

## Green Action Fund has \$ Green \$ for 💡 Green 💡

By Julie Galusky

Want to see more renewable energy at UCCS? Have a desire to decrease our campus' water use? Do you have an idea for new technology that will help decrease our carbon footprint and emissions? The Green Action Fund wants your ideas and projects!

The Green Action Fund (GAF) supports student, staff and faculty driven projects designed to increase sustainable development, operations and practices in the UCCS community. A student fee of \$5 per student per semester provides the funds. So, if someone on campus has a sustainable idea – GAF has the funds.

Since 2012, the campus community has submitted over 100 projects, resulting in 70 funded ideas for reducing the ecological footprint and involving students in education and outreach in sustainability issues. This represents over \$331,000 in funding of ideas generated and implemented right here on campus.

A student committee of 8-12 students administers the fund, accepts and reviews proposals and votes on funding awards. The committee meets weekly to hear project presentations and discuss the merits of each proposal. A part-time student project coordinator oversees the progress and financial aspects of projects and assists the team in connecting with campus and community resources for a successful outcome.

The top five sustainability categories funded by GAF since 2012 are\*:

- Waste Reduction – 26%
- Renewable Energy – 18%
- Energy Conservation – 11%
- Water Conservation – 10%
- Sustainable Transportation – 10%

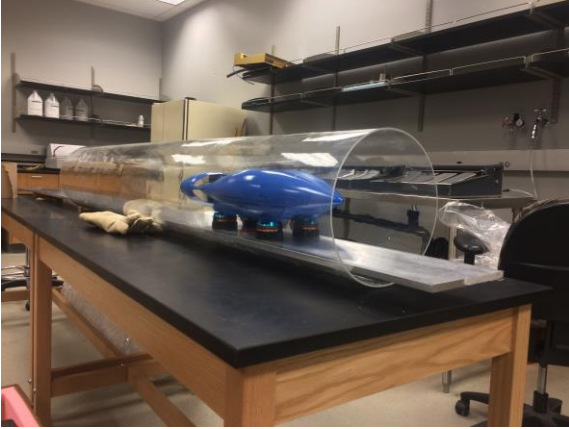
\* Ranked by % of total funds spent 2012-2016

A recent addition to the family of funded projects includes aquaponics at the UCCS greenhouse. Austin Busha and Erik Wennersten, students in Mechanical Engineering program at UCCS, are designing and installing a semi-automated, 75-gallon aquaponics unit for growing produce, and eventually fish, for UCCS Dining and Hospitality Services. The open-sourced, solar powered unit will live in the UCCS Greenhouse and be available to all UCCS departments for further enhancements and research projects in the future.

In the area of waste reduction, undergraduates Alex Greanias and Clare Thomas have developed a plan to use zero waste station tents at campus events to contribute to the Zero Waste Program at the Office of Sustainability. Three Zero Hero tents will provide high



visibility and ease of use for these events, making zero wasting at UCCS fun, easy and commonplace.



The Green Action Fund also provided travel expense for a team of 12 students and their faculty advisor, mathematics professor Radu Cascaval, to attend the SpaceX Hyperloop Pod Design Competition at Texas A&M in January. The math and engineering students developed their own design for a hyperloop travel pod and presented it along with 75 other colleges and universities. The working prototype will be on display on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the UCCS Engineering Building.

Leave your legacy at UCCS through a sustainable project that will continue to strengthen our community and lessen our environmental impact. Learn more on the GAF website: [uccs.edu/gaf](http://uccs.edu/gaf). If you have any questions or want to discuss project ideas, you can contact the GAF at [greenfun@uccs.edu](mailto:greenfun@uccs.edu).