

Western Carolina University CEI Covenant

MISSION

The Clean Energy Revolving Fund's mission is to encourage global sustainability¹ on campus and in the community, by funding innovative projects that demonstrate environmental leadership and economic benefit.

CEI will empower Western Carolina University and its students to build a sustainable community.

CEI will foster local projects that further the worldwide movement for a sustainable future. As an independent fund at Western Carolina University and administered by members from all parts of the WCU community, CEI will fund renewable energy, energy efficiency and other cost-saving projects that demonstrate sustainable design.

GOALS OF CEI

1. To foster sustainable design and environmentally sound technologies and practices on the Western Carolina campus.
2. To educate and inspire all members of the Western Carolina community on the potential for, and benefits of, conservation and clean energy innovation.
3. To act as an exemplar of socially and environmentally responsible financial practices.
4. To serve as a role model on sustainability initiatives for other institutions of higher education, community groups, other non-profit organizations, businesses, and governmental bodies.
5. To sustain itself financially and functionally into the foreseeable future without compromising—where possible supporting—other student, community, and institutional initiatives for a socially and environmentally just, benign, and sustainable world. Through a revolving mechanism drawing revenues from projects, CEI will replenish the fund while providing cost-savings to WCU. This will provide an unrivaled hands-on opportunity for individually structured environmental education while raising the awareness of the entire community. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that, contrary to common belief, self-funding sustainability projects are a crucial part of fiscal stability.

FUNDING PROJECTS

This/CEI funding will primarily be used for projects that save money for a specific recipient(s) on fuel, electricity, water, building maintenance, storm water fees, or some other (or multiple) cost source(s) by making a positive impact on sustainability.

The CEI Board should be open both to smaller, rapid pay-back projects and larger, longer-term ones.

All projects should seek to maximize the overall benefits of sustainability in a financially responsible manner.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

Efficiency Investments: Installation of high-efficiency pumps, equipment, lighting, boilers, and air conditioners, The weatherization of campus windows with modern high-insulating glass and frames, and installing energy recovery ventilators on Olin-Rice ventilation hoods and Payment of the marginal difference between more efficient models of equipment.

Water Conservation: Repairing water leaks and installing additional low-flow appliances, installation of systems that recover or reuse wastewater.

Renewable Fuels: Manufacture of alternative energy sources from clean biomass-based fuels not requiring extensive additional fossil energy inputs.

Renewable Energy: The installation of on-campus renewable energy systems, such as wind power, solar thermal or photovoltaic, geothermal, biomass, biogas, and micro-hydropower Investing in community-based renewable energy projects.

Green Building: Investing in equipment or design of green building, like passive solar heating or green roofing, that provides measurable cost-savings.

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE PROJECTS

Fossil Fuels: CEI should not invest in any project using fossil fuels, unless the project leads to a significant net decrease in the consumption of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions.

Non-renewable Resources: CEI funding should never be invest in or used to develop projects using technologies such as nuclear energy, large-hydroelectric dams, toxic or hazardous building materials, and other unsustainable practices.

Renewable Energy tags/offsets: CEI funding should not be used for the purchase of green tags, renewable energy certificates, or other offsets. Instead, CEI should aim to invest in projects that provide economic savings and environmental leadership to the college.

Budget Shortfalls: CEI funding should never be used to cover University budget shortfalls, except by investing in projects that meet CEI standards.

Staffing/Salaries: CEI funds must never be used for the following: faculty or staff salary or wages except for in association with a CEI project. Volunteer work is to be sought long before a proposal of staffing.

INVESTMENTS

CEI may also invest in conventional investment strategies that support its financial viability such as green investment funds, community investing, or money markets, as well as make innovative investments generating direct revenue, as long as such investments further one or more goals of CEI without significantly compromising any of the others. However, long term fiscal responsibility and the goals of sustainability, innovation, education, and community engagement should be emphasized. Such investments should be viewed as methods to manage CEI's funding flow in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and take great care to always avoid turning down a sound proposal in the interest of increasing the fund through conventional investment.

The CEI should not be used to invest in any projects, businesses, or companies which promote unsustainable practices or use non-renewable resources—particularly fossil fuels, nuclear, or large-scale hydroelectric—or a culture of disposal.

STRUCTURE OF CEI

CEI will be managed by "The CEI Board," a body initially composed one college administrator, one faculty member, one alumnus/ae, and two full time students.

The faculty representative will be appointed by the appropriate faculty committee. The administrator will be appointed by the Chancellor of the University.

One student representative will be appointed by the Eco C.A.T.S. while the other will be an elected member of the Western Carolina University Student Government Association approved by the WCU SGA.

The WCU alumnus/ae will be selected by the CEI board.

