

# Clean Energy Fund Recommendations | Fall 2020

Submitted by the Socially Responsible Investment Advisory Council to Richard Cate, VP for Finance

## Executive Summary

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The SRI Advisory Council received nine proposals to the Sustainable Campus Fund (SCF) this fall. The SCF subcommittee met on October 27, 2020 (Amy, Eric, Chris, Anitra, Luce, Lindsey) and recommended moving all but one proposal forward to the SCF Forum. The group also recommended that the Greenhouse Lighting Project be referred to the Revolving Loan Fund as it appears to meet the criteria. While 9 proposals is an adequate number of applications considering the transition to SCF and the dynamic nature of the semester, effort will increase next semester to ensure a more competitive proposal process.

**The SRI Advisory Council voted to recommend funding for \$276,447 of the \$315,689 requested during the forum. The group recommends funding five proposal requests fully (Bittersweet Pollinator Garden, Covered Bike Racks, Campus Compost Operations Feasibility Study, Library Stack Lighting and Smart Waste Sensors), not funding three proposals (Cigarette Receptacle, Fleet Sharing Proposal, and New Campus Signage Update) and recommends that one proposal instead be presented to the Revolving Loan Fund (Greenhouse Facility Director). The group also requested additional information or modifications to one proposal (Fleet Sharing Pilot) and requested it be returned as a stronger proposal in the spring.**

## Proposal Recommendations

### Bittersweet Pollinator Garden

Proposed by: Liza Bryan (RSENr undergraduate) and Caitlyn Williams (RSENr undergraduate)

Funding request: **\$3,550**

This proposal aims to turn the backyard of the Bittersweet building into a native, perennial pollinator garden. The garden will serve to showcase how humans and pollinators can coexist and transform a normal, Burlington backyard into a pollinator rich habitat. Upon completion of the garden, a documentary will be made to inspire others to undertake a pollinator garden of their own. A student-driven idea, the proposal envisions hiring 2 interns at \$15, for 2.5 hours per week, for 34 weeks. Matching funding efforts for the proposal and underway from the Audubon Society and the Apis Fund.

**The council voted to fund this proposal and this was previously approved by Vice President Cate for an urgent grant deadline.**

### Campus Compost Operations Feasibility Study

Proposed by: **Corey Berman**, UVM Recycling and Zero Waste

Funding request: \$1,000

This proposal is the first part a proposed two-part project. The first part would be a feasibility study to determine if bringing compost collection in-house makes financial and operational sense. The proposal is seeking funding solely for the student employee or paid internship to assist with data collection and draft reporting. The proposal originated from the Sustainable Campus Fund Infrastructure Committee.

The project would begin with assessing UVM's solution for meeting Vermont's recently enacted state-wide composting mandate. Several questions were raised, including asking whether this is a cost-savings proposal or an environmental proposal. The project internships are viewed as a great opportunity for an Environmental Science student and Business student for examining both economic cost-benefits and environmental benefits.

**Recommendation: The council voted to fund this proposal.**

## **Cigarette Receptacle Data Collection**

Proposed by: Ian Lynch and Olivia Lopez, Undergraduate Student Government Association, CAS and RSEN

Funding request: \$3,344

This proposal will fund two internships seeking to collect information on the three cigarette butt receptacles that were installed. Interns would conduct a waste audit on the three receptacles, create and conduct a survey regarding potential changes in cigarette usage, research effective messaging strategies to mitigate the usage of cigarettes, place this messaging on campus, and continue to push for the installation of the remaining 11 receptacles that are waiting to be installed.

The group discussed this at some length, noting that the project is totally student-driven. However, the group recommends not funding the proposal at this time and would encourage the students to strengthen the research questions, investigate current smoking policies on campus and perhaps move forward during a time that is more "normal" for the campus.

**Voting outcome: The group recommends denying funding for this semester.**

## **Covered Bike Racks**

Proposed by: Abby Bleything, Adam Frasier, and Jim Barr, Transportation & Parking Services

Funding request: **\$229,345**

This request proposes initiating Phase II of the Covered Bike Racks project and seeks funding for the construction of two covered bicycle racks on UVM's campus, at the Harris Millis complex and Davis Center. Each shelter would hold 28-32 bikes. The proposal supports the SCF's vision of displacing fossil fuel use on campus by encouraging people to commute to and travel around campus year-round on bikes and increase equity for those that do not have access to a vehicle. The proposal has the advantages of building on previous funding from the Clean Energy Fund and also aligns with the Active Transportation Plan.

A motion was made and seconded to fund both locations with stackable racks to provide more capacity for accommodating students that do not live on campus. However, there were concerns raised about the overall price tag of the proposal, prompting a discussion of using alternative materials or completing a

competitive bid process prior to approval. A request was made for a more detailed breakdown of the costs and following this information, the group voted to fund the proposal.

