



## **Associated Students of Western Washington University**

### **Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Committee- Rules of Operation**

#### **SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY, & JUSTICE FUND**

##### **Mission Statement**

The Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund (SEJF) Grant Program promotes sustainability by providing grants to create and implement projects that positively impact environmental, social, health, and economic practices on our campus and in our community.

##### **SEJF Committee**

The Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Committee provides program oversight to the SEJF, provides budgetary direction and approval, and determines project application approval as guided by the rubric. The SEJF Committee upholds the SEJF Mission to support social, environmental, human health and economic sustainability on our campus and community, as well as to provide student engagement and development opportunities.

The SEJF Committee acts in accordance with the SEJF Committee Charge and Charter and the SEJF Rules of Operation.

##### **Grant Program**

The SEJF Program suggests funds, manages the recruitment and processing of grants for innovative student-driven project proposals that protect local and global ecology, uphold social equity, create economic vitality, maintain human health, advance sustainability and create access for students to ideas of sustainability.

The program awards three different-sized grants:

- Small grants: \$500-\$5,000
- Medium grants: \$5,000-\$35,000
- Large grants: \$35,000+

#### **PROGRAM OVERSIGHT**

##### **Program Advisement**

The SEJF Committee shall offer interpretations and advisement to the SEJF Program Staff in regards to program direction and decision making based on the values of the SEJF Program.

##### **Sets and Interprets Fee Language**

When the SEJF Fee is up for reauthorization, language and fee amount will be developed and approved for the ballot under the supervision of the committee. When the SEJF fee needs reaffirmation or reauthorization that significantly affects the fee amount or fee language an

approval by student referendum is necessary. Additionally, any needed interpretation of the fee language shall be from the SEJF Committee by consensus of the committee, or a majority vote. Final approval of ballot language will be from the AS Executive Board through the AS VP for Sustainability. Final approval of the referendum terms and conditions will happen through a majority vote to approve the language from the student body.

#### **Regarding Reduction of Student Tax Amount During the Referendum's 4-year term**

The AS Executive Board has the power at any point during the 4-year term of the Referendum to vote to decrease the SEJF tuition fee for students, given consultation from the SEJF Program.

#### **Ensures Appropriate Use of Student Funds**

The SEJF Committee works to ensure the fair and equitable use of student funds, prioritizing grants that encompass a more equitable and transformative sustainability that strives for a just local and global environment, while continuing to resist the historically exclusive and marginalizing movements of environmentalism and improving the student experience. It also prioritizes grants that furthermore support the protection of local and global ecology, uphold social equity, create economic vitality and maintain human health. This will be done through the utilization of the SEJF Scoring Rubric for project evaluations.

#### **Budget Approval**

The Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Program Budget is created by the SEJF Program Staff and subject to the approval of the SEJF Committee during spring quarter. The SEJF Budget contains the Operational Budget and the Funds for Granting Budget. The Budget Authority will provide at least quarterly updates to the committee. The committee has the authority to review and redistribute the allocation of reserves based on committee vote.

#### **Operational Budget**

##### **Investments in Renewable Energy**

A portion of the collected funds will be allocated towards investments in renewable energy, such as partnering with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) on its Green Direct Renewable Energy Program, or by other methods to support Western Washington University moving towards net-zero emissions.

##### **Program Approved Grants**

The SEJF Committee allocates funding to the Administrative Budget in order to fund Program Approved Grants at the approval of the SEJF Program Staff and budget authority. All program-approved grants will be presented to the committee as consent items

#### **Funds for Granting Budget**

##### **Committee Approved Grants**

All funds not allocated to the administrative budget or committed to existing projects are available for new grants.

## **APPROVAL AND FUND GRANTING**

The SEJF program provides outreach, engagement, and support for individuals and teams that seek funding. The program and the Sustainability Engagement Institute (SEI) Director vet all potential projects for alignment with the university's Sustainable Action Plan (SAP) and the mission of the SEJF.

## **Grant Levels**

### **Small Grants**

The fund-granting authority for small grants is delegated by the SEJF Committee to the SEJF Program Staff and will be spent out of the funds allocated for grants in the operating budget. Once the program and the Sustainability Engagement Institute (SEI) Director approve the proposals, they are considered funded and brought as a consent item to the committee.

