**Western Washington University**

**Services and Activities Fee Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, April 9, 2020 4:00pm**

**Virtual via Teams**

**Present:** Adam Leonard, Caitlin Sommers, Cameron Allen, Christian Rotter (Chair), Debbie Curry (recorder), Eric Alexander, Jackie Baker-Sennett, Kevin Harris, Kurt Willis, Lain Defiesta, Matt Coelho, Nate Jo, Raquel Vigil, Rebecca McLean, Steve Card, Travis Cram,

**Absent:** Chloe Ingle, Ichi Kwon, Steve VanderStaay

Christian called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

**Approval of Previous Week’s Meeting Minutes:**

Due to no quorum at the last meeting, the meeting minutes for March 4 and March 11 were approved at today’s meeting. A draft of the minutes for both meetings had been forwarded to the committee for their review the week prior. Christian asked if there were any questions or corrections to either of the meeting minutes. There were none.

Christian requested a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting held on March 4: Jackie Baker-Sennett moved to approve the minutes; Christian seconded that motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Christian asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting held on March 11: Nate Joe moved to approve the minutes; Jackie Baker-Sennett seconded that motion. The vote passed unanimously.

**Discussion/update regarding changes that may be forthcoming from the university:**

Kurt presented a 2019-20 S&A Fee Analysis (Thru Winter 2020) to prompt discussion:

**Tab 2 (Other Fees)** reflects the Board of Trustees Fees Decision at their April 7, 2020 meeting showing the anticipated financial impacts of the COVID19 Virus assuming a 47.8% reduction. Last year’s S&A Fee Committee recommended a total of $223.98 fee per student, and per Kurt’s estimations that fee would drop to $117.00 per student. This tab does not reflect the breakdown to the individual constituent areas.

Eric added that meeting constituent areas had agreed to percentage reduction for the spring 2020 quarter:

DRAC 100%, Associated Students 85%, Campus Recreation 50%, Athletic 0% (due to Athletics fiscal structure, and the fact that fall/winter is the time they do most of their spending and spring is the time of year they “make themselves whole”, it was not feasible for them to take a reduction.)

Eric shared that the AS Board held a 2-hour virtual Townhall for students on April 8 around fees, tuition and other issues of concern to students. A recording is available if others are interested in hearing it. There was a lot of understanding and clarity realized on the fees and rates situation we all face.

**Tab 1 (S&A Fee)** is a snapshot of the ***2018-19 Actual*** figures recommended by last year’s S&A Fee Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees at their June 2019 meeting; the ***2019-20*** ***Projected***(4% fee increase ($7.38/qtr) estimated headcount=5/1/19 figure used for S&A constituent budgeting purposes) and the***Variance*** based on a slight enrollment increase in fall.

Also included was a breakdown of the ***Actual Distribution*** for fall 2019 and winter 2020; as well as an ***Estimated*** spring 2020 column, which was based on the approval of the Board of Trustees at an emergency meeting held on 4/7/20 for the reduction of the spring quarter S&A Fee (original fee of $223.98 was reduced by 48% ($106.98) to $117. Spring 2020 enrollment projection shown assumes a 5% reduction in enrollment from spring 2019 (spring 19 = 13,787 x .95 = 13,098).

Through the discussion that followed it became clear the estimated adjustments to the percentages for Spring 2020 would need to be adjusted.

Nate shared he was confused as to why today’s conversation hadn’t taken place two weeks ago, and that an emergency S&A Committee meeting had not been called, prior to the Board of Trustees emergency meeting last week to be given an opportunity to meet and share thoughts and ask questions, which he felt would have been valuable given the changes in dollars. Nate also added that students in the Townhall repeatedly asked why they are paying fees at all under these circumstances; when some have lost jobs and are having a hard time buying food. He also felt it would be concerning should Athletics wind up receiving a larger than expected distribution and asked for clarity on the numbers.

Eric addressed Nate’s first question regarding the emergency meeting. While he understood Nate’s question and concern, and in a perfect world, yes, that would have been appropriate, unfortunately the immediate circumstances and timeline did not allow for calling a meeting with the AS. Kurt added that he attended the WWU Mandatory Fee Strike Force meetings and that the conversation was open and honest with no intention of non-transparency exhibited. A great deal of consideration was given determining the various programs that could be cut and still provide essential services.

Adam commented on the estimated annual figures on Kurt’s spreadsheet questioning the percentage used, suggesting clarification needs to be made before moving ahead with budget recommendations. He also addressed Nate’s comment regarding getting people together for discussion prior to the Board meeting; stating that the last two weeks, there were numerous meetings within the division and discussions around rates and fees and that a lot of time and thought had been put into these decisions, working with very limited time constraints.

Steve addressed comments regarding the Athletics budget: the numbers presented are not consistent with the expectations of Athletics and Athletics in no way expect to receive more than had been previously allocated. Relative to the cost savings of cancelled events and travel for spring, he stated that travel costs had not been cancelled, but credited – that money had already been spent. The cost of travel has increased, not decreased, but the cost of those increases has primarily been covered by fundraising efforts. Over the last three or four years, there have been no program increases other than for salary/minimum wage increases. We have a small student crew which costs Athletics about $60K (fall/winter sports). Steve stated that there were not a lot of opportunities to save in other areas.

Looking at the fundraising piece, we are seeing a significant drop in our fundraising over the next couple of months and probably moving into next year; a major June event has already been cancelled. Most events designed around teams for spring sports have been cancelled or dramatically reduced. Consequently, the savings we were looking to see not traveling in the spring (food/lodging) amounts to a net zero savings. Steve added that with the complexity and funding of our program, the results were that we could not afford to take any hits. And he reminded the committee that Athletics has been in a deficit for the last several years.

Additional conversation within the committee aimed at efficient and practical ways of determining the new base to work resulted in agreement that the percentages provided by finance administration were correct, however the dollar amounts were not correct, or worthy of further discussion, until the miscalculations were corrected.

Kurt agreed to rework this spreadsheet using suggestions provided through this conversation and will send it to Debbie and Christian to send out to the committee again for their review prior next week’s meeting.

**Questions & conversation regarding scheduling budget presentations:**

Christian asked the committee if they felt comfortable moving forward with scheduling budget presentations for next week, the following week, or waiting until we have more accurate numbers to go with.

Nate commented that he was concerned with moving ahead with next year’s budget process, feeling more information is needed before any recommendations can be made. There are too many details that are unknown at this point and he would like more clarity before scheduling time to present budgets. Christian and Rebecca agreed more time was needed to obtain accurate data. Rebecca indicated she still has not received all the information needed from her areas and would not be close to presenting next week.

Kurt commented on the current meeting schedule and timeframe in which the committee must work within. He agreed to check with the VPs office to see if it is possible for Dr. Huskey to present this committee’s recommendations to the Board in August rather than in June, adding it would be critical for the committee to reach a decision before the end of spring term.

Nate asked if it was possible to get a better idea of what the actual numbers will be before scheduling any budget presentations and perhaps adding additional committee meetings to the calendar. Christian agreed and thought it might make sense to look at scheduling additional committee meetings to allow time for presenting, if committee member’s schedules allowed for that.

Christian asked Steve if he felt that Athletics could be prepared to present next week. Steve agreed they could be prepared, but that he would prefer the same understanding on the numbers other constituents have for their presentations. Christian agreed, and it was decided as a committee everyone would be equally prepared with accurate data before moving forward.

Rebecca shared that she has been advising the DRAC areas to plan on being fiscally conservative based on the fact they may not get any increase in the fall. Nate agreed, adding that it is not fair to consider at this point all fees would go back to 100% in fall, and suggested presenting various scenarios to allow for accurate planning as much as possible. Christian agreed that scenarios was a great idea. Eric suggested presenting on an aggressive side with what next year may look like using 0% increase with a 5% decrease in revenue as well as 10% decrease in revenue as realistic possibilities. Looking at the reality of what the US economy may look like by mid-April, we are likely looking at unemployment numbers equal to the Great Depression levels. The realities of the challenges that will bring are massive and the more aggressive we can be looking at these budgets from a fiscally conservative perspective the better. Christian agreed, adding that we are working in uncharted waters this year, none of us have dealt with anything like this, and fiscal responsibility is something important to keep in mind.

Further discussion recommended budget presentations should begin with 2019-20 base scenarios using a 5% and 10% reduction of that base’s spring quarter enrollment.

Nate agreed this makes sense, however, because we may not be fully operational in fall 2020, he suggested possibly adding a 3rd scenario with the consideration that fall 2020 remains on-line and fee reductions for spring 2020 are extended.

Kurt recommended rather than a scenario, all constituents could agree that if fall classes are online, they will address the possible fee reduction in a manner done as before, but with constitute input. The committee agreed with this recommendation.

Nate agreed that suggestion made sense, and clarified that he didn’t mean to extend fee reductions into fall, however he did want to remind the committee their purpose of protecting the students and stated that if fall classes are online, students will not be happy with fees going back to 100% as originally planned. Eric agreed and stated Nate’s point was very valid.

Eric also stated that as a citizen and Whatcom community member, unable to access state parks and facilities for which I am paying taxes, there are times where adjustments are necessary. Mandatory fees are kind of a local taxing system; our systems were built on long-term commitments to balance support. Eventually, we will need to come up with the language we use to talk about this.

Eric also added at some point we will need to discuss fees collected this summer as well as summer of 2021, as there are a couple of the constituencies who collect summer fees.

It was agreed the committee will wait for the numbers from Kurt; to include 2019-20 base scenarios using a 5% and 10% reduction of that base’s spring quarter enrollment. If classes in fall are online, constituents include how that would look for their areas.

Nate had a question regarding the spreadsheet, stating that the Board of Trustees approved a new fee level; they did not approve a new percentage distribution to constituency fees. As far as he knows, the S&A Committee has never voted on a reallocation of percentages and is required to do so. RCW 28B states, the S&A Fee Committee has the authority to allocate those fee dollars. Nate asked for clarity on where the Committee is going with this and what the final allocations for spring 2020 will be.

Kurt responded that Nate’s question was a good one and that he was not sure where this needs to go from here, what authority and/or latitude this committee has in this situation. Kurt will start this discussion with the VPs office and legal counsel, and we will go from there.

Christian asked if there were any other questions or comments for today’s meeting; there were none.

Kurt added a couple of last-minute reminders: That any committee members having issues with Teams to please contact Christian for assistance; DRAC recently made a presentation on their revised charter which they requested this committee approve. We will get that Charter approval on an upcoming meeting agenda per DRACs request.

Today’s meeting adjourned at 5:20pm

**Next meeting**: April 16, 2020, 4-5pm – Virtual via Teams