

## **Student Green Energy Fund Bylaws**

*“Done right, sustainability doesn’t cost, it pays.” - Ray Anderson, Interface, Inc.*

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### **Preamble**

The Student Green Energy Fund (SGEF) was initiated as a collaborative, statewide, student-led campaign in 2007. As changes to the State University System of Florida and the subsequent changes to the regulation of student fees emerged, the effort necessarily adapted to become a USF system-wide project. With support from USF Tampa’s Office of Sustainability, other key faculty and staff, and various student organizations, students from USF Tampa and USF Saint Petersburg championed the SGEF proposal through the USF Board of Trustees and the Florida Board of Governors (BOG).

At USF St. Petersburg, the Student Green Energy Fund is financed through a nominal student fee of **\$1.00 per credit hour**. The fund is used to assist the university in reducing energy costs through conservation, promoting power generation using clean, renewable energy technologies, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. With approval from the Florida Board of Governors on March 24, 2011, students at each campus within the University of South Florida (USF) System earned the right to vote, via a student body referendum, to approve the initiation of the fee and affirm any subsequent modifications to it on their respective campuses. Every three years, students will have the opportunity to reaffirm support of the fee via referendum. The most recent referendum for the USFSP Campus took place in 2017 and passed with an 87.7% acceptance.

The Student Green Energy Fund catalyzes a growing experiential learning model that focuses student leadership and creative energy towards a noble and necessary goal. Sustainability in higher education bolsters institutional pride, generates revenue through innovative technology and problem solving, and strengthens community through collaboration. By developing a proposal, ushering it through the different bureaucratic channels and ultimately self-assessing a fee, students have demonstrated overt and proactive leadership in sustainability. The work that follows from the formal body laid out in these bylaws should maintain integrity towards these origins, as a student led and collaborative pursuit, and should reflect alignment with its intent, as just one mechanism in support of a broader campus commitment to sustainability.

### **Article 1: Governance Structure**

## 1. Numbers & Representation

- a. The Student Green Energy Fund Committee (herein known as the Committee) has authority over the Student Green Energy Fund (SGEF or the Fund).
- b. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of 7 total members including six voting members and one chair.
  - i. At least one-half of the committee must be students appointed by the Student Body President.
  - ii. ~~The Student Body President shall appoint a minimum of one student alternate member.~~
  - iii. At least one-half of the committee must be students approved by Student Government at General Assembly.
  - iv. ~~The USFSP VCSA shall appoint a minimum of one nonstudent alternate.~~
  - v. The Chair is appointed by the SGEF committee members. Quorum must be met to vote and the previous SGEF Chair and Vice Chair must be present to conduct the meeting in which the transition takes place.
  - vi. The Committee shall encourage open participation in committee business by campus and community stakeholders.
    1. The Committee holds at their discretion the power to create additional roles on the committee, and must inform the appointing bodies of additions.
    2. These include but are not limited to: Ex officios, at-large members, advisors, interns, etc.
    3. These "members" serve strictly in a support capacity and are not eligible to vote on committee business.
- c. **Alternates**
  - i. ~~There is a minimum of one student alternate appointed to the committee. Additional alternate positions may be created at the discretion of the Committee, with consultation from the appointing bodies.~~
  - ii. ~~Alternates can include students and non-students.~~
  - iii. ~~Alternates must attend all meetings of the Committee in accordance with Article 1, Section 4d.~~
  - iv. ~~Alternates may be called upon to fulfill the duties of a voting member in that member's absence, and may be included to establish quorum in such cases.~~

## 2. Powers & Voting

- a. Once quorum is established (see Article 1, Section 4b), a simple majority of the voting members present is required to make funding and any other official decisions, except as stated elsewhere in these bylaws.
- b. The Chair votes only in the case of a tie.
- c. Vote casting by electronics means (i.e. email, teleconference) may be permitted as needed but is not preferred. However, teleconferencing members shall not be a means of quorum. Members must be present to be considered for quorum.
- d. In accordance with Article 1, Section 1, an alternate member may vote in the absence of a voting student member.

