



## **Student Green Energy Fund 2015/2016 Charter**

### **I. Introduction**

The [American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment](#), signed by USF President Judy Genshaft in 2008, obligates USF-Tampa to conduct an annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory and develop a long-term [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) to reduce and, eventually, eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from the Tampa campus operations and infrastructure. In 2009, the USF Office of Sustainability was established to oversee these requirements ([USF Policy 10-051](#)). Since then, the Office has created a greenhouse gas inventory (baseline AY 2007-2008) and a CAP. One of the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions identified by the CAP is energy consumption by the University. The CAP concludes that energy consumption must be reduced to lower greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.

The Student Green Energy Fee assists the University of South Florida with conserving energy, reducing energy costs, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, promoting renewable energy technologies, reducing water usage and/or increasing resource sustainability. With approval from the Florida Board of Governors on March 24, 2011, students at each campus vote in a study body referendum every three years to determine if they support the fee and at what rate. The most recent referendum for the Tampa Campus were certified by the Election Rules Commission on February 28, 2014. The referendum passed with 69 percent of students voting to approve the fee at the rate listed above. The next referendum will take place in the spring semester of 2017.

### **II. Fee Administration**

The Fee is collectively managed by the Student Green Energy Fund (SGEF) Council, which consists of 15 individuals: 12 regular (voting) members, two alternates, and one Chair.

The Student Government (SG) President nominates six student members and one student alternate from the USF Tampa Campus upon the recommendation of the SG University and Community Affairs Department or other administrative unit of the SG designated by the SG President. The Director of the Office of Sustainability (OS) nominates six faculty/staff members and one faculty/staff alternate from the USF Tampa Campus upon the recommendation of the Sustainability Initiative Steering Committee or other administrative unit of the OS as designated by the OS Director.

All appointments to the SGEF Council are made by the USF President or her/his delegate. Nominations from students, faculty, and staff are accepted by the SG President and OS Director each year in September, with appointments made no later than September 30. All SGEF Council appointments are limited to 12 months, ending September 30. SGEF Council members may seek additional (including consecutive) terms.

The SGEF Council Chair convenes the council, oversees procedural matters, and may cast a tie-breaking vote. A simple majority of voting members (seven) is required to vote on SGEF proposals and amend the SGEF Charter. The simple majority must consist of at least three student members and at least three faculty/staff members. Vote casting by electronic means (e.g., e-mail) may be permitted as needed but is not preferred. Alternate members may be called upon to vote if a simple majority of regular voting members cannot be achieved.

### **III. Fund Management**

Fees are collected and maintained in a dedicated auxiliary account (“In the Auxiliary Trust Fund – Budget Basis”), and all expenditures for projects funded from the account are approved and paid from that account. The auxiliary fund is administered by Student Affairs. The SGEF Chair is the authorized signatory on the account. An objective cost review is conducted periodically in order to assure accurate estimates. Reports on project expenditures are made on a periodic basis. Unused funding for projects is returned to the fund for other projects.

Since the SGEF is maintained as an auxiliary account, a six percent withholding is required for administrative overhead. In addition, a minimum of five percent of the fees collected is held annually in reserve for contingencies and bad debt. A maximum of three 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 SGEF Council. A maximum of 10 percent of the fees collected can be used annually to purchase energy monitoring equipment and related supplies and services, as approved by the SGEF Council, to ensure the efficacy of projects supported by the Fee.

### **IV. Fee Allocation**

All current and actively enrolled students as well as current employees of USF may apply for SGEF funds.

All proposals that seek to use SGEF funds must comply with the following criteria:

- proposals must address reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, water usage, and/or resource sustainability on the USF Tampa Campus,
- proposals must include an educational component that informs the USF community about the results of the project,

- all relevant university paperwork (e.g., Space Impact Request, Event Request, etc.) must be completed and approved,
- all proposed projects must have immediate application (i.e., should not be “pure” research),
- budgets cannot include salaries or stipends for USF employees but can include stipends for undergraduate students and salaries (but not tuition) for graduate assistants,
- proposals must demonstrate that funding alternatives (such as fees, grants, etc.) are not available/applicable, and
- all proposing and benefitting units must comply with the reporting requirements of the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment (<http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org>) and the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (<https://stars.aashe.org>).

All proposals that seek to use SGEF funds should comply with the following criteria:

- proposals should specify or estimate the return on investment (e.g., KWH reductions, GHG emissions reductions, and/or cost savings realized by the institution),
- project management teams should include a combination of faculty/staff and students,
- projects should seek internal/external funding matches or cost sharing with other units,
- proposals should show how the projects align with the USF Strategic Plan and/or Master Plan,
- proposals should demonstrate the sustainability of the project after the budget period has ended (e.g., a statement from the benefitting unit committing to maintain the project after the budget period has ended), and
- projects should enhance student success and contribute to institutional sustainability.

The SGEF Council will not reject a project solely based on financial payback or cost savings. Additionally, the council will not reject a project due to failure to meet a stated minimum GHG/energy or water use reduction per dollar spent. The council, however, may consider the expected performance of a project when deciding between competitive grants.

