



The Green EDGE Fund

Fall 2011 Report

About the EDGE Fund

The Green EDGE Fund finances environmental projects on the Oberlin College campus and (occasionally) in the Oberlin community. A Board of one faculty member and eight students, including a Student Senator, administers the Fund.

The Fund supports two different types of projects: efficiency loans and sustainability grants.

Efficiency loans are given for projects that have clear and timely financial paybacks into the fund. Our “loans” are paid back with monetary savings achieved through efficiency improvements.

Sustainability grants do not have any payback requirements. These grants support projects that increase Oberlin's sustainability but don't produce easily quantifiable savings.

We have these two types of projects because we have two funding sources. Part of our funding comes from the college administration, which has asked us to only invest in projects with clear financial paybacks (the efficiency loans). The other part of our funding comes from activity fees paid by the student body, which supported using the funding for either energy efficiency projects or general sustainability projects (the sustainability grants)

Featured Projects

Stevenson Hall Balcony Garden

In November 2010, ENVS 101 students and the CDS Recyclers proposed that garden boxes be planted along the balcony railing of Stevenson Dining Hall. We approved a \$3,340 sustainability grant for this project because it will reduce the campus dining service's reliance on the industrial food system and reduce the carbon footprint of meals produced in the dining halls. These herb boxes are highly visible, increasing students' awareness of where food on campus is sourced. A seasonal rotation of herbs such as basil, chives, parsley, and cilantro in the spring and summer will be alternated with a winter rye cover crop in the fall and winter.



Mower Conversion to Vegetable Oil

In March 2011, the Grounds Department requested funding to convert a lawn mower to operate using waste vegetable oil. We approved a \$1,750 efficiency loan for this project because it will save 125 gallons of diesel per year, resulting in annual financial savings of approximately \$500 and annual CO₂ equivalent savings of 1.4 tons. We expect this project to have a payback period of three years. Not only does this project save the college money and reduce fossil fuel use and carbon emissions, but it also supports Full Circle Fuels, a locally business operated by Oberlin alum Sam Merrett, '05.



LED Light Bulbs for EXIT Signs

In February 2011, the Green EDGE Fund purchased 100 LED light bulb kits to be installed in the 65 EXIT signs on campus that use incandescent bulbs. Each sign will now use 2.8 Watts, compared to 50 Watts for incandescent bulbs. As EXIT signs are on for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, this project will have a timely payback period. The EDGE Fund spent \$1,745 on this efficiency loan, which will have monetary savings of \$15,300 over the bulbs' lifetime.





More Environmental Orbs Installed

In November 2011, the EDGE Fund approved an \$8,000 sustainability grant for the installation of 16 new environmental orbs in numerous residence halls. We pursued this project because it will promote environmental awareness and stewardship in dorms through real-time feedback on resource consumption. Research has shown reductions in energy consumption for halls that have orbs installed. This data has not yet been quantified, but if calculations of monetary savings attributed to the energy orbs become available, then we will convert this project to an efficiency loan.

Oberlin Community Services Garden

In April 2011, we approved a sustainability grant to Oberlin Community Services (OCS) for \$15,000. These funds were used to expand the organization's community garden and make two ADA accessible plots. The grant tripled the growing area to a size of 1200 square feet and converted the garden to a raised bed system, leading to a harvest of over 200 pounds of fresh vegetables. We pursued this project because it was an opportunity to simultaneously expand Oberlin's local food economy and address the inequity posed by the premium associated with fresh, local produce. The garden allows OCS to provide more fresh, sustainable, and healthy produce at its food pantry.



Stevenson Dining Hall Compost Pulper

In August 2011, a compost pulper was installed in Stevenson Dining Hall to process post-consumer food waste more efficiently. The Green EDGE Fund partnered with the Senior Class Gift, Bon Appétit, and capital funding to cover the full cost of this project. CDS has been composting pre-consumer waste since 2004, but found that the risks of bacterial contamination were too high to compost meat and post-consumer waste. The pulper grinds up this post-consumer food waste and extracts the water, allowing it to be composted with less risk of bacterial contamination. The compost pulper will also reduce energy and water usage in Stevenson because these resources were used in the old system of running the garbage disposal.

Contact the EDGE Fund

Website: <http://tinyurl.com/edgefund>

- Find our project proposal templates
- Read about other past projects
- Learn the Fund's priorities for projects

Email: edgefund@oberlin.edu

- Send us completed project proposals
- Pitch an idea you just thought of
- Ask questions or provide feedback

In person:

- Visit our weekly meeting in AJLC 216
- Stop any board member you see around campus

Board Members

Hasnaa Benlafkih, '12
Tani Colbert-Sangree, '13
Josh Laufer, '12
Noel Myers, '14
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Richelle Romanchik, '15
Evan Tincknell, '14

Eliana Golding, '13, Student Senate Liaison

Jordan Suter, Assistant Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies

Keith Watkins, Director of Facilities Operations

Ron Watts, Vice President for Finance