

Sustainable Energy Initiative (SEI) Committee Bylaws

ARTICLE I: SEI PURPOSE AND MANDATE

The purpose of the SEI Committee is to explore the options for, and determine uses of, the student sustainability fee established in Spring 2014 in accordance with its specified mandate.

Section 1: SEI Committee Mission

- 1.1 To proactively respond to budget shortfalls caused by energy price increases by funding energy efficiency or renewable energy projects that benefit Western Carolina University (WCU),
- 1.2 To provide funding to faculty and students to conduct relevant environmental research projects,
- 1.3 To provide supplemental funding for campus-based internship positions available to interested WCU students across all disciplines,
- 1.4 To educate and inspire all members of the WCU community about the potential for and benefits of sustainability, energy conservation and renewable energy innovation,
- 1.5 To act as an exemplar and steward of socially and environmentally responsible financial practices,
- 1.6 To serve as a role model on sustainability initiatives for other institutions of higher education, community groups, non-profit organizations, businesses, and governmental bodies,
- 1.7 To sustain itself financially and functionally for a socially- and environmentally sustainable campus,
- 1.8 To identify and secure external sources of funding,
- 1.9 To network within the campus community to generate change pertaining to sustainability, and
- 1.10 To advocate for sustainable practices on campus in all levels of the campus community.
- 1.11 To ensure all members of the community are treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

ARTICLE II: SEI COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Officers (9)	Faculty/Staff Advisors
Chair	Minimum 1 Faculty Advisor
Vice Chair	Minimum 2 Staff Advisors
Secretary	Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO)
Treasurer	Director Operations & Maintenance
Public Relations (2)	
Project Manager (2)	
External Affairs Officer	

Section 1: Configuration of the SEI Committee

- 1.1 The SEI Committee will be a singular body comprised of officers and non-voting members.
- 1.2 All SEI officers must be full time WCU students with a minimum 2.5 GPA and in good standing with WCU.
- 1.3 To best represent the student body, the SEI Committee will strive to include members from the 8 WCU colleges including: 1) College of Arts and Sciences, 2) College of Education and Allied Professions, 3) College of Business, 4) College of Fine and Performing Arts, 5) College of Health and Human Services, 6) Kimmel School, 7) Honors College, and 8) Graduate School.

Section 2: SEI Officer Elections

- 2.1 SEI officer elections will be held at least annually and consist of an application, interview, nomination, and voting process. The SEI Chair may appoint a committee to assist with applicant selection.
- 2.2 All prospective new student officers must go through the application process as outlined in this Section. Acceptance and placement of a new student officer requires a 2/3 vote of approval by current serving officers.
- 2.3 Annual SEI officer elections will take place at the end of the Spring semester. The Chair has the authority to modify election dates to best fit the needs of the Committee. The WCU student body will be duly informed of opportunities to apply to the SEI.
- 2.4 The Chair has the authority to appoint interim SEI officers in the event of a vacancy resulting from removal or resignation of an officer until current serving officers can vote on a permanent replacement as stipulated in this section.

Section 3: Student Commitment

- 3.1 The SEI Committee will meet no less than once a month.
- 3.2 SEI student officers may not miss more than two committee meetings per semester. At the time of the third absence, the SEI Chair has the authority to commence disciplinary action, which may include removal upon approval of a 2/3 vote of current serving officers.
- 3.3 Commitment from SEI Committee officers beyond the academic year may be required.
- 3.4 Any commitment extending beyond the academic year must have SEI advisor approval and be approved by a majority of officers prior to the end of the academic year.

Section 4: Faculty and Staff Advisors

- 4.1 New faculty and staff advisors will be appointed by the SEI Chair upon consultation with current SEI advisors, WCU's Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) and WCU Director of Operations & Maintenance.
- 4.2 The CSO and WCU Director Operations & Maintenance will be permanent, non-voting members of the SEI Committee.
- 4.3 Faculty and staff advisors shall strive to be present at every SEI Committee meeting, and are strongly encouraged to be present during proposal presentations and discussion.
- 4.4 Faculty and staff advisors may not miss more than two committee meetings per semester. A faculty or staff advisor who misses three meetings in a semester must seek and obtain approval for reinstatement from the CSO.

ARTICLE III: SEI OFFICERS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The SEI Committee will be governed by duly elected officers, with additional guidance and support provided by non-voting members.

