

Green Fee Prospectus

Introduction – Why introduce a green fee?

Green fees exist at both the UIUC and UIC campuses. These fees fund projects related to environmental sustainability initiatives on-and-off campus. Introducing this charge will provide critical funding necessary to improve UIS' commitment to sustainability and will bring us in line with our sister campuses. It will also provide student employment, improve educational programming, provide jobs training opportunities, and help our campus reduce costs associated with resource use, waste management, and infrastructure development.

The green fee will be **no larger than \$8/semester**. The initial fee will start at \$5/semester and it will be raised or lowered in the future based on an ongoing assessment of the program's performance, the benefits provided to students, and student satisfaction with the use of the fees. The summer semester charge will be 50% of the fee charged during the Fall and Spring semesters. This should yield a total annual revenue of \$20,000 to \$30,000 during the combined Fall and Spring semesters, with summer yield depending on enrollment.

The fee will be mandatory and will be assessed with other student fees. However, any student who wishes to appeal the fee, will be granted a refund upon application.

Projects – What will the fee fund?

The fee will be used to fund three different types of three types of programs/initiatives:

(1) 10% will be used to fund short-term sustainability green-service projects undertaken by UIS students, faculty, and staff. Examples could include Greek Going Green events, in which fraternities and sororities participate in Springfield-area clean-ups or beautification projects or a regular Go Green and Go Home event sponsored by the Resident Housing Association, in which students collect recyclables and reusable goods in the spring when students vacate on-campus housing. Organized groups of students, faculty, and staff will be able to propose events for funding for their particular organizations.

(2) 25% will fund two part-time student workers, who will assist with the management of the fee and help with logistics related to the implementation of sustainability projects and initiatives. These student workers will be supervised by UIS staff with roles in building services and/or student life (e.g. Dave Barrows and Cynthia Thompson). They can also seek advice and mentorship from faculty on the Campus Senate Committee on Sustainability. They will be paid hourly, but some funds will also be available to them for conference travel and presentations of the success of the green-fee.

(3) 65% will fund longer-term infrastructure and programing projects proposed and implemented by UIS students, faculty, and staff. These Sustainability Grants will be awarded annually. A committee composed of students, faculty, and staff (described below) will review project proposals annually and select the best proposals for funding. Example of projects that

have already generated substantial student interests that could be funded using this revenue include:

- An on-campus community garden.
- A bicycle repair station like those recently installed in Springfield City Parks.
- A solar panel charging station for cell phones and laptops.
- More recycling bins.
- An on-campus compost system and/or food-pulper.
- A subsidized conversion to compostable materials in on-campus eateries.
- Subsidized, UIS-branded cups for use in on-campus eateries.
- Bike trailers for campus vehicles to help students transport their bicycles to local trails.
- Construction of an on-campus arboretum with trails and educational signs.
- Construction of a small nature center featuring environmental education programming for the community.
- An educational workshop series on composting, rain barrel construction, gardening, and other ways of being green locally.
- Creation of trails and bike paths connecting UIS to downtown Springfield and other desirable off-campus sites.

Procedures – How will the fee be established and how will the funds be managed and disbursed?

SGA could introduce a referendum during the April 2016 election asking UIS students to approve the addition of a green fee. If the referendum passes, we would notify UIS administration of the result and proceed through the necessary channels for the Board of Trustees and IBHE approval. Based on the UIC example, this process should take about 12 months.

Once fees are collected, the funds will be deposited in a green fee account managed by the Office of Student Life. Decisions about the disbursement of funds will be made by a new **Green Fee Committee** that will be established as a sub-committee of the Campus Senate Committee on Sustainability. The Green Fee Committee will consist of nine members. Five will be students appointed by SGA (three at-large members, one representative from SAGE, and one representative from the Bio Club). If SAGE and/or the Bio Club are defunct, these representatives will also be at-large and will be appointed by SGA. Two members will be faculty, appointed by the Sustainability committee. Two will be permanent members from the UIS staff (preferably the Grounds Superintendent and the Executive Director of Facilities and Services). The Green Fee Committee will be chaired by a student, who will be elected after the committee has formed. All SGA appointments will be made by the newly elected SGA in May for terms beginning July 1.

The two student employees will be non-voting members of the committee and will attend all meetings. They will coordinate the annual call for service project and Sustainability Grant proposals and will assist with logistics related to the collection, review, and implementation of these proposals.

The committee will review service project proposals in fall and spring, and will review larger Sustainability Grant proposals once/year in the fall. Students, faculty, and staff interested in submitting proposals will first be invited to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing the proposed service idea or sustainability project, and the committee and student staff members will provide feedback and direction to help them develop full proposals. Proposals will be awarded on a competitive basis; not all projects will be funded, but applicants can reapply. There will be a reporting requirement to enforce follow-through on project ideas, and all projects will be publicized, explained, and well-labeled so that students are very aware of and have the chance to comment critically on the use of green fee funds. The committee will submit reports to SGA and the Campus Senate yearly and will work with WUIS and The Journal to publicize annual achievements. Transparency will be critical.

Schedule – When will this happen?

If the referendum is approved by students in April 2016, we could have approval by April 2017 to begin collecting the fee. The fee would first be implemented in Fall 2017, and the first projects would be funded in Spring 2018 when the funds become available.