Northwestern University Sustainability Fund
Charter and By-laws
FY 2014
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PURPOSE OF THE FUND: The Northwestern Sustainability Fund (NSF) provides one-time grant funds for student-led projects directed toward improving the sustainability of the operations or student experiences at the Northwestern University Evanston campus.

The fund and its grant making committee empower students and enable student-driven projects at Northwestern University by providing a source of funding, guidance, hands-on experience and networking.

Funding student projects is consistent with the university mission of education and research and will contribute to Northwestern University’s vision to make the university more sustainable through student-led programs. The Fund is aligned with the Northwestern University Strategic Plan, which seeks to “contribute to the solutions for renewable energy and a sustainable environment and to how public policies and economic incentives promote implementation of new technologies and practices.”

ARTICLE 1. GRANT-MAKING COMMITTEE

Section 1.1—Powers and Voting

The NSF Grant Committee shall have sole authority to receive and approve or reject grant requests for funds from the Northwestern Sustainability Fund. A simple majority of the Committee’s full membership is required to make grant awards and any other official decisions, except as provided for elsewhere in these by-laws.

Section 1.2—Duties of the Grant-Making Committee

It shall be the duty of the Committee members to:
• Establish and articulate clear priorities for allocating grant awards and make these priorities and policies publicly available;
• Review project applications and determine allocations of grant awards;
• Provide resources and advice for students pursuing Northwestern University-related projects prior to the application and post selection of projects;
• Provide guidelines to obtain regular progress updates and final reports for all grants awarded;
• Produce an annual written report to the University Administration and the broader public to communicate the effectiveness of the Fund and to communicate the importance of continuing similar funding in future years.
Section 1.3—Member Number and Representation

The Grant-Making Committee shall consist of seven (7) students and four (4) non-students, as follows:

- One Faculty Co-chair
- One Student Co-chair
- One student representing the Associated Student Government (ASG) Sustainability Committee
- One faculty/staff member representing the Office of Sustainability
- One faculty/staff member representing the Initiative for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern (ISEN)
- One student representing Northwestern Energy and Sustainability Consortium (NESC)
- One student representing Students for Ecological and Environmental Development (SEED)
- One student representing Engineers for a Sustainable World (ESW)
- One Faculty member at-large
- One to two student members at large, preferably representing the Eco-Reps program
  - Student-at-large vacancies will be filled through an open application process, administered by the Office of Sustainability of Northwestern University.

The following founding members of NSF will select the inaugural committee for FY2014:
- Mark Silberg, ASG AVP for Sustainability 2012-2013;
- Robert Winston Whittier, Director of Sustainability.

Section 1.4—Officers

- The Committee shall have two co-chairs selected by a majority vote of the Committee. There will be one student co-chair and one faculty or staff co-chair. The Chairs shall preside at all meetings of the Grant-Making Committee, acting as a facilitator and holding meetings to the agenda in a timely fashion. The co-chairs are responsible for writing the meeting agenda.
- The Committee shall have a Vice Chair selected by a majority vote of the Committee. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair with his or her duties, and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall assume all duties of the Chair. The Vice Chair may be a Student, Faculty, or Staff member of the Grant-Making Committee.
- The Committee shall have a student or staff secretary selected through interview and application by the co-chairs and vice chair. The secretary will be responsible for note-taking, scheduling, and other administrative tasks;
- At the end of each term of office, the Grant-Making Committee will take nominations and/or voluntary bids for Chair for the following term. Potential nominees are encouraged to have prior experience as a member of the Grant-Making Committee;
- Candidates for Chair and Vice Chair will be selected by majority vote of the Committee.

Section 1.5—Terms of Office
• Each student member of the Grant Committee shall be appointed for one year. All student member terms will begin on September 1 and end on August 31 of the following year;
• An open application process will select student members. Mark Silberg and Rob Whittier will select the inaugural committee. For FY2015, co-chairs will revise these bylaws to reflect a new application process;
• Faculty and staff hold their appointment permanently, unless they are impeached by supermajority vote from the full committee or voluntarily rescind their position via written request to the Committee;
• New appointments for faculty and staff must be approved by unanimous vote of the Grant Committee. Outgoing faculty and staff are included in this vote;
• The Grant Committee will elect the Chair and Vice Chair in their first meeting of each term.

