

## **Clark University Student Sustainability Fund Operational Guidelines**

Authored by students Ethan Forauer, Holden Beale, Amanda Brackett, Emily Smela, and Samantha Sandella, April 2015

### **Introduction**

Be it set forth that the Clark Undergraduate Student Council (CUSC) will allocate \$20,000 per semester towards funding sustainability initiatives on Clark University's campus. These funds are constitutionally allocated through the CUSC constitution.

### **Article I- The Student Sustainability Fund**

**1.1 Mission Statement:** The Student Sustainability Fund is a resource for the advancement of sustainable practices, education, and infrastructure within the Clark community.

**1.2** The funds will be managed by the Student Sustainability Fund (SSF) Committee, a committee made up of students and a representative of the student body from CUSC. The Committee will award funds to projects proposed by undergraduate students who will work in partnership with faculty, staff, departments, graduate students, community members, local businesses or registered student organizations. Projects can originate in any academic discipline and will be environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable based on the following guidelines:

1. Projects shall reduce Clark University's operational impact on the environment.
2. Projects shall include publicity, education, and outreach components.
3. Projects shall receive all necessary written approval by appropriate campus officials prior to consideration.
4. SSF will not fund projects already mandated by law or Clark policy.
5. SSF will fund projects that go above and beyond current legal or policy requirements.

**1.3** The SSF funds are not to be used or reallocated for purposes other than those described in this document. The SSF shall continue to operate even after student fees are no longer collected into the Fund, as long as money remains in the SSF allocation.

### **Article II- Board Structure and Responsibilities**

**2.1** The Committee is overseen by Sustainable Clark and CUSC. All committee members, except the non-voting Sustainability Coordinator, are expected to take part in each aspect of the voting process. Committee members will only be expected to apply to their position on the committee once, but will be re-evaluated with new committee applicants at the end of each spring semester.

The Committee will consist of 6 members:

#### **a. Policy and Practice Coordinator**

1. Maintain a thorough understanding of Clark's sustainable philosophy and related documents such as the Climate Action Plan
2. Will set meeting agendas and conduct meetings with the SSF Committee.
3. Will delegate responsibilities to the other committee members.
4. Acts as the Chair of the Fund's Committee.

### **b. Project Monitoring Coordinator**

1. Will be responsible for following up with projects after finances have been disbursed.
2. Will hold fund recipients accountable to their goals
3. Will process and approve quantitative project milestones
4. Will ensure that post-project reports and educational elements are realized.

### **c. Administrative Liaison**

1. Will work closely with the Advisory Board and Committee Advisor.
2. Will be responsible for maintaining contact with project coordinators and ensuring the receipt of all documentation regarding the progress of and the realization of all projects awarded funding.
3. Will be responsible for working with project applicants and coordinators on spending and budgeting their awarded money.

### **d. Treasurer/CUSC Vice-President**

1. Will be responsible for managing the fund's budget.
2. Act as a liaison with the committee's accountant
3. Ensure loan repayments are received as scheduled.
4. Will be responsible for updating Clark University Student Council (CUSC) members on decisions made by SSF.
5. Will help in selection of committee member applicants.

### **e. Clark Sustainability Coordinator/ Committee Advisor**

1. Non-voting member.
2. Will work with Treasurer/CUSC Vice-President in selecting committee member applicants.
3. Must actively provide feedback throughout the application process.

## **2.2 Advisory Board**

- a. The advisory board will be responsible for meeting with the Committee at least once per semester to assist in the final approval of project applicants and funding allocations
- b. The advisory board will be comprised of:

1. Business Manager,
2. Physical plant representative,
3. Faculty member,
4. Administrative staff member, who may be a representative from Student Leadership & Programming.

- c. Each member of the advisory board will serve for one year, following the University's school calendar.
- d. Advisory Board members will be selected based on availability, interest, and expertise.
- e. The SSF committee will extend invitations to potential Advisory Board members prior to project application submissions during the fall semester. Members will be chosen and confirmed by the Committee before the second round of project applications are submitted.

### **Article III- Function and Purpose**

**3.1** The Committee is formed to explore the options for the distribution of resources.

**3.2** To review and recommend projects to be funded:

a. To evaluate the feasibility of projects being discussed with the professional assistance of the Advisory Board.

