

Charter of the University of Pittsburgh Green Fund Advisory Board (GFAB)

Mission Statement

The University of Pittsburgh Green Fund Advisory Board (GFAB) exists to promote sustainability at the University of Pittsburgh, with the express intent to improve the quality of life for all undergraduate students at the University. The fund to support GFAB (“The Pitt Green Fund”) will be administered by a committee of students, and will be allocated/collected from one or more of the following sources:

- (1) The University of Pittsburgh Student Activities Fee via Student Government Board allocations
- (2) Grants awarded to the GFAB by outside institutions
- (3) Voluntary contributions earmarked for GFAB projects
- (4) Yearly earnings from a fee assessed to students (pending administrative approval)

Article 1 — Green Fund Advisory Board

Section 1.1 — Powers and Voting

The GFAB will have responsibility for the appropriation of funds collected by the means stated above. The GFAB, as recognized by the office of Student Life at the University, has been delegated the authority from and shares the responsibility with Student Life for the administration of these funds. A simple majority of the board’s full membership is required to make funding and any other official decisions. Each member of the GFAB controls one vote, and the GFAB Coordinator shall represent the tie-breaking vote in the event of tied votes.

Section 1.2 — Duties of the GFAB

The duties of the GFAB shall be to:

- (1) Accept and review project applications to determine the fund apportionment
- (2) Monitor the progress of funded projects and provide guidance and assistance to project teams as necessary
- (3) Meet bi-weekly at the discretion of the GFAB Coordinator to provide a check on the progress of projects and address relevant business. If necessary, the GFAB may hold additional meetings at their discretion.
- (4) Adhere to the project selection process outlined in Article 2 of this charter
- (5) Hold a meeting or conference call after the end of the academic year to present the ending report, review the year’s progress, and present any revisions or amendments to the program. This meeting should include members of the GFAB and optionally the SGB environmental chair

Section 1.3 — Committee Member Positions and Duties

The GFAB will be composed of nine (9) undergraduate, full time, non-CGS students from the Oakland Campus of the University of Pittsburgh.

(1) GFAB Coordinator

The duties of the GFAB Coordinator shall be to:

- A. Call and facilitate all meetings of the GFAB
- B. Create meeting agendas, and hold all meetings to agenda in a timely fashion
- C. Be held accountable for the activities and responsibilities of individual GFAB members as provided for in this charter
- D. Cultivate and maintain communication and a good relationship with University administrators, faculty, student groups, and community members who are relevant to GFAB projects and operations
- E. In the event of tied votes, the Coordinator shall represent the tie-breaking vote
- F. Oversee the GFAB selection committee and appoint the following positions
- G. Oversee the project solicitation, submission, and selection process
- H. Oversee the completion of an end-of-year report that documents completed projects, final GFAB budget spending, and estimated savings to the University if possible. This report should be verified and approved by the GFAB at large, well written, attractively designed, and polished before submission to SGB, Student Life, Facilities Management, The Department of Housing and Food Services, The Pitt News, and other relevant University affiliates by the first week in June of each year

(2) Financial Organizer

The duties of the Financial Organizer shall be to:

- A. Provide a monthly report of all expenses of the GFAB
- B. Submit all necessary forms for expenditures to the Student Government Board Allocations Committee and the SORC office
- C. Maintain accurate reports of all account balances in an ongoing log that documents all GFAB transactions
- D. Be accountable for the financial actions of all project leaders
- E. Maintain communication with the Student Government Board business manager, president, and the Student Organization Resource Center (SORC) Business Office.
- F. Assess financial feasibility of projects
- G. Be present during any discussion with additional or alternative funding sources for a project, even if not liaison to that project
- H. Facilitate discussion and maintain relationships with university departments and offices that are potential funding sources for projects
- I. Seek funding from external sources if deemed necessary or possible.
- J. Act as a project liaison as described below should the need arise in the event of more than five projects being overseen by the GFAB

(3) Spokesperson

The duties of the Spokesperson shall be to:

- A. Ensure a transparent and positive relationship between the GFAB and the student body by working with Student Life, Residence Life, and student organizations. This includes outreach for project proposals and project support
- B. Promote the GFAB in any way necessary to maintain this transparency as well as student interest
- C. Sustain the attention of administrators, faculty, and students by regularly communicating progress and successes via diverse media including The Pitt News and blog posts on the website
- D. Administrate the GFAB and/or the Pitt Green Fund website
- E. Contribute to the final report as described above
- F. Act as a project liaison as described below should the need arise in the event of more than five projects being overseen by the GFAB

(4) Secretary

The duties of the Secretary shall be to:

- A. Keep record of all official business, decisions, project progress, and proceedings of the GFAB. Meeting minutes should at minimum record the names of present GFAB members, the agenda, project and funding updates, delegated tasks, and the date of the next meeting. Meeting minutes must be made publicly available within one week of the meeting date
- B. Ensure that all GFAB documents, meeting minutes, and records are available to the public online
- C. Assist the GFAB Coordinator with clerical tasks as necessary
- D. Act as a project liaison as described below should the need arise in the event of more than five projects being overseen by the GFAB

