Campus Sustainability Grant Application – Cover Sheet

PROPOSAL INFORMATION
Project Title: IMPACT’s Environmental Impact: Introducing Mess Kits to Cut Waste

PRINCIPAL STUDENT INVESTIGATOR (PROPOSER) INFORMATION
Name: Brittany Whitlock
Email: britwhit@uga.edu
Phone: (678) 687-4072
Degree Program / Graduation Date: Biology and Psychology, May 2016

FACULTY / STAFF SPONSOR INFORMATION
Name: Sarayfah Bolling
Email: sbolling@uga.edu
Phone: (706) 542-6801
Title / Department: Senior Coordinator for Social Justice Education, Center for Leadership and Service

ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL INFORMATION
The proposal includes the following fields (check all that apply):

___ Education
___ Research
X Service
___ Campus Operations
___ Sustainability + Arts submission

Summary of Budget:
Personnel Funding .................................................. $
Equipment............................................................ $4,860.20
Supplies / General Expenses................................. $
TOTAL................................................................. $4,860.20
**Project Overview**

**Description**

IMPACT Service Breaks is the University of Georgia's alternative service breaks program that provides opportunities for students to participate in nationwide, week-long experiential service-learning trips every spring and winter break. IMPACT trips engage students in pressing social issues, including topics like environmentalism, public health, and food justice. The 25 trips and 500 student participants yield approximately 20,000 hours of service per academic year. Moreover, IMPACT promotes active citizenship and develops leadership for social change.

IMPACT prides itself on being an organization that operates with integrity, whose daily operations align with its espoused values of social justice and consciousness. This year, we aim to enhance our environmental consciousness by addressing the amount of excessive waste that our trips produce.

Students prepare a majority of the meals they consume throughout the week on their IMPACT trip. While this is financially beneficial for our student-funded program, it also means that students are using disposable dishware, cups, and utensils for nearly every meal. This year, IMPACT will send 476 students on service-learning trips around the country. Over the course of 3 meals a day for 7 days, that adds up to a conservative estimate of 8,946 paper plates, 26,838 plastic utensils, and 2,982 Styrofoam cups added to landfills by IMPACT trips this year alone.

The solution to this problem is simple. Our program would like to invest in a set of 380 reusable mess kits that would be used in place of disposable products. Each kit comes with a reusable plate, bowl, cup, and silverware set. Each participant would be given a mess kit to use throughout the week, which would be returned to the program at the conclusion of the trip. Likewise, this investment would allow us to not only eliminate hundreds of pounds of unnecessary waste this year, but for years to come. Between now and 2020, the use of reusable mess kits could prevent the unnecessary waste of a minimum of 193,830 disposable items.

Replacement of disposable dishware with reusable mess kits is a common and extremely successful practice in alternative breaks programs throughout the country. It is time that UGA follows suit.

**Intended Outcomes from Section VII in 2020 Strategic Plan**

The following items would be direct outcomes of implementation of this mess kit proposal, all five of which are explicitly named as priorities for the University in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

1. Reduction of environmental footprint of a University-funded program
2. Purchasing of environmentally responsible products
3. Increased recycling
4. Reduction of waste
5. Fusion of conscious sustainability into an education and leadership program

Contribution to enhance existing sustainability practices, initiatives, and awareness

IMPACT has a unique capacity to spread ideas and awareness to a huge population of people. First and foremost, incorporation of mess kits into IMPACT trips will add to sustainability awareness efforts already directed towards UGA students by demonstrating to our participants how simple it can be to incorporate sustainability and waste-reduction in daily life. IMPACT trips tend to be transformative experiences for students, in which they make changes to their thought patterns and habits. By demonstrating our own commitment towards sustainability, many participants may do the same.

Additionally, IMPACT trips work closely in the 25 distinct communities that they travel to. The incorporation of this sustainable practice will be noticed by community organizations, universities, and UGA alumni throughout the country. This practice will demonstrate to large organizations around the country that it is both possible and financially responsible to improve the environmental impact of daily operations.

Partner organizations and departments

IMPACT Service Breaks is housed in the Center for Leadership and Service in the Division of Student Affairs. Additionally, we are a member organization of Volunteer UGA.

Inspiration and proof-of-concept for this project comes from Break Away, a national non-profit that supports the development of alternative breaks programs.