Section 1.6—Member Qualifications
• All Student members of the Grant Committee must be registered as Northwestern University undergraduate or graduate students in good standing as determined by their respective schools during their term of office;
• Staff and Faculty members of the Grant Committee must be full-time employees of Northwestern University.

Section 1.7—Member Replacement
A Committee member may be removed by supermajority vote of the other committee members for unjustifiable absence, conflict of interest, or other reasons deemed appropriate by committee. In the event that a Committee member is removed or resigns, the original appointing body will select a replacement. The new Committee member will serve the remainder of the original member’s term.

Section 1.8—Conflict of Interest
The Grant Committee shall conduct itself in such a way as to prevent conflicts of interest. Each committee member must publicly disclose all campus groups and organizations of which he or she is a member. Where appropriate, committee members must recuse themselves 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.

Section 1.9—Public Relations Team
The Grant Committee Co-Chairs may, at their discretion, elect a Public Relations Chair. This individual will be responsible for coordinating the production and distribution of media to various communications channels, including campus media and the university administration. These communications are intended to 1) ensure a transparent and public grant application system; 2) inform the general public about the projects funded and their successes; 3) provide an annual report to the University Administration. The Public Relations Chair presides over the Public Relations Team. The Public Relations Team shall attend Grant Committee meetings as non-voting members. The Public Relations Chair reports to the Grant Committee Co-Chairs. Size and selection of the Public Relations Team is at the discretion of the Public Relations Chair.
ARTICLE 2—OVERSIGHT BY THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Section 2.1—Oversight by the Office of Sustainability and Facilities Management

The Office of Sustainability and Facilities Management shall assure that operation of the Sustainability Fund follows university policy and procedure and shall serve as the office of record for all Sustainability Fund documents. The Office of Sustainability must approve all disbursements of the funds. The Office must verify that requested disbursements are reimbursable according to the terms of these by-laws, the terms of the grant award, and are consistent with university policy and procedure.

ARTICLE 3—ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AND PROJECT SELECTION

Section 3.1—Allocation of Grant Awards by the Grant-Making Committee
As noted in Section 1.1, the Grant-Making Committee shall propose grant awards for submitted projects by a simple majority vote of the full Committee membership. The Committee may elect to award only a portion of a grant proposal.

Section 3.2—General Requirements for Funded Projects
Northwestern University undergraduate and graduate students, as well as recognized student organizations at Northwestern University, may submit proposals for funding. Non-Northwestern University entities and persons may also submit proposals only if these proposals are co-sponsored by a Northwestern University entity. Following is a list of broadly defined criteria that will guide grant allocation decisions by the Committee.

The submitted proposals must meet the following criteria:

1) Increase sustainability in the operations of the Northwestern University campus.
   • Projects should directly address environmental sustainability on Northwestern University's campus or in the capacity that off-campus activities influence on-campus sustainability. This includes a broad range of environmental considerations, including but not limited to energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste reduction, transportation management, green procurement, green buildings, and education.

2) Have clearly defined, measurable outcome(s) within a proposed timeframe.
   • All projects shall have a mechanism for evaluation and follow-up after funding has been disbursed. Projects that are not completed within a single academic year should have a plan for continuation during the following year, until the project is complete. Projects should include a report made to the Grant Committee after successful or unsuccessful implementation.

3) Incorporate publicity, education and outreach within the Northwestern campus and its surrounding communities.
   • The project should include some component that raises greater awareness of sustainability issues on campus. This might include an outreach component, an article in
a Northwestern University publication, or the fact that the project is conducted in public view.

4) Contain a component of direct student involvement.

Section 3.3—PRIORITIES
Five questions guide NSF priorities:

Does the project add value?
- We encourage projects that will complement existing Northwestern University programs and projects in place on campus. We encourage proposals that build on existing infrastructure and commitment to work towards a common goal for campus sustainability.

Does the project educate or raise awareness?
- Preference will be given to projects that are highly visible, impact daily student life, and/or reach a wide demographic within the Northwestern University community.

Does the project make economic sense?
- Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate the greatest reduction in Northwestern University’s negative environmental impact for the least cost and that can obtain funds from sources other than the Northwestern Sustainability Fund.