### 3. Duties

- a. It shall be the duty of the Committee members to:
  - i. Define, evaluate, and revise award types and criteria for project proposals.
  - ii. Establish procedures for receiving and processing project proposals.
  - iii. Review project applications and determine allocation of funds.
  - iv. Advertise the Fund to the USFSP community to solicit participation and applications.
  - v. Make project proposals and descriptions of funded projects publicly available
  - vi. Develop, delegate, and supervise the duties of all staff and interns of the Committee.
  - vii. Complete all reporting as required in Article 5
  - viii. Educate and market the USFSP community about SGEF funded projects.
  - ix. Assist project investigators in meeting project proposal required criteria.

### 4. Meetings

- a. Frequency
  - i. The Committee will meet at least once a month during the academic year.
  - ii. The Committee will meet at least once over summer session.
  - iii. The Committee chair may call emergency meetings with at least 72 hours notice when deemed necessary
- b. Quorum
  - i. At least 4 voting members, excluding the chair, must be present to establish quorum.
  - ii. Quorum must be established for any vote from the committee.
  - iii. Alternates may be called upon to establish quorum and fulfill the duties of a voting student member.

- iv. The committee may continue a meeting without quorum, but may not hold any binding votes on any business.
- c. Attendance
  - i. Members with unexcused absences or an excess of excused absences are subject to removal from the committee with a super majority ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote.
  - ii. Excused absences are granted by the chair.
- 5. Officers and Advisors
  - a. Chair
    - i. The Chair shall coordinate all meeting agendas
    - ii. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Committee, acting as facilitator and holding meetings to the agenda in a timely fashion.
    - iii. The Chair should be a student.
    - iv. The Chair only votes in case of a tie.
  - b. Vice Chair
    - i. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair with his or her duties.
    - ii. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall assume all duties and authority of the Chair.
    - iii. The Vice Chair is eligible to vote unless serving in the capacity of the Chair.
    - iv. The Vice Chair shall serve as club liaison throughout the university with the authority to speak on behalf of the Committee.
    - v. Manage and report on the performance of the SGEF budget and approved projects, while coordinating with the Green Fund Manager.
      - a. In the absence of the Green Fund Manager or its position, The Vice Chair shall assume all duties of the Green Fund Manager.
  - c. Marketing Officer
    - i. Create all committee messages to be marketed publicly.
    - ii. Upkeep and maintain all social media sites ie. Website, Facebook, Twitter, Event invites.
    - iii. Distribute the SGEF message.
  - d. Event Officer
    - i. Coordinate with Vice Chair as he or she is the club liaison for the university.

- ii. Plan and organize events for the Committee.
    - iii. Acquire room reservations for all meetings and events.
  - e. Proposal Adviser
    - i. As projects are approved and managed this adviser is in contact with the PI's for guidance through the proposal process.
    - ii. Take charge of Purchasing Orders.
    - iii. Remain in contact with the Chair for administrative tasks.
  - f. Green Fund Manager (optional)
    - i. Carry out evaluation/detailed due diligence on relevant proposals
    - ii. Manage completion matters post-approval
    - iii. Manage and report on the performance of approved loans/projects
- 6. Member Qualifications & Terms of Office
  - a. Student Members:
    - i. ~~Terms are one year from starting date.~~
    - ii. Student members are restricted from voting in their first formal meeting.
    - iii. Student members may seek additional (including consecutive) terms.
    - iv. All student members of the Committee must be registered USFSP students during their term of office.
    - v. ~~Students who graduate before their term of office expires are eligible to finish out their term.~~
    - vi. One student member will be appointed to serve on Clean Energy and Resource Conservation Commission (CERCC) as the SGEF liaison as according to CERCC bylaws.
  - b. Non-Student Members:
    - i. Terms for non-student members are two years. Terms may be less than two years at the discretion of the VCSA and the non-student member. Terms for student members are one academic year (two semesters).
    - ii. Non-student members may seek additional and consecutive terms.
    - iii. Non-student members are restricted from voting in their first formal meeting.
    - iv. Non-student members of the Committee must be currently employed by USFSP.

c. All other qualifications for appointment are left to the discretion of the appointing bodies.

7. Member replacement

- a. A committee member may be removed by a supermajority ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the committee's full voting membership.
- b. In the event that a committee member is removed or resigns, the original appointing body will select the replacement.
- c. Replacement members will serve out the remainder of the original member's term of office.