Section 1: Officer Duties

- 1.1 Chair: The Chair is responsible for presiding over all SEI meetings. The Chair shall schedule/facilitate meetings and develop the agenda with appropriate parties including non-voting members and advisors. The Chair will coordinate all work with the CSO to prepare for meetings. The Chair shall be responsible for all communication with the WCU administration on all issues. The Chair is counted for the purposes of a quorum but will vote only in the event of a tie. Any role/responsibility not otherwise assigned in the SEI Bylaws may be designated to the Chair upon approval of SEI Advisors.
- 1.2 Vice Chair: The Vice Chair assists the Chair with all duties. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair assumes all necessary duties of the Chair. The Vice Chair will be included on pertinent communications by the Chair.
- 1.3 Secretary: The Secretary will take minutes at SEI Committee meetings and keep copies for future reference. The Secretary will submit all minutes to the Public Relations Officer in a timely manner for posting on the SEI website.
- 1.4 Treasurer: The Treasurer reviews and presents account updates at every SEI meeting, and works with the CSO to monitor project expenditures.
- 1.5 Public Relations Officers: The Public Relations Officers serve as a medium between the SEI and WCU media outlets, as well as WCU awareness and engagement programs. The Public Relations Officers will ensure that all project proposals that receive funding are reported to all available media outlets to ensure that the WCU community is informed of all projects. The Public Relations Officers will post meeting minutes to the OSEM share site and SEI website.
- 1.6 Project Managers: Project Managers will be responsible for collecting, organizing, and managing reports while SEI projects are being implemented, as well as reporting back to the Committee. Project Managers will be responsible for collecting and managing all data related to approved projects. Once project implementation has begun, Project Managers will assist the CSO in reporting on all stages of the project and managing communications with all parties involved.
- 1.7 External Affairs Officer: The External Affairs Officer will be responsible for networking with campus departments, advisors, other student Recognized Student Organizations (RSO's) and the off-campus community. The External Affairs Officer will establish and maintain faculty/staff relationships; communicate with the campus community about concerns and/or ideas dealing with sustainability efforts with emphasis on project proposals; assist the Committee with new member recruitment and help secure external funds for project support via donors, grants, etc.
- 1.8 SEI Officers may not serve in the same voting position for more than four consecutive semesters (excluding summer semester).
- 1.9 All SEI Officers and non-voting SEI members are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner consistent with the WCU Creed and Code of Student Conduct that helps enhance an environment in which the rights, dignity, worth, and freedom of each member of the academic community are respected. Any action or conduct in violation of these guidelines or deemed inappropriate by SEI is subject for removal, and or further disciplinary action.

Section 2: Membership Compensation

- 2.1. SEI Committee Officers shall be eligible for payment in the form of a stipend to be processed by the Chief Sustainability Officer at the conclusion of each month. Individuals are expected to complete a monthly activity log to assist with reports on SEI actions, events, programs, etc.
- 2.2. SEI Committee Officer hours shall be evaluated annually by SEI Advisors, who shall recommend weekly hour requirements and compensation for each position.
- 2.3. The SEI Committee will vote on any proposed increases/decreases to compensation and hours. Changes shall be approved upon a simple majority vote by the SEI Committee.
- 2.4. Compensation increases/decreases cannot become effective in the same academic year in which they are proposed, and any changes to compensation for SEI Committee Officers will become effective the following academic year.
- 2.5. An SEI Officer serving in a temporary, dual capacity will receive a stipend equivalent to that of the highest paying position.
- 2.6. At no time shall any SEI Officer receive a stipend greater than that of the Chair.

Section 3: Non-Voting SEI Student Members

- 3.1. Non-voting SEI Student Members will play a vital role in assisting officers with their tasks and maintaining their responsibilities.
- 3.2. Non-voting SEI Student Members will be responsible for assisting with the planning, advertisement, and execution of meetings that also act as public forums.
- 3.3. Non-voting SEI Student Members do not have voting rights, but will have opportunities to work directly on approved projects.
- 3.4. SGA Liaison: The SGA Liaison is a non-voting member of the SEI responsible for maintaining a direct connection to the Student Government Association and handling relationships and administrative duties requiring SGA involvement. The SGA Liaison will be the Environmental Senator or another individual appointed by the SGA staff advisor.

Section 4: Faculty/Staff Advisors

- 4.1. SEI Advisors shall consist of a minimum of one WCU faculty member, two WCU staff members, the CSO, and the WCU Director of Operations and Maintenance.
- 4.2. Advisors are responsible for guiding, advising, and helping the SEI fulfill its mission.
- 4.3. Advisors mentor and provide guidance to SEI Committee members.
- 4.4. All personnel matters related to the SEI and/or SEI members will be made in consultation with SEI Advisors.
- 4.5. SEI Advisors have the authority to revise/override any vote taken/decision made by the SEI.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS & PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary procedure is a system of rules used to conduct fair and efficient meetings and facilitate group decision making. It is based on the consideration of the rights of the majority, the rights of the minority, the rights of individual members, the rights of absentee members and the rights of all groups taken together.

