



**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 works in collaboration with 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.

**PROGRAM OVERSIGHT**

**Program Advisement**

The SEJF Committee shall offer interpretations and advisement to the SEJF Program Staff who are employed and managed under the Sustainability Engagement Institute in regards to program direction and decision making based on the values of the SEJF Program. The fund manager for SEJF Program is the Associate VP for Academic Affairs, and is the final authority regarding grant approvals. In collaboration with Sustainability Engagement Institute staff, this position can also provide advisement for fund management within the SEJF Program.

**Commented [LW3]:** 2022-23: develop section to state SEJF program values with Lindsey

**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 advisement 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.

### Ensures Appropriate Use of Student Funds

The SEJF Committee works to ensure the fair and equitable use of student funds, prioritizing grants that encompass more equitable and transformative sustainability initiatives that strive for a just local and global environment, while continuing to resist the historically exclusionary 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 each spring quarter. The SEJF Budget contains the Operational Budget and the Funds for Granting Budget. The SEJF Budget Authority, the Academic Affairs designee via the Sustainability Engagement Institute, 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.

### SEJF Funding Use

#### 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.

#### Personnel Budget

#### Budget for Granting Proposals

##### Grant Program

The SEJF Grant Program suggests both funding priorities and funding levels and manages the recruitment and processing of grants for innovative student-centered project proposals that protect environment, uphold social equity, create economic vitality, maintain human health, advance sustainability and create access for students to explore and advance sustainable actions and commitments at Western Washington University.

The program awards three differently-sized grants:

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

We define Sustainability, Equity, and Justice as the following:

**Commented [LW4]:** 2022-23 VP for Sustainability: Develop/ flesh out this language:  
From Lindsey:  
I'm curious about this. Has this happened in the past?  
I'm curious about what this might look like.  
And in this case, is the vote based on consensus or majority?

**Commented [LW5]:** For 2022-23 AS VP for Sustainability: Flesh out this section with help of SEJF, SEI, SEJF Committee

**Commented [LW6]:** Connect with Delfine about this

**Commented [LW7R6]:** Subheading for the Grant Fund section?

**Commented [EA8]:** This language seems to need some refinement. Maybe even getting rid of the word ideas. I think the hope is to give students access to explore and advance sustainable action?

**Commented [LW9R8]:** This is now more specific; perhaps can be shorter. Language can be discussed in 1:1 and group meetings

**Commented [LW10]:** For AS VP 2022-23 Successor: Define these with help of SEI, SEJF, committee

- Sustainability:
- Equity:
- Justice:

#### **Committee Approved Grants**

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

#### **Program Approved Grants**

Small sized program-approved grants will be presented to the committee as consent items. If committee is not in session, then information about the grants will be shared at least with the SEJF Committee chairs or uploaded to the Microsoft Teams.

### **APPROVAL AND FUND GRANTING**

The SEI and SEJF staff provides outreach, engagement, and support for individuals and teams that seek funding through the Program Coordinator and student staff. 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**

Small grants are reviewed and approved by the SEJF program staff and funds are 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 to be presented, and then they are voted on in a subsequent meeting. 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 a Memo of Feedback will be given to the team with feedback, questions, and recommendations from the SEJF Program team. 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 and final application, the committee will vote on approval. Approval is based on alignment with the SEJF mission and values as detailed in the fee language. Approval happens at the motion of a

**Commented [LW11]:** 2022-23 AS VP Sustainability : Revisit this idea with SEJF and SEI people in summer

**Commented [LW12]:** VP Sustainability 2022-23: food for thought  
From Zinta:  
I think it's worth mentioning that as soon as a large grant abstract is approved, the funding is encumbered. Therefore, a final application approval is not dependent on available funding, just on the viability proposition, as well as its alignment with the mission and values.

committee member and a majority vote of the seated membership.

### Contingency Funding

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 \_\_\_% of their total budget, medium and large grants can be given \_\_\_% of their total budget.

**Commented [LW13]:** 2022-23 AS VP for Sustainability: Decide what the exact percentages for grant contingency funding will be with help of SEI, SEJF, SEJF Program.

### 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 Staff Advisor 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."

**Commented [LW14]:** From Lindsey: I know this is a bigger conversation, and could not be implemented immediately, but we could also consider shifting to defined application windows, and just decide that applications will not be taken during the summer.

**Commented [LW15]:** Revisit this section, especially with newer institutional changes.

**Commented [LW16R15]:** Note from Eric: However, I also want to recognize when conflict of interest exists, it should be considered or alternate approval pathways should be created.

