UIS Green Project Letter of Intent

Project Name: Water Bottle Refill Station on the 4th Floor of the Brookens Library

Contact Information:

Project Team

Name	*UIS Student/Faculty/Staff & Department (or Office)*	*UIS Email*	*Phone #*
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Project Information:

Please provide a brief description of the project. What are the goals and the desired outcomes of the project?
Please address all of the above items including concrete examples of the desired outcomes.

The following is a proposal for the implementation of a new water bottle refill station on the 4th floor of the classroom side of the Brookens Library. Students, faculty and staff would benefit from the water bottle refill station. The water fountains currently in use are negatively perceived as being less sanitary than water bottle refill stations. The proposed water bottle refill station would increase the number of students and staff using re-useable bottles instead of relying on single usage, disposable water bottles, minimizing plastic waste.

The main goal of the project includes, but is not strictly limited to, the reduction of the university's carbon footprint. Currently, many students and staff throughout UIS make use of disposable water bottles. New water bottle refill stations would encourage students and staff to purchase refillable water bottles and use the proposed station. This would reduce the amount of plastic waste created by the university as a whole, over time reducing the impact UIS has on the environment. The classroom side of the Brookens Library is an area that is frequently trafficked by students and faculty. The proposal bellow calls for the installation of one new water bottle refill station on the 4th floor of Brookens Library to replace the existing fountain.

Please describe why this project matters to you and how it relates to sustainability.
How will it aid in promoting the sustainability culture on campus? Describe your long-term vision.

The implementation of the proposed project to install a new water bottle refill station will help UIS become an environmentally friendly place. The university's environmental impact will decrease in regards to plastic waste as there will disposable water bottles. Instead, students and staff would benefit from using refillable water bottles, which have a longer useable lifespan and produce less waste.

Having the proposed water bottle refill station in place of the fountain will encourage students and staff to remain hydrated without their being concerned with the costs or environmental impacts of using disposable water bottles. Refillable water bottles are sold for a flat rate ranging from $5 to $20, while a once weekly bottled water can cost $1.50 per bottle. With the implementation of the proposed water refill station, water will be more readily accessible.

Currently, we have a leaky water faucet on the fourth floor of the classroom side of the Brookens Library. This is anything but sustainable. There is a small bucket located under the faucet to catch any leaks, however, with a new water bottle refill station in place of this faucet, water waste would be eliminated. UIS would be conserving water with the implantation of the proposed program. Another issue being caused by the leaky faucet is that of carpet damage. If the carpet damage continues to spread, the carpet in the hallway housing the water fountain will need to replaced, adding to the amount of waste UIS produces. This problem can easily be avoided through the implantation of a new water system that will not leak.

In the long term, the proposed project of new water bottle refill station is designed to reduce the university's environmental impact. This will be accomplished through the decreased use of disposable water bottles and the elimination of water leaks. Through the implantation of the prosed water bottle refill station project, UIS will be one step close to becoming an environmentally sustainable community.

Where will the project be located?

The proposed water bottle refill station will be located on the 4th floor of the classroom side of the Brookens Library and will replace the existing water fountain.

Please provide a brief summary of how students will be involved in or affected by the project:
Are there any relevant opportunities for student or multidisciplinary involvement with your project?

Students and staff members of the Center for Success, COLRS, and Graduate Public Service Internship Office will be the primary users of the proposed water bottle refill station in the classroom side of the Brookens Library. Water bottle refill stations are perceived as more sanitary than the current nonfunctioning water fountain. Students and staff that are on the 4th classroom side floor of Brookens have to walk down to the third or first floors to purchase water bottles from a vending machine. Installing the proposed water bottle refill station will minimize the amount of time a student has to leave their class, tutoring appointment, or work in order to get clean, fresh water. Staff members will also minimize time away from their desks and maximize the time they spend helping students if they do not have to travel to other floors in search of fresh water.

Other than saving students time and effort, the proposed water bottle refill station will also save students and staff money. A refillable water bottle has a price range of $5 to $20, this is a flat rate and students only spend money on a water bottle once. Single use water bottles from vending machines or the Student Union cafeteria however, typically cost $1.50 per bottle. At a bottle per weekday ($1.50 x 5) a student's costs for water is $7.50 per week. Multiply that by the 15 weeks of a semester ($7.50 x 15), and the total cost for water amounts to $112.50 per semester. Students with meals plans could use this money for several meals instead, and those that do not have meal plans could also find other uses for their estimated $112.50.

Please provide a brief summary of the project timeline (Most approved projects are proposed in the Fall and implemented in the Spring)
A brief summary of total project timeline and key milestones

The water bottle refill station has been proposed in the Fall semester and will follow this suggested timeline. Installation of the water bottle refill station will take place over either winter break or in the beginning of the Spring semester, allowing the station to be available for use in the Spring semester.

Please provide a brief itemized breakdown of the funds needed.
We will help you factor in the cost of labor and installation. If you have a plan for where you would like to purchase supplies from, provide it here and include a URL link to each item on the desired retailer's website.

As previously mentioned, there is a precedent for the water bottle refill stations. This proposal will use the same water bottle refill stations in Brookens as those used in PAC. Because of this, there exists the potential for a discount as a repeat customer. Information about the water refill stations can be found online at Elkay's website, but more specifically, we will be looking at the LZS8WSLP model, for which details have been listed below.

An Elkay Enhanced EzH$_2$O Bottle Filling Station & Single ADA Cooler, Filtered 8 GPH Light Gray, model LZS8WSLP, retails for $1,790 per unit. Our proposal calls for the installation of 1 of these systems. This would result in a unit cost of $1,790. We welcome the Green Fee Committee's suggestions for calculating installation and labor costs.

Funding for the new water bottle refill station in the 4th floor classroom side of the Brookens Library will come from the Green Fee assessed to students. Alternatively, a fundraising campaign can also be started to help with the purchase, installation, and labor costs associated with the project.

Do you have any suggestions for how we could measure the success of this project?

The success of the proposed water bottle refill station project can be measured in three ways. The first involves the water station itself. EzH$_2$O systems have a counter that instantly displays the number of single use plastic water bottles saved by using the station to refill reusable bottles. This number can be used to immediately start tracking the success of the new water bottle refill station.

The proposed project's success can also be evaluated by measuring the number of single use water bottles that are sold at vending machines or and at the Student Union's cafeteria. If the proposed water bottle refill station project is successful, there will be a decrease in the number of single use water bottles sold per semester.

The third suggestion for measuring the project's success is a satisfaction survey deployed via email. Students and staff can answer a set of predetermined questions to rank their satisfaction with the new system and rank that against the water fountains. An example of a question is having students and staff rank their thoughts on the new water bottle refill system. For example, students and staff could use a Likert scale with the following options - very sanitary, sanitary, moderately sanitary, unsanitary, and very unsanitary – to rate their perception on the cleanliness of the new system. These answers can then be compared to perceptions of the previous water fountain using the same scale.

Additional comments:
Any additional comments/relevant information about the project proposal

The proposed water bottle refill station will help in the university's mission to become more sustainable and reduce its carbon foot print. Thank you very much to the UIS Green Fee Committee and all involved for their consideration of the proposed project.