



G R E E N F E E

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

General Administration & Committee Activity

Between May and September of 2011, the Office of Sustainability assumed responsibility for the Green Fee account and began the administrative procedures necessary to carry out the projects that the Committee had selected for funding. Jim Walker finalized the hire of Karen Blaney as the program coordinator for the Green Fee account and Committee and worked with University accountants and business managers to agree on standard operating procedures for account administration. Each project campus-wide must be represented by a *new* University 19 account with "Green Fee" in the name, and funds are transferred into these accounts from the main Green Fee account in Office of Sustainability. This has been an opportunity to deepen relationships with the departments affiliated with the Green Fee, including the Cockrell School of Engineering, Center for Sustainable Design, and even the Department of Art & Art History.

The Committee met four times in the Fall semester and completed several important business items. The application and guidelines were finalized for the 2012 year, and the Committee selected a logo designed by Jeanie Fan, a Master's student in the School of Architecture. A project amendment form and budget sheet were created to accommodate changes in project budgets and timelines, of which there have been several. The Student Activity Center has agreed to a dedicated billboard featuring Green Fee projects. Finally, the Committee agreed on a protocol for projects that appear to be "stuck." These projects will receive a flag in February and funds may be withdrawn in March if the problems are judged to be insurmountable. (No projects look in genuine danger of these consequences at the present time.)

Project Updates

Projects Managed by Office of Sustainability

Campus Building Submetering

This project was originally proposed for management by the Campus Environmental Center, but was retained by Office of Sustainability when the need for broad cross-campus collaboration became clear. The grantees received high-level support from CPFM, and several meetings have taken place involving TRECs, Utilities & Energy Management, Facilities Maintenance, and the Division of Housing and Food Service. The original proposal called for the Student Services Building, CEC's new home, to be submetered, but DHFS's interest in the project helped redirect attention to the residence halls that make up the Honors Quad. These buildings are good candidates for submetering, and the dashboard will immediately have a 'captive' daily audience to provide usage statistics and feedback. The plan at the present time is to transfer all funds to the Division of Housing and Food Service to facilitate the procurement negotiations (since submetering services would be provided to DHFS in the residence halls).

HRC Sustainable Landscape

After the funding announcement, this project quickly received support from UT Landscaping and the HRC management staff. Subsequently, the project encountered delays in November when the Dean of Architecture suggested consultation with Architecture faculty regarding projected designs for the HRC Plaza. To resolve the conflict, the Green Fee Committee approved an additional \$5,000 to subcontract a registered landscape architect from a firm familiar with UT to review the proposed landscape plan.

Perry Castaneda Library Recycling Bin Upgrade (PROJECT COMPLETE)

After receiving their custodial vendor's final approval to install visually consistent bins throughout the building, PCL went ahead with their purchase and installed these bins over winter break. They report success! The Office of Sustainability will work with PCL to tag the bins with the Green Fee logo.

Facilities Maintenance/Campus Environmental Center Water Fountain Upgrade

After some logistical delays, Facilities Maintenance successfully installed twenty-eight 'gooseneck' fountains on the back of regular water fountains to aid in refilling water bottles, encouraging use and reuse of bottles instead of carrying single-use containers. The installations are complete, and CEC is working on a map of all locations, as well as a publicity campaign.

Bicycle Parking

The equipment was received in mid-December, and PTS has installed all of the bike racks purchased through this grant. The grantee, Andrew Lee, is currently attempting to gather the informal survey data on rack usage promised by his proposal.

Solar Table Installation/Practical Design Course

A location on PCL plaza was approved by PMCS in February, and the sole source justification for renting from Sol Design was also approved by Purchasing in the same month. Installation will occur on March 20th and the Solar Pump Charging Station will be on campus through June 1st. The course does not have a host department or professor confirmed, which will need to be addressed before the end of the semester.

Safe Cycling Campaign

This is a project that has simultaneously seen several successes and several changes. The grantee, Kate Bedford, has brought together multiple departments on key strategic initiatives. The entire UTPD officer corps has taken a bicycle safety course, and they are also actively working with PTS on a ticket-mitigation safety course that will also be open to the whole campus (not just offenders) for various other incentives. Associate Professor Gloria Lee's Spring 2012 Design Persuasion course has also taken on concepts from the Safe Cycling Campaign and will generate proposals for the art installations promised by the project. The consultation services for infrastructure upgrades to be provided by League of Bicycling Voters have been replaced by a graduate research assistant for spring and summer 2012. Even with all of these successes, some of the anticipated achievements have been postponed while Ms. Bedford pursues a professional development opportunity in New York City. The rest have secondary contacts assigned to them and Ms. Bedford continues to coordinate the project remotely. For more on this project, see note in Other Projects by Department.

