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STUDENT ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE PROPOSAL FORM

Part I- General Information:

Name of Student Organization	UAP 3354: Environmental Policy & Planning
Contact/Responsible Person	Giuliana Seymour, Vj. Catalan, Dixon Hass
Contact Office Held/Title	
Contact Email Address	gseymour@vt.edu , vjc18@vt.edu , dhass1@vt.edu
Contact Telephone Number	(201) 250-1345, (703) 896-6706, (434) 465-7409

Part II- Project Cost Information

Estimated Cost of this Proposal	\$53.01 per case of each utensil	See III.C. below
Estimated Savings -	0	See III.D. below
Net Cost of this Proposal =	\$53.01 per case of each utensil	

Part III- Supporting Information

A. Please describe your sustainability initiative and attach supporting documentation.
 The goal of this RFP is to replace the plastic utensils in Turner’s dining hall with compostable ones. Since Turner’s is the only dining hall on campus without a staff to sort the waste, compostable utensils are the next best option. Everything that is sold at Turner’s can be thrown out in three options: compostable, recycling, and landfill. It is up to the students to sort their waste into the correct bins. If the utensils were compostable, the environmental impact would be much less than plastic. Currently, Virginia Tech is using SmartStock utensils produced by Georgia-Pacific. Those utensils are plastic and are unable to be recycled. Changing the utensils from plastic to a compostable material would help divert waste from landfills. The company is coming out with a compostable version that would only require the school to change the utensils and not the dispensers. SmartStock utensils are made from PLA plastic, which must be broken down in an industrial composter where it is heated to a certain temperature to turn it into a soil like material.

B. How does this initiative help to achieve the goals of the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment Resolution and Sustainability Plan?

Resolution #1: Virginia Tech will be a Leader in Campus Sustainability.

- This initiative would make the university a leader in dining sustainability. Virginia Tech would be ahead of other universities because of this achievement and would be paving the way to eliminating all plastic utensils in dining halls.

Resolution #2: Virginia Tech will represent the VTCAC&SP in the university’s Strategic Plan.

- This proposal will promote more environmentally friendly dining practices that will successfully minimize waste in the future.

Resolution #8: Virginia Tech Recycling will adopt a goal of 50% recycle rate by 2020.

- The removal of plastic utensils from the dining halls would assist in reducing the amount of plastic entering the waste stream. Lowering the amount of plastic waste, Virginia Tech Recycling would have to handle, and lay the foundation for further plastic reduction in other campus facilities to achieve the desired 50% recycling rate by the end of the year.

Resolution #10: Virginia Tech will engage students, faculty, and staff through education and involvement to develop and implement innovative strategies for efficient and sustainable use of energy, water, and materials in all university-owned facilities.

- By using these compostable utensils, students, faculty, and staff will learn about the impact they have on the world through managing their waste stream. They will be able to educate themselves on the positive alternatives to plastic to help reduce stress on waste management and recycling costs. These compostable utensils could be a good starting point on improving everyone's education on sustainability, by introducing the concept of sustainable practices in day to day life through these high traffic facilities. Allowing students, faculty, and staff will be engaged by directly contributing to the waste reduction of materials at Virginia Tech.

Resolution #14: Virginia Tech will work to provide funding to support sustainability programs.

- This compostable initiative will promote Virginia Tech as a more committed university that is working towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways of life. This will help their public image by also attracting more students to attend the school.

C. What is the cost of your proposal? Please describe in adequate detail the basis for your cost estimate.

The current cost of our proposal is based on a per unit cost of a case of each utensil type, provided by Blake Bensman the Dining Services & Housing (Student Affairs) Sustainability Manager. Currently Virginia Tech purchases SmartStock Regular #5 plastic utensils. Which cost approximately \$27.78 per case of 960 utensils of any one type, which includes knives, spoons and forks each sold in separate cases (Bensman, 2020). In switching to Dixie Ultra SmartStock Comp., composed of PLA compostable plastic, that price rises to \$53.01 per case of 960 utensils of any type (Bensman, 2020). While this appears to be a 90% increase in price per case of utensils, the cost per utensil only increases by approximately \$0.03 per unit. Additionally there would be no secondary costs associated with the replacement of the SmartStock dispensers as the Dixie Ultra SmartStock Comp. are compatible with the current dispensers on campus (Bensman, 2020).

