Gibbs House Fellowship Structure and Expectations

The Gibbs House Fellowship provides a unique opportunity to work and live in a sustainably-oriented cooperative living arrangement at the historic Gibbs House. Gibbs House Fellows have the capacity to become the sustainability ambassadors for the Office for Sustainability and Western Michigan University. Please review the following overview of the fellowship program structure and expectations for our Fellows. Gibbs House Fellows pay reduced rent and utilities as an incentive to encourage their ability to make substantive contributions to the Gibbs House Fellowship.

Behavior & Characteristics

- Fellows will follow Western Michigan University Student Code of Conduct.
- Fellows will actively work to reduce their ecological footprint by:
  - Minimizing consumption and refraining from accumulating unnecessary consumables and products.
  - Minimizing waste, using durable goods in place of disposables, and reusing materials whenever possible.
  - Sorting through any and all waste that is generated appropriately while emphasizing reuse, repurposing, and recycling.
  - Using low impact transportation whenever possible, such as bike, bus, carpool, etc.
  - Appropriately conserving and recycling resources such as water, electricity, heat, space, and goods.
  - Working together to generate ideas and procedures to increase self-sufficiency with respect to resource use.
  - Buying local first, especially food, and considering lifestyle costs in all purchases.
  - Engaging in "natural cleaning" practices. This will emphasize the use of no- to low-impact chemicals and, whenever possible, will avoid the use of unnecessary chemicals altogether.
- Fellows will work to increase self-sufficiency by assisting with growing and harvesting food on the Gibbs House property.
- Fellows will maintain and agree upon equitable division and distribution of labor.
- Fellows will maintain an appropriate exterior and interior house presentation.
- Fellows will maintain cleanliness and organization of their belongings to accommodate tours.
- Fellows will budget time for programming and projects on a weekly basis and will take these commitments into consideration when enrolling for classes each semester. This may require taking a reduced credit load to allow the time and ability to contribute to the Fellowship.
Programming

Gibbs House Fellows are responsible for allocating 5 hours per week to programming initiatives. Each fellow is expected to schedule their time appropriately to contribute to their daily and weekly responsibilities. Programming hours are not paid except under special circumstances.

 Orientation
The Gibbs House Fellowship orientation will be scheduled during the first semester of the Fellowship to get to know each other and discuss what it means to be a Gibbs House Fellow. Expect games, team challenges, good food, and a good time. Gibbs House Fellows will complete a pre-fellowship survey stating their goals and expectations during this time and will also be expected to complete a post-fellowship evaluation at the end of the fellowship.

 Strategic Planning Meeting
A strategic planning meeting provides an important opportunity to review, discuss, and outline the expectations of the Gibbs House Fellowship programming and projects. The first strategic planning meeting will take place early in the fall semester. Subsequent strategy meetings may be scheduled at the beginning of the spring semester or as needed.

 Weekly Meeting
Fellows will meet together with the Coordinator of Sustainability Projects each week at a set time to discuss time sensitive initiatives and plans for upcoming events and projects.

 Monthly Potluck
Fellows will host a monthly potluck at the Gibbs House to provide an opportunity for students and staff from the Office for Sustainability and anybody else who is interested in sharing food and conversation at the Gibbs House. This is a great opportunity to interact with others and show off the features of the Gibbs House and Farm.

 Harvest Festival
Fellows are responsible for organizing and hosting the annual fall Harvest Festival and open house. The 1st Harvest Festival in fall 2014 was organized to celebrate the diversity of efforts and activities that take place at the Gibbs House. This event is an opportunity to bring together our university and community partners to show off our common efforts.

 Documentation
Fellows will actively engage in monitoring, tracking, and analyzing consumption of energy and resources via various house logs (ie, TED Energy Monitor, shower water usage, landfill waste, etc).

 Workshops
Fellows are each responsible for organizing one workshop per semester that is open to WMU students and the community. Workshops can be taught and facilitated by a Gibbs Fellow or community specialists can be brought in to teach others a valuable skill or process.
Gibbs House Fellowship Structure and Expectations

- **Website/Blog**
  Fellows will provide content (weekly or biweekly depending on house activity) that will be used for social media posts. Posts will provide current updates on Gibbs House Programming, Fellowship Projects, or other relevant and timely information about sustainability. This content should be presented using a written narrative and appropriate photographs and/or video.

- **Post-Event Reports**
  1-2 page summary reports will be due within 1 week following a major event or workshop to the Coordinator of Sustainability Projects. Post-event reports generally cover the important details of an event such as “Who, What, Where, When, and Why”. These reports provide documentation and recommendations of an event or workshop that are used internally and can be shared with others on our website as a resource.

