



Student Green Energy Fund 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 (). Since then, the Office has cre

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 was certified by the Student Government Election Rules Commission during the 2020 General Elections. The next referendum will take place in the spring semester of 2023.

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 USF Tampa Governor of Student Government or her/his delegate nominates six student members and one student alternate each year, with appointments to the SGEF Council effective July 31. All SGEF Council appointments are limited to nine months, starting April 30. SGEF Council members may seek additional (including consecutive)

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 Success. The SGEF Council 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.

IV. Fee Allocation

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

Required Criteria for Proposals

- proposals must align with the university’s commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and/or energy costs
- 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,
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- proposals should demonstrate the sustainability of the project after the budget period has ended

Preferred Criteria for Proposals

- 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,
- (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.
- proposing and benefitting units must comply with the reporting requirements of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (https://secondnature.org/signatory_handbook/measuring_progress/) and the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (<https://stars.aashe.org>).

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 <https://usflearn.instructure.com/enroll/A94AWL>.

The SGEF Council has established a two tiered grant system.

- **Fast Track Mini Grant (up to \$5,000)**: Typically, these mini grants are educational or promotional. Project proposal is not required, however the SGEF Council may, at its discretion, require one.
- **Competitive Grant (\$5,001 and above)**: 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 SGEF Council will evaluate all project proposals in this grant category.

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 amount.

These competitive 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.

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