(5) Project Liaisons

A project team may require more than one liaison. Liaisons shall be accountable for the progress and funding of their charged project, and they shall fulfill the following responsibilities:

- A. Meet regularly with their project team to review their progress, next steps, and needs
- B. Oversee final allocations to their project team and be cognizant of opportunities to reduce cost
- C. Report expenditures and any funding concerns (e.g. – need for more funding than expected or improper use of funding) to the Financial Organizer and/or the GFAB Coordinator
- D. Help their project team seek alternative funding should it become necessary (e.g. – other grants)
- E. Connect their project team with relevant University administrators, faculty, and student organizations
- F. Provide a progress update to the GFAB at regular meetings

Section 1.4 — Selection of the GFAB

A special selection committee will appoint the GFAB Coordinator within one week after interviews held in the first week of the April preceding their term. The criteria for selection of the GFAB Coordinator will be at the discretion of the selection committee, but preference should be given to previous GFAB members. The selection committee for the GFAB Coordinator shall consist of:

- (1) The outgoing Coordinator of the GFAB
- (2) One other GFAB member
- (3) The President of Student Government Board
- (4) The SGB Environmental Chair. If the SGB Environmental Chair may not participate, a fourth member selected by Student Government Board.
- (5) Student Government Board member liaison to the Environmental Committee

Applications for the remainder of the GFAB shall be made available to the student body at the start of each fall semester and will be due no later than the second week of September. All students will be encouraged to apply, but preference may be given to:

- (1) Students with prior leadership experience in environmental organizations
- (2) Civil and Environmental Engineering majors
- (3) Environmental Studies majors
- (4) Business and Accounting majors
- (5) Students whose field of study or involvement encompasses other related environmental fields

The criteria for selection of the students who will serve on the GFAB will be at the discretion of the GFAB selection committee. The selection committee shall consist of:

- (1) The new GFAB Coordinator
- (2) The outgoing GFAB Coordinator or one other past GFAB member who will not be serving on the new committee if the outgoing GFAB Coordinator cannot be present
- (3) The SGB Environmental Chair. If the SGB Environmental Chair may not participate, a fourth member selected by Student Government Board
- (4) Student Government Board member liaison to the Environmental Committee

Applicants will indicate their preferred committee position (Financial Organizer, Spokesperson, Secretary, Project Liaison) on the GFAB application form, and the incoming GFAB Coordinator will appoint qualified applicants to these positions. Applicants must choose at least one committee position and can indicate multiple interests.

Section 1.5 — Terms of the Green Fund Advisory Board Members

The GFAB will serve for one academic year from the time they are appointed in September through April of the following year. The GFAB will be in recess during the summer semester from the months of June through August. Committee members may serve no more than two consecutive terms, but the total number of terms they may serve is not limited. A committee member may serve for a third term if they are selected to be the GFAB coordinator in their final term. GFAB members wishing to serve another term must reapply for consideration.

Section 1.6 — Member Replacement

Any committee member may be removed by majority vote of the other board members for the following reasons:

- (1) Absence from one (1) mandatory meeting of the GFAB without adequate reason
- (2) Absence from three (3) or more bi-weekly meetings of the GFAB without adequate reason
- (3) Failure to act in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in this document
- (4) Failure to act in accordance with the duties as prescribed and determined by the other members of the GFAB

In the event that an GFAB member is removed or resigns, the current GFAB will select a replacement. Replacement is optional after project selection and at the discretion of the GFAB. The new board member will serve the remainder of the original member's term but will not inherit their term limit.

In the event that the GFAB Coordinator must be replaced, the current GFAB will select a current member to inherit the duties of the GFAB Coordinator position and a new member will be selected to replace them as described above.

Article 2 — Project Selection and Allocation of Funds

Section 2.1 — Project Selection

- (1) Project proposal applications for the current year will be made available online by the first week in August. There will be no set due date for proposals, but the GFAB should set a date within the sixth week of the fall academic term when the selection process will start. Due to limited funding, any proposals submitted after this date will receive less priority during the selection process.
- (2) Any project that requires funding before November 1st of each academic year must notify the GFAB of their needs, and their proposal will be considered early by the GFAB if deemed appropriate.
- (3) The GFAB will hold a mandatory meeting during the sixth week of the fall term to review applications and determine if any clarification is necessary. Proposed projects which are clearly infeasible or beyond the scope of the GFAB may be removed from further consideration by a vote as described in section 1.1 of this charter.
- (4) The GFAB must meet with each individual or team that has proposed a project to better understand the project before making a funding decision.
- (5) Each project will be researched by the GFAB to determine feasibility before granting funds.
- (6) Projects that have been adequately researched may be selected for GFAB support in the form of funding or endorsement. Selection shall occur by a vote as described in section 1.1 of this charter. Projects that are endorsed without funding will still receive support from the GFAB similar to funded projects.
- (7) Project proposers should be notified within one (1) week after their project is selected for funding, selected for endorsement, or denied by the GFAB.
- (8) At least one project liaison should be assigned to each project during the research period or upon project selection. Liaisons should begin meeting with their assigned project group within one (1) week after the project group has been notified of their selection.

