**Western Washington University**

**Services and Activities Fee Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, March 5, 2021; 9:30-10:30am**

**Teams Virtual Meeting**

**Present:** Kurt Willis, Eric Alexander, Raquel Vigil, Abdul-Malik Ford, Noemi Bueno, Steve Card, Emma Duff, Adam Leonard, Caitlin Summers, Danil Sonjaya, Travis Cram, Rebecca McLean, Evan Shuster, Kevin Harris

**Absent:** Debbie Curry (recorder), Ichi Kwon

**Guest:** Megan McGinnis, Michael Sledge

**Agenda Items:** 1) Approval of February 26 meeting minutes, 2) Questions for AS representatives, 3) Vibe check, 4) Looking Forward to Spring 21

Evan Shuster called the meeting to order at 9:27am

**Approval of Minutes**

Evan shared the minutes of February 26 on the screen for the committee to review and make comments.

Referencing the presentations made at this meeting, Eric asked if it made sense to determine a particular format to support making future presentations more accessible to others being able to view when posted on the website. Kurt responded that he had communications regarding this topic with individuals on campus and that there are format preferences (word, excel, etc.) that work much better for downloading. Kurt will address this again with the committee when he gets more clarity on requirements; and he and Lisa Megard will work together on past meeting materials to get them updated in the format that works best so that meeting materials for this year are accessible to all on our website.

Evan asked if there were questions or amendments to the minutes of the February 26, 2021 meeting. There were no amendments requested to these minutes. Danil Sonjaya made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Emma Duff seconded the motion. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

**Questions for AS Representatives:**

Because of time constraints at the end of last week’s meeting there was not enough time to address committee questions. Evan asked if an AS representative could share the PowerPoint presentation from last week on the screen to allow the committee to address any questions they may have.

Noemi agreed with Eric’s perspective that future presentations by AS could be in a more preferential format and shared her screen with last week’s PPT presentation, scrolling through for a quick review.

Regarding subsidies, Evan asked what subsidies AS has and what part of the budget they represent. Eric responded that the CDC (Child Development Center) receives approximately $115-120K a year, which is meant to help offset costs to student-parents – open to students as a first priority and also open to staff and faculty as well. The CDC budget is in the high $700’s. The AS Western Leadership Advantage program in total is about $130K program and we contribute $36K to that.

There were no further questions regarding the AS presentation. Evan thanked Noemi for taking the questions and encouraged others to feel free to reach out at any time with questions that may arise.

**Vibe Check:**

Evan explained that this meeting may be a little more unusual because he is leading it for the first time, and because this process can be confusing and could become more so as we get into the distribution process as we move forward, he opened the floor for discussion, advice, question, or comments – any feedback new members may find helpful.

Noemi asked if committee members would receive a more detailed schedule for next quarter. Evan responded that topic will be further discussed during this meeting regarding the upcoming meeting schedule; adding he would like to set some deadlines for the committee to work towards to support meeting the end goals of this committee.

Eric shared with the committee that there are fees that have changed that at one time stood on their own, but now seem to him more like and S&A Fee; specifically the Sustainability, Equity and Justice Fee (formerly the Green Energy Fee). As the Green Energy Fee became less applicable over time due to costs and a variety of other reasons, the fee was renamed seems to have taken on a feel more like an S&A Fee. Eric questioned who or how might this committee address this potential change?

Also, as things move forward in our budget discussions, Eric suggested the committee identify possible gaps we might see in the way we do things. Not all processes are perfect and there may be ways to improve ours; and he encouraged students and others to voice suggestions. As an example, historically we have been conservative in our budget estimates, based on student enrollment. But we have learned that more aggressive estimates can be more accurate.

And finally, as things change, for example President Randawa’s recent announcement of the need to hire a lead diversity officer, and as we look at recent student demands over the last few years, it has become clear that diversity, equity and inclusion have been critical and important, suggesting it may be necessary for us to consider who is at the table relative to future S&A Fee committees; are there new structures that could be created. As we are looking ahead, we should investigate if we have a mechanism or is there a possibility to reorganize this committee. These are bigger questions he feels should be addressed, and Eric indicated he wasn’t sure we had the time or bandwidth to consider these things this year, but certainly sees these topics worthy of consideration in the future.

Kurt appreciated Eric’s suggestions; addressing his last comments regarding the committee reorganization; he added that there is a process for restructure, which would likely require legal counsel for guidance – referencing the Housing and Dining and Rec Center Bonds and the considerations taken in those instances. We need to develop a process at Western and invite that process in this case to work through any changes.

Addressing Eric’s last comment, Kurt stated that processes evolve and that who we are today is not who we were yesterday or who we will be tomorrow, and we need to acknowledge that. S&A has been fairly stable, but some will remember that years ago, Housing and Dining used to be at the S&A Fee table, but a couple of the constituents felt Housing and Dining was large enough and already receiving a fixed portion of fees and they wondered why H/D were receiving allocations from the S&A Fee as well; so the institution, through the VP of Student Affairs, determined it was no longer appropriate for them to receive S&A Fees – and things evolved. The RCW allows each campus to establish its process, and he agrees it would be a worthy conversation around who is at the table. Kurt thanked Eric for his question.

Eric also addressed Danil’s question from earlier in the conversation regarding the make-up of the committee, stating that since he has been at Western the committee representation has been the way it is now; two voting reps from AS and DRAC and one reps from Athletics and Campus Rec. Raquel commented that but she believes it has been this way for the past 20 years, and thinks it is time to rethink the number of membership reps, especially now that Athletics is more prominent in the distribution breakdown, which may be why they have one representative. Danil appreciated their input in terms of distribution but was thinking more about backup personnel and availability in emergencies, for example when Malik has not be able to attend these meetings AS has had backup to support their group. Steve explained that years ago Athletics and Campus Rec were a part of DRAC, and then became their own constituency with Athletics and Campus Rec combined – then with two reps. When they separated, each constituency (Athletics and Campus Rec) took their one voting representative and that is how the committee has remained for the last 15 or 20 years.

Evan also thanked Eric for the question adding he agrees with challenging the assumptions that we have about what’s mandatory, who the committee is, and how we operate. Evan asked if there were other questions.

Rebecca asked if S&A has a process set up for admitting new members to the committee. DRAC had to address this a couple of years ago. We took time to revise our charter and process which better outlined our procedures. She wondered if that was something that existed or would the committee like to develop one. Kurt didn’t think we had a formal process, as the Housing and Dining situation referenced earlier indicates. He would support making a recommendation (present bullet points) that a process be developed. Perhaps checking with a fellow institution to see what they do, even though we all have our own specific processes we follow the same RCWs, and Kurt feels Dr. Huskey would be open to having this discussion; a policy would honor and protect the process of this committee.

Bringing this topic directly to the voting representatives of the committee, Evan asked if the time and resources to investigate and develop a process for adding constituencies to the S&A Fee Committee would be something the student reps agree would be a good decision?

For context, Travis shared that the DRAC process required weekly meetings throughout a full academic year so this committee should expect a significant amount of work be put into the development of a new process; in particular this committee will have a challenge, as you will experience less latitude in the development of your process than what DRAC encountered.

Evan thanked Travis for his input agreeing it would be a commitment which is why he thinks it important all voting reps are on the same page on this matter. Evan also added that there will be several individuals leaving the committee this year, but that this year’s committee could at least begin the process of changing the S&A Fee Committee Charter. Eric shared he added a link in the chat for the *S&A Fee Committee Charge and Procedural Guidelines* which, as far as he can see, do not indicate any direction for making changes.

Evan thanked Eric for that information, asked for further conversation on this topic or another topic. There were no other comments.

**Looking Forward: What we need to do as a team in Spring 21:**

Assumptions: WAGES

Kurt addressed a bill currently in Committee of the Washington State Senate recommending two years of furloughs for Pro Staff (Exempt): 12 days in FY22 and 12 days in FY23. We won’t know if that passes until the end of April (or so), but there are undertones of concern over fiscal resources being tight. Kurt also corrected the note on the agenda regarding the 3% reduction is not correct and should be disregarded.

Kurt added that the classified staff step increases will continue without interruption, if the employee has not topped-out. However, the biennial bargaining unit contracts have not been negotiated, and as of last week, there is no clear indication as to the status of classified staff wages, which will need to be a consideration when we enter our budget conversations.

