



## **Student Green Energy Fund Bylaws**

**University of South Florida  
Sarasota-Manatee campus**

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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 St. Petersburg Campus championed the SGEF proposal through the USF Board of Trustees and the Florida Board of Governors (BOG). In 2024, the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus followed suit.

As per [USF Regulation 4.0102](#), the Student Green Energy Fund across all three USF campuses 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 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. All committee members (both student and non-student members) must be approved by Student Government at Campus Council.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. 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.

### **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 electronic means (i.e. email, teleconference) may be permitted as needed but is not preferred. The Vice Chair has final say over all teleconferencing matters.
- d. All executive members have the power to vote in the committee. Executive members are counted as voting members during quorum.

### **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 USF Sarasota-Manatee campus community to solicit participation and applications.
  - v. Make meeting minutes, project proposals and descriptions of funded projects publicly available through the SGEF web page.
  - 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 USF Sarasota-Manatee campus community about SGEF funded projects.
  - ix. Assist project investigators in meeting project proposal required criteria.
  - x. Identify and determine best alternative approaches to achieve committee's objectives and goals during unusual times/situations in case of unforeseen circumstances.

### **4. Meetings**

- a. Frequency
  - i. The Committee will meet at least once a semester during the Spring and Fall semesters

- with additional meetings at the discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair.
  - ii. The Committee will meet at least once over summer session (either June or July). This summer meeting should include a discussion of transition of leadership, if needed.
  - iii. The Committee Chair may call emergency meetings with at least 48 hours notice when deemed necessary.
- b. Quorum
- i. At least 6 voting members, excluding the Chair, must be present to establish quorum during the Fall and Spring. In the Summer, during emergency meetings, and in uncertain circumstances, the minimum number of members required to meet quorum is 4 at the discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair.
  - ii. Quorum must be established for any vote from the committee.
  - iii. The committee may continue a meeting without quorum but may not hold any binding votes on any business.
- c. Attendance
- i. Voting members and executive members with unexcused absences (when the Chair/Vice Chair are not notified prior to the beginning of the meeting) or an excess of excused absences are subject to removal from the committee with a super majority (2/3) vote (at the discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair).
  - ii. Excused absences are granted by the chair.
5. Officers and Positions
- 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 only votes in case of a tie.
  - iv. The Chair should coordinate the hiring of all executive positions, if applicable.
  - v. The Chair should attend Sustainability executive meetings.
  - vi. The Chair should help to promote SGEF and its activities to the student body to encourage greater awareness and participation in the group.
  - vii. The Chair should produce a Final Report to be released through University Communications and Marketing (UCM) at the end of each academic year (the end of their term as Chair).
  - viii. The Chair shall serve as club liaison throughout the university with the authority to speak on behalf of the Committee.
  - ix. The Chair shall manage and report on the performance of the SGEF budget and approved projects, while coordinating with the Green Fund Manager.
  - x. The Chair should serve as the SGEF liaison at the Clean Energy and Resource Conservation Commission (CERCC) meetings as according to CERCC bylaws.
- 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 should be a student if the Chair is a non-student (faculty or staff)
  - iv. The Vice Chair is eligible to vote unless serving in the capacity of the Chair.
- c. Committee Advisor
- i. Track attendance for general body meetings and E-board meetings.
  - ii. Acquire room reservations for general body meetings and events.
  - iii. In the absence of the Green Fund Manager or its position, the Committee Advisor

shall assume all duties of the Green Fund Manager.

- iv. The Committee Advisor shall work with University Communications and Marketing (UCM) to:
    - 1. Upload the minutes and agendas of every E-board meeting and general body meeting to a SGEF website.
    - 2. Regularly update the website page listing projects proposed and submitted during every semester.
    - 3. Maintain an active list of students and faculty who serve as voting members for SGEF every semester.
  - d. Proposal Adviser or Green Fund Manager
    - i. As projects are approved and managed, this adviser or manager is in contact with the PIs and the Sustainability Planner for guidance through the proposal process.
    - ii. Does not serve on the Committee.
    - iii. Take charge of Purchasing Orders.
    - iv. Remain in contact with the Chair for administrative tasks.
    - v. Update the project database on a regular basis.
    - vi. Carry out evaluation/detailed due diligence on relevant proposals.
    - vii. Manage completion matters post-approval.
    - viii. Manage and report on the performance of approved loans/projects.
    - ix. Provide updated reports on the SGEF budget each semester and as requested by the committee.
    - x. Keep track of projects that will have recurring costs (e.g. maintenance) upon completion.
    - xi. Manage an updated folder with all final approved proposals, letters of intent and final project reports.
    - xii. Work with the Sustainability Planner and Project Investigator (PI) to help calculate project Return on Investment (ROI).
    - xiii. Conduct an objective cost report each semester in order to ensure accurate accounting.  
This document should be kept in the SGEF files.
6. Member Qualifications & Terms of Office
- a. Students
    - i. Terms are one academic year. Membership extensions are decided on a yearly basis by the SGEF Chair and Vice Chair.
    - ii. Memberships are renewed except for cases of lack of participation or lack of communication by member.
    - iii. Both undergraduate and graduate students may serve as participating or voting members.
  - b. Non-Students
    - i. Non-Students are defined as full-time faculty or staff.
    - ii. Terms for non-students are one academic year.
    - iii. Non-students may seek additional and consecutive terms.
  - c. All other qualifications for appointment are left to the discretion of the appointing bodies.
  - d. Voting Members
    - i. Minimum of 6 voting members. At least half of voting members must be students.
    - ii. Both students and non-students can be voting members.
    - iii. All voting members must have the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus designated as their primary campus (includes students, staff and faculty).
    - iv. Voting members can vote on SGEF proposals.
    - v. Voting members can vote on the edits of SGEF documents (including bylaws, constitution,