### Project Follow-up

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 Program Staff, the committee can vote to pull funds from a project that has not spent its funds in the appropriate timeline.

**Commented [LW17R15]:** Content from UW Conflict of Interest information:

"We must avoid activities that would compromise the public's confidence in the University's integrity or that would impair our independence and objectivity of judgment in the discharge of our responsibilities to the University. We should demonstrate sensitivity in identifying potential conflicts of interest, whether of a financial, personal, or professional nature. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed, reviewed, and appropriately managed or eliminated in accordance with the reporting and other provisions of applicable University and regulatory agency policies."

### Conflict of Interests

We must avoid activities that would compromise the public's confidence in the Associated Students' and SEJF Program's integrity or activities that would impair our objectivity of judgment in the discharge of our responsibilities to the institution and student body. We should demonstrate sensitivity in identifying potential conflicts of interest, whether of a financial, personal, or professional nature. In the event of any grant proposal where an individual committee member is a project owner and/or directly benefits individual 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, Sustainability Engagement Institute, and The Viking Union. The committee member(s) will be asked to abstain from voting.

#### Records and Accountability

"We should hold ourselves accountable to each other, to the University, and to the public for our actions and our omissions. Our duty includes an obligation to report suspected violations of laws, regulations, or University policies to appropriate University officials and to avoid retaliation against others who in good faith report such violations."

These come from UW's Regents Statement of Ethical Principles, <https://fa.uw.edu/audit/content/regents-statement-ethical-principles>

**Commented [LW18R15]:** If we are to state that "if one fails to disclose that there may be a conflict of interest and it is found afterwards that this conflict of interest existed", then we also must include a consequence, not one that is punitive in nature, but an "appeal process" for example.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATIONS**

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

### **Voting Membership**

- AS Vice President for Sustainability (Co-chair)
- Environmental and Sustainability Programs Representative (Vice Chair)
- AS Vice President for Student Services
- AS SAIRC Marketing and Assessment Representative
- AS ESC Representative
- 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

### **Non-voting Membership**

- Facilitator and advisor to the SEJF Committee, Professional Staff designee appointed by Eric Alexander (Co-chair)
- Sustainability Engagement Institute Director
- Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Grant Program Manager
- Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Grant Program Coordinator
- Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Grant Program Ambassador
- Student Governance Assistant Secretary

### **Member Responsibility**

Members of the SEJF Committee are expected to attend committee meetings and review relevant documents before meetings. All voting members are expected not to vote based on personal or positional insight, but instead 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 a core element that carries over from the abstract and must be consistent across these two submissions.

### **Responsibilities of the Co-Chairs**

Due to the various different positions of this committee's members and their inherent differing positional powers, and the content of meetings and their discussions, the responsibilities of the chair position are allocated between the AS VP for Sustainability and a Professional Staff Designee Advisor.

The responsibilities of the AS VP for Sustainability entail those of a communications liaison:

- Acting as a liaison between the AS Executive Board and SEJF Committee.
- Communicating with the Student Governance Assistant between meetings to ensure that agendas are constructed, regular meetings are scheduled, and required meeting information is uploaded or otherwise shared in timely manners.
- Acting as the point of communication between the SEJF Program and Committee.
- Ensuring necessary work such as suggestions on governing documents, reading of proposals, committee related planning happens between meetings.
- Share any committee related updates and co-lead discussions about governing documents, referendums, or other similar topics.

This student position does not have the responsibility of facilitating SEJF meetings, unless they decide they want to assist the Professional Staff Designee.

The Professional Staff Designee should be a position that can advise and facilitate the committee based on understandings of:

- AS Committee structures.
- Roberts Rules.
- Meeting facilitation and conflict management strategies.
- Legality surrounding AS Committee decisions and actions.
- An understanding of the "Voluntary fees of students" Revised Code of Washington [RCW 28B.15.610](#).

## RECORDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The SEJF Program and the SEJF Committee shall be accountable to the student body, the state, this institution, and the law, policy, and ethics standards required of all programs at Western Washington University by making all meeting agendas, minutes, and documents available to the public. The SEJF Program Staff also creates an annual report on the operations of the SEJF Program and fee level which can be shared to the AS Executive Board annually.

## AMENDMENTS

These rules of operation may be amended by a majority vote of the AS Executive Board, with input and insight from the SEJF Committee membership and any Sustainability Engagement Institute positions.

**Commented [EA19]:** Also, there is accountability to the state, the institution, and the laws, policies, ethics and standards that are required of all programs at WWU.

**Commented [LW20R19]:** Note to try to incorporate this information into this section with assistance and input from others.

**Commented [EA21]:** And the SEJF Committee? And...anyone else?