Section 2.2 — General Requirements for Proposed Projects

- (1) All projects shall promote sustainable practices, thinking, and development, with a goal of a healthier campus and community.
- (2) All proposed projects must have a clearly defined goal or intended outcome.
- (3) Recipients of funding shall be required to maintain a close working relationship with the GFAB to ensure the progress of their project.
- (4) All projects shall have a mechanism for evaluation and follow-up after funding has been allocated. At minimum, a project plan must include a report made to the GFAB after successful (or unsuccessful) implementation. If a project is expected to have ongoing benefits such as annual cost savings, the project plan must include a mechanism for tracking, recording, and reporting these benefits back to GFAB on an (at least) annual basis.
- (5) Project proposals must detail plans for publicity, education, and outreach.
- (6) The GFAB will not support projects already mandated by law or The University of Pittsburgh policy directive (e.g., basic standards for new building construction), since University of Pittsburgh is already obligated to allocate funds for such projects.
- (7) Projects are highly encouraged to benefit the students of University of Pittsburgh financially, educationally, or through the creation of volunteer/action opportunities.
- (8) Any University of Pittsburgh affiliate may submit project proposals.
- (9) No GFAB support shall go to a project that involves paving or developing any green space.

Section 2.3 — Preferences for Proposed Projects

The GFAB shall give preference and priority to project proposals that also meet the following criteria in this section. Preferred projects shall demonstrate the following criteria:

- (1) Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate the greatest reduction in the University of Pittsburgh's negative environmental impacts for the least cost.
- (2) Preference will be given to projects with a strong student-participation component.
- (3) Preference will be given to projects that yield cost savings to the university.
- (4) Preference will be given to projects that can obtain matching funds from sources other than GFAB.

Section 2.4 — Additional Project Criteria at Discretion of Committee

The GFAB may determine additional requirements or preferences for each year's funding cycle, provided that these additional criteria are:

- (1) Consistent with the overall mission of GFAB.
- (2) Consistent with the requirements and preferences outlined in this document.

Article 3 — Fund Allocation and Other Rules for Governing the GFAB

Section 3.1 — Spending Restrictions

There shall be no minimum spending limitations. The GFAB can choose to set funds aside to build for future endeavors or larger projects with the permission of the Office of Student Life.

Section 3.2 — Allocation Restrictions and Priorities

There is no limit to how many items the GFAB can support each year, provided all gift totals remain within the budget. Members of the GFAB are not exempt from submitting project proposals, but are required to be held at the same standard as all other applicants. Members should excuse themselves from voting in the event of a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest may be defined as any instance where a voting member of the GFAB is invested in a project for reasons external to the GFAB (e.g. – said member proposed the project or is actively working on it outside of the GFAB).

Section 3.3 — Guidelines for Fund Allocation

- (1) Should the GFAB be granted the ability to retain rollover funds, any funds not distributed or dispensed in a given year shall remain in the fund for future use.
- (2) Funds will be allocated to projects in advance on paper, but will only become physically available for use at the precise moment they are needed (for purchases, et cetera) in the implementation of the project. This is to ensure that funds are not physically given in full at the onset and then never used during the course of project implementation. Funds allocated initially on paper to a project that are not physically obtained and spent within the project's determined timeframe shall be returned to GFAB for reallocation.
- (3) As long as fund rollover is not allowed, allocated funds must be distributed to project teams by June 1 when the Green Fund account rolls back into the SGB account at the end of each fiscal year. The project team may reapply for funding in the next funding cycle.
- (4) Funds distributed by the GFAB are not to be used or reallocated for purposes other than those described in this document.
- (5) Any projects not directly benefitting the undergraduate student body, such as scholarships and research grants, will be funded solely by voluntary donations. The purpose of this to ensure that student funding directly benefits students.
- (6) Standing funds must be invested in a socially responsible manner, as defined by the current GFAB.

Article 4 — Accountability, Records, and Reports

Section 4.1 — GFAB Accountability to the Student Body

The GFAB shall be accountable to the student body and shall make all its records available to the public online or upon request.

Section 4.2 — Accountability of Projects

All projects funded by the GFAB shall submit a report to the GFAB at the conclusion of the project or annually from the date of the project approval, if the project is funded for multiple years. The report must include a budget detailing the spending of all funds

Section 4.3 — Records and Reports

The GFAB must keep on record:

- (1) Minutes of all GFAB meetings indicating the time, place, names of voting members present, and the proceedings thereof
- (2) Adequate and correct records of all accounts and transactions
- (3) Record of projects selected each year and the funds allocated to each
- (4) Reports made back to the GFAB on completed projects
- (5) The end-of-year report detailed in section 1.1.3(1)

Article 5 — Charter Amendments

Section 5.1 — Justification

Content pending approval.

Section 5.2 — Amendment Procedure

Content pending approval.