**Recommendation: After extensive deliberations, the group voted to recommend funding this project for the full amount.**

## **Fleet Sharing Pilot**

Proposed by: **Hannah November**, Undergraduate Student, VT Clean Cities Coalition at UVM's Transportation Research Center

**Funding request:** \$42,090

This proposal will support a 12-month long fleet vehicle sharing pilot program among UVM departments toward building a more resilient transportation future. This project will work with the Vermont Clean Cities Coalition (VTCCC) and Transportation and Parking Services (TPS), in conjunction with Carshare Vermont, to acquire and install fleet sharing hardware and software for each vehicle in the pilot. By investing in the fleet sharing technology for this pilot, and sharing underutilized vehicles, the transportation needs of each department can be met at reduced operational and environmental cost.

The council noted that while the selection of the Car Share software might be the best choice, it is also possible the university might already have the right software available with its room scheduling system, pointing to the need for further investigation. Other areas called out for investigation included clarifying the funding of the internship, working with Hannah to help define the work, and examining what other colleges are doing to move the fleet sharing strategy forward.

**Recommendation: The council requested the proposers respond with a job description explaining what the role of an intern would be and voted not to recommend funding the proposal this semester but encouraged the proposer to return with a modified proposal in the spring.**

## **Greenhouse Facility Lighting**

Proposed by: Derek Allen, Greenhouse Facility Director, and Stella Cunningham (Undergraduate student, CAS)

Funding request: \$30,900

The UVM Greenhouse in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences seeks to retrofit its outdated, low efficiency light fixtures with high efficiency LED grow light technology in several of its high-profile greenhouses at its Main Campus Greenhouse Facility. This proposal is designed to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce electrical operating costs in a highly visible and well used teaching and research space on the UVM campus. The proposal would support two undergraduate internships, in the spring of 2021 and fall of 2021.

Discussion of the proposal by the council was favorable, however, it was also noted that the proposal was a better fit for the Revolving Loan Fund. Luce Hillman was identified as being able to move the proposal to the Revolving Fund.

**Recommendation: The council recommends the Greenhouse Lighting Project be referred to the Revolving Loan Fund as it appears to meet the criteria.**

## **Howe Library Stack Light Renovation: Phase 3**

Proposed by: **Aidan Doherty and Lynn Wood, CAS, Political Science**

Funding request: \$40,000

Proposal is to replace outdated, non-LED/CFL lighting above the book shelves on the 2nd floor of the Howe library with motion-sensor activated LEDs. Phase 1 of the renovation provided efficient lighting and occupancy sensors with timers for the 3rd floor and Phase 2 began work on the second floor. This proposal provides multiple benefits, including energy savings, better quality lighting, as well as raising the visibility of the CEF/Sustainable Campus Fund on campus. This is a request for funding the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the lighting project in another section of the second floor. The group had two proposals to consider – one proposal asked for funding Phase 3. Another proposal requested funding for the next four phases of the project – 6 phases in total that are the same and address different sections of the library. The group voted to only vote on Phase 3 for \$40,000.

**Recommendation: The SRIAC voted unanimously to recommend funding this proposal for Phase 3 at \$40,000.**

## **New Campus Signage Update**

Proposed by: **Corey Berman, UVM Recycling and Zero Waste**

Funding request: \$5,000

This request proposes to design and roll-out a new campus-wide signage campaign to support and advance the increased diversion of materials from the landfill and participation in campus recycling efforts. It would also build in consistency of labelling across campus and tie into the State of Vermont design specifications which would assist students when moving off campus in terms of label recognition leading to increased participation. A student driven-initiative, students would be involved by physically labeling all existing containers, setting out new containers where necessary, making sure there is adequate coverage across campus and providing feedback.

**Recommendation: The council voted to recommend no funding based on the decision that this is an operational cost that should be part of a departmental budget.**

## **Smart Waste Sensors**

Proposed by: **Corey Berman, UVM Recycling and Zero Waste**

Funding request: **\$2,550**

This proposal will fund the installation of volume sensors in campus dumpsters and provide access to a subscription service allowing for real time monitoring of containers. The proposal falls at the intersection of both engineering and environmental studies which could be useful for students pursuing these majors and could potentially provide for a student internship to assist with data collection and data analysis both

of which could be used to increase program efficacy. The pricing for this proposal reflects a six-month agreement with the company.

While the council was overall favorable, the proposal prompted numerous questions, ranging from the emissions and GHG impacts of the project, questions about the internship and who would analyze the data, questions about existing dumpster volumes, the technology being used, etc. The council also asked for the name of the company, as well as the estimated GHG reductions from the project on UVM's relatively smaller campus. In addition, the group noted that if research indicates there is a benefit, then SRIAC would likely fund this.

**Recommendation: The council voted to recommend funding this proposal in full.**