Projects Managed by Campus Environmental Center

Micro-Farm (aka Leona MicroFarm)

This project was one of the most heavily altered through the Committee decision-making process, reducing it from a two-acre cultivation area on an untenable location to a much smaller lot comparable to the existing Community Garden. The type of experimental crop installation was encouraged, however. The budget was reduced to \$15,000 for the year and the grantee was sent forward to secure space. The lot facing onto Leona St was approved in

November, and a work order is currently active to pipe City of Austin water to the site, perform soil testing, and re-do the fencing. The original grantee (Lizzie Prokop) and the CEC Gardening Coordinator (Christina Leal) worked with last year's Gardening Coordinator (Daniella Lewis) to create a specific coordinator position for the MicroFarm and propose a reallocation of funding to that position. This application was successful, and design for the site is now proceeding in earnest alongside the site preparation.

Tree Nursery

The Tree Nursery briefly proceeded with its intent to establish the Nursery at Pickle Research Campus. The CEC purchased the first greenhouse over the summer, but momentum briefly stalled in reaction to concerns issued from the Nursery's faculty advisory council. The Office of Sustainability explored a relationship with the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, which ended up being a positive opportunity for all sides. The WFC had recently initiated an arboretum project and reforestation efforts for Bastrop, and is able to offer these community relationships and expertise to the Tree Nursery. The Coordinator, Vlad Codrea, is now actively working with WFC staff to set up the greenhouse and plant the first seeds. The CEC and Office of Sustainability are actively monitoring feedback from WFC and CEC volunteers regarding the general opinion of siting the Nursery out at the WFC, which is only accessible by car.

Campus Environmental Center Expansion of Services

The student staff funded by the Green Fee this year have been a resounding success. The Orange Bike Project is now managing over 70 bikes in its rental fleet, and offers shop hours daily (except for Sunday). They have also hosted three social rides to encourage safe cycling, and are working with the Safe Cycling Campaign on the art installations and expanding safety training. The Concho Community Garden is a vibrant location for student creativity and community events, including activities for the UT Child Development Center, frequent potlucks, and cooking classes. The two hourly employees mean that staff are present daily to watch over the site and perform any needed maintenance. The graduate program assistant for CEC has worked hard to increase a sense of personal investment and productivity among the student leadership, initiating weekly task lists and facilitating a larger student presence in the new SSB office space. She is currently assisting with grantwriting for the organization and is planning on working through the summer to aid the transition to the 2012-2013 school year.

The supply funds for the Garden, Orange Bike, and the CEC office have been partially used. The training funds will be used primarily for a summer training, open to all students, to develop leadership in campus sustainability.

Other Projects by Department

UTeach Field Trips

UTeach has designed a series of field trips that features important sustainability features of campus, including the Biological Sciences greenhouses, the Hal C. Weaver Power Plant, the turtle pond, and a real science lab at UT. The trips are led by current undergraduate students. The Green Fee supports transportation and two interns dedicated to planning and leading the trips, but all 40+ students in the UTeach program are exposed to the campus sustainability material. UTeach led six field trips in Fall 2011 and plans six for Spring 2012.

200kw Photovoltaic Install (Mechanical Engineering)

The Green Fee provided matching funds to complete 200kw of solar energy panels at three locations on the UT campus: Pickle Research Campus, Manor Garage, and Facilities Complex Building #3. A time-lapse video was produced by the department: (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu2PB9bgDWg>). All of the installations will transmit real-time performance information for use by students and researchers.

Environmental Science Institute Outreach Forum

ESI has been gathering photo and video content on most of the Green Fee projects working this year, particularly the Leona MicroFarm and the Tree Nursery. The first video is “live” at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tyQ1G36dow>. ESI also presented a Hot Science, Cool Talks lecture by Dr. Michael Webber, the PI on the 200kw Photovoltaic project on February 24th. Seven of the Green Fee projects were represented at the exhibit fair during the hour before the lecture.

Algae Fertilizer

This group is testing the effects of replacing synthetic fertilizer with processed algae. The initial samples were of loamy soil from Pickle Research Campus, seeded with Bermuda grass. Both fertilizers improved grass density, but the algae improved microbial activity, which is an indicator of soil health. The group is proceeding to the larger field study (1/4 acre plots) and the process will be documented by the ESI videographer.

Conclusion

The greatest successes of the UT Green Fee program to date are in the scope and diversity of the projects. The number of opportunities for students to be involved in campus sustainability has measurably increased. The Green Fee is also increasing collaboration between academic and operational divisions. Challenges include keeping students invested over multiple semesters and keeping up with the administrative details of the program, including scheduling nine busy members of the Committee. The Office of Sustainability has great allies in its own Business Services and Personnel divisions, and has received valuable assistance from the Office of Accounting and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Student Government, the Campus Environmental Center, and all the departments receiving Green Fee funds. It will be a pleasure to report on the full year of activity in September 2012.