As centers of intellectual creativity, campuses are on the forefront of cultural and technological change – this is where innovation is born and future engineers and scientists gain the skills to change the world. Our campuses should be living laboratories: models to the nation of a just and sustainable future. As one of the world’s top research universities, The University of Arizona has a responsibility to lead by example through reducing our environmental impact and de-carbonizing our energy sources as soon as possible.

ASUA Sustainability Office proposes to establish a “Green Fund” that provides seed money for student projects that reduce the University of Arizona’s ecological footprint and/or spread awareness about environmental issues and their possible solutions. Special emphasis will be placed on leveraging the seed money provided by the fund to obtain matching/supplementary funds, collaborative partnerships, and projects that replenish the Green Fund. For example, partnership talks have been initiated with Biosphere 2 regarding the use of a portion of the money to install solar panels on several small buildings including their student casitas. We would then sell them the electricity in addition to the renewable energy credits. A local solar installation company, Geo Innovation, has agreed to install PV solar systems at cost. Other project could include:

- Install measurement devices in dorms to gauge water and electricity usage.
- Implement water harvesting and smart landscaping around university buildings.
- As a pilot program in partnership with Residence Life, install a solar hot water system on a dorm.

The fee would initiate a student operated and funded finance mechanism for projects aimed at making the University of Arizona campus more sustainable. This “Green Fund” will be used on and around campus to increase awareness about environmental stewardship and reduce the ecological footprint of the campus community for years to come.

To oversee the project, a committee made up of students, faculty, and staff from various backgrounds would be formed. The Green Fund Committee will be comprised of a Technical Advisory Board and a Student Voting Board to supervise the appropriation of the Green Fund. (See attached material for details)

- How this supports student priorities:
  McKinsey Global Institute reports that energy efficiency upgrades average an internal rate of 17 percent. The projects funding this initiative would not only save the university on energy costs - and subsequently save the students money - but the projects would also serve as an educational tool for those looking to get into the very promising and fast growing green industry sector.

- The anticipated impact:
  Awareness campaigns will aim to educate the campus community about our collective and individual impact on the environment. We will also provide “how to tips” to help those who seek to reduce their ecological footprint. Our website will also offer numerous resources and announcements about events and volunteer work. Additionally, the energy and water systems will be visible to the student body, in turn, raising awareness about the viability of certain renewable energy technologies. We anticipate that our outreach efforts in conjunction with events and visible installations of green technology (such as solar panels) will reach nearly every student. The outcome of this can be measured by surveys, greenhouse gas reductions, and money saved by campus facilities.
Surveys have show incredibly strong support for this type of undertaking. Also, this idea and proposal has been endorsed by the Clinton Global Initiative as a viable and worthy project. Lon Huber submitted it last semester and it was accepted officially in February.