

# **The Clean Energy Fund**

## **Mission and Structure at the University of Vermont**

*Prepared by*  
**Clean Energy Fund Committee**  
**September 2016**

In 2016 a new structure was created for the Clean Energy Fund, including a new administrator. The Socially Responsible Investing Advisory Council's (SRIAC) mission statement has also been redefined and broadened to support the Vice President for Finance in fulfilling his/her responsibilities related to investments of the operating cash reserves at the University, the administrative oversight of the Clean Energy Fund, and any other issues related to investments.

### **Mission of the Clean Energy Fund**

**Vision:** The Clean Energy Fund was created in response to students' vision of the University of Vermont running efficiently on a fraction of its current energy needs, powered by clean, locally produced renewable energy that fulfills both the University's needs and supports the local economy.

The University of Vermont's Clean Energy Fund (CEF) was established to advance renewable energy infrastructure on campus, and foster clean energy research and academics. A self-imposed student fee of \$10 per student per semester replenishes the fund with about \$250,000 annually.

The priority for the CEF is to support renewable energy development by investing in projects that displace fossil fuel energy use by the campus. Preparing for and making the necessary changes to campus to transition away from fossil fuels engage the three aspects of sustainability: social, ecological, and economic. Lectures, events, and internships develop the social capital for the UVM community to understand the complexity of a renewable energy transition and better address the challenges ahead. The CEF advances and supports the incorporation of clean energy into the campus infrastructure by supporting feasibility studies, including electrical and structural considerations, as well as physical installations of renewable energy-- support that is beyond the scope of current University funding mechanisms. Measurable benefits to the environment can accrue as the UVM community finds ways to reduce energy use and utilize cleaner energy sources through innovative technologies and ideas.

CEF projects will fall under one of three categories: *1) infrastructure 2) academics and co-curricular education and 3) innovative research.*

**Office of Sustainability (OoS).** From 2008-2016, the OoS managed the Clean Energy Fund. This prior responsibility has been restructured to focus on aiding senior leaders and scoring highly in the AASHE Sustainability Rating and Assessment System (STARS); advancing the University of Vermont's Climate Action Plan (CAP); and engaging students by managing the Eco-Reps Program's peer-to-peer outreach activities. OoS' role coordinating STARS data collection and managing the Climate Action Plan (CAP) entails providing research and policy support for the University Community and connecting the CAP and other operational plans with STARS goals. The broadened role of the SRIAC will allow for greater partnership with the OoS and increased community engagement by defining ways that social and environmental criteria can be integrated into university policies and management systems.

## Organizational Structure



### Socially Responsible Investing Advisory Council (SRIAC)

The SRIAC is comprised of representatives from all major constituents on campus: graduate students, undergraduate students, staff, and faculty each have two representatives on SRIAC. SRIAC will solicit and make recommendations on CEF proposals related to the category of Academics and Co-Curricular Education. The SRIAC will also serve as a standing council with representation from across campus to communicate directly with the campus community on all proposals related to the CEF by engaging through Town Hall forums, surveys, and other calls for input. CEF Infrastructure project proposals will be moved forward to the SRIAC from the Clean Energy Infrastructure Committee (CEIC). Innovative Research category projects will be moved forward to the SRIAC from the Honors College and the Graduate College. The SRIAC will make recommendations on project proposals to the VP for Finance, who will make final funding decisions. The Sustainable Funds Coordinator will be integrally involved in facilitating communication between the various entities associated with the CEF including the student body, the Honors and Graduate Colleges, and the Clean Energy Infrastructure Committee.

## **Clean Energy Infrastructure Committee (CEIC)**

The CEIC will be comprised of five members from across campus: The Office of Sustainability will have one representative; Capital Planning and Management will have one representative; Physical Plant Department will have one representative; and a representative from the Division of Finance will chair the Committee. The Sustainability Funds Coordinator will also serve on the committee.

The Sustainability Funds Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with various stakeholders related to the CEIC, maintaining the CEF website, and facilitating strong and open connections to staff, faculty, and students.

### **Process**

Proposals for CEF Infrastructure projects will originate from the Clean Energy Infrastructure Committee. The SRIAC will directly solicit new ideas for Academics and Co-Curricular Education from the University community. The Director of Undergraduate Research within the Honors College and the Director of Graduate Research from the Graduate College will develop proposals for Innovative Research, by identifying prime opportunities for funding. The SRIAC will make final recommendations for funding to the VP for Finance on all project proposals.

In each fall semester, the SRIAC will review all proposals and ideas from committees. To ensure community participation and input, the SRIAC will discuss and subsequently present selected proposals to the University community at semester Town Hall forums and surveys will be used to increase outreach. Facilitating this process, the Sustainable Funds Coordinator will work directly with students and faculty to clarify expectations for proposals and support proposal development. Project completion may not necessarily fit within an annual academic year.

### **Infrastructure**

The Clean Energy Infrastructure Committee (CEIC) will identify 2-3 infrastructure projects annually that are economically feasible and have the support of planning personnel on campus. Examples of infrastructure projects include building energy dashboards, installation of solar panels, smart meters, and feasibility studies.

### **Academics and Co-Curricular Education**

During the fall semester, SRIAC will identify opportunities for funding academic efforts by soliciting ideas and proposals from across campus. Examples of academic and co-curricular education projects include lecture series, guest lecturers and co-curricular education projects.

### **Innovative Research**

These projects will be developed in collaboration with the Graduate College and the Honors College. Both colleges have existing institutional processes for awarding research funding to eligible students. Relevant innovation and research examples include the creation of organic solar cells for photovoltaic panels, and development of small scale wind turbines.

## **Funding**

No more than 50% of the total Clean Energy Fund is to be allocated for an individual category (infrastructure, academics, innovation). Any amount over this percentage for a specific proposal requires approval by the VP for Finance.

The CEF is not to be used for professional development for individuals, course work at other institutions, or food or drink for meetings. Neither is the CEF intended to fund faculty research. Specific, highly relevant research proposals may be considered if the connection to the campus is explicit. Undergraduate research proposals require a faculty sponsor.