How to Plan, Budget, Write, and Implement a Student Sustainability Grant

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Who am I?

- Senior, graduating in April!
- Majors: Political Science & Spanish
- Minors: Environmental Studies & Psychology
- From Decatur, Michigan

Photo: Disney Pilgrimage, 2015
Project Overview

- Received a Student Sustainability Grant in April 2016 to plant more trees on campus with the help of student volunteers. There are plans to create a Tree Walk for students to enjoy native Michigan trees.

- After a process that began in the fall of 2015, TODAY the trees were planted in the Goldworth Valley Pond Area by more than 70 volunteers.

- A dedication ceremony was added to honor President John M. Dunn and Mrs. Linda Dunn. Eastern White Pines- the Michigan state tree. Mrs. Dunn spoke and was the first person to begin planting trees!
Why all the fuss about trees??

- They lead the fight against climate change.
- They absorb and sequester excess carbon dioxide produced by human activity.
- They provide shelter and the habitat for animal species and other organisms.
- They provide shade from harmful UV radiation that can cause skin cancer.
- They provide the foundation for houses.
- They bring people together and build community!
- And so much more!
My Personal Connection

- Planting trees since I was six years old
- My grandfather planted hundreds of trees in an empty field in my hometown around his house. Now it is a small forest.
- My mom is an environmental activist donating time and money to many organizations
- I worry about the state of the environment and our efforts to be sustainable during this challenging time in political history.
- Why not a normal political science thesis?
1. Getting Inspired

- From a lecture about climate change and the role trees play in fighting it.
- Motivated Students on campus
- Power of Belief- finding the will to follow-through
Step-by-Step Process

- Planning
- Budgeting
- Writing
- Implementing
2. Talking to the Campus Sustainability Chair & and Reading the SSG handbook

- This will become one of your biggest supporters.
- It is required for grants that make infrastructure changes
- A go-to for questions
- SSG Handbook is relatively short. Reading every page is really helpful.
- Figuring out your requirements
3. Setting goals

- First: what do you want to see accomplished in a perfect world?
- Second: set realistic and attainable goals to discuss at meetings with the SSGAC Chair and other people who will get involved.
- My goals:
  - to add a large amount of plant material to campus,
  - get students involved in planting,
  - put the trees in a place that can be viewed and enjoyed by passerby
  - promote the student sustainability grant
4. Office for Sustainability visit

- Don’t be intimidated!!
- ***Required meeting for grants that have infrastructure changes involved
- More than just the ECO-Mugs!
- Met Derek Kanwischer, Projects Manager
  - Became one of my Honors Thesis Committee members
5. Meeting with University Departments

- Required for Space Assessment
- Multiple Meetings
  - Facilities Management
    - Landscape Services
    - Campus Planning, Space Management and Capital Projects
  - Individual:
    - Peter Strazdas- Associate VP of Facilities Management
    - Dave Dakin- Director of Planning, Space Management and Capital Projects
    - Steve Keto- Natural Areas and Preserves Manager
    - Darrell Junkins- West Regional Supervisor, Honors Committee Member
    - Many others!
6. Setting a Timeline

- Important to keep the project on track!
- It is okay if it changes a bit! Learn to be flexible and adaptable!
  - President Dunn’s busy schedule
  - The weather
  - Changes in the Valley Pond Area because of the Dining Center
7. Reflection

- Favorite part of this step?
  - Meeting people who would become very important in my life and in my quest to plant trees!

- What did I learn about myself?
  - To delegate tasks with others, to keep myself on track, and professionalism

- The hardest part?
  - Staying on track with school, work, and other commitments
Time to Budget!
8. Considering the Space Assessment

- Only so much space and time for plant material!
- Taking into consideration the existing infrastructure and landscaping
- Making sure the pond was still visible
- Planting new trees where old ones had to be taken down!

- Decided on Goldsworth Valley Pond Area
9. Considering the Student Input

- The purpose of the grants is to benefit all students..
- Sent around a survey in the WSA weekly meeting to get an understanding of what trees students wanted to see.
- Needed trees to be native for Tree Campus USA.
10. Getting Budget Approval

- Hey, important people! What do you think??
- Scaling back the original goal of plant material from $25,000 of material to $14,000
11. Reflection

The totals for each category were as follows:

- large tree totals = $6,250
- small tree/large shrub total = $1,473
- shrubs = $508
- additional expenses totaled $5,238.48

Numbers from Possibility Place Nursery and Acorn Farms
Writing the SSG Grant!
12. Writing a Narrative

- Now that everything had been put together, it wasn’t so bad!

- The questions in the narrative are as follows:
  - How will your proposal advance sustainability at WMU?
  - Has your proposal been tried before-- on this campus or elsewhere? If so, provide examples of best practice and explain how your proposal advances the state of the art.
  - How will you ensure that your proposal benefits all students on campus?
  - Will your proposal require ongoing maintenance? If so, who will be responsible for this once you are gone?
  - Is your proposal safe, legal, adequately budgeted, and possible within existing university infrastructure?
13. Finding Necessary Support

- Graduate Student: Joshua Greenman, Political Science
- Advisor: Lisa Dechano-Cook, Geography
- Department Head: Keith Hearit, College of Arts and Sciences, Associate Dean
- Additional Faculty: Stephen B. Malcolm, Biological Sciences
14. Passing a Western Student Association resolution
15. Passing a Graduate Student Association resolution
16. Asking the Campus Sustainability Chair to Give Written Approval

- Logan’s Big Moment!!
- Or get 500 Student Signatures
17. Submitting the Grant Proposal

Send it via Email in a SINGLE PDF DOCUMENT
18. Reflection

- What would I do differently?
  - Don’t wait until 20 minutes before to go to the lab to scan necessary documents. Also, as people to send you their letters of approval electronically, if they are willing.

- The best part?
  - Seeing the finished project and realizing a lot of people supported this idea

- Most difficult part?
  - The leg work!
Time to Start Planting!
19. Receiving the Funding and Attending Financial Managers Training

- Find out about your grant approval two weeks after the deadline. Deadlines the Thursday before Spring Break (Spring Cycle), Thursday before Thanksgiving (Fall Cycle).
- Deliberated by Student Sustainability Grant Allocations Commission (SSGAC)
- AKA New RSO Orientation
- You have to attend to get access to the funds
- Keep all original receipts and order forms!!
- Organize this with the newly renamed Office for Student Engagement. Formerly SALP.
20. Ordering Materials and Using Allocated Funds

- Landscape Services
- WMU Sign Shop
- Facilities Management
21. Setting a Date, Time, and Location

*Note: steps 21-24 are useful for event-related goals primarily. If your grant does not involve an event, skip to step 25*

- Timeline Change from Original Proposal
- Date: April 21\textsuperscript{st} 2017
- Time: 12pm-2pm
- Painted Rocks at Goldsworth Valley Pond
22. Inviting the Media, Creating Advertisements, and Recruiting Volunteers

*Note: steps 21-24 are useful for event-related goals primarily. If your grant does not involve an event, skip to step 25*

- WMU News
- WMU Western Herald
- Organizations Involvement: Phi Sigma Pi, Delta Sigma Theta, Western Student Association
- Two Environmental Studies Classes
- Advertisements: Lynnae Strait, WSA Graphic Design Chair
- Recruiting Volunteers: online RSVP Form, Experience WMU, WMU Events Calendar
23. Preparing the Event Area and Assembling Any Equipment

*Note: steps 21-24 are useful for event-related goals primarily. If your grant does not involve an event, skip to step 25*

- Friday!!
- Picking up the dedication Plaques
- Organizing Trees
- Pre-digging some holes
- Pre-planting of blueberry bushes, shrubs and some trees.
- The darn microphone!
24. Instructing the Participants/Volunteers

*Note: steps 21-24 are useful for event-related goals primarily. If your grant does not involve an event, skip to step 25*

- Giving a speech
- Over 70 volunteers
- Over 130 people present during the dedication ceremony and Arbor Day Welcome.
- My family and friends!
- Darrell gave a fun 2 minute instructional overview
25. Enjoying the Finished Project or Event!
26. Reflection and the Required Final Evaluation

- Required to submit a final document about the use of funds.
- Finishing the How-To- Manual
- Believing in your project will make others believe in it too.
- Hardest Part? STAYING CALM and focusing.
- The support of the WMU community has been my favorite part about my college experience.
- I now know I might want to be an environmental policy writer.
Moving Forward

- This project is not finished yet! More to plant, more to create, more to get excited about!
- Professors are wanting to recreate the event and do it every year now. REQUESTING MY MANUAL AS GUIDANCE!
- Thank you to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, WSA, and Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity for donating the plaques for the two large eastern white pines.
THANK YOU ALL!!!!
Questions??