Additionally, I am working with Greg Albanese, Associate Director of the Tate Student Center for Facilities and Operations, to secure storage space for the mess kits if the grant is received.
Campus Sustainability Grant Application – Compliance Form

Please answer all of the following questions, and explain in full where required.

Will this project require compliance review in any of the following areas?
Please place an “X” on the appropriate line to indicate “Yes” or “No” for all three compliance areas.

1. Animal Use
   __ Yes
   X No
If “Yes,” please reference the section and page number in the proposal describing animal use:

   For more information contact:
   706-542-5933

2. Biohazardous Materials
   X Yes
   __ No
If “Yes,” please reference the section and page number in the proposal describing biohazardous material use:

   For more information contact:
   706-542-9876

3. Human Subjects
   __ Yes
   X No
If “Yes,” please reference the section and page number in the proposal describing human subject use:

   For more information contact:
   706-542-5318

Name: Brittany Whitlock
Title: Executive Coordinator of IMPACT Service Breaks
Date: November 14th, 2015

X  By placing an “X” on this line, I certify I will fulfill all requirements pertaining to compliance if this grant is approved.
## Campus Sustainability Grant Application – Budget Sheet

### I. Personnel **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Amount/Person</th>
<th>Total Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGA Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGA Student</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Amount</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$0</strong></td>
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</table>

### II. Equipment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Equipment Items</th>
<th>Length of Use</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 380 mess kits ($11.95 each) + tax, free shipping <a href="http://tinyurl.com/p37xquu">http://tinyurl.com/p37xquu</a></td>
<td>Until needing replacement, estimated 10 years</td>
<td>$4,860.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$4,860.20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. Supplies/General Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Supply Items</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Acceptable personnel funding include: 1) hiring outside consultants or contractors to perform required project tasks, 2) UGA Facilities Management Division staff labor charges for project implementation, 3) UGA student workers managed by participating UGA department to perform required project tasks.

**If more space is needed, please attach a separate document listing specific items and their costs.

**Note:** All Campus Sustainability Grant funds must be expended before June 30th.
Implementation Plan

Specific Aims

The implementation of IMPACT'S sustainability initiative has three specific aims:

1. To drastically reduce the amount of waste produced on IMPACT trips from the use of disposable plates, cups, and cutlery.
2. To demonstrate to students, alumni, and partner organizations a simple way in which they can reduce their environmental impact.
3. To push forward both UGA and IMPACT’s goal to improve environmental impact.

Detailed Implementation Plan and Timeline

Step 1: Ordering and Storage (December and January, 2016)

1.1 Ordering

Mess kits will be ordered as soon as funds are made available after award notification, if received. IMPACT will order 380 mess kits. While IMPACT as a whole has approximately 500 trip attendants annually, 380 mess kits will be sufficient for our program (as the same kits sent on the 5 winter break trips in December will be returned and used for the 20 spring break trips in March). This will provide enough mess kits to supply for the 376 attendants of spring break trips (336 participants + 40 Site Leaders) plus 4 extra as back-up.

1.2 Product Choice

The following mess kit, produced by GSI Outdoor and sold by Amazon, is what we plan to order: [http://tinyurl.com/p37xqwu](http://tinyurl.com/p37xqwu). We have confirmed with an Amazon representative that 380 units of this kit can be ordered. This specific model was chosen for the following features:

1. The set is all inclusive, coming with cutlery, plate, bowl, cup, and individual mesh bag. Many other models do not include cutlery.
2. The set is made of lightweight, microwaveable, and strong plastic. According to reviews this plastic is much more durable than enamelware, which most other sets are made from.
3. The unit is sold individually and comes with its own mesh bag, which would logistically make it simple for trip participants to take care of, travel with, and keep track of.
4. The model has 156 customer reviews with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5 stars, which is much higher than all other equivalent products on the market.
Other option considered is listed below:

- **http://tinyurl.com/qyfpmxx**: Also produced by GSI Outdoor and sold by Amazon. This is a 4 person table set that does not include cutlery and does not include individual mesh bag.

### 1.3 Product Storage

We are currently collaborating with Greg Albanese, Associate Director of the Tate Student Center for Facilities and Operations, about where mess kits could be stored if the grant is received. Current discussion is of storing the mess kits in metal cabinets in Tate Student Center.