Raquel confirmed in the chat that salary increases to classified staff who are eligible for mandatory step increases is still in effect, and that the Enrollment and Student Services Division supports a projected 4% increase in Goods and Services for FY22.

Assumptions: TRAVEL

Evan commented that the freeze on travel continues; not knowing when we will be allowed to travel again makes budgeting difficult, but it does appear things are getting better. – Evan opened the floor for conversation.

Steve shared that Athletics is traveling right now, based on a decision made by the President that we move forward with competing the remainder of the school year, we have obligations and scheduling requirements with the conferences and the NCAA; and next year we anticipate no travel restrictions and are looking at a normal travel year. We have not been told we have any restrictions, obviously we will need to take into account fiscal restrictions, but we do anticipate we will be traveling next year.

Travis responded that speech and debate this summer will still be on-line, early fall travel may be limited, and DRAC is looking to winter being back to more normal travel operations.

Adam indicated that, similar to Athletics, Campus Rec is planning to return to a normal travel season come fall; we will have sporadic practices in the spring, but they are few and far between. Our goal is to get back to normal with regards to travel and equipment rental, etc.

**Preparing Budget Proposals:**

Kurt shared a master template for budget planning with the committee. Kurt indicated that the S&A group has used this process for several years now and provided a quick review of the spreadsheet columns, their concepts and purpose. Kurt also shared a completed spreadsheet from Athletics to provide context and also reviewed that spreadsheet briefly. Each voting rep, working with their advisor and fiscal specialists, will express their wants and needs to create these budget requests.

Rebecca shared that DRAC does a lot of switching funds around, and that Kurt’s template doesn’t provide a place to demonstrate how funds move around, so she added a column to include that information last year, and wondered if transfers should be included in “other revenues and expenses” column instead. Kurt felt that was up to the constituencies, suggesting they show starting and ending balances for reserves funds. Rebecca indicated that is included in her version of the spreadsheet as well. After a brief conversation around Rebecca’s question he felt the differences could be addressed in conversation when budgets are further discussed.

Eric indicated he felt we all have different reserve structures; also suggesting we need to think of these spreadsheets as being documents of record and questioned how the committee should note Covid affected revenue and expenditures so what took place would be clear 10 or more years out. Kurt suggested noting at the top “Covid Impacted” and/or a footnote explaining significate reductions, etc. Eric agreed that was a good idea.

Evan agreed, adding “this is the year for shaking things up” addressing processes from the past that may not be efficient anymore. Addressing the assumptions Steve had added in the chat were a good start:

1) No salary increases, 2) Nominal benefit increases, 3) Minimum wage, and 4) FY19 budgeted allocations as a starting point. Steve added that FY19 was the last year that was considered a normal year and last year it was agreed there would be no increase in fees and no change in the allocation, and obviously this year there has been upset as well. We need to go back to the last time there were no major significant adjustments to allocations, which would be FY19, using that as our starting point and grow from there, with the assumption things will return to “normal” next year; that’s why he suggested these assumptions so we are all starting from the same spot and requests are consistent from each constituent. Evan liked the idea of everyone moving from the same starting point, however the theme of today’s conversation has been challenging assumptions and challenging how things have been done in the past; starting on a level playing field is good, but we also have to be willing to be flexible from there.

**Next Meeting and New Schedules:**

Evan questioned the committee if they felt the next two meetings were necessary. After a brief discussion, it was determined to skip the next two meetings, resuming spring term meetings beginning with the week of 3/29 through 6/4. Evan stated he would be asking everyone for their schedules and he, Debbie and Kurt would determine the best day and time for spring meetings. Kurt asked the committee to please provide spring class schedules, including mandatory meetings that cannot be moved or missed, or anything you cannot get out of to ensure Debbie and Evan are able to select an accurate and reasonable meeting time (hopefully not 7am).

Noemi questioned if sending an email or just updating calendars would be adequate. Evan responded that both would likely be the best. Noemi also proposed, if possible, that there be no meeting on Friday as the AS group has challenges with not everyone being available that day. Evan indicated we would do our best.

Today’s meeting adjourned at 10:33am.

Spring quarter meeting schedule will be established in the next couple of weeks.