## **V. Proposal Process**

Project proposals can originate from any source within USF-Tampa as they pertain to the USF Tampa Campus, including individuals, groups, and formal and informal bodies. It is anticipated that most awards will not exceed \$100,000, unless exceptional circumstances require additional funding. Proposals must be submitted online via <http://www.usf.edu/sustainability>

The SGEF Council has established a three-tiered grant system.

- **Fast Track Grant (up to \$5,000)**: Typically, these grants are educational or promotional. It is not required that all such grants undergo Technical Advisory Group review; however, the SGEF Council may at its discretion require such review.
- **Medium-Range Grant (from \$5,001 to \$250,000)**: Grant projects in this range assist the University with conserving energy, reducing energy costs, lowering greenhouse gas

emissions, implementing renewable energy technologies, reducing water usage or increasing resource sustainability. Minimally, the Technical Advisory Group will evaluate all project proposals in this grant category prior to SGEF Council review. The SGEF Council may require additional consultation and greater oversight depending upon the complexity of the project with regard to purchasing volume, labor costs, number of contractors involved, high visibility or award level near the high end of the grant dollar range.

- **Signature Grant (over \$250,000)**: Signature grant projects share the same sustainability emphasis and oversight requirements as medium-range projects. Additionally, signature grant projects will enjoy significant institutional support, attain extraordinary visibility and target outcomes that address critical needs congruent with SGEF Charter priorities. Project leaders will assemble a team of experts with complementary strengths to lead these large, complex projects to a successful conclusion.

There is no set due date for proposals. The SGEF Council reviews project proposal applications as received and maintains a queue of vetted and approved projects ranked by funding priority. As funds become available, the SGEF Council authorizes commencing specific projects.

All proposals must include:

- Project title;
- PI, Co-PI details;
- Organizations that will implement the project (to help determine any additional costs and resource restraints).
- Project description;
- Detailed budget and budget justification documenting existing human and financial resources for the project as well as projected ongoing resource needs (total cost of ownership for the life of the project) including major equipment, contracts/services (commissioning, monitoring, etc.), and personnel costs;
- Resource matching that might be provided by organizations (with appropriate commitment authority documentation);
- Proposed timeline for the project with major milestones and project end dates;
- Metrics on how success will be measured;
- Estimated or calculated return on investment (energy, GHG emissions, cost savings), if possible; and
- Plan for sustainability of the project beyond the initial project period, if applicable.

## **VI. Evaluation Process**

Proposals are first reviewed by members of the ad hoc SGEF Technical Advisory Group (SGEF TAG), an informal group of 10-20 scientific experts representing energy technologies and related fields. Members of the SGEF TAG are appointed by the Director of the USF Patel School of Global Sustainability, upon the recommendation of the OS Director. SGEF TAG members

provide commentary and advice, but not funding recommendations, for submitted proposals. SGEF TAG commentary usually accompanies each proposal as they are evaluated by SGEF Council members. All SGEF TAG members must identify any conflicts of interest for any project reviewed.

The SGEF Council develops its own evaluation metrics, in concert with the SGEF Criteria, which are used in the development of proposal recommendations and prioritization. All SGEF Council members must identify any conflicts of interest for any project under review, and must refrain from voting accordingly. Award recipients are notified within approximately one week of the SGEF Council's funding recommendations. The SGEF Council may, at its own discretion, award funding to projects on a contingency basis. Any contingencies must be addressed by the PI(s) of the proposed project before funding is allocated.

## **VII. Project Management**

The SGEF Council, through its Chair and a dedicated SGEF Manager, provides administrative and budgetary oversight on all projects. The Principal Investigator (PI), in conjunction with the SGEF Manager and OS Director, is responsible and accountable for all project components, including scale/scope, monitoring, maintaining, and metric measurements. Project changes that necessitate 10 percent or greater alterations to any budget category must be approved by the SGEF Council before proceeding.

Project reporting by the PI is required on a quarterly basis, mapping actual to identified success criteria with established metrics. The quarterly reporting requirement commences on the date that the SGEF Council releases project funding. A final project report is required within one month of the end of the project, unless otherwise determined by the SGEF Manager. Projects must be closed out with all accounting entries at the conclusion of the project. It is expected that an appropriate level of project management will be applied by the implementing organization.

## **VIII. Charter Agreement**

The SGEF Charter was drafted, reviewed, and approved by the Student Green Energy Fee Task Force on June 22, 2011 (with subsequent updates based on counsel from USF Provost and Executive Vice President Ralph Wilcox and USF Vice Provost Graham Tobin). The members of the Task Force include:

Christian Wells, Director [Task Force Chair]  
Kalanithy Vairavamoorthy, Director  
Lelia Proctor, Director  
Siva Prakash, Associate Director  
Matthew Diaz, President

Office of Sustainability  
Patel School of Global Sustainability  
Facilities Planning and Construction  
Physical Plant  
Student Government

Zachary Johnson, Vice President	Student Government
Brian Goff, Attorney General	Student Government
Lindsay Lewis, Director of Governmental Affairs	Students Government
Samantha Toro, Chair of Sen. Com. on Judiciary & Ethics	Student Government
Nakita Kiger, Chair of Senate Committee on Rules	Student Government

### **VIII. Charter Amendments**

The SGEF Charter was amended on July 17, 2015 by a majority vote of the SGEF Council.