**Western Washington University**

**Services and Activities Fee Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, May 14, 2021; 2:00-3:00 pm**

**Teams Virtual Meeting**

**Present:** Michael Sledge, Debbie Curry (recorder), Eric Alexander, Noemi Bueno, Raquel Vigil, Emma Duff, Adam Leonard, Danil Sonjaya, Caitlin Summers, Travis Cram, Kevin Harris, Ichi Kwon, Rebecca McLean, Evan Shuster

**Guest:** Linda Beckman, Steve Brummel, Jack Herring, Megan McGinnis

**Agenda Items:** 1) Approval of Minutes, 2) Linda Beckman introduction, 3) Fee adjustment: Final decision, 4) Fee allocation amount, 5) Adjourn

Evan Shuster called the meeting to order 2:03 pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

Evan asked if there were questions or amendments to the minutes of the 5/7/2021 meeting.

Regarding the vote on the fee increase referenced on page 2, Noemi questioned who had seconded Evan’s motion to approve an effective rate increase of 1.07%, a $2.40 increase to the fee, which covers all COLA increases ($226.38 quarterly fee for next year: an increase of $2.40 per quarter or $7.20 per year).

Debbie agreed to review the recording to confirm who seconded the motion. Minutes will be corrected as needed and resubmitted to the committee for next week’s meeting for approval.

**Linda Beckman introduction**

Michael made the introduction of Linda Beckman who has joined the committee as a guest for the next couple of meetings to provide budget support. Linda is the Division Director of Financial and Capital Resources for Enrollment & Student Services and very familiar with budget projections and the S&A Fee Committee spreadsheet.

Evan announced to the committee he had added an agenda item; requesting the committee review real-time the **Worksheet-FY22 Fee Projection & Allocations and Summer 22 Fee\_5-4-21 spreadsheet** to be sure all dollars were accurately reflected for each constituent. Michael shared the screen with the committee as the review took place. Adjustments needed to be made to DRAC and Athletics budgets which Linda would manage during the meeting. The spreadsheet would be revisited prior to the end of the meeting to confirm accuracy. At this point the budget deficit was $677,063.

**Final fee adjustment discussion**

Evan gave a brief update on where he understood constituencies stood by end of last meeting on increasing or not the fee next year recommending, after an additional brief conversation take place, a straw-pole be taken.

Some points (but not all) made during this conversation:

* Emma agreed with Evan that the COLA was the priority and cautioned on increasing the fee too high.
* Kevin agreed the COLA was the bare minimum to look at and 4% was no way appropriate. He feels programs return more value per dollar than students are currently putting into them.
* Danil acknowledge it was very useful Campus Rec was able to be supported with carry forward dollars.
* Evan reiterated being able to support and grow programs without increasing cost to students is very valuable, but the increase being proposed ($2.60 per quarter) isn’t something that could break the bank but could well save programs and the ability to shape student’s lives.
* Noemi doesn’t personally support a fee increase because she feels it a morality issue stating that low income students are typically not able to be involved in most of the programs offered due to cost or availability issues due to work demands; with classes being on line many students don’t feel they are being financially supported by the university; other areas also increasing fees.
* Evan responded to Noemi’s point stating he isn’t sure looking at this from a morality standpoint is appropriate, but if we do take that approach he feels we have a moral duty on this committee to provide the best experience possible to students. He also disagreed that DRAC is unaffordable to low income students, providing an example of an individual who has been able to participate and take advantage of DRAC offerings.

Travis addressed Raquel’s question regarding DRACs proposed overall increase of 4% yet only supporting a 1.4% increase, explaining DRAC prepared their budget at the 1.4% increase as they (and all constituents) were requested to do; and reminding Raquel she, as the AS budget advisor, had also proposed an overall increase of 4% (she also indicated her support of whatever decision the student representatives reached). Travis recapped, budget for the year you anticipate having based on your program needs were the instructions we were all given.

