

July 12, 2024

ITEM 213-1001-R0724

Request for Authorization to Increase the Sustainability Fee; University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

In accordance with Board of Regents' Policy 940.12.1, the Board of Regents authorizes the University of Montana to increase the mandatory ASUM Sustainability Fee to a rate of \$9 per semester for any student taking one (1) credit or more beginning Fall 2024.

EXPLANATION

The Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM), in conjunction with University of Montana Administration, are requesting the approval of an off-cycle request for a student-driven fee.

The Associated Students of the University of Montana enthusiastically supports campus sustainability initiatives, including the ASUM Sustainability Fee and other strategies to address the University's environmental footprint. Efforts to implement sustainable practices have repeatedly received strong support from the student body through campus-wide referenda, student surveys, and past years' (ASUM) resolutions.

The ASUM Sustainability Fee provides a dedicated source of funding for UM's sustainability efforts, including carbon emission reductions, developing green buildings and grounds, supporting sustainable transportation, reducing or utilizing efficient means of energy consumption, supporting locally sourced food options on campus, and diverting waste through recycling and composting efforts. Additionally, the ASUM Sustainability Fee has supported student-led sustainability projects such as the installation of covered bike parking and water bottle filling stations. The ASUM believes that campus and student support of sustainability efforts are instrumental in campus-wide recruitment endeavors.

The ASUM Sustainability Fee began as an opt-out \$4 fee in 2009, was increased to an opt-out \$6 fee in 2013, and became a mandatory fee of \$6 in 2019, all by student vote. The fee has not been increased since 2013. Since its establishment in 2009, the sustainability fee has generated approximately \$1.3 million which has been deployed into campus energy efficiency, tracking, and resource conservation efforts. Additionally, the ASUM Sustainability fee has engaged hundreds of students in project development, proposal writing, proposal review, and proposal approval processes. The additional funding resulting from the ASUM Sustainability Fee increase would allow to continue funding projects at their current pace by addressing increased labor and materials costs

ASUM Sustainability Fee revenues are contributed to the Kless Sustainability Fund (the Fund) which is overseen by the Kless Sustainability Committee. The Kless Sustainability Committee is appointed by the ASUM and its voting members are comprised entirely of students. The Sustainability Engagement Coordinator (the SEC), a UM employee convenes the Kless Sustainability Committee, supports project identification, proposal review, and the administration of funds. Projects that are eligible to receive ASUM Sustainability Fee support are generated and proposed by UM students. Projects are vetted and approved for funding by the nine-member Kless Sustainability Committee which is comprised of 2 ASUM Senators and 5 at-large Students who are also appointed by ASUM. The two non-student (and non-voting) members are filled by a member of UM's facilities team (utility engineer for technical expertise) and a faculty member.

The \$6 flat rate Sustainability Fee currently produces approximately \$100,000 of annual funding to support grants and loans to student-led sustainability projects on the UM campus, including projects such as: retrofitting buildings, installing smart metering systems, installing rooftop solar arrays, and expanding recycling efforts to all residence halls. The ASUM Sustainability Fee and Kless Sustainability Fund increasingly provide a valuable resource for UM to continue its investment in the efficiency and performance of campus buildings and reduce operational costs in pursuit of UM's financial and environmental sustainability goals.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1: SB26-19/20: Resolution Regarding Sustainability Fee Referendum

Attachment #2: ASUM Election Results Report

Attachment #3: Memorandum of Understanding between ASUM and UM Sustainability Office

Attachment #4: Updated Mandatory Fee Schedule