**3.3** To track, publicize, and make available information on funded sustainability projects to the Clark student body.

**3.4** All Projects to be considered for SSF funding must meet the following criteria:

a. Projects must address environmental sustainability on Clark's campus, or in the capacity that on-campus activities influence sustainability off campus. All proposed projects must have a clearly defined, measurable outcome, and include relevant metrics.

b. Projects with a research component must also apply that research at Clark.

c. Project proposals must be submitted by Clark undergraduate students in partnership with faculty, staff, academic departments, graduate students, community members, local businesses and registered student organizations. Individuals and organizations outside of Clark may not submit proposals on their own.

d. Project proposers shall receive all necessary written approval by appropriate campus officials prior to consideration.

e. SSF funding will not support projects already mandated by law or Clark policy directive (e.g., standards for new building construction), since Clark is already obliged to allocate funds for such projects, unless the applicant and their partner seek loan options. SSF will fund projects that go above and beyond minimum University requirements. The Fund will consider projects that are unable to gain sufficient funding from other sources.

f. All projects shall submit monthly reports after funding has been dispersed. Additionally, a project plan must include a final report made to the SSF Committee after successful implementation. If a project is expected to have ongoing benefits such as annual cost savings, the project plan must include a mechanism for tracking, recording, and reporting these benefits back to the SSF Committee on an annual basis. This mechanism must be continued after all project members graduate.

g. The entity carrying out the project is expected to acknowledge the SSF in any public communication, and carry out activities, as appropriate to publicize the project and the Committee's support.

h. Projects must have publicity, education, and outreach components.

i. Consistent with overall mission of SSF, the mission of Sustainable Clark, and the mission of Clark University.

**3.5** To oversee progress and the completion of projects granted resources by the Committee.

## **Article IV- Committee Member Terms, Conditions, Elections, and Removal**

**4.1 Election Process** As indicated in the CUSC Constitution, the CUSC Vice-President will be elected under Constitution protocols every spring semester. One of the CUSC Vice-President's responsibilities will include serving on the SSF Committee as the Committee's Treasurer and CUSC liaison.

**4.2 Committee Formation Process** The other four student committee members (Technology Chair, Outreach and Communications Director, and Administrative Liaison) can apply through this process.

- a. To apply for these positions, students must fill out an application and be interviewed by the Sustainability Coordinator and the Treasurer/CUSC Vice-President.
- b. The selection of the members will be a joint decision between the Sustainability Coordinator, Treasurer/CUSC Vice-President, and the Sustainability Task Force.
- c. Specific positions will be determined during this process.

**4.3 Attendance** All members of the Committee are expected to attend all Committee meetings.

- a. A maximum of no more than three (3) meetings may be missed during the appointment year.
- b. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, he/she is expected to notify the chair at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance.
- c. A member who is unable to attend a meeting is still expected to perform all work required of him/her for that meeting.
- d. If a member should be absent for two meetings, the chair shall notify the member of his/her absences.

**4.4** If a committee member is unable to complete their one-year commitment, they will be replaced by an alternate vetted by the Sustainability Coordinator and the remaining committee members.

- a. The opening will be publicized to the student body.
- b. Students wishing to be on the committee will apply using the same application as the other committee members.
- c. The Sustainability Coordinator and the remaining committee members will select the new member based on their application.

**4.5 Removal** The Committee may, by a majority vote, remove a Committee member who demonstrates an inability to perform the duties of membership.

- a. After three unexcused absences, The Committee may remove a member by a majority vote.

**4.6** In the event that a position is not filled, its responsibilities will fall to the Policy and Practice Coordinator.

**4.7** The Committee may, at any time, reassign member responsibilities by a simple majority to take best advantage of the skills and interests of its members.

**4.8 Conflicts of Interest** The Committee shall conduct itself in such a way that conflicts of interest are minimized and all potential conflicts of interest are made public. For example, each Committee member must make public all campus groups and organizations of which he or she is a member. Where appropriate, the Committee member should recuse himself or herself from voting on grant allocations for projects proposed by such groups. For such votes, the "full Committee membership" as defined for voting majority purposes shall be decreased to account for the Committee member's recusal.

## **Article V- Operational Procedures of the Committee**

**5.1 Meetings** Meetings of The Committee are initiated by the chair of the committee. Any member of the committee may request that the chair call a special meeting. A quorum is necessary to call a meeting if the chair refuses to call a meeting for some reason.

- a. Meetings shall be held on weekdays, during the Fall and Spring semesters, when classes are in session.

- b. Special meetings can be called on days when classes are in session with a notice of at least 48 hours.
- c. Every effort shall be made to schedule meetings of the Committee at the convenience of all the members.