Does the project include strong student participation?
- Preference will be given to projects led by students or that involve students in their implementation.

Does the project have long-term impact?
- Strong preference will be given to projects that will have a lasting impact on campus beyond their completion and beyond the graduation/departure of their original instigators.

ARTICLE 4—OTHER RULES GOVERNING NSF FUNDS

- Any funds not allocated in a given year shall remain in the NSF account for future use;
- Funds allocated to a project that are not spent within the project timeframe shall be returned to the Fund for reallocation;
- Sustainability Fund monies are not to be used or reallocated for purposes other than those described in this document;
- The Sustainability Fund shall continue to operate as long as sufficient money remains in the account;
- Funds may not be used for any purposes that violate Northwestern University policies and procedures;
- Funds may be used for compensation or travel only with specific approval from the Sustainability Fund Committee;
- The Sustainability Fund may not own any intellectual property in Northwestern Sustainability Fund-sponsored projects;
The Sustainability Fund may not be used in exchange for equity.

ARTICLE 5—ACCOUNTABILITY, RECORDS, AND REPORTS

Section 5.1—Accountability of Sustainability Fund to the Student Body
Administration of the Sustainability Fund shall be open and visible to the student body and therefore the Sustainability Fund shall:

• Make all of its records available to the Northwestern University public, including project proposals and documentation that have received funding;
• Publish an annual report of its activities;
• Maintain the Sustainability Fund website at sustainability-fund.northwestern.edu

Section 5.2—Accountability of Projects
All projects funded by the Sustainability Fund shall submit a report to the Committee at the conclusion of the project or by a date specified to the project team. The report must include a budget detailing the spending of all funds. It is the responsibility of individual projects to maintain proper documentation of all spending, such as but not limited to receipts, order forms, and in-kind services. The Sustainability Fund will pay only those expenditures eligible under these by-laws and the specific terms of the grant award.

Section 5.3 – Presentations to the Northwestern Sustainability Fund Committee
All projects funded by the Sustainability Fund are to provide a short presentation to the Northwestern University Sustainability Council on the current status/progress of the project. This may include a PowerPoint presentation or a verbal presentation by the assigned project manager or selected project member. Scheduled dates must occur at least once per year. Dates will be provided and publicized by the Grant Committee and Public Relations Team and coordinated with the project manager.

Section 5.4 – Coordination between Sustainability Committee, Office of Sustainability, and Student Project Members
The NSF Grant committee will assign a project manager to be the primary contact and liaison with all grantees. The project manager is a member of the Grant Committee. The manager will be responsible for:

• Keeping open communication with project group members;
• Providing any guidance necessary for the project’s completion;
• Forwarding updates to the Office of Sustainability;
• Serving as the overall liaison between student project members, the Sustainability Fund and Northwestern University administration.

Section 5.5—Records and Reports

• Northwestern Sustainability Fund records will be kept on file with Office of Sustainability. The Secretary will provide administrative support for preparing Sustainability Fund meeting minutes, copying and filing Sustainability Fund records, and other administrative work required to support the Sustainability Fund.
• The Sustainability Fund Committee must keep on record:
Minutes of all meetings of the Grant-Making Committee indicating the time and place of meetings, the names of those present, and the proceedings thereof;

Adequate and correct ledgers and records of account, including accounts of its properties and business transactions and accounts of its assets, receipts, and disbursements;

Record of projects selected each year and the funds allocated to each;

Reports made back to the Fund on completed projects and all annual reports received from projects with ongoing grants.

ARTICLE 6—AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

A three-quarters majority vote by the voting members of the existing Grant Committee may amend, create, or repeal portions of this charter. The Co-Chairs are responsible for submitting revisions and updates to this document on a yearly basis.

ARTICLE 8 – GRANT PROPOSAL DEADLINES

The early application deadline will be September 30, 2013. The fall application deadline will be on November 11th, 2013. The winter application deadline will be on the Friday before reading week, with results being published before Friday of finals week (dates still undefined).

Funding deliberations, questions to potential project managers, and final funding decisions will be made and announced within two weeks of the application deadline.

At the end of each academic year, any remaining funds will be returned to the University Central Budget.