

SETTING THE STAGE FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The UNC Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee (RESPC) congratulates PlayMakers and the Department of Dramatic Art on receiving an RESPC grant of \$67,500 for new, energy efficient stage lighting in the Paul Green and Kenan Theatres. With approximate savings of 74,989 kWh per year, the committee is thrilled that these lights can contribute both to energy efficiency and outstanding theatrical productions.

RESPC is a student-created, student-run group whose purpose is to increase the use of renewable energy and sustainable practices through the funding of renewable energy, energy efficiency, maintenance, and energy education projects on campus, as stated by the committee's mandate. The committee is comprised of Student Congress-appointed Undergraduate and Graduate students as well as ex-officio members of the UNC faculty and administration. In addition, an open student group also aids in evaluating potential projects.

RESPC was created through Student Congress in 2003 in response to a successful Green Energy Campaign led by students who felt renewable energy needed a presence on campus. After a bill placed a referendum on the student ballot to raise student fees \$4 per semester, 74.5% of the UNC student body voted in favor of the renewable energy fee. Fee collection began during the 2004-2005 school year. RESPC thus received the responsibility of managing the allocation of the fee and the fee's renewal via referendum every 4 years.

Since then, RESPC has been behind the creation of many renewable energy projects on campus. The committee has funded the addition of a 172-panel Morrison Dormitory solar-thermal array, the conversion of the Point-To-Point (P2P) bus fleet to run on 20% B-20 biodiesel, and the construction of 30 geothermal wells at the Botanical Garden's Visitor Education Center.

While such large projects are vital to addressing the need for more renewable energy on campus, RESPC felt that many opportunities for saving energy remained unexplored. Thus, when the fee required student renewal in the spring of 2009, RESPC decided to expand the committee's mandate to also include energy efficiency, maintenance, and energy education projects.

After 83% of UNC students voted "yes" to approve the new mandate and student fee for another 4 years, RESPC then began examining new types of projects for consideration, such as LED lighting and speaker forums. Energy efficiency projects allow for rapid implementation and a broader range of project proposals, while educational opportunities serve to inform the public about the importance of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Upon receiving PlayMakers and the Department of Dramatic Art's proposal to replace outdated stage lighting in fall of 2009, RESPC delighted in this opportunity to save energy, provide modern equipment for students working with the lights, and reach out to the theatre-going community. The group has greatly enjoyed working with PlayMakers and the Department of Dramatic Art and looks forward to new project proposals from more UNC departments.

Want more information about RESPC energy grants? Visit respc.unc.edu or email respc@unc.edu.