



College of the Environment  
School of Environmental & Forest Sciences

Campus Sustainability Fund Committee  
University of Washington

April 22, 2016

Dear CSF Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the CSF proposal being submitted by the SER-UW Native Plant Nursery.

As Adult Education Supervisor for University of Washington Botanic Gardens, I manage public and professional education programs at the Center for Urban Horticulture and Washington Park Arboretum. These programs include classes, workshops, conferences and tours that benefit UW students, the broader UW community, and the general public by enriching participants' connections with plants and the natural world. I will support the work of the SER-UW Education RA to coordinate logistics of the educational programs that will be open to the public and to advise as needed on other curriculum development or program planning.

The Nursery provides an abundance of plant material for UW restoration projects, a unique, hands-on learning opportunity for horticulture and restoration-focused education, and an important framework for community building and professional development in the field of ecological restoration. Funding from CSF to support the student positions in this application is essential to facilitating the next step toward long-term programmatic sustainability for the Nursery. Supporting these RA positions will allow the student leaders to focus their time and attention toward formalizing operations, building a long-term community of support, and enhancing the educational component of the Nursery.

The work undertaken by the Nursery inherently creates a positive environmental impact at UW. Use of native plants in the UW landscape reduces the need for supplemental watering and pesticide use. Native plants provide habitat for wildlife and food for pollinators. Having plants and vibrant green spaces on campus correlates with a multitude of mental and physical health benefits. But a greenhouse structure and plants cannot create these benefits alone. It is important that the students leading this work have the opportunity to create a plan that will help guide future leaders and facilitate succession as experienced students graduate and new students enter the organization.

This proposal offers an exciting and significant opportunity for education, outreach, and behavior change. While the Plant Production RA is building systems for sustainable operations, the Education RA will create curriculum to deepen the environmental education experience of students who are volunteering with SER-UW. The public education programs will offer further exploration of topics in native plants and ecological restoration and will also provide an opportunity to engage members of the broader UW community and the general public. This will benefit the future of SER-UW by building a broader base of support for volunteer work and community support. This education and outreach can also lead to behavior change by encouraging sustainable practices in managed landscapes both on the UW campus and beyond.

The Education unit of UW Botanic Gardens already works in collaboration with the UW Farm for portions of their education and outreach program based on urban agriculture, and we look forward to expanded opportunities to collaborate with SER-UW on native plant and restoration-based educational programming.

I believe this is a strong proposal that will create significant value for the development of SER-UW as a sustainable student organization, and I encourage you to approve the application.

Sincerely,



Jessica Farmer  
Adult Education Supervisor  
University of Washington Botanic Gardens