



ISEE QUARTERLY REPORT: FALL 2023

Greetings, Colleagues!

Please check out this Fall iSEE Quarterly (iQ) for all of the recent major news from the Institute on our research, education/outreach, and campus sustainability missions.

In October, I was humbled and honored at my [official investiture](#) as the Alvin H. Baum Family Fund Chair. We at iSEE are so grateful for the Fund, led by Joel Friedman and Loretta Namovic, which has been our founding benefactor for more than a decade, and I look forward to continuing the work with my colleagues across campus and at partner institutions to advance the Baum family legacy.

Here is more from the past few months:

IN RESEARCH

- iSEE has released a [Request for Proposals for seed funding](#) of three types of research initiatives (deadline Dec. 1): interdisciplinary; Campus as a Living Lab; and for visioning/planning activities.
- [I-FARM \(check out the new website!\) updates](#):
 - View our [video](#) on drone cover crop planting, which received coverage in the Sept. 20 WILL [Closing Market Report](#). Also, see our [video](#) on improved robotic cover crop planting.
 - I-FARM was also featured by Illinois Public Media on [Illinois Innovations](#) and by [Al Jazeera](#).
- [SCAPES updates](#):
 - VIDEOS: Check out our [coverage](#) on the first full season, as well as [maturing crops and experiments](#) and [spring planting and other work](#), at Solar Farm 2.0; and the [solar panel installation](#) and [planting](#) for a smaller-scale experiment at the Illinois Energy Farm.
 - Researchers from Illinois, Colorado State, and Arizona each published new journal articles (read more in the first SCAPES [newsletter](#)).
- [Illinois Regenerative Agriculture Initiative updates](#):
 - IRAI has marked a successful first three years with new funding from the Midwest Regenerative Agriculture Fund and a new name: I-Regen, which reflects its commitment to regenerative agriculture in the Midwest, particularly the I-states. [Read more.](#)
- Major media news:
 - iSEE and CABBI affiliates Emily Heaton, Andrew Leakey, Andrew Margenot, Steve Long, and others were part of a PBS *NewsHour* livestream from the Quad titled [“The Ag Tipping Point.”](#)
- [Leverhulme Centre for Climate Change Mitigation updates](#):
 - Read our [news release](#) on a study in *GCB Bioenergy* showing enhanced rock weathering decreases carbon loss by 42% in maize and more than doubles C storage in miscanthus.

- [Agroecosystem Sustainability Center updates:](#)
 - Read ASC's [news release](#) on measuring stress from ozone in soybeans, a U of I News Bureau [release](#) and [short video](#) on carbon storage, and our [news release](#) on a study of accurate, efficient soil carbon estimations.
 - Founding Director Kaiyu Guan was [awarded](#) an AGU Macelwane Medal.
 - ASC's Andrew Margenot was featured in [Illinois Farmer Today](#).
 - Guan and Syngenta Chief Soil Scientist Matthew Wallenstein published an op-ed in [AgriPulse](#) about why the recent Illinois dust story shows the need for new farming practices.
- [I-GUIDE updates:](#)
 - The team published "[Cyberinfrastructure for Sustainability Sciences](#)" in *Environmental Research Letters*.
- Check out our [feature update](#) on Brian Allan's Stormwater & Mosquito Control project.
- [Seed funding updates:](#)
 - Affiliate Lei Zhao received an AGU [Global Environmental Change Early Career Award](#) and the International Association for Urban Climate's [Timothy Oke Award](#).
- [Illinois Geothermal Coalition updates:](#)
 - Co-Founder Yu-Feng Lin was featured in a *Wired* article titled "[The Massive Batteries Beneath Your Feet.](#)" Geothermal was featured on [Illinois Public Media](#) as well.
 - IGC founders, Co-PIs, and affiliates have published nine journal papers in the past year.
- [CABBI updates:](#)
 - Read a [news release](#) on a breakthrough for efficient generation of succinic acid, a valuable chemical building block. And a [news release](#) on a new paper describing an eco-friendly enzyme that helps create key chemical building blocks.
 - The new CABBI [greenhouse groundbreaking](#) was Sept. 27 at Illinois Research Park.
 - Researchers from two themes [charted the oilcane microbiome](#).

IN EDUCATION & OUTREACH

- ISEE recently announced its [RFP for a potential 2024 Critical Conversation](#) topic.
- Coming May 16-17, 2024: "[Envisioning Equitable Transitions to Sustainable Transportation Systems,](#)" a workshop in Chicago sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and in collaboration with UIC.
- [Environmental Leadership Program updates:](#)
 - Our [feature](#) shares personal and policy successes by members of the first two cohorts, a [video](#) shows the 2023 student team working with a city council, and a [Q&A](#) features alumna and ELP Advisory Board member Jennifer Walling of the Illinois Environmental Council.
- [Fall 2023 Critical Conversation on climate-smart commodities updates:](#)
 - Registration was at capacity for this Sept. 18-19 event. Read the [summary notes](#). View a [video](#) of the keynote. And read a [blog post](#) by one of the organizers, Jean Brokish.
 - Keynote Speaker [Maggie Monast](#) was featured by [WGN-TV](#), [CBS Chicago](#), and [Fox Chicago](#).
- [Certificate in Environmental Writing/Q Magazine](#) updates:
 - [Q Vol. 6 Issue 1](#) was published in October.
 - Students in five different majors won [Janelle Joseph Environmental Writing Contest](#) prizes.

IN CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY

- In October, iSEE was part of [Sustainability Month](#) events that include a monthlong [Sustainable Habits Challenge](#), a [Green Quad Day](#) that featured the [iSEE Clothing Swap](#) and [Kindness Rocks](#) initiatives, and a [trash pickup](#) along with several student and community events.
- The first [Zero Waste football tailgate](#) was Sept. 23, and received coverage in [The News-Gazette](#) and on [WCIA](#) and [WAND](#). View our [video](#) of the event. The next one is Nov. 11.
- Check out the new videos on [Eco-Friendly Hydration on Campus](#) (shown at Convocation) and on [Hydration at Illini Athletic Events](#) (shown at all Illini football home games)!
- iSEE published a [resident advisor/new student training video](#) on how to get involved in the campus sustainability movement and educational opportunities.
- [Illini Lights Out updates](#):
 - At the first four of five fall dates, 637 volunteers have turned off 19,354 bulbs, saving as much as 33,386 kilowatt-hours and \$2,944 in energy bills over those weekends — and averting as much as and 23.4 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Next date Dec. 1.
 - The program was No. 85 in the [“100 things to do before you graduate UIUC.”](#)