

**Western Washington University Associated Students**  
**Green Energy Fee Committee Meeting**  
Thursday, April 14, 2014 VU567

**Committee Members Present:** Robby Eckroth, Chair (AS VP Student Life), Josie Ellison (AS VP for Academic Affairs), Seth Vidana (Sustainability Manager), Regan Clover (GEF Program Coordinator), Ed Simpson (Rep. Business and Financial Affairs)

**Absent:** Grace Wang (faculty), Nina Olivier (AS ESP Associate Director), and Sadie Normoyle (GEF Education Coordinator), Ashley Selvey (Student at Large),

**Advisor(s):** Kevin Majkut, Director of Student Activities

**MOTIONS**

**GEF-14-S-03** Approve the Minutes from the April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 10<sup>th</sup> Meetings. *Passed.*

**GEF-14-S-04** Approve Nova Solar Technologies to the Final Application Stage. *Failed.*

*Robby Eckroth, AS Vice President for Student Life, called the meeting to order at 2:32p.m.*

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Additions/ Changes to the Agenda**

**III. Approval of Minutes**

***MOTION GEF-14-S-03 By: Ellison***

Approve the Minutes of the April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 10<sup>th</sup> Meetings

Second: Simpson                      Vote: 5 - 0 - 0    Action: Passed

**IV. Discussion and Consent**

**• Nova Solar Window**

Simpson doesn't know if the Green Energy Fee is appropriate for funding the research and development of an idea. He said getting the actual product implemented at the Viking Union would take years and a lot of money. Eckroth believes the purpose of the Green Energy Fee is to educate students and get them engaged in a timely manner after they go through the committee process. Rusk could see a compromise where they would fund a smaller window as a demonstration, but doesn't think a multi-year plan is the best idea especially because the Green Energy Fee is up for renewal next year. Vidana mentioned that this technology may exist in a different format, but they could get a window like this right now. Rusk spoke with Josh Miller and he said there are a few companies in and out of Washington state that make clear glass solar generating windows at a relatively affordable price. Clover mentioned that their presentation made it seem like this idea has never been done before and that it was brand new technology. Rusk said the quantum dots they are using to create this window may be the new technology that has never been proposed before. Simpson suggested the idea to fund a display prototype and have the team come back to the committee in the future when they have a workable and more efficient window to install. Clover said the display window would be about \$15,000. Rusk wonders if the small window would generate enough energy to charge a smart phone. Eckroth thinks there should be a warning sign on this prototype if it is available for student use. He is worried it could be damaging to electronic devices. Eckroth said they should think critically about this because this project is going to set precedent for future projects. He said they should think about if these types of projects should be able to get funded by the Green Energy Fee in the future. He said this might be something next year's Vice President for Student Life might want to think about when the fee is up for renewal. Vidana suggests communicating to the team that once they prove this technology and have a watt per unit range that is comparable to the commercially available

windows, then come back to the committee. He said they may come across challenges when transitioning from the prototype stage to the actual window. He said this could prevent people from being comfortable installing this into the Viking Union. Rusk said as of now GEF isn't used for the research and development of project at this point, but they could have this conversation if they would like to change this in the future. Eckroth believes this team would be able to find other avenues to gain funding to start up their project. He said the Ashley Selvey was unable to attend this meeting, but she sent in her vote via email.