- **Recruitment of Future Gibbs House Fellows**
  Current Gibbs House Fellows should always be seeking to attract appropriate new candidates to apply for the subsequent Gibbs House Fellowship. Outreach may include tabling at appropriate events, hosting informational gatherings, putting up posters, handing out informational quarter sheets, giving brief class raps, and seeking other opportunities as they arise.

- **Tours**
  Fellows will work with the Office for Sustainability and Permaculture Team to offer regular Gibbs House tours.

- **Work Days**
  Fellows will serve as hosts to Gibbs House workday events as needed.

- **Miscellaneous**
  Future programming responsibilities may increase to account maintenance and continuation of various projects or other resources that are established at the site. eg, taking care of the chickens at the Gibbs House property.
Gibbs House Fellowship Structure and Expectations

Fellowship Project

Fellowship Projects are characterized by initiatives to advance the sustainability resources at the Gibbs House property. Project ideas will be discussed with the Coordinator of Sustainability Projects and the rest of the Gibbs House Fellows at the beginning of the fellowship to determine high priority and high leverage projects that will make the Gibbs House an exemplary model for sustainable living.

Past and potential Fellowship Project examples include: researching and installing a house gray water system, managing the house energy monitoring system so it accessible and understood by all house members and guests, researching and installing thermal curtains, researching and establishing chickens on the property, building an intuitive database of Gibbs Fellowship History and present programming and projects, implementing various bicycle generator projects, various solar thermal or solar PV projects, researching and implementing a solar dehydrator, etc.

Due to the varied nature of each individual project, as well as the various programming expectations set forth above, the amount of time Gibbs House Fellows are expected to devote to their projects may vary from week to week. However, progress toward projects should be consistent and timelines for various project expectations can be identified during the strategic planning meetings and subsequent meetings with the Coordinator of Sustainability Projects and other office staff.

- **Accountability**
  Fellows will keep a detailed written record of all time allocated to projects (including research, documentation, labor, implementation, etc). Fellows will also be expected to report their weekly progress toward their projects at the weekly house meeting.

- **End of Semester Project Report**
  Fellowship Project Reports must be completed and submitted at the end of each semester. These forms will be included in the Gibbs House binder for the reference of future residents.

- **End of Term Report and Presentation**
  Fellowship Projects require the submission of a report that is submitted to the Office for Sustainability for documentation. Short 3-5 minute presentations will be given to your fellow peers usually scheduled the week before final exams.

- **Leaving a Legacy**
  When a project is complete, Fellowship Projects will be installed and become a part of the sustainability features, tours, and programming at the Gibbs House.

- **Compensation**
  Fellows may be compensated for documented work related to their Fellowship Project. The number of hours of compensation will be determined on a case-by-case basis relative to the Office for Sustainability programming budget and the priority-level of the project. Initial project ideas should be determined during the Fall and Winter strategic planning sessions. There will be times when project priorities will shift during the semester as needed.
**Gibbs House Fellowship Structure and Expectations**

**Office Projects**

Student employees at the Office for Sustainability are hired to work on variety of projects central to the Office for Sustainability mission and objectives and day-to-day operations. Examples of office projects include: Recycling and Waste Reduction, Permaculture, Bike Stable and Non-Motorized Transportation, Communications and Outreach, Sustainability Studio, Graphic Designer, Photographer, Videographer, and others. Gibbs Fellows may be offered the opportunity to take part in various office projects before, during, or after their fellowship. However, these responsibilities are supplemental to their obligations as a Gibbs House Fellow. Once the Gibbs House Fellowship becomes more established, we anticipate that Fellowship Projects will become institutionalized as commonly recognized responsibilities of the Office for Sustainability.

**Overlapping Projects**

There will be instances when project initiatives meet the overall mission and objectives of both the Gibbs House Fellowship and the Office for Sustainability. In these unique instances, Fellowship Projects may also be considered Office Projects and vice versa. For example, recent Gibbs House Fellows (2013-2014) worked on projects that were aligned with development goals of the landscape renovation. These Gibbs House Fellows lived at the Gibbs House and conducted research at the Office for Sustainability during the winter months, and implemented these projects during the spring, summer, and fall seasons. Exemplary projects included native landscaping, mushroom cultivation, seed saving, hugelkultur beds and swales, food forests, and other site-related responsibilities such as building fence and constructing a hoop house.