Travis also responded to Danil’s question of “what is the value achieved to programs by any revenue brought in”? suggesting employment opportunities as one way to see advantages to students supported by the mandatory minimum wage increases; suggesting that going 2-3 years without fee increases puts the university further and further behind; and that in future years we should always be asking how we protect students, not just protecting them as we rebound from a really tough year. A small increase has an important benefit to students when you weigh the increased employment earning opportunities and increased program services that small fee can provide.

Raquel asked Travis if DRACs budget of $1,162,634 is based on full operations? Travis responded that budgets were based upon the way our constituent base understands their ability to serve their students for the programs and activities they do, including the employment opportunities for students throughout the next academic year.

Raquel indicated that she had not received that information and AS did not prepare their budget in the same way; had they done so they would have increased their ask by $75-$100K.

Evan understood that Raquel did not attend some of the first meetings but asked why it was that AS didn’t develop their budgets as Travis outlined, and as the constituencies had agreed. Eric responded that he believed they had and further explained the same process Travis had previously outlined DRAC had followed. He also believed it was perhaps just a different perspective that Raquel was looking at the budget causing the questioning.

Evan shared that he believed all constituencies planned their budgets for next year to the best of their abilities while providing the best services and activities possible. Rebecca added that DRAC budgets had been created to meet operational needs as conservatively as possible: Some cut budgets, some shifted costs, some programs eliminated needs. DRAC prepared a budget to meet operational needs as conservatively as we could.

It was agreed this conversation was unproductive in moving the committee closer to a decision and agreed to disagree on this matter.

Bringing the conversation back to the fee, Evan encouraged the committee to reach a decision on the fee rate adjustment adding DRAC is in favor of a 1.25% fee increase. A quarterly increase would be $2.40 to students. Evan made a motion that the S&A Fee committee increase the S&A Fee by 1.25% to mitigate the COLA adjustment. Emma seconded. A vote was taken in the chat: **The committee approved a 1.25% increase to the S&A Fee and Evan asked Linda to fit that into the spreadsheet.**

Evan requested Linda pull up the spreadsheet again to confirm the numbers input are now accurate and asked Linda to input the 1.25% fee increase as well.

After reviewing the adjust spreadsheet, and making a housing adjustment the following reflect the confirmed budget numbers:

**DRAC** adjustment was made resulting with a final number of $1,162,634

**Athletics** adjustment was made resulting with a final number of $2,201,320

**Campus Rec** no adjustment was made, final number remains $431,410

**AS** no adjustment was made, final number remains $3,061,003

All constituencies agreed these numbers to be correct prior to the end of today’s meeting; confirming a negative budget of $524,785 dollars which needs to be removed overall from constituencies budgets.

Evan asked if the committee felt an additional meeting needed to be scheduled next week to ensure enough time to reach the fee allocation decision. Michael suggested stretching next week’s meeting by 30 minutes; it was agreed that was a workable solution.

The goal of next meeting is to determine the percentage each constituency will receive in fee allocation. Evan suggested one choice would be to carry forward the percentage allocations from last year and each group would manage whatever short fall they may have on their own, or if it’s felt that any constituency has requested too much then a discussion can take place around that conversation with regards to revenue. Evan asked all groups to reflect on the situation and discuss with students and advisors, adding now that we know the fee increase and the shortfall, we should be able to come to an agreement on the fee allocation.

Eric suggested a shortfall of $500K is more complex than a simple distribution, stating this may be an untenable situation and the committee needs to look at how they may need to rethink about where that money would come from; perhaps reserves or go back to programs to look for cuts. Evan agreed with Eric and suggested all groups look closely at budgets and seriously ask where spending can be reduced.

Rebecca shared that if she took the 10% carryforward, DRAC could make an adjustment in ask of $110,000. Evan suggested DRAC further discuss doing that and encouraged all groups to look to close this gap as well.

Fee allocation discussion and summer session projections will be discussed at the next meeting.

Evan thanked the committee for their time and discussion today.

Today’s meeting adjourned at 3:03 pm

Next meeting: Friday, May 21, 2:00-3:00 pm, Teams Virtual