- etc.)
  - vi. One voting member will be appointed to serve on the Clean Energy and Resource Conservation Commission (CERCC) as the SGEF liaison, as according to CERCC bylaws.
7. Member Replacement
    - a. A committee member may be removed by a supermajority ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the committee's full voting membership.

#### **Article 2: Fund Management**

1. Fees are collected and maintained in a dedicated auxiliary account, therefore:
  - a. A nine 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. Reports on project expenditures are made public on a yearly basis.
7. Unused funding for projects is returned to the fund for other projects.

#### **Article 3: Proposal Process**

1. Project proposals can originate from any source within USF Sarasota-Manatee campus (employees & actively enrolled students) as they pertain to the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus, including individuals, groups, and formal and informal bodies.
2. The SGEF Committee is responsible for developing and publishing the Request For Proposals (RFP).
3. Funding Cycles
  - a. During the academic year, there will be two Requests For Proposals (RFPs) - one for Fall and one for Spring. The RFPs apply to projects with an estimated cost greater than or equal to \$5,000 with publicized proposal deadlines. The first date for projects to be voted on is November 1st and the second date is April 1st. These dates are subject to change at the discretion of the SGEF Chair and Vice Chair.
    - A majority of voting members must approve projects above \$5,000 submitted outside of the defined funding cycles.
  - b. Proposals under \$5,000 may be submitted at any time and may be recommended for funding.

#### **Article 4: Project Criteria**

1. Required Criteria for Proposals
  - a. SGEF accepts proposals in the following two categories:
    - i. Reduce the university's greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and/or energy costs
    - ii. Proposals with indirect impact on the university's greenhouse gas emissions may be considered for approval by the committee but should not exceed 10% of the overall budget per fiscal year. The indirect project categories as listed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) are; Education, Research, Campus Education and Public Education.
  - b. Proposals must include a mechanism for measurement and verification of results, including any

- applicable kWh reductions and GHG emissions reductions.
- i. All proposed projects must include a timeline from proposal to completion.
  - 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.
    - i. 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 (e.g., a statement from the benefitting unit committing to maintain 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 USF Sarasota-Manatee campus 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).
  - f. Proposals must include plans for publicity, education and outreach to the USF community about the project and its performance.

#### **Article 5: Project Evaluation & Selection**

1. All applications will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility and adherence to the application guidelines.
2. The SGEF Committee is responsible for creating and updating the SGEF Project Evaluation Rubric which is to be used when reviewing and selecting proposals.
3. Votes for SGEF proposals are based only on the merits of the proposal in question. SGEF voting members must abstain from voting on any proposal they are leading. Voting members must evaluate the given proposal on its own merit without reference to other proposals.
4. The SGEF Committee Voting Members will each fill out a SGEF Scoring Rubric to rank the proposed project. Once the PI has presented their proposed project, the voting members’ rubric scores will be added up, and the average of these scores must meet a threshold of 80% of the total possible points on the rubric. (Rubric is subject to change at the discretion of the SGEF Chair and Vice Chair.)

#### **Article 6: Accountability, Records & Reporting**

1. Accountability to students & the campus community
  - a. The Committee shall be accountable to the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus community, with special consideration for accountability to the student body, and therefore shall:
    - i. Make all of its records available to all USF Sarasota-Manatee campus 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, if requested.
    - 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.
4. 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.
  - iii. The SGEF Committee is responsible for creating and developing a code of conduct.
5. Audits
- a. As a State authorized fee, the Green Fund is subject to all restrictions of review and inspection of books, record keeping, including internal University, The University of South Florida System and State audits.

#### **Article 7: Constitutional Amendments**

1. By-Laws Amendment Process
  - a. An active SGEF member can propose amendments to the constitution during a club meeting.
  - b. Proposed amendments to the constitution must be presented in writing (as suggested comments on the existing document) to the Chair.
  - c. The Chair shall review the proposed amendment and include it as an agenda item in the next scheduled SGEF meeting.
  - d. The proposer of the amendments shall then discuss in detail the main purpose behind the suggested amendment during the SGEF meeting.
  - e. All attending members (voting and participating) will review the amendment and discuss necessary changes before the amendment is put on a vote.
  - f. Voting members present at the meeting will then proceed to vote on the amendment. Voting will follow standard voting procedures.
  - g. Any and all changes must then be reviewed and approved by the General Counsel of the University prior to adoption. The amended bylaws/constitution will be submitted to the appropriate office for proper filing.

*(updated: 6.3.24, T.O.)*