**Article 2: Fund Management**

- 1. Fees are collected and maintained in a dedicated auxiliary account, therefore:
  - a. A six percent withholding is required for administrative overhead.
  - b. Five percent is held annually in reserve for contingencies and bad debt.
- 2. The auxiliary fund is administered by the Regional Vice Chancellor of Administrative and Financial Services (CFO)
- 3. The CFO is the official signatory on the account.
- 4. A maximum of 3 percent of the fees collected can be used annually to fund a term-limited OPS staff position ("SGEF Manager") to manage the fund, as approved by the Committee.
- 5. A maximum of ten percent of the fees collected can be used annually to purchase energy monitoring equipment or conduct energy monitoring procedures to ensure the efficacy of projects, as approved by the Committee.
- 6. An objective cost review is conducted yearly in order to assure accurate accounting.
- 7. Reports on project expenditures are made public on a yearly basis.
- 8. Unused funding for projects is returned to the fund for other projects.

**Commented [1]:** \$8.25/ hr, 13 hr/week, \$2,500 per semester, \$5,000 per year (No action needed)

**Article 3: Proposal Process**

1. Project proposals can originate from any source within USFSP (employees & actively enrolled students) as they pertain to the USFSP campus, including individuals, groups, and formal and informal bodies.

2. **Funding Cycles**

**Commented [2]:** ? Nick Setteducato (No action needed)

a. During the academic year, there are two funding cycles for projects at an estimated cost above \$15,000 with publicized proposal deadlines. The first date is October 15<sup>th</sup> and the second date is March 15<sup>th</sup>.

i. A majority of voting members must approve projects above \$15,000 submitted outside of the defined funding cycles.

b. Proposals under \$15,000 may be submitted at any time and may be recommended for funding.

#### **Article 4: Project Evaluation & Selection**

##### 1. Required Criteria for Proposals

a. Proposals must reduce the university's greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and/or energy costs.

b. Proposals must include a mechanism for measurement and verification of results, including any applicable Kwh reductions and GHG emissions reductions.

c. All relevant university paperwork (i.e. Space Impact Request) must be completed and approved.

d. All proposed projects must have immediate application (i.e. cannot be "pure" research).

e. Project investigators must investigate internal/external funding matches or cost sharing opportunities (fees, grants, etc.).

f. Proposals must include a value analysis that estimates a return on investment (ROI) and cost savings realized by the institution.

1. Proposals must include a value analysis that can be integrated and realized by the institution into the Green Revolving Fund.

g. Proposals must include a plan for sustaining the project after the budget period has ended.

##### 2. Preferred Criteria for Proposals

- a. Project management teams should be collaborative, involving faculty/staff and students.
- b. Projects should enhance student engagement and learning opportunities and contribute to institutional sustainability.
- c. Proposals should show alignment with the USFSP Strategic Plan, Master Plan, and Climate Action Plan.
- d. Projects should measure and monitor any potential savings derived from the project, and report upon those savings.
- e. Preference will be given to projects that can use revolving paybacks (i.e. the fund is paid back through energy savings)

**Article 5: Accountability, Records & Reporting**

- 1. Accountability to students & the campus community
  - a. The Committee shall be accountable to the USFSP campus community, with special consideration for accountability to the student body, and therefore shall:
    - i. Make all of its records available to all USFSP students and employees
    - ii. Issue an annual report of its activities
- 2. Project Accountability
  - a. All funded projects shall submit a report to the Committee according to timelines defined by the Committee and at the conclusion of the project or annually from the date of the project approval, if the project is funded for multiple years.
    - i. The report must include a budget detailing the spending of all funds.
  - b. Upon review of the report, the committee shall judge whether the funds were spent within the scope of the project.
- 3. Records & Reporting
  - a. The Committee must keep on record:
    - i. Minutes of all meetings of the Committee including date, time, location, the names of those present and the proceedings thereof. These must be made available to all members and easily accessible by the public.
    - ii. Accurate accounting of all funds
    - iii. Copies of approved proposals and status or final reports from all funded projects
    - iv. Copies of all annual reports issued by the Committee

**Commented [3]:** Present to Student Government, formal report (not too long)  
 - Project Contributor  
 - ROI  
 - Cost  
 - Pictures  
 (No action needed)



b. Ethical Standards

- i. SGEF members must abstain from voting in the event of a conflict of interest.
- ii. SGEF members must report potentially compromising relationships to the SGEF committee.