### **Medium Grants**

After reviewing and approving medium-sized grants, the SEJF Program Staff and the SEI Director bring grants to the SEJF Committee for decision in what may be a one-meeting proposal process, decided at the discretion of the committee. Approval is based on available funds and alignment with the SEJF mission and values. Approval happens at the motion of a committee member and a majority vote of the seated membership

### **Large Grants**

Large grants will be brought to the SEJF Committee for decision in a two-step review process:

- **Abstract:** The committee will review the abstract and give a Memo of Feedback to the team with feedback and recommendations. Approval is based on available funds and alignment with the SEJF mission and values as detailed in the fee language. Approval happens at the motion of a committee member and a majority vote of the seated membership.
- **Final Application and Presentation:** After approval of the abstract, project teams are eligible to submit a final application. Following the final presentation, the committee will vote on approval. Approval is based on available funds and alignment with the SEJF mission and values as detailed in the fee language. Approval happens at the motion of a committee member and a majority vote of the seated membership.

## **Contingency Funding**

Emergency (contingency) funding is available for approved projects that face unexpected changes in expenditures due to price fluxes or other unanticipated events. Emergency funding is granted by the program and presented to the committee as a consent item for all grants. Small grants can be given an additional 25% of their total budget, medium and large grants can be given 10% of their total budget.

## **Process Outside of Quorum:**

When the committee is not in session, this committee's responsibilities fall to the AS VP for Sustainability (Chair of SEJF Committee or designee), AS ESP Representative (Vice Chair of SEJF Committee or designee), and the Director of the Sustainability Engagement Institute (or designee) to consider and determine approval of projects for medium to large sized grants that are facing schedule constraints. Grant proposal approval will require the support of all involved parties and will be based on the project's alignment with the values

of the SEJF mission and Western's Sustainability Action Plan, in addition to the proposal's viability. Approval of a project via this process will facilitate funding and implementation that will fall under the standard SEJF grant program guidelines and expectations.”

### **Project Follow-up**

Proposals will have an individual timeline determined by the team with the support of the SEJF Staff. All allocated funds must be spent within that timeline, unless an extension is approved by the SEJF Committee. Any unspent funds at the end of the grant period or project will be released back to the SEJF. At the recommendation of the SEJF Operations Staff, the committee can vote to pull funds from a project that has not spent its funds in the appropriate timeline.

### **Conflict of Interests**

In the event of any grant proposal where a committee member is a project owner and/or directly benefits members of the SEJF Committee (including ex-officio members), the application will automatically be brought to the committee for approval regardless of grant type. Program Approved Grants that experience a conflict of interest must come to committee for a formal voting process. This includes, but is not limited to, the Environmental and Sustainability Programs, the AS Executive Board, The Office of Sustainability, and The Viking Union. The committee member(s) will be asked to abstain from voting.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATIONS**

The SEJ Committee is made up of students, faculty, and staff from different areas of campus which represent different stakeholders in the SEJ. The makeup of the committee is as follows:

AS Vice President for Sustainability (Chair)

Environmental and Sustainability Programs Director (Vice Chair)

AS Vice President for Student Services

1 WWU AS Senator

3 Students at-large, appointed by AS Executive Board

-1 Student at-large

-2 Students at-large with special interest in equity and/ or justice within sustainability

1 Faculty representatives, appointed by the Faculty Senate

1 Representative from Business and Financial Affairs

Sustainability Engagement Institute Director (non-voting)

Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Grant Program Manager (non-voting)

Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Grant Program Coordinator (non-voting)

Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Grant Program Ambassador (non-voting)

Secretary (non-voting)

Director of Student Activities, Advisor or Designee (non-voting)

### **Member Responsibility**

Members of the SEJ Committee are expected to attend committee meetings and review relevant documents before meetings. All voting members are expected to vote based on the proposal's alignment with the SEJF mission.

When voting on large grants, the two-step process should be considered when committee members vote. For large grant abstracts, the project teams focus primarily on the value proposition. Therefore, committee members are charged with voting on the value proposition during this stage. For large grant full applications, project teams focus on the viability proposition. Therefore, committee members are charged with voting on the viability proposition during this stage. The value alignment of the project with the SEJF mission should remain present and unchanged from the approved abstract: this is core element that carries over from the abstract and must be consistent across these two submissions.

## **RECORDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The SEJF Program and the SEJC shall be accountable to the student body and shall make all meeting agendas, minutes, and documents available to the public. The SEJF Program Staff creates an annual report on the operations of the SEJF Program and fee level which can be shared by the AS VP for Sustainability to the AS Executive Board annually.

**AMENDMENTS**

These rules of operation may be amended by a majority vote of the AS Executive Board.