University of Maryland
University Sustainability Fund By-Laws

Approved by the University Sustainability Council on March 4, 2010
Amended by the University Sustainability Council on March 16, 2012 and April 29, 2016

Mission Statement
The University Sustainability Fund (the Fund) provides funding for projects that promote environmental sustainability, and positively impact and enhance the student experience at UMD. The Fund will allocate funds to projects that increase the use of renewable energy on campus and/or in the local community, increase the energy efficiency of our facilities, reduce the amount of waste created and material resources used on campus, encourage sustainable behaviors, and integrate sustainability into teaching, research, and service at UMD. The Fund is supported by student fees and administered through a student-majority committee of the University Sustainability Council (Sustainability Council).

Article 1: Student Advisory Subcommittee

Section 1.1: Powers and Voting
The Sustainability Fund Review Committee (the committee) of the University Sustainability Council is responsible for selecting and recommending projects to be funded by the University Sustainability Fund. A simple majority of the committee’s full membership is required to finalize a recommendation. The Sustainability Fund Review Committee reports to the Sustainability Council.

Section 1.2: Duties of the Subcommittee
Committee members shall review project applications and recommend allocation of funds to the Sustainability Council.

Section 1.3: Member Representation
The committee shall consist of at least 3 students and 2 non-students. Additional members may be added by the Sustainability Council.

Voting Members and Terms:

1. The undergraduate member of the Sustainability Council.
2. A minimum of two undergraduate students appointed by the Chair of the Sustainability Council from nominations provided by the Senate, the Student Government Association, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs in consultation with the current chair of the committee. These individuals cannot serve for more than 2 consecutive years as members of the Subcommittee.
3. A non-student member of the University’s Sustainability Council (other than the Director of the Office of Sustainability) or that person’s designee. This individual is appointed by the Chair of the Sustainability Council.
4. The Director of the Office of Sustainability or designee.
5. Designee of the Director of the Office of Sustainability who is responsible for overseeing the final fund allocations as explained in Section 2 and serving as a non-voting member of the committee.

In the event that the Graduate students pay a Student Sustainability Fee in the future, the committee will include 2 additional individuals:

1. The graduate student member of the University Sustainability Council.
2. A graduate student appointed by the Chair of the Sustainability Council from nominations provided by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Government. This individual cannot serve for more than 2 consecutive years as a member of the committee.

The committee shall invite experts/guests to provide information and draw on campus expertise as needed.

Section 1.4: Officers of the Subcommittee
The committee shall have two officers: a Chair and a Vice Chair

The Chair shall be the undergraduate student representative of the University Sustainability Council and will preside at all meetings of the committee, acting as a facilitator. The Chair shall also coordinate and approve meeting agendas.

At the beginning of each term of office (September 1), the committee will take nominations and volunteers for Vice Chair. The committee shall select the Vice Chair by majority vote. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair with his or her duties. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall assume all duties of the Chair. The Vice Chair must be a student member of the committee.

Section 1.5: Terms of Office
Each member of the committee will be appointed for one year beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31 of the following year. The Director of the Office of Sustainability and designee may serve successive terms.

The Sustainability Council Chair must solicit nominations and appoint new committee members by May 15 each year.

The Chair and Vice Chair shall hold office for one year.

Section 1.6: Member Qualifications
All student members of the committee must be registered (full or part-time) UMD students during their term/s of office.

Staff and/or faculty members of the Subcommittee must be currently employed by UMD.

Section 1.7: Member Replacement
In the event of repeated absences, conflict of interest, or other appropriate reason, the committee may recommend to the Sustainability Council Chair that a member be removed.
In the event 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 committee shall conduct itself in such a way that its decisions avoid conflicts of interest as well as any appearance of a conflict of interest.

Article 2: University Sustainability Fund Coordinator

Section 2.1: Duties of the Coordinator
The Director of the Office of Sustainability will identify a member of the Office staff or other qualified UMD employee to support the work of the committee as a Fund Coordinator.

The function of the Fund Coordinator is to:

- Assist the committee in publicizing and administering the University Sustainability Fund.
- Prepare an annual report of the previous year’s budget and funded projects.
- Maintain the archives of the committee.
- Monitor the progress of projects that have received funding, via progress and annual reports submitted by fund recipients.
- Orient new committee members as necessary.

Article 3: Allocation of Funds and Project Selection

Section 3.1: Allocation of Funds
The committee shall decide which projects to recommend to the University Sustainability Council for funding by a simple majority vote of the full committee membership. The committee may elect to recommend funding for a portion of a proposal. The committee may submit recommendations to the Sustainability Council at any time.

Section 3.2: Criteria for Proposed Projects
Proposals for Sustainability Fund grants must be submitted to the Fund Coordinator by a priority deadline of October 15 or a final deadline of January 15. The committee shall give preference and priority to project proposals that meet the following criteria:

REQUIRED

1. **Campus Affiliation** - Only UMD students, staff members, and/or faculty members can propose projects. Individual students or student organizations proposing a project must include the name and contact information for a faculty or staff sponsor/advisor who is committed to advising throughout the project implementation. All proposers must include the name and contact information for a business officer who will oversee the use of funds for the project.

