

# Willamette University Community Action Fund for Equity and Sustainability Constitution

Last updated November 16th, 2023

## **Preamble: Goals of the “Community Action Fund for Equity and Sustainability”**

The purpose of the fund is to provide students, faculty, and staff of Willamette University with an opportunity to make environmentally, culturally, and socially sustainable changes as a community. The fund will advance the state of sustainability, equity, and social justice in the Willamette University community. Although the fund is sourced from student fees, the impact of projects is welcome to extend beyond our campus.

## **Article I: Committee Summary**

### **Section 1: General Role of the Committee**

During the academic year, the allocation and management of the fund will be the responsibility of the committee. It is the responsibility of the committee to not only make decisions regarding the fund, but also to advertise and promote the availability of the fund to students, faculty, and staff of the Willamette campus community. It is important that access to the fund is equitable. These funds are intended for investment each year on projects that advance sustainability, equity, and social justice.

## **Article II: Standards To How Grants Shall Be Evaluated**

### **Section 1: Proposed Grant Requirements**

The committee shall focus on the following when considering funding proposals:

1. Feasibility.
2. Longevity, long-term maintenance, and sustainability.
3. Level of support from and engagement of relevant students, faculty, and staff.
4. Benefit to the Willamette campus community.
5. Effective use of funds.

The proposals coming from students, staff, and faculty of the incorporated graduate schools will be evaluated as follows:

The committee will be presented with a forecasted amount of funding and be tasked with deciding on a flexible monetary cap on grants that benefit each respective graduate school as needed. This cap will be representative of the portion of the fund contributed by the respective schools. This measure is to promote equitable funding of proposals, recognizing that the graduate schools would contribute less to the fund than the College of Arts & Sciences.

### **Article III: Committee members**

#### **Section 1: Student members**

Undergraduate students interested in serving as members of the committee will submit applications to the voting committee members of the current committee who will make the final placement decisions. The Committee will include voting student members who hold the following positions. The voting members will be selected by the current committee members or appointed by previous representatives (see below). Members may only hold one position at one time. Voting members will be paid according to the levels described in the bylaws.

- At least 1 Student Committee Chair
- 1 Student Outreach Coordinator
- 1 Student Proposal Consultant
- At least 1 Student Project Advisor
- 1 Student Secretary
- 1 Student Financial Officer
- 1 Law school student representative -- 1 MBA school student representative

Members will be appointed by the committee at the end of each spring semester. The committee chair(s) will have appointments made before the beginning of the fall semester.

#### **Section 2: Ex-Officio members**

The committee will also include non-voting ex-officio committee members to advise the committee. These members need not apply to sit on the committee, but rather are included in the committee by virtue of their job title. The ex-officio members will be:

- 2 Committee Advisors (1 Faculty, 1 Staff)

-- Associate Director of Facilities Management or designee

\*If the fund is ever altered to provide parameters for purchasing clean energy, an appropriate administrator will also be included on the committee as an ex officio member.

## **Article IV: Rolling over funds**

### **Section 1: Annual fund rollover**

If, by the end of the fiscal year, the fund has a remaining balance, the balance will roll over to the following year. This will build the fund's size and security, allowing the fund to support larger investments for student projects in the future. The committee may opt to eliminate this provision once the fund has reached a desired threshold, or by adjusting the requirement going forward. The committee can only take these steps based on a 75% consensus. In this way, the fund will be able to sustain projects that periodically require a significant capital investment. The committee will regularly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the fund.

## **Article V: Changing or eliminating the fee**

### **Section 1: Increasing or decreasing the fee**

If the committee desires a change to the size of the fee administered to students, this change must follow university policy described [here](#) and below.

Fee requests and changes to existing fees must be submitted through the [fee request and change form](#) by December 31. The form requires a submitter to provide an amount, a description, a rationale for the fee, details about the fee collection and refund process and a projected revenue and expense budget. Fees must be labeled as permanent or temporary at the date of submission. Temporary fees will require an expiration date. Financial Operations will solicit annual approval of unchanged fees en masse.

Financial Operations will compile Category III-V fee requests and work with the appropriate UFO to solicit feedback from the required stakeholders for the category of fee during January.

Financial Operations will present fees that have gone through the process to the Senior Vice Presidents for approval in February. Financial Operations will provide the results to Student Accounts, Financial Aid and UFO's by the end of February.”

### **Section 2: Eliminating the fee**

The fee and grant process may be eliminated if the program is ineffective. The program may be deemed ineffective if less than 50% of the available funds are allocated for two years in a row or if many previously awarded grants are not completed effectively. If either of these two events occurs, the committee must work to rectify any problems by amending the committee constitution or changing the way that grant advertising, application, awarding, and support are managed.

Before reducing or eliminating the fee, the committee will take the following steps should the above conditions be met:

1. Significantly improve advertising and outreach across multiple forms of media to attract more project proposals.
2. Conduct research into needs on campus relating to equity, sustainability and basic health, and invest directly in solving these problems. (e.g. water bottle fillers, period products projects—funded directly by CAFES with no project proposal.)

If the above actions still do not allow funds spent to surpass 50% of all fee income in a given year, the committee will meet to discuss a reduction of the fee.

If a year of reduced-fee CAFES income still does not allow 50%+ of funds to be spent, the committee will meet to discuss a temporary elimination of the fee as a whole.

If the committee decides that the fee and grants should be eliminated temporarily in their present form, a 75% majority vote can require that the fee be stopped. Funds will be monitored until CAFES is again spending above 50% of its available funds consistently. If this change occurs, CAFES can discuss reinstatement of the reduced fee (and its increase to \$25 or above if proposed projects or direct expenses to the community have seen an extreme resurgence).

However, a continued lack of meaningful spending even after temporary fee reduction may imply the inefficacy of the CAFES fee and organization as a whole. In this case, the committee may discuss making the fee elimination permanent. If the grant account contains enough money to support further grants, students may continue to apply for grants twice a year until the account cannot support further grants. The committee will remain intact to decide between grant applications and monitor projects. Once the fund balance falls below \$1,000, the remaining balance will be passed to the Student Engagement & Leadership (SEAL) budget.

## **Article VI: Changing the committee constitution**

### **Section 1: Changes to the constitution**

At any time, the committee may opt to change any of the policies detailed above. Unlike fund dispersal decisions which require a simple majority, the committee will be committed to decisions based on a 75% majority.