UC SANTA BARBARA
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Bring on the Green

From dozens of proposals for a robust array of campus-specific sustainability initiatives, The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) at UC Santa Barbara has awarded more than $190,000 to 20 projects for 2018-2019.

The initiatives, which range from solar installations to lighting upgrades, equipment rebates and carbon sequestration research, are expected to be completed over the next year — and to yield long-term environmental benefits.

TGIF annually supports a host of innovative efforts that are often student-driven, selected by a committee composed primarily of students and entirely funded by students as well. UC Santa Barbara students in 2018 voted overwhelmingly — 83% — to reaffirm TGIF by way of a lock-in fee. The quarterly fee of $3.47 per student, which hasn't changed since the fund's inception, contributes more than $180,000 per year to the fund.

"Since the fund started in 2006, we have given out over $2 million in grant funding which has helped start several significant and ongoing sustainability programs at UC Santa Barbara, including LabRats, PACES, The Campus Farm, Food Cycling, ZipCar on campus, Faculty Sustainability Champion, Indoor Composting and ECOalition," said Jewel Persad, TGIF grants manager and campus sustainability manager. "All of the wonderful projects and programs we have funded over the years would not have been possible without the creative ideas of our faculty, staff and students, and the generous support that students provide through the TGIF student lock-in fee."

Three solar projects are being funded in this new season of TGIF. The largest of them, from the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER), will receive $50,000 toward construction of a 24.5 KW solar panel system at North Campus Open Space. The Division of Humanities and Fine Arts was awarded $9,119 to purchase a solar table to power devices outside the Humanities & Social Sciences Building. And The Orfalea Family Children's Center was granted $8,819 to purchase a similar table to bring clean solar power to the center while creating educational opportunities for the children.

Among the other notable new projects to be funded by TGIF for its 2018-2019 cycle:

Electric Grounds Equipment ($20,403) — The grant funding will be used to purchase electric equipment for grounds maintenance, including 48 electric leaf blowers to replace all of the gas leaf blowers currently used on campus. The electric equipment will significantly reduce UCSB's environmental impact by saving energy, limiting air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the noise level.

IV Theater Lighting Upgrade ($10,635) — Funds will go toward upgrading the dimmable incandescent lighting system in Isla Vista Theater, providing better light quality, reducing maintenance needs, and simplifying operations for staff and faculty. The project will save 7,056 kWh in lighting energy, 2328 in cooling energy and over three metric tons of CO2-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions annually.

Carbon Sequestration Study ($15,195) — Enabling studies at North Campus Open Space to include an assessment of the carbon sequestration potential, the project will help sequester carbon and will empower student participants through hands-on, mentored research experience in the newly evolving field of "carbon farming."

Sustainable Tech Repair Pop-up ($16,812) — The project creates a service for students that provides minor software and hardware repairs of smartphones, tablets and computers. The goal is to reduce e-waste by increasing the ability to repair — rather than discard — technology, contributing to UCSB's zero waste goals.

Efforts aimed at reducing waste from food and textiles and at incentivizing replacement of old, inefficient equipment also received funding, as did proposals for four new hydration stations in campus buildings to limit the purchase and waste of single-use plastic bottles. A complete list of the projects to be funded can be found here.

Created in 2006 by an overwhelming majority vote of UCSB students, TGIF was the first student-funded sustainability initiative of its kind — and the first green fee — in the UC system. It has since impacted nearly every part of the campus, over the years supporting hundreds of projects that are helping UC Santa Barbara conserve water, reduce waste, boost energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.