Section 1: Meetings

- 1.1 The SEI Committee will adopt and follow Roberts Rules of Order as the official parliamentary authority.
- 1.2 Meetings will be held regularly as determined by the Chair upon consideration of member availability, but no less than once a month. The Chair will have the authority to schedule additional meetings as necessary and communicate those to the Committee.

Section 2: Quorum

- 2.1 Attendance by a majority of SEI Officers, including the Chair and Vice Chair, constitutes a quorum.

Section 3: Voting

- 3.1 Only SEI Officers may cast a respective vote. Non-voting members may provide suggestions and advice, but may not vote on issues regarding the SEI Committee.
- 3.2 Non-voting SEI members may be present during routine votes, but may be asked to leave a meeting prior to votes regarding personnel matters.
- 3.3 Voting can occur via email if a quorum is not present during a scheduled Committee meeting.
- 3.4 A quorum is necessary for email votes

Section 4: Amendment of Bylaws

- 4.1 A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of SEI Officers is required to adopt, amend, create, or repeal any portion of these bylaws with approval of SEI Advisors and WCU legal counsel.
- 4.2 All bylaw revisions shall be monitored and tracked by the Secretary for review by future SEI Committees.
- 4.3 All bylaw revisions will be posted to WCU Engage and SEI pages for reference.

ARTICLE V: THE SEI PROPOSAL PROCESS

As stated in Article 1, Section 1 of these bylaws, the purpose of the SEI is to explore the options for, and determine uses of, the student fee established in Spring 2014 in accordance with its specified mandate. A significant portion of this fee will be allocated annually to support student, faculty, and staff-submitted project proposals. The SEI Committee will review and recommend projects to be funded by the SEI.

Section 1: Project Funding Eligibility and Process

To be eligible for SEI funding, proposals and/or proposers must:

- 1.1 Be identified through the formal SEI proposal process,
- 1.2 Be submitted by WCU students, faculty or staff,
- 1.3 Be categorized as internal funding, brick-and-mortar, internship, and/or research-based,
- 1.4 Contain an educational component, and
- 1.5 Be submitted during submission dates set forth by the SEI Committee.
- 1.6 The SEI Committee may require proposers to attend at least one proposal workshop as a condition for funding.
- 1.7 The SEI Committee reserves the right to revoke or transfer project funding to another eligible university entity if the Committee determines such action is necessary to ensure/maintain project integrity.

1.8 Current SEI Officers are NOT eligible to submit a proposal for SEI project funding.

Section 2: Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 All potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be disclosed to the SEI Committee by the proposer prior to proposal submission.
- 2.2 The SEI Committee retains the right to discuss all potential and perceived conflicts of interest with the University's legal counsel at any time during the proposal process.
- 2.3 Failure by the proposer to disclose potential or perceived conflicts of interest may result in termination of the proposal process/funding.

Section 3: Involvement of Other University Entities

- 3.1 The SEI Committee may refer proposals/initiatives to WCU Facilities Management (FM), and/or other appropriate WCU units to: 1) Discuss the feasibility of a proposed project, 2) Review potential impacts of proposed projects on campus sustainability goals, and 3) Identify relationships to ongoing or planned campus infrastructure projects.

ARTICLE VI: FUND ALLOCATION AND DISTRIBUTION

Section 1: Disbursement and retention of SEI funds will be as follows:

- 1.1 SEI Officers will vote on whether to fund a proposal that is brought before the Committee. A two-thirds majority of voting SEI Officers is required to approve a proposal for funding.
- 1.2 Funds allocated to a project but not spent within the timeline outlined in that project's grant acceptance letter will be returned to SEI for reallocation.
- 1.3 SEI funds not distributed or dispensed in a given year shall remain in possession of the SEI for future use.
- 1.4 Funds distributed by SEI are not to be used or reallocated for purposes other than those described in a project's grant acceptance letter.
- 1.5 The SEI Committee has the ability to seek an increase or decrease to the Sustainability Fee through the WCU Budget Hearing Process.

ARTICLE VII: DISSOLUTION

Section 1: Student Wide-Referendum

- 1.1 The SEI Committee may be dissolved through a campus- wide referendum.

Section 2: Post-Dissolution Operation

- 2.1 The SEI Committee will continue to meet and function for as long as the SEI fund has a positive balance post-dissolution.
- 2.2 The SEI Committee shall continue to operate in the event student fees are no longer collected or deposited for as long as sufficient funds remains in the SEI account.

Section 3: Post-Dissolution Fund Transfer

- 3.1 In the event of dissolution, all unspent and obligated funds will be transferred to the SGA main reserve fund.