to a group of students for a potential Green Fund Grant as a part of a class project. I wanted to offer a paper straw alternative in SIU dining facilities to decrease the schools plastic consumption, even if only by a little bit. They helped me write the proposal, and I am happy to announce that we received the grant! I have spent the last several months working with SIU dining to implement my idea and starting Monday SIU will be offering a paper straw alternative in the Marketplace and Delyte's coffee shop.

I am so excited for this opportunity and so thankful for all the effort that my team put into helping me write the proposal and the effort my dad (Mark Taylor) put into helping me put the finishing touches on all of our marketing materials, and for printing them all for me as well.

The Green Fund was established at SIU in 2009, and it provides funding for sustainable project ideas all across campus including but not limited to food, energy efficiency, renewable energy, greening/grounds, transportation, waste, and outreach for sustainability efforts.

<https://sustainability.siu.edu/green-fee/green-fund/>
<https://sustainability.siu.edu/green-fund/green-fund-projects/>



i.



ii.

4. Provide evidence of how you used the Green Fund Marker in your project.

a. Promotional Poster



DID YOU KNOW?
500 MILLION PLASTIC STRAWS ARE USED IN THE U.S. EVERY DAY. MAKE THE SWITCH, USE AN ECO-FRIENDLY PAPER STRAW.



i.

b. Promotional wrap around signage for the straw bins.



i.

5. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to do a similar project in the future? If so, please describe.

I would want to set up a better communication system between those using the straws and those providing the straws. This project used a QR code system to try and communicate opinions/comments about the straws between the two groups. The QR code was placed on the promotional posters found in both the Marketplace and Delyte's; however, not very many people used the code to give feedback about the straws. This could be because the codes were too small, or simply not noticed. In the future, using a widely accessed promotional site (such as MyCourses) would be useful for gaining feedback.

Furthermore, the original intention of the straws was to replace all plastic straws in the Marketplace and Delyte's; however, the SIU student center was concerned about the general feelings of

consumers in regard to the switch from plastic to paper. With this in mind, they made the decision to offer the paper straws as an alternative to the plastic straws by putting both bins out side by side. In the future, I believe we would see more support for the paper straws if at least one location completely switched to paper straws. This would be more environmentally friendly while still being socially friendly (this is because the discontinued use of straws would not be beneficial to members of the SIU community who require straws for disability services). Another alternative idea would be to completely switch over to paper straws but keep the excess inventory of plastic straws in bins behind the counter. This way if there is a consumer who prefers plastic, they can request one.

- 6. Provide as an attachment to the email (see email address below) a minimum of 5 digital images. A minimum of one of the five images should include a person. Images should be of high a quality as possible and be attached in jpg format, if available. Images will be used to promote interest in sustainability projects on campus and may be used on our website and in other promotional material. These can be photos of the progress of the project or the completed project. Provide captions for photos here.**
 - a. PS1: Paper straws in a labeled container next to a drink with a paper straw
 - b. PS2: Paper straws placed next to a fact card and drink with a paper straw
 - c. PS3: Kelsey McAllister drinking her coffee with a paper straw and posing with a SIU poster
 - d. PS4: Focused view of a drink with a paper straw being held by a student
 - e. PS5: Students Josie Taylor and Avery Shikanai working while drinking coffee with paper straws
 - f. PS6: Student Kelsey McAllister reaching for a paper straw to put in her drink

- 7. In 2-5 sentences, describe what you learned from completing the Green Fund grant process. Include a detailed response (Do not simply respond “yes” or “no.”) to at least one of the following questions to help us understand how this project has impacted your overall university experience.**
 - **Did the completion of the Green Fund grant process help to prepare you for your future career opportunities?** The completion of the Green Fund grant process allowed for a corporative work experience with many different partners from across campus, including various student groups and faculty members. This coordination experience will allow for corporate endeavors in the future.

- 8. List suggestions for the SIU Sustainability Council to improve the Green Fund Award Process here:**
No suggestions at this time.

Final Report forms should be sent electronically, in editable Microsoft Word format, to greenfund@siu.edu. This should be completed before requesting final reimbursement. A Sustainability Council designate will review final reports before releasing funds.