A member of the University Trustees may join the Board as is appropriate for its role in broader Western Carolina University management.

The CEI board will act as a decision-making, financing, and implementing body for conservation, clean energy, and sustainability initiatives on Western Carolina's campus.

Terms will be for two years, excepting the WCU SGA representative who shall be approved annually. Terms can be modified based on scheduling and the graduation of student representatives. Should a board member resign or become unable to fulfill their duties, a replacement should be chosen through the established method at the earliest available opportunity.

PROCEDURAL PROCESS FOR CEI

At meetings, the board will discuss policy, management strategies, and large proposals, and may modify these proposals either by scale, implementation plan, or financial parameters before voting on the proposal.

Any board member may call for a vote. Consensus should be achieved where possible, but decisions will be made by majority rule subject to the consensus requirements cited in the Charter. Proposals for projects under \$1,000 may be approved by the co-chairs between board meetings unless another member objects.

The board may send suggestions to various campus bodies as to how they can operate in a more sustainable and /or cost-saving fashion without necessitating additional funding.

Financing Plan

A fund designated solely for efficiency and sustainability projects will prevent rising energy costs from inhibiting projects which would reduce the pressures from those costs. Such an innovative solution would make WCU a national leader with a creative model for financing sustainability which other institutions could follow. Harvard's example has shown that revolving mechanisms for sustainability projects are very lucrative economically (Harvard's \$6 million Green Campus Loan Fund has achieved an average annual Return On Investment of 27.9%¹).

The CEI will be funded by the current full-time students of Western Carolina University through an additional fee of \$4.00 per full-time student per semester. CEI board members should look to grants as a major source of funding. CEI should identify and apply for grants that support its core mission and seek to partner with grant providers to fund particular projects.

FINANCING CEI

Pending approval, CEI will receive phased start-up funds totaling \$0 from the following sources:

Phase I: Spring 2008 – \$36,000

Proposed: 9000 Students

A student approved donation of \$4.00 from each student.

Phase II: Fall 2008 – \$72,000

Proposed: 9000 Students

A student approved donation of \$4.00 from each student.

Phase III: Spring 2009 – \$108,000

Proposed: 9000 Students

A student approved donation of \$4.00 from each student.

A Note:

***A similar fund at Harvard University that did not split savings between the recipient and the fund (all savings went directly to the fund until pay-off) achieved average 27.9% return on investment (ROI) through a mix of short and long-term projects. Western Carolina provides even more lucrative renewable energy and conservation potential. We should expect a similar average ROI, although it will be split between CEI and project recipients (primarily the college itself), which is more favorable for Western Carolina since it lacks the unusual financial assets of Harvard. See <http://www.greencampus.harvard.edu/gclf/achievements.php>

Sample Project Ideas

- Installing motion sensors (vending misers) on vending machines to reduce power usage.
- Installing motion sensors in class rooms and other areas that are unoccupied for long periods of time.
- Renegotiating a washing machine contract and paying the marginal difference of more efficient, front-loading washing machine models, which can further displace dryer usage.
- Paying for building re-commissioning.
- Installing low-flow water appliances.
- Installing high-efficiency pumps, equipment, boilers, and air conditioners.
- Payment of the marginal difference in cost between more conventional and more efficient equipment models.
- Replacing single-pane campus windows with modern high-insulating glass and frames.
- Replacing all incandescent light bulbs with CFLs or LED lighting systems.
- Installing Green building materials in new campus construction.
- Installing energy recovery ventilators in Stillwell and Natural Science building ventilation hoods.
- Installing solar thermal systems and other clean heating systems.
- Installing photovoltaic panels.
- Installing wind turbine(s).

Sustainability as defined by the Brundtland report: Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Many thanks are due to the folks from Macalester College, Appalachian State University, Warren Wilson, and Harvard University, for their countless hours of research, meetings, and assistance, Lauren Bishop, Eco C.A.T.S., the UNC Charlotte Earth Club for their encouragement, AASHE for their guide and support through email, Vanessa Moore, S.U.R.G.E., Professor Barbara Sanders, the WCU Campus Greens, and a special thanks to everyone else who has volunteered and shown support for the CEI in these early phases. Without their aide this charter would have much longer to complete.

This idea has already been tested and shown to work in many colleges and universities around the nation. Warren Wilson, Appalachian State University, UNC Chapel Hill, and UNC Charlotte are the institutions in our state that already have a similar system in place. It has been announced that UNC Wilmington will be adopting a similar system in the near future. That will make the fourth university in the UNC system to have such a program. I would rather see WCU become a leader of environmental change than a follower.

The foundation for profound change in our university community is ready.
Will we set it into place?