

**2017-2018 Mandatory Student Fees  
Sustainability, Equity and Justice Fund Referendum Proposal**

**Proposed Fee: Renew the Sustainable Action Fund as the Sustainability, Equity and Justice Fund at a rate of \$.90 per academic credit per quarter, not to exceed \$9.00, which the student body under the advisement of the Sustainability, Equity and Justice and Fund Committee can vote to raise up to \$1.20 per academic credit per quarter, not to exceed \$12.00 overall. This fee is purposed with funding projects and educational experiences that provide sustainable benefits, opportunities for student learning and growth, and to uphold the values of sustainability inclusive of protecting local and global ecology, upholding social equity, creating economic vitality and maintaining human health.**

**Fee History:**

The Green Energy Fee was first established at Western Washington University in 2005 after the Students for Renewable Energy (SRE), an Associated Students (AS) Club at Western, worked with key members of Western's staff, faculty, and administration to include the ballot measure in the 2005 AS elections. The student body approved the initiation of the fee with an 85 percent approval rate. The initial fee, titled the Renewable Energy Fee, was set at \$.40 per academic credit per quarter not to exceed \$4.00. The fee was used solely to purchase Renewable Energy Certificates (REC's), which fund the expansion of renewable power production and offset Western's carbon output.

In 2010, the fee was restructured to include the use of surplus funds for a grant program that students could access to implement projects that 1) increase energy efficiency; 2) decrease energy consumption; 3) generate renewable energy; and 4) reduce greenhouse gas pollution. The student body voted to renew the fee, newly titled the Green Energy Fee (GEF), with an 80 percent approval rate. The GEF currently stands at \$.70 per academic credit per quarter not to exceed \$7.00.

In 2015, the student body voted to renew the GEF as the Sustainable Action Fund (SAF) at a rate of \$.70 per academic credit per quarter, up to \$1.40 per academic credit per quarter, not to exceed \$10.00 overall, with an 86 percent approval rate of the voting population. The fund was intended then to support projects and educational experiences that would provide substantial environmental benefits, opportunities for student learning and engagement, and to help keep Western Washington University at the forefront of sustainable practices. Such projects and experiences included 1) the purchase of REC's to help fund the expansion of renewable power production and offset 100 percent of Western Washington University's carbon output; 2) Fund three student leadership positions within the Associated Students Environment and Sustainability Programs (ESP) office dedicated to a) actions and campaigns that directly influence Western

Washington University's sustainability; b) educating the Western Washington University community on sustainability issues; c) empowering students to tackle their own vision of a better world; and d) assisting, encouraging, promoting and advocating for movement by the institution towards a sustainable future; 3) A campus-wide grant program that awards funding to innovative, exciting and practical student-driven and student-led project proposals that will a) advance efforts in creating a culture of sustainability at Western Washington University; b) decrease energy consumption and generate renewable energy; c) empower and provide students the resources to further their visions of sustainability on campus; d) connect organizations within Western Washington University and the Bellingham community, and integrate sustainability into every Western Washington University department; e) reduce greenhouse gas pollution; and f) educate students, faculty, staff and visitors on the importance of sustainable practices; 4) continuing to fund an operational employee position that is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the funds associated programs.

The SAF as voted was effective Fall Quarter 2015 and would expire the end of Summer Quarter 2018. The SAF is currently \$.70 per academic credit per quarter not to exceed \$7.00.

**Shall the students of Western Washington University recommend to the administration that the Sustainable Action Fund be renewed as the Sustainability, Equity and Justice Fund at a rate of \$.90, not to exceed \$9.00, which the student body under the advisement of the Sustainability, Equity, and Justice Committee can vote to raise up to \$1.20 per academic credit per quarter, not to exceed \$12.00 overall for the purpose of the continued funding of projects and educational experiences that protect local and global ecology, uphold social equity, create economic vitality and maintain human health.**

Cited as a "select accomplishment" in Western Washington University's Sustainable Action Plan, since shifting it's mindset to a more holistic and equitable sustainability, the Sustainable Action Fund has only just begun to encompass and foster the kind of impact originally intended. Through increased student involvement and outreach work, the Sustainable Action Fund has increased greatly in its utility, and is providing funding for projects and opportunity that embody sustainability as its envisioned by our campus.

Since the renewal of the SAF Fee in 2015 a growing number of projects proposed to and funded by the Sustainable Action Fund have focused on an understanding of sustainability as the intersection between human health, economy, social equity, and environmental protection. This reflects an overall shift in both the types of projects which students are interested in pursuing through the SAF and the number of projects proposed overall. Over 20 SAF projects have been implemented since the 2015 renewal, over half of which have been approved in the past year alone (2017). This is approximately the same number of projects that were completed from the

start of the grant program in 2010 until the renewal in 2015, a 5 year span, clearly showing an increased interest in SAF projects. These diverse projects reflect the broad scope of sustainability undertaken by students over the past three years. Designing SAF projects builds skills for student participants as well as providing broad educational opportunities for the entire campus community that persist over time. This relates to the SAF's stated goals to 1) Increase Student Involvement and Education 2) Reduce Western Washington University's Environmental Impact and 3) Create an Aware & Engaged Campus Community.

Projects over the past several years have:

- 1) Brought speakers to campus to speak on topics such as:
  - a) Food Justice, "Food Awareness Evening" and "Another Food System is Possible"
  - b) Environmental Justice, "A Change of Course"
  - c) Climate Change, "Climate Fest"
  - d) Ecofeminism "Bringing Dr. Vandana Shiva to Western"
  - e) Personal Agency, Reducing Fossil Fuels "Dr. John Francis"
  - f) And others
- 2) Provided opportunities for students to engage in the community:
  - a) Working on Community farms, "Community Ambassadors for Sustainability"
  - b) Local, sustainable travel, "Microadventures"
- 3) Improving the built-environment,
  - a) "Electric Vehicle Charging Stations"
- 4) Increased student education on personal sustainable behavior
  - a) "Electric Bike Pilot"
  - b) "See and Be Seen"
- 5) Facilitated travel to sustainability conferences across the US including:
  - a) "Students for Zero Waste Conference"
  - b) "Tilith Conference"
  - c) "OHESC Conference Scholarships"
  - d) And others
- 6) Supported student and community conferences held at Western
  - a) "Real Food Challenge West"
  - b) "Climate Fest"

Moving forward, the Sustainable Action Fund hopes to continue to serve the needs of the student body and to empower the student body to create change on our campus surrounding the intersections of sustainability and social justice. Renewed as the Sustainability, Equity and Justice Fee, this can continue to move in this direction of encompassing a more equitable and transformative sustainability that strives for a more just local and global environment, while continuing to resist the historically exclusive and marginalizing movements of

environmentalism. Furthermore, this fee is proposed to allow for the continued growth already evident in the program, and continued campus wide efforts of social justice. The current needs of sustainability are constantly changing, and by broadening the scope of this fund, more and more students will be able to be served by its mission of supporting the protection of local and global ecology, the upholding of social equity, the creation of economic vitality and the maintaining of human health.

**The SEJ Fund as voted would be effective Fall Quarter 2018 and would expire the end of Summer Quarter 2022.**