**MOTION GEF-14-S-04 By: Ellison**

Move to Approve Nova Solar Technologies to the final application stage

Second: Rusk

Vote: 1 - 5 - 0

Action: Failed

**V. Discussion of Fee Increase and Budget**

Kevin Majkut said they started off the year with about \$475,000 in the bank. He said the fee revenue tends to peak at the beginning of the quarter and then decreases a bit as people leave Western Washington University or get their refund checks. He said this budget includes the money allocated for operations, small grant proposals, current projects, and money for the reserves. He said the money in the reserves is used to pay for staff time, to wrap up projects if the fee goes away, and to pay for the RECs that have been contracted. He said since the Solar Thermal Project was stopped, they got \$177,000 back from this. He said as of now they have about \$530,000 in the Green Energy Fund. Clover said in the 2013-2014 academic year they have funded two small grant projects which was the Hydroponics project and the Human Aspect of Sustainability project. She said as of now they are under the \$40,000 that was allocated towards small grant proposals. She said the Viking Fixit Station Project is in the preliminary estimate and design stage right now, and their budget is in the \$13,000 range. She said they also approved the Performance Hall Overhaul project. She said right now they are trying to find matching funding before they bring an amount to the committee. She said they are potentially going to ask for funding up to \$350,000. She said this would renovate the lighting just above the Concert Hall stage and the controller. Clover said the team mentioned that the lighting inside the Concert Hall wouldn't be affected in the 2019 renovation plans. She said the committee just approved the Red Square Convenience Composting project and the Western Wind Energy project to go on to the preliminary design and estimate stage. She said the Red Square Convenience Composting project estimated they would need \$7,500 and the Western Wind Energy project had an estimate of \$20,000. She said these estimate are on the low end and thinks the actual project cost would be more than the original estimate. Clover said all of these projects will start to be funded in the next fiscal year. She said the small grant projects would be expended by the end of this year. Majkut said they will have about \$720,000 until the end of next year that would be available as resources. He mentioned that they would have about \$600,000 to spend on projects for this year and next year. He believes there is plenty of money available to fund all of the projects at this point. He thinks they are going to have a hard time spending all of the Green Energy Fee money unless they are able to fund more projects or dedicate most of the money to just one project. He said it is hard to justify a fee increase when they already have a lot of money in the bank and not very many projects being proposed. Clover said people come into her office asking to implement more water bottle refill stations and solar panels on buildings, but they can't do them because it is a pilot project that has already been done before. She said if they keep projects within a pilot project range, it limits the amount of projects being proposed. Vidana recently spoke with the Facilities Director about the requests for water bottle refill stations. He said the Facilities money as of now is being used to maintain things rather than to buy new things for campus buildings. He doesn't know if there will be funding that comes from another source to do things like implement new water bottle refill stations. He said the committee should discuss what constitutes a pilot project and if they are strictly doing project pilots or not. He thinks this conversations should happen over this quarter and next year because the fee is going to

be up for renewal. He suggests the possibility of separating the fee into two categories with one being for pilot projects and one being for project repeats. Vidana also doesn't know where students stand when it comes to non-Associated Students administration chipping in to make the campus greener. He said this has been brought up before in regards to the university being responsible to pay for the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). Simpson suggested to take a look at past pilot projects and if they were successful to push to Facilities Management that these projects should become a university standard. He mentioned that they may want to have more of a discussion with the Associated Students and Richard Van Den Hul if there is a way the university could contribute with the purchasing of RECs. He also thinks the Associated Students should put in a capital request saying that water bottle refill stations are a high priority. He thinks there should be opportunities for others to put in requests that are ranked fairly high. Majkut thinks the university wouldn't have a problem with GEF funding renovations to buildings, but he doesn't think that's why the Associated Students wanted this fee. He thinks it might change the fee from being an educational student experience pilot program to the Associated Students making a commitment to sustainability in the campus. He thinks the fee would need to be higher to see the type of impact they would want. Majkut said the Associated Students has been working more collaboratively with the university, which makes the Associated Students one of the players in the system. He said they have been using the structure of the university to make changes, which teaches students how to work within larger systems. Eckroth said that it sounds like there doesn't need to be a fee increase as of now. He thinks this might be something to look at with the Green Energy Fee comes up for renewal. Eckroth said the administration made it pretty clear they don't want to see increase. He talked to students about the south campus late night shuttle being expanded, and students said they would be fine with a fee increase if it was used to expand the services they receive at night. Ellison thinks if students are able to see what they get out of student fees they may not mind paying a little extra for increased services. Eckroth said when the administration asks for more funding from the state along with increasing student fees, then legislatures might wonder why the university is asking more funding when they can just increase the fees. Vidana wondered the total fees students pay is. Majkut said it is around \$1200 per year.

## **VI. Adjourn**

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY ACCLAMATION AT 3:07 P.M.**