**5.2** The Committee may conduct business at a meeting when a quorum is present. A quorum is half of the committee, representing a minimum of 3 students.

**5.3** If a quorum is not present, the committee may have a working session but may not adopt positions or other motions. All motions must be made by a voting member and seconded by another voting member.

**5.4** The Policy and Practice Coordinator is required to take attendance at all meetings. If he or she is not present, another member of the committee will do so.

**5.5** The Committee must approve the minutes of the previous session before moving to any other business.

**5.6 Voting** Voting procedures will consist of the following standing rules:

- a. Any voting member may move to make a motion or make modifications of a motion.
- b. The chair must be present at all meetings where a vote is called for.
- b. The chair will announce the motion and ask if anyone would like further discussion.
- c. The chair will then ask for committee members to vote.
- d. The motion and total number of yeas, nays, and abstentions shall be recorded by the Policy and Practice Coordinator or another member of the committee if Policy and Practice Coordinator is not present.
- e. A voting threshold for passing any motion requires a three-fifths (3/5) majority vote of a quorum (hence majority vote).
- f. Only student members may vote.
- g. All committee members are allowed to send a proxy to observe in their place, but the proxy has no voting rights.

**5.7** All members are required to reveal any possible conflicts of interest when considering a proposal. In the event of a conflict of interest, a member may participate in deliberations but may not vote.

**5.8** The SSF will go through a periodic review process every three years. This review will be conducted by CUSC along with the SSF Committee. The goals of the review process are to:

- a. Judge the strengths and weaknesses of the SSF program, the committee structure and the administration of funds.
- b. Determine whether it is appropriate to raise or lower the size of the student fee used to finance the fund. The review process is important to maintain accountability and transparency in use of the fund.

## **Article VI- Project Applications, Funding and Tracking**

### **6.1 Application Process** (once per semester)

- a. Outreach and publicity to the campus community will be conducted in the beginning of each semester to encourage participation.
- b. Applicants will be expected to submit an expression of interest application to the committee to receive critique, feedback, and advice. The Committee will also inform all unsuccessful applicants of the reason why their request was rejected.
- c. Office hours and a meeting will be conducted with the applicant.
- d. A comprehensive application will then be due detailing the specifics of their project proposal including proof of a committed partner, a detailed and supportable budget, and a timeline.
- e. Following these submissions, a meeting with the advisory board will be held with committee to obtain technical and feasibility expertise.

f. The committee will then rank the projects based on established criteria, vote, and allocate funds and resources.

**6.2 Project Funding** Each Committee member and project mentor shall review each proposal warranting consideration for funding.

- a. A majority vote will decide approval.
- b. A majority vote is required to approve funding levels.
- c. Any grant or loan recommended by The Committee requires the approval of the Sustainability Coordinator and the Sustainability Task Force.

**6.3 Project Tracking** The committee is responsible for tracking all funded projects, and for ensuring that funds are spent appropriately and in a timely manner. The staff/faculty advisor/partner will be responsible for project management continuity if student awardees have graduated or are studying abroad.

- a. All funded projects must provide monthly progress reports after funds have been awarded and until the project is complete. This is expected on the first Friday of every month. An end of project report is also expected. These reports must contain an accounting of funds spent on the project and receipts or invoices for all purchases.
- c. Concerned parties may call on the committee as a whole to report problems with projects. These concerns will be reviewed by the SSF Committee and advisory bodies on a case-by-case basis. Continued problems with any project will be grounds for funding rescission.

**6.4 Annual Reviews** The Committee must prepare and publish an annual review of all programmatic initiatives and funding.

**6.5 Funding Rescission** Funding may be rescinded at any time by a majority vote of the committee:

- a. In cases of change of scope, inadequate progress or lack of communication.
- b. After at least 3 attempts to contact the project contacts and reconcile project differences
- c. After Project Contacts have the right to address the committee prior to a rescission vote.

## **Article VII- Bylaws**

**7.1** The Committee shall have the power to alter, amend, or appeal the Bylaws or adopt new Bylaws by a majority vote of The Committee, provided that the Bylaws shall at no time incorporate any provision inconsistent with the rules and regulations of CUSC or any applicable governmental law.

- a. All revisions to the Bylaws shall be monitored and tracked for future Committees to review.
- b. Bylaws should be re-approved on an annual basis

**7.2** An amendment must be approved by more than half of the SSF Committee in order to be ratified.