

*Proposal to establish the Green Fee
and Promote Sustainability*
At Boston University

Dear Members of the Boston University Community:

There has never been a better time than now to incorporate sustainability into our internationally recognized institution. With increased media attention and scientific pressure, solutions to climate change are being sought with more urgency than ever before. The Green Fee and Sustainability Committee advocated in this proposal are bold but conceivable steps towards a greener future for Boston University. As students from Boston University have expressed through continued support, the green fee is a feasible, student-backed approach to greening our campus.

During the Civil Rights era, Boston University was a hotbed of political activism, with thousands of students fighting day after day for the end of injustice. Many people have called climate change today's fight for civil rights, citing the injustice caused by environmental degradation not only on nature but on future generations as well. We, as students and leaders of the future, are embarking on a mission to reengage the passionate activism on campus with this universally relevant cause. Many other universities have undertaken similar projects and are now revolutionizing the climate change movement. It is crucial that Boston University take up this cause and act now to institutionalize the reduction of its environmental impacts.

Sincerely,

Boston University Environmental Student Organization

PART I: THE GREEN FEE

The \$10 per semester Green Fee would allow students to invest in the university’s sustainability. By choosing to pay the Green Fee, students will be making a statement about the university’s priorities. The money raised from the Green Fee will pay for projects that would increase the university’s energy efficiency. Thus, these projects save the university annual expenditures, which will be passed onto students by decreasing tuition inflation. These projects would in turn save university money and produce a large amount of return on investment.

The Green Fee would appear on the student account invoice as an opt-out fee, similar to the Sports Pass. Revenues from the fee will go into a fund that will be spent on a wide range of initiatives to improve the environmental performance of the Charles River Campus. Examples include improved recycling, the installation of more efficient light fixtures, and, the purchase of electricity from renewable or “green” power sources. Allocation of the fees will be made the Boston University Sustainability Committee.

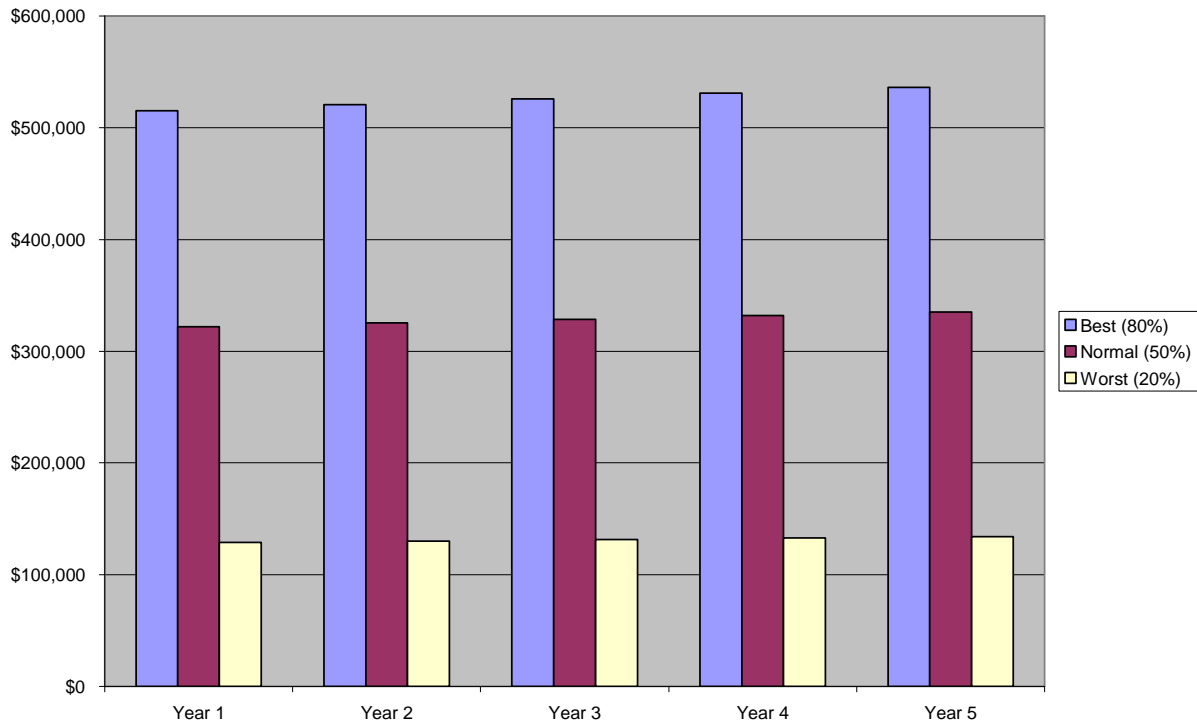
Revenue Projections

All undergraduate and graduate students, totaling 32,210 students, have the option of contributing to the green fee. Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate the amount of funds generated by the green fee with a 1% increase in student population each year.