2. **Minimum Request** - The proposer requests no less than $2,000 and no more than the total amount available in the Sustainability Fund. Proposers seeking less than $2,000 can request a Sustainability Mini Grant from the Student Government Association’s Sustainability Committee.
3. **Innovation** - The project is innovative and does **not** include routine maintenance/equipment replacement or code-compliant activities. The Fund may provide money to cover the cost difference between conventional equipment and/or operations and sustainable alternatives.

4. **Itemized Budget and Schedule** - The proposer must submit an itemized budget that details the full cost of implementing the project and specifies the budget items for which the proposer is seeking Sustainability Fund support. The proposer must also provide an appropriate schedule for completing the project.

5. **Metrics and Reporting** - The proposal includes a plan for tracking, recording, and reporting the project outcomes back to the Fund Coordinator within 12 months of receiving funding.

**PREFERRED**

6. **Project Outcomes** - Sustainability Fund projects typically meet at least one of the following criteria and ideally meet multiple criteria in this section, however, projects that do not meet these criteria may be considered. *Please contact the Fund Coordinator prior to applying if your project does not match with one of the following:*
   
   a. The project improves the environmental performance of campus operations by decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing energy and/or water use, enhancing stormwater management, increasing biodiversity, minimizing waste, etc.
   
   b. The project substantially improves or creates opportunities for UMD students to learn about and develop skills for sustainability or otherwise enhances the UMD student experience.
   
   c. The project involves research that would create substantial opportunities for student involvement and the outcomes of the research have practical implications for improving the environmental performance of campus operations.

7. **Appropriate Expenses** - The proposer requests Sustainability Fund money to cover the costs for materials and/or skilled labor to implement the project and **not** salaries or stipends. Furthermore, Fund money would cover **only** one-time costs and **not** ongoing costs.

8. **Feasibility and Institutional Support** - The project is feasible and has the support/approval of appropriate campus individuals and units.

9. **Cost/Benefit Analysis** - The project proposal outlines the payback period (if applicable) and clearly-defined, measureable outcomes, backed by metrics. The benefits will be considered relative to costs and the availability of monies within the Fund.

10. **Matching Funds** - The sponsoring department or other entities beyond the Sustainability Fund offer matching financial or in-kind support for the project.

The committee may determine additional requirements and preferences for each year’s funding cycle provided that these criteria are consistent with the overall mission of the University Sustainability Fund and consistent with the criteria and preferences outlined above.

**Section 3.3: Review of Proposals**

The Chair of the Sustainability Council and/or the Office of Sustainability will issue a call for proposals to the campus community by September 15th of each year. Proposals submitted in response to this call should be received by the committee within two weeks following the proposal submission deadline.
Members of the committee may submit proposals for consideration but any member who submits a proposal must recuse him/herself from voting on that proposal.

Article 4: Other Rules Governing University Sustainability Fund

A. The committee may not recommend more than 100% of the funds to the Sustainability Council. Any funds not allocated in a given year shall remain in the Fund account for future use.

B. Funds allocated to a project that are not spent within the approved project time frame or 1 year, whichever is longer, shall be returned to the Fund for reallocation. Project leaders may request an extension if they will have funds remaining at the end of the approved time frame if the project is ongoing. Requests for extension must be sent to the Fund Coordinator within 30 days of the end of the approved time frame and must include a detailed plan explaining how the project leaders will use the remaining funds to complete the parts of the project that were specifically approved for funding by the Council. The request for extension will be reviewed by the Fund Coordinator. Project leaders cannot use funds past the stated end of approved time frame without written approval from the Fund Coordinator.

C. Fund monies are not to be used or reallocated for purposes other than those described in this document and in the approval issued by the University Sustainability Council.

D. A portion of the Fund monies may be used to promote projects supported by the Fund or the Fund itself. Requests to use these Fund monies must be approved by the University Sustainability Council.

E. The Fund shall continue to operate even after student fees are no longer collected into the Fund, as long as sufficient money remains in the Fund account.

Article 5: Accountability, Records, and Reports

Section 5.1: University Sustainability Fund Accountability to Stakeholders

The committee shall make its Fund records available to the public and keep a yearly report of its approved proposals and respective funding decisions. These records and report for a given year shall be presented to the University Sustainability Council on the first meeting of the subsequent academic year, and shall also be made available on the campus sustainability website (www.sustainability.umd.edu).

Section 5.2: Accountability of Projects

All projects funded by the Fund shall submit a report to the Fund Coordinator at the conclusion of their project or annually from the date of the project approval, if the project is funded for multiple years. The report must include a budget detailing the spending of all funds and how goals and milestones were achieved.

Upon review of progress or final project reports, the Fund Coordinator shall judge whether the funds were spent within the scope of the project. If the Fund Coordinator decides that the funds were spent outside of the project scope, they may recommend the return of any remaining funds to the Fund. The committee will evaluate the project status based on all available information and make recommendations to the Sustainability Council regarding the return of unused project funds.
Section 5.3: Records and Reporting
The committee must keep on record:

- Adequate and correct records of the Fund accounts
- Records of projects selected each year and the funds allocated to each.
- Reports made to the Fund Coordinator on completed projects and all annual reports received from projects with on-going benefits.

Article 6: Amendment of By-Laws
Modifications to these By-laws may be recommended to the University Sustainability Council by a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the voting members of the committee. Recommended modifications must be consistent with the mission of the University Sustainability Fund.