**Western Washington University**

**Services and Activities Fee Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, February 10, 2022; 1:00-2:00 pm**

**Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Michael Sledge, Debbie Curry (recorder), Linda Beckman, Eric Alexander, Raquel Vigil, Glory Busic, Noemi Bueno, Steve Card, Mac Franks, Adam Leonard, Caitlin Summers, