

## **Thoughts, Advise, and General Musings from a now washed up Enviro Affairs Chair**

By: Jeff Cook

Hello, if you're reading this, chances are you have now accepted the job as the environmental affairs chair. Congratulations! You are now probably the fourth person to have found/viewed our website! In any case, I have compiled a list of helpful information that may be beneficial in your efforts over the next 1+ years. This information is subject to change in the future, and you should always ask if the below information is still relevant, but hey it can't hurt to know right?

- Are we really Eco-U?
  - Dumb question, yes, we aren't perfect but hell, we're not the worst either!
- How much money is in the Fund and where can I find out?
  - At current students, that pay segregated fees, give \$4 a year to this fund. The total number will change from year to year but recently it was \$18,200.
  - You can ask the Student Organization Finance Office, to find out what is in the fund every year.
  - If money is not spent from year to year from the fund, it is monitored by OFO and you can also ask them how much money for sustainability projects is in the seg fee reserve fund
  - This money is not in its own separate account, but OFO will monitor from year to year so that you can go to the Senate to ask to spend that unspent portion on a particularly great project.
- What does the term "on-campus" really mean?

- Despite what you may think and your best intentions, the Mauthe Center is NOT part of “campus”. You cannot spend sustainability funds that contribute to that center in anyway.
- Housing is also not owned by students or the university; however you may spend money in this location as it is considered “more closely related to campus” than the Mauthe Center, in any case proceed with caution.
  - Contact Glenn Gray, or current housing director to discuss projects here.
- The Kress Center and the Union are both owned by the students, consider using money here! It is the easiest.
- All academic buildings and anything on the ground that isn’t the above locations is considered state property, proceed here with caution as well.
  - Contact Paul Pinkston, or the current director of facilities to discuss projects here
- Who needs to know about these sustainability projects anyway?
  - In short, everyone! But, you are only one person and a small committee, so here are the people that need to know first other than your committee of course
    - Sustainability Director – currently Lauri Case
      - This person should arguably know about your project before anyone, because she will most likely be able to help you develop the project in the first place
    - SGA Prez and Vice Prez
      - you report directly to them, probably best to keep them informed of what you are doing

- Student Senate
  - They have to approve any and all of your projects best to make sure before you prepare the resolution that you have enough votes in the Senate
    - At this point you may want to inform SUFAC, although they may think so, they are not in control of this money and you can spend it on whatever the Senate decides. However, they may be helpful in an advisory role.
- Campus Sustainability Committee
  - If you spend more than \$5,000 you need to discuss the project with this committee
    - It is also good to discuss any projects with them as they may be able to provide **expertise** and arguably more importantly **funding**
- Important Staff and Administrators
  - If feasible, get the chancellor's approval at some point, but make sure that you at least gain the support of Paul if it is on state property or Glenn if it is in housing, or whoever is directly in charge of the area in question
- The Student Body
  - Educate, Educate, Educate
  - Place all information that you have on Environmental Affairs Committee webpage and label adequately, contact Amanda

Wildenberg, or Chris Sampson, or campus communications in general to determine the relevant contact for the website.

- Who cares about Senate Resolutions?
  - People tend to forget how important Senate Resolutions are. These resolutions are very powerful and in fact once approved and signed that resolution is supported by the entire student body.
    - Therefore, write a lot of them and make sure they get passed, and then use them to your advantage. However, a resolution is only as powerful as what you do with it, as a result plan and implement them wisely.
    - Also check to see if a resolution on your issue has already been done, if possible use that, or just change the wording and bring it to senate again.
- What the H! Why haven't we done these projects yet?!?
  - First look at the website, there is a lot of information that should help you find a project, but here are some of the more notable projects at current not completed.
  - Reusable Cups in Dining Areas
    - Coffee mugs are not an option in common grounds the area is too small to support more storage
    - Plastic reusables in the cafeteria?
      - Talk with director of Avians and union, should be easier
  - Plastic Water Bottle Ban
    - The Food vendor contract does not end until 2014, we cannot ban the sale of plastic water bottles until we write a new contract in 2014. Here's to you enviro affairs chair from 2014!

- Reusable Water Bottle Refilling Stations
  - Relatively easy as well, talk with Paul Pinkston,
    - Union one is widely used, however they have a filter inside which needs to get replaced relatively frequently, facilities will most likely not purchase the filtered type fountain because they do not have the capacity to continually replace filters. They will instead buy the same fountain but without the filter.
- Composter for Food Waste
  - Rick Warpinski, current union director, has been discussing purchasing a food waste composter for the market place, or Leona cloud commons.
    - Please discuss with him if this project is operating or going to operate before considering composting within the dining areas. In fact, it is probably best to start a discussion with Rick prior to developing any composting projects on campus
- Alternative Energy on campus!?
  - Solar
    - Please see Mauthe Center discussion previously
    - Housing is managed by a Board of Directors, discuss with Glenn to determine if housing board approves of solar projects within campus housing
    - Developing energy projects on academic buildings, state buildings, has to be approved through the state. Although not impossible,

these projects can take up to a year to complete, begin early and prepare to wait long periods of time

- Wind
  - This is highly controversial and expensive, but campus has had some studies done, check graduate work, this is a possibility
- Geothermal
  - Expensive, studies have been done by graduates see their work, not considering particularly feasible at this time
- Solar Heating
  - Grand idea, you better work on it!
- Natural Landscaping
  - We planted 75 plants why not more?!
    - Discuss this project with facilities and more specifically the grounds supervisor
- Okay, I have a project, now what to do?
  - If you are spending a large sum of money you have to complete a Request for Proposal or a Request for Bid. If possible go for the RFP. Work with Linda Dupuis, or the current director of purchasing, to help you through this process. If it is on state land, Paul may be the best contact.
  - In any case, you need to watch the dates that generally show up in early April for the deadline to submit bids to purchasing, these deadlines ARE REAL! Don't get in the situation where you miss these deadlines!
- This project will be done in no time!

- Just so you know, projects always take at least a month longer than you would think, be prepared.
- Also, remember that all funds must generally be spent by July 1.
  - Also, remember that your term ends around May 1<sup>st</sup>, so it is best to make sure that your project is well on its way before you head out!
- You did it! Great you implemented a good project, time to let people know!
  - Project Visibility
    - It is always important for SGA, who is spending student money to let them know it is benefiting the students. This generally requires some sort of signage
    - Proceed with caution when using funds directed towards “Environmentally Sustainable” projects, for signage. For example, cue complaint number one, “Instead of spending \$400 on that sign, they should have used it for another solar panel!”
      - As a result, consider using SGA agency funding for this portion of the project, or gasp, your honorarium! Recent environmental affairs chairs have turned down their honorarium altogether and others have used their honorarium for this purpose.

Good Luck! This is a difficult job and one for which you most likely are getting paid next to nothing, or you turned it down, very noble of you. I hope this information has been helpful and that you succeed in greening the campus so that people will finally stop asking the question under point one!