SUSTAINABILITY FUND – SMALL GRANTS FOR IDEAS THAT MIGHT FURTHER THE “POWER OF SUNY”

Energy-Smart New York is one of SUNY’s Six Big Ideas that will demonstrate the Power of SUNY, and how it can help, not only its educational community, but all of the citizens of New York. One of the goals of the SUNY Office of Sustainability is to help our campuses think innovatively and strategically about energy usage in the myriad ways it manifests itself. Interestingly enough almost every successful environmental sustainability initiative results in less energy usage and, therefore, directly furthers the goals of Energy-Smart New York. Even conserving water, which is a heroic goal on its own, results in less energy usage at sanitary sewer plants.

Focus and Scope of the Fund

This small grant sustainability fund (“Sustainability Fund”) was created because SUNY believes that great ideas come from that “what if” idea that many of us get in the middle of the night. We also know that successful ideas often result from failed iterations, and we would like to encourage small risk taking that may fail but also might result in a practical idea that reverberates throughout the SUNY community.

We recognize that this is not a large funding opportunity. We, therefore, have attempted to make this application process as simple as possible, so that we have accountability and receive information without unnecessary reporting requirements. One of the great features of sustainability is transparency of information, and we are hoping that results will be available to others even if the project failed to achieve its stated objective.

Review Panel and Awards

The review panel will consist of two representatives from SUNY campuses, the SUNY Director of Sustainability and a SUNY student-leader. Grant amounts will not exceed $7,500, and the expectation is that the average grant will be for $5,000. The total amount of the Sustainability Fund for this year is $60,700.

Calls for Proposals

The Sustainability Fund is currently a pilot project. We will be asking for proposals from September 19, 2012 through October 31, 2012. If successful, we are anticipating that this will be an annual call for proposals during this same period each year. The funding will be made available by January 15, 2013, and must be spent by August 15, 2013. Please clearly mark any proprietary information, if applicable. The Sustainability Fund will be administered by the Research Foundation of State University of New York (RF), and will be subject to RF policies and procedures (www.rfsuny.org).

Criteria
Proposals for funding will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Innovative sustainability theory
- Ability of the potential findings of the funded project to benefit more than one SUNY campus
- Ability of the potential findings of the funded project to benefit the community surrounding the SUNY campus or other communities in New York
- Involvement of multiple SUNY campuses
- Matching funds (preference for $1 matching for every $2 from Sustainability Fund)
- Involvement of students
- Potential to use this funding geared to a small project to develop a larger project that would qualify for other state, federal or private funds

Proposal Format

A proposal needs to include the following information:

1. Title of project;
2. Duration of project;
3. Amount of funds requested;
4. Short project summary, 200 words or less, include,
   a. What other SUNY campuses, if any, besides the host campus would benefit; and the benefit to community;
   b. Short statement of what would constitute a success for your project;
   c. Will your project have an impact on energy consumption and will this impact be measurable;
   d. Does your project directly or indirectly involve renewable energy; and
   e. Does this benefit the community surrounding the campus or any other community?
5. Project participants – list principal investigators, must include at least one SUNY faculty member, and how many students that you anticipate using;
6. If multiple campuses, the designate campus for coordinating funding;
7. Describe in approximately one to three pages the nature of your project;
8. If applicable, describe in 200 words or less how this project may lead to a larger project;
9. List subject matters taught by principal investigators;
10. List publications by principal investigators; and
11. Budget, with expenditures broken down by salaries for students, supplies, travel and equipment (no salary allocation for faculty or staff). The form budget is Exhibit A to this request for proposals.

The proposal should be countersigned by the principal investigator(s) and authorized campus sponsored program representative, and submitted at the following email address using pdf formatting: sustainability@suny.edu.

Notification of Award
The lead institution’s sponsored program office will be notified of a successful award, with a copy to the lead institution’s principal investigator. The RF Central Office will work with the campus sponsored program’s office to establish the award from which funds can be expended.

Reports

The lead principal investigator will be expected to provide a final report (2-5 pages) summarizing the outcomes of the project, including any abstracts, publications and invention disclosures. The report should include whether additional funding to extend the research will be sought by the research team. The report will be due by no later than September 30, 2013.

Questions

Any questions concerning this sustainability fund or the application guidelines contained herein should be addressed to Deborah Howard, Director of Sustainability, 518-320-1489 or Deborah.howard@suny.edu.