SSI FEE BOARD MINUTES | JUNE 1, 2012

DETAILS

Minute Taker: Morgan Dumitru
Timekeeper: Justin Russell
Present: Morgan Dumitru, Justin Russell, Kyle Ireton, Olivia Poblacion, Ryan Stewart, Brian Laird, Brandon Trelstad, Emily Bowling
Absent: Laura Jones

AGENDA

Solar Trailer Upgrade, presented by Brandon (20 Minutes)
Travel Grant: Nicholas Legg, presented by Justin (15 Minutes)
Working SSI Budget, presented by Morgan (5 Minutes)
SEC, presented by Brandon (3 Minutes)
Research Grant Program, presented by Justin (60 Minutes)
Next Meeting, presented by Timekeeper (2 Minutes)

MINUTES

SOLAR TRAILER UPGRADE – 11:05 TO 11:25 AM

DISCUSSION
  • The Sustainability Office is hoping to upgrade the Solar Trailer batteries, BMS, connections, charge controls, and wiring.
  • Brandon presented a proposed budget for the upgrades. At this point, would cost a total of $13,962.
  • Morgan asked for clarification on payback period, lifespan, and alternative technologies.
    o Minimal payback, 10+ year lifespan.

DECISION(S)
  • Board approved expenditure at up to $15,000, to be withdrawn from the Green Fee portion of the contingency fund.

ACTION ITEMS
  • Brandon will proceed with purchase.

TRAVEL GRANT: NICHOLAS LEGG – 11:25 TO 11:40

DISCUSSION
  • Board discussed application.
  • Concerns were raised over connection to sustainability at OSU and the mission / vision of the SSI.
DECISION(S)
• Board approved grant at $300, and agreed to revise the travel grant application (especially the relevance section) to clarify the focus on either (a) events and trainings, or (b) an activity with a particularly strong connection to sustainability efforts at OSU and the mission / vision of the SSI.

ACTION ITEMS
• Justin will contact Emily P. and Taro N. to proceed with purchase sometime this week.
• Board will update Travel Grant guidelines in July.

WORKING SSI BUDGET – 11:40 TO 11:45
DISCUSSION
• Morgan updated board on need to create a working budget for FY13 to reflect the funding level approved by the SIFC.

ACTION ITEMS
• Justin will draft a working budget for the SSI by the next meeting.

SEC – 11:45 TO 11:48
DISCUSSION
• Brandon notified board of the meeting on Wednesday, June 6th from 1-2 PM in MU 109A to discuss Sustainability & LEED in the SEC.

ACTION ITEMS
• Board members will do their best to make the meeting.

RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM – 11:48 AM TO 12:48 PM
DISCUSSION
• Justin explained to Kevin Ahern the context for our consideration of a potential research grant program.
• Brandon expressed concerns of the SSI about how to move into providing funding for research rather than simply materials or services.
• Kevin explained to the Fee Board the current undergraduate research programs, and emphasized a few key points:
  o It is important to make sure the faculty member and student are appropriately paired by interest, focus, and experience.
  o It might be possible to receive matching funds from faculty.
  o Funding for a summer is ~$4,000 in his existing programs. Funding during a school year can be a lot less because they work part time (might be around ~$500/term).
  o Kevin could help locate potential candidates (faculty and students), match professors and students, review applications, and get the program working in a wide range of communities.
  o There are three models the SSI could use: (1) put out notices to advisors, talk to classes, and post to a few places direct students to talk to Kevin Ahern to find a mentor, and once people have a mentor they put together an application that is then submitted to Kevin Ahern, (2) advertise opportunity, have students apply, or (3) a hybrid.
  o Would recommend a two-step process: (1) get a (noncompetitive) letter of interest from a student that Kevin would review to pair with a mentor, and (2) get a full (competitive) proposal from the student-mentor pair. (If the student already had a mentor, that would be considered as well.) The letter of interest / intent would be an opportunity to make sure it aligns with the SSI’s interests.
• It is important to have clear boundaries on the research and a clear process for identifying potential recipients and mentors.

• Brian and Morgan clarified that the timeline would likely be a trial program in Fall 2012 and a full program in Fall 2013. Kevin suggested advertising in Fall 2012 for a trial in Winter 2013.

• Group discussed balance of undergraduate and graduate funding, agreed that that would be up to the Fee Board to discuss.

• Group discussed duration of grants. Kevin recommended that funding last for either a full summer or two academic terms, and that the SSI try to spread the money out a bit.

• Timeline for Fall:
  o Letters of Intent: Due October 15th
  o Applications: Due November 15th

• Kevin could help put together expectation documents, and emphasized that the process would be driven by the SSI.

• Group discussed potential measures of success. Kevin does: (1) a end-of-summer symposium to present, and (2) a end of winter write-up reflecting on that summer experience. Success is (1) students have a better understanding of research, and (2) professors had a good experience with the students. Would recommend that the SSI have (1) a sustainability symposium, and (2) have students write a report. The SSI should also consider establishing a mission for the program itself.

• Group discussed matching funds: wouldn't require it, do provide the opportunity and recognize that it might influence consideration of the application, and do inform students that if the professor is willing to fund them in full they're automatically in the program.

• Logistically, have students on payroll (to avoid making it a scholarship) under their mentor’s department, the SSI would transfer funds to that department, require that unspent funds are transferred back, and ask for both an initial budget and final summary of

• Group discussed usage of funds: Kevin would recommend funding only wages / salaries, because materials and equipment should be covered by the department. There might be legitimate uses of funding for services or supplies, but we would need to find ways to potentially weed out inappropriate applications.

• Kevin would recommend the SSI thinks really hard about what it wants to accomplish and how the research dollars will advance the mission and vision of the program. The better we can refine our goals for the program, the more successful it will be.

• If we wanted to have something to report with the budget, we could get the word out now and try to run a trial with two different students Fall 2012. When we have a plan, contact Kevin by mid-August (earlier is better).

NEXT MEETING – 12:48 TO 12:50 PM

DECISION

• The next meeting will be on June 8, 2012 from 11 AM to 1 PM at the OSU Student Sustainability Center.

Observers: Kevin Ahern

Notes: The Fee Board specifically scheduled this meeting to meet with Kevin Ahern and discuss the potential for a Research Grant program.