D. Will your proposal produce cost savings for the University? If so, how much? Please describe in adequate detail the basis for your savings estimate.

Our proposal would not produce any cost savings as the compostable utensils cost \$53.01 per case of 960 while the current utensils cost \$27.78 per case of 960 (Bensman, 2020). This comes to the compostable utensil costing about \$0.05 each and the current utensil costing about \$0.02 each. However, it is important to note that the compostable utensils would fit into the current dispensers and not require much labor or require any additional cost to install. Some of the extra cost could also be offset through donations of proposed utensils in a trial run at Turner Hall and slowly transitioning to the more costly compostable utensils. If the results of the switch demonstrate a meaningful decrease in waste production and an internal production of compostable material, then a long term plan to build infrastructure that would allow for in-source composting would make sense. Not only would this provide the university with its own supply of cheap compost, this compost produced directly by the University's own green waste plan could be used in conjunction with other proposed sustainable initiatives around campus. For example, this compost plan would couple nicely both in principle and practicality with recent ideas for community green gardens. A plan like this would also comprehensively accomplish the university's goal to become a leader in campus sustainability and garner a wide range of positive publicity for its innovative and sustainable ideas.

E. Is this funding request for a One-Time need or an Ongoing need (please check one)?

One-time

Ongoing

F. Is funding available for this request from another source? If yes, describe the funding (source, amount, etc.)
No.

Current SmartStock Regular #5



Proposed Dixie Ultra SmartStock Comp. PLA Compostable Plastic Utensils.



SmartStock Utensils Dispenser



Sources:

Bensman, B. (2020, November 5). Personal Interview

Attachment # 2

**STUDENT ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE PROPOSAL FORM
(Continued)**

Part IV- Requestors/ReviewersIV- equestors/Reviewer

Giuliana Seymour, Vj. Catalan, and Dixon Hass

Prepared By (Name of Contact for Student Organization)

Date 11/9/20

Blake Bensman

Reviewed By (Name of Appropriate University Official)

Date 11/9/20

Denny Cochrane

11/30/20

Reviewed By (Name of Office of Sustainability Representative)

Date

Attachment # 3

**STUDENT ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE FUNDING PROPOSAL
CONTACT LIST**

In the preparation of your Green RFP form, student organizations are encouraged to seek input and guidance from the following list of university employees. These individuals are familiar with the form and the process. They can address the feasibility of your proposal, provide a technical review, and evaluate the cost & potential savings.

<u>Area of Expertise</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Engineering & Operations, Energy Management	Kim Briele	Director Engineering & Assessment	sbriele@vt.edu
Facilities: Housing & Residence Life	Todd Pignataro	Associate Director of Facilities	ptodd@vt.edu
Facilities: Buildings & Grounds (Small Renovations)	Jim McDaniel	Project Coordinator	jmcdani@vt.edu
Exterior Lighting	Rob Glenn	Director VT Electric Services	RobGlenn@vt.edu
Student Engagement & Campus Life	Spencer Stidd	Associate Director for Events Services	sstidd@vt.edu
Dining Services & Housing (Student Affairs)	Blake Bensman	Sustainability Mgr.	bensman@vt.edu
Alternative Transport (Bus, Bike & Walk/Electric Vehicles)	Nick Quint	Transportation Network Mgr.	nquint@vt.edu
Landscape Architecture	Melissa Philen	Site Planner	mnphilen@vt.edu
Hahn Horticulture Garden	Scott Douglas	Director/Instructor	dsd1@vt.edu
Recycling and Waste Management	Denny Cochrane	Director Office of Sustainability	denniscc@vt.edu
Other Sustainability Topics	Nathan King	Sustainability Mgr. Office of Sustainability	naking@vt.edu