Introduction

The aim of this position is to serve as a liaison between the Office of Environmental Sustainability and the Green EDGE Fund and to develop and enhance energy efficiency projects on campus. The liaison will serve as a voting member of the Green EDGE Fund’s student board and as an intern of the Office of Environmental Sustainability.

The main responsibility of the liaison is to work with the Green EDGE Fund, the Office of Environmental Sustainability, and Facilities Operations to research develop, and implement comprehensive, large-scale infrastructural projects that promote environmental efficiency at Oberlin College and generate paybacks for the fund. This includes: working alongside students and the Oberlin community to generate projects, coordinate with campus staff and administration (Facilities Operations, Facilities, Planning and Construction (FP&C), and the Vice President for Finance and Administration) to strategically develop and implement projects, and see projects through to completion (brainstorm and generate ideas; receive and incorporate feedback; develop and implement the project and work with the appropriate channels to accomplish this; track and report monetary savings).

Accomplishments

- Green EDGE Fund Approved Projects
  - “Expanding the Dashboard Part II”
    - Unanimously approved.
    - Efficiency Loan.
    - $150,000 with a 2.5 year payback.
    - Project Overview: “(1) to establish a campus-wide resource monitoring system that provides real-time data and a permanent repository of high resolution historic data for electricity, water, and natural gas consumption, (2) to engage, educate, and empower students to understand their choices and connections to resources at a campus-wide level, and (3) to continue Oberlin College’s legacy as a leader in environmental sustainability by producing the first total greenhouse gas emissions and resource monitoring display system.”
    - Potential Challenge: “I have received approval from VP Mike Frandsen... the College will honor a 2.5 year payback on a $150,000 investment from the Green EDGE Fund for Phase II of the Dashboard Expansion Project... with the caveat that no additional efficiency loans be approved between
now and the end of fiscal year 2016-17 (June 30, 2017) allowing the Efficiency Loan account to naturally recover from its projected deficit.”

(Heidi Pycraft)

- **“Composting Toilets at George Jones”**
  - Approved with publicity delay.
  - Sustainability Grant.
  - $15,465.44
  - Project Overview: “The objective of this project is to build and install four composting toilets and structure for the George Jones Farm in Oberlin, Ohio. The George Jones Farm has been an integral part of the Oberlin food community for some time now and is in the midst of an aggressive plan to become more sustainable and connected in the community. A large part of our mission is to educate the next generation on family practices, sustainability, and ecology; as such we are currently looking to expand our programming to include grade-school-aged children. We believe this expanded programming will be a great asset to the community and will reach far greater than our backyards and schools. To date, while trying our best, we are very limited in this programming because of the lack of proper sanitation facilities at The Farm. In order to provide this programming, we are in need of appropriate restroom facilities. The Farm does not have city sewer facilities, and keeping with the model of sustainability, we are seeking funds to build composting toilets and hand washing station. These facilities will allow us to sufficiently bring students, families, and community members to The Farm to learn and grow with us.”

- **“OECC Sustainability Project Phase II”**
  - Unanimously approved.
  - Sustainability Grant.
  - $22,500

- **“Ecolympics Prizes, Materials, and Speaker Expenses”**
  - Unanimously approved.
  - Sustainability Grant.
  - $4,592.75

- **Carbon Neutrality Firm Selection Committee**
  - Decided on EverGreen Energy as the firm to work with to get to Carbon Neutrality by 2025.

**Deliverables**

- Approval of the Academic Hand Dryer proposal
- Approval of the Elevator Lighting Retrofits proposal
- Approval of the Veggie Oil Tractor Conversion proposal
- BigBelly Solar-Powered Trash Cans proposal (pending)
The Synapse Science Magazine Article on Green EDGE Fund past projects
Updated Standard Operations Procedures Handbook
End of Year Presentation Speech

Challenges

One of the bigger challenges this year was the restructuring of several of the offices within the Service Building (i.e., Facilities Operations and Facilities, Planning, and Construction) that resulted in the laying off of several important stakeholders to this position. Fortunately, Jim Klaiber has stepped in as Director of Facilities Operations and “liaison” to the Green EDGE Fund.

The challenge now is to find more creative solutions to reduce and more efficiently regulate Oberlin’s resource consumption since at this point many of the easy and obvious projects have been approved and carried out (i.e., lighting retrofits). The completion of the installation of the Dashboard meters will be integral to this process as the metering will allow us to track electricity and water usage through BuildingOS software. As mentioned before, however, proposals from identifying issues through the Dashboard cannot be approved until the end of the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year, which could potentially pose challenges.

Key Stakeholders

- Green EDGE Fund Board Members (2015-2016)
  - Julia Murphy, Chair
  - Amelia Wallace, Vice Chair
  - Elaine Hinrichs, Treasurer
  - Maya Sosland, Carbon Management Fund Liaison
  - Nimo Ismail, Senate Liaison
- Incoming & Returning Green EDGE Fund Board Members
  - Julia Murphy, Chair
  - Erik Gonzales-Kramer, Vice Chair
  - Danyang Dong (Dennis), Treasurer
  - Skyler Davis (Sky), Public Outreach Coordinator
  - Juan Contreras, Secretary
  - Rebecca Chant (Becca), Accounts Manager
  - Hillary Pan, OES Liaison
  - Maya Sosland, Carbon Management Fund Liaison
  - Nimo Ismail, Student Senate Liaison
- Sean Hayes, Oberlin Project Executive Director (GEF Advisor)
- Meghan Riesterer, Assistant Vice President of Energy Management and Sustainability
- Bridget Flynn, Sustainability Coordinator
- Jim Klaiber, Director of Facilities Operations
- Bill Frawley, Facilities Operations Manager
- Dennis Grieve, Grounds Service Manager
• Steve Varleman, College Architect
• Nick Bobulsky, Manager of Construction
• Heidi Pycraft, Controller
• Mike Frandsen, Vice President of Finance
• Darrell Tremaine, Sustainability Energy Technology Research Fellow
• John Petersen, Professor of Environmental Studies (Dashboard)

Recommendations

It’s really important to stay on top of projects and follow up after projects have been approved and funded to make sure that the installation process went smoothly. That is one of the things that I kind of let slip this year and need to catch up on in the upcoming year. I’ve been keeping in contact with Facilities Operations to see when the installation of the academic building hand dryers will finally be complete but it’s been pushed back a couple of times and is the reason the Green EDGE Fund has decided to postpone the installation of the residential building hand dryers under my recommendation.

Suggestions

Since I am again continuing this position in the coming year, a suggestion for myself is to explore the idea of challenge grants with the College and Community. Perhaps something can be worked out so that the campus can finally fully utilize BigBelly solar-powered trashcans which pose significant labor savings albeit a less-than-great resource consumption payback. Additionally, look into some of the things other universities have done or are working on for inspiration. Also, make sure to utilize the rebate program.

Conclusion

There are definitely a lot of ideas that I still need to flesh out in the coming year. I think that a lot of what I worked on in the first semester was very implementation-based while the spring was mostly on coming up with new, more creative ways to make the campus more efficient. Since by the end of the coming year the Dashboard meters will be completed, hopefully there will be many more efficiency loan proposal to come.