Table 1. Green Fee Revenues

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Best (80%)	\$515,360	\$520,514	\$525,719	\$530,976	\$536,286
Normal (50%)	\$322,100	\$325,321	\$328,574	\$331,860	\$335,179
Worst (20%)	\$128,840	\$130,128	\$131,430	\$132,744	\$134,071

Figure 1: Green Fee Revenues in Years 1 through 5



The green fee is based in part on Harvard's Green Campus Loan Fund, in which zero interest loans are provided for projects that reduce the University's environmental impacts. The Harvard GCLF started in Jan. 2002 with \$3 million, and in its first two and a half years of operation, GLCF-funded projects saved the University just under \$900,000 a year, for an average return on investment of over 30 percent. The University cut Greenhouse gas emissions by over 33,000 metric tons, reduced water consumption over 15 million gallons and reduced waste by 200,000 lbs.

PART II: SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Subsection A: Membership

President Brown has approved the formation of a Boston University Sustainability Committee. The purpose of the Committee will sustainability goals for the University, coordinate sustainability activities among faculty, students and staff, and otherwise help set goals related to sustainability. The Committee will be co-chaired by Mr. Gary Nicksa, Vice-President for Operations, and Dr. Cutler Cleveland, Professor of Geography and Environment in CAS. Other

Committee members include Dean Elmore, representatives of several University offices, faculty from CAS, ENG, and student representatives. Two or three students will be chosen from the Environmental Student Organization, the B.U. Energy Club, the Student Union's sustainability group, or other student interest groups. **The Student Union General Assembly must confirm all students selected by the Committee as able representatives of the student body at large.**

Subsection B: Transparency and Accountability

The Committee will oversee the collection and dispersal of the Green Fee. It will consider suggestions from the University committee on what projects should be funded, and make recommendations to the Administration on the prioritization of projects to be funded by the fee. There will be complete transparency regarding all aspects of the green fee. Specifically, information on the amount of student participation, amount of funding accrued, information on the projects to which the funds are allocated, and the amount allocated to each project will be available to the public online, potentially on the BU Green website (www.bu.edu/green) and in a yearly report published by the Sustainability Committee.

If funds are found to be improperly disbursed or unethically used in other activities other than those for environmental sustainability, Committee members will be replaced under such circumstances by their constituencies.

PART III: STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

At schools across the country, students are driving the movement for increased sustainability on and off campus. In a student referendum at Harvard, 82% of the students voted to support a \$10 fee to fund renewable energy for campus use. Approximately 76% of the student body voted for the fee to be optional while 59% supported an opt-out mechanism. Harvard now has one of the most successful 'green initiatives' in the country. Duke University purchases over \$10 million annually in green energy by matching student donations of \$25 or \$50 for green energy purchases on campus. Clearly, student interest in funding green projects has driven very successful programs which are transforming the modern college campus.

Students do not stop caring as they step outside their campuses. In November of 2007, thousands of college students, including several ESO members, gathered in Washington D.C. for a weekend long conference on solving climate change. The weekend, called Power Shift, culminated in a day of lobbying senators and congressmen on Capitol Hill to support pro-

environment bills in Congress. The positive energy from the conference has propelled the founding of many regional initiatives including the organization Massachusetts Youth Climate Action, which will be holding the first ever Massachusetts Power Shift this April held on our very own campus. Student involvement in environmental activism extends outside the campus, and has fueled an international climate change movement that is gaining momentum in the world at large.

As the section on the Sustainability Committee explains, students from different groups and schools at Boston University will play a significant role in deciding the projects funded by the green fee. Initial ideas from the students in the Environmental Student Organization include:

- Replacement of leaky windows in CAS and other academic buildings to allow for better insulation and less energy wasted on heating
- Installation of efficient light bulbs and motion detectors in CAS and older residences
- Increased public recycling facilities and visibility at GSU, outdoors, and in residences
- The purchase of clean energy from our current energy provider (Constellation)
- Support for student activities such as dorm energy-saving or recycling competitions, campus outreach and communication
- Further education on sustainability and climate change on campus

CONCLUSION

Energy use and energy cost are rising. Many highly regarded scientific institutions, most notably the IPCC, have pegged human impact onto climate change. Students support institutionalizing measures towards sustainability on campus. The optional green fee would provide a mechanism that would facilitate reduction of the university's energy consumption (and consequently, spending) improvement of Boston University's image through progressive action, and the addition of Boston University to the list of institutions which are leading the fight against the greatest challenge of our lifetimes.