**Step 2: Training and Informing** *(January and February, 2016)*

Site leaders will be informed of the acquisition of mess kits at the training meeting on Monday, January 25th, 2016. At a date closer to trip departure (February 22nd, 2016), when leaders are most likely to retain specific logistical information, leaders will be trained on procedures and policies regarding mess kits. Site Leaders will be informed that they are responsible for ensuring that all mess kits must be returned, and that they will take financial responsibility for any lost kits.

IMPACT Participants will be made aware of the implementation of mess kits at our spring All Participant Meeting, which will take place on February 1st, 2016. Doing this will help participants to understand the sustainability initiative and how they can be a part of making it a smooth process.

**Step 3: Implementation on Spring Break Trips** *(March, 2016)*

#### 3.1 Send-offs

In the week leading up to trips, the Executive Board prepares large bins of supplies to be taken on trips. Distribution of the appropriate number of mess kits into bins for each trip will be handled during this week. An inventory sheet will be secured to each bin, so that Site Leaders are aware of exactly how many items they have. This ensures that all materials are returned successfully. The Executive Board will load the bins into vans on the morning of departure to ensure that the materials are not left behind.

#### 3.2 Reception of feedback during trips

Site Leaders check-in with Executive Board members each night of their trips. Any feedback on the use of the mess-kits or suggestions for improvement of the system will be logged by board members in a document throughout the duration of the trip.

Participants will be asked to clean the kits thoroughly after the conclusion of the trip’s final meal.

#### 3.3 Recollection, assessment of any damage

At the de-brief Site Leader meeting following the conclusion of spring break (March 14th, 2016), all IMPACT materials will be returned. The Executive Board will count and reorganize the mess kits into appropriate storage, ensuring that none are damaged or dirty.
3.4 Charges distributed for any lost kits

The Site Leaders of any trip that did not return all of its mess kits will be charged with the equivalent cost. IMPACT will then order replacement kits.

Step 4: Project Evaluation (March 2016)

In the Executive Board meeting following the conclusion of spring break trips, the Executive Board will evaluate the success of the project based on Site Leader feedback and will document suggestions for the next year’s team.

Step 5: Celebration and Publicity (Ongoing after trips)

The mess kit sustainability project will be celebrated and publicized as is outlined in “Communication Plan”, discussed below.

Step 6: Inclusion of Procedures into Transitional Documents (April, 2016)

All procedures followed in the implementation of mess kits will be included in position tasks and timelines that are used to transition in the next term’s Executive Board. This will ensure that the use of mess kits continues successfully in the program.

Timeframe Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Task</th>
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| January | • Mess kits will be ordered and stored in Tate Student Center  
• Site Leaders will be informed of mess kit initiative in training meeting, 1/25/16  
• Celebration of initiative will be included in alumni newsletter |
| February | • Participants will be educated about the initiative at the spring All Participant Meeting, 2/1/16  
• Site Leaders will be trained on logistics of mess kit and informed of financial responsibility for lost or damaged kits at meeting, 2/22/16 |
| March | • Executive Board will distribute kits into trip bins with accompanying inventory sheet, week leading up to 3/4/16  
• Executive Board will pack bins into vans at trip departure, 3/4/16  
• Executive Board will receive feedback about mess kit usage throughout trip week, 3/4/16-3/13/16  
• Participants will thoroughly clean their mess kit following the conclusion of their last meal, 3/13/16  
• Executive Board will recollect, organize, and assess mess kits for damage, 3/14/16  
• Executive Board will charge leaders for any missing or damaged kits and order replacements, week of 3/14/16  
• Executive Board will assess success of the initiative and document suggestions for the next year, week of 3/14/16  
• Mess Kit Initiative success will be celebrated at All Participant Meeting attended by Provost Whitten and VP Wilson, 3/28/16 |
April

- The Mess Kit Implementation Plan will be included in transition documents for the next Executive Board.

**Operational Outcomes**

1. 8,946 paper plates, 26,838 plastic utensils, and 2,982 Styrofoam cups saved from waste this year and for every year of the program to come.
2. 500 students gaining hands-on experience of practicing a new environmentally-friendly behavior for a full week.
3. Exposure of a successful environmental initiative to students, alumni, nonprofit organizations, other alternative breaks programs, Provost Pamela Whitten, and VP Victor Wilson (see Communications Plan).

**Merit and Feasibility**

Though the detailed implementation plan may make this project look complicated, the initiative is in fact quite simple to execute. All steps of the implementation plan require nothing more than adding the mess kit project to facets of IMPACT operations that already exist. The training meetings, transportation bins, inventory checks, publicity celebrations, etc. are all pieces of IMPACT operations that would take place anyway. The seamless integration of the initiative into IMPACT’s existing structure ensures that it will be implemented easily for years to come.

Additionally, feasibility of the project has also been proven by its successful implementation in many alternative breaks programs at other universities around the country.
Communications Plan

One of the wonderful aspects of IMPACT’S plan to reduce waste is that it does not depend on major advertisement or recruitment for successful implementation. To enact effective use of the kits, IMPACT’S student trip leaders will be trained during one of our weekly meetings on both the philosophy behind the kits and how to manage them easily on their trips. Additionally, participants will learn about the implementation of the use of mess kits during our spring All Participant Meeting which will take place on February 1st, 2016. These two methods will ensure proper use and understanding of the use of mess kits on IMPACT trips.

Outside of implementation, various communication strategies will be employed to celebrate the implementation of the project and spread its success and philosophy. Discussion of the project will be integrated into our monthly newsletter to IMPACT alumni that will be sent out beginning this January, 2016. Additionally, the project will be discussed and shared at the national Breakaway conference for alternative breaks program during the summer of 2016. Finally, celebration of the new project will be an agenda item on IMPACT’S All Trip Celebration on March 28th, 2016 which will be attended by UGA’S Provost Pamela Whitten and Vice President of Student Affairs Victor Wilson.
November 16, 2015

Dear Campus Sustainability Grant Committee:

On behalf of Brittany Whitlock, student executive coordinator, and the IMPACT: Service Breaks (IMPACT) organization, it is my pleasure to write a letter of support endorsing the organization’s sustainability grant proposal. IMPACT’s student executive board has made a commitment to prioritizing sustainability efforts in its program delivery. Approximately 500 UGA students participate in week-long winter and spring break service trips. The sustainability grant will help the IMPACT organization significantly reduce its waste on these service break trips.

The grant will help IMPACT enact its espoused value of sustainability. Moreover, IMPACT will be in a position to model ethical sustainable behavior to a large network of UGA students, reaching 55 student leaders and approximately 500 student participants. The sustainability grant will have reciprocal benefits, too. IMPACT will be able to advance the mission of the Office of Sustainability through service and outreach, and student engagement.

IMPACT consists of two advisors—a Doctoral Intern, and a full-time Senior Coordinator. As the Doctoral Intern, and on behalf of the Senior Coordinator, I (we) fully commit to supporting our student leaders and the organization in this sustainability initiative. IMPACT is an organization that has a long history of enriching the student experience and changing communities for the better. Moreover, social justice is at the core of IMPACT, and structures are in place to keep the organization accountable to its values and mission. Both advisors will ensure the project has a plan and that this plan gets implemented into service trips. As advisors, we are fiscally responsible given we have a budget comprised of student fee and trip fee monies. We will be certain to monitor the progress of the initiative in addition to the budget.

I could not be more proud of IMPACT’s student leaders driving this sustainability grant proposal. The student leaders inspire me to think about how I can lead a more sustainable life, and I know this grant will enable the organization to promote sustainability that will also have a positive effect on the lives of all the participants engaging in a week-long service trip.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

With gratitude,

Scott M. Brown
Doctoral Intern—IMPACT: Service Breaks
Anticipated Grant Project Beneficiaries & Metrics

This project is aimed at benefiting IMPACT Service Breaks by significantly cutting its production of unnecessary environmental waste. The measured impact of transitioning from disposable eating ware to reusable mess kits is a simple and astounding calculation. In this year alone, preventing the mealtime waste of approximately 500 students, 3 times a day, for a full 7-day weeks amounts to 8,946 paper plates, 26,838 plastic utensils, and 2,982 Styrofoam cups saved from landfills. That impact multiplies for every year that the mess kits are used. Even if only used until 2020, the use of reusable mess kits would prevent the unnecessary waste of a minimum of 193,830 disposable items.

While IMPACT Service Breaks is the main benefactor of this project, the initiative would have a huge array of beneficiaries. As a University-backed and financially supported organization, the implementation of this project would directly support many items of UGA's strategic plan towards improving environmental sustainability. IMPACT’s 500 students would gain a week of experience practicing a new environmentally friendly habit, which could potentially transform into a lifelong behavior. Finally and importantly, the 25 communities our trips serve would be direct benefactors, as the arrival of our students would no longer also equate to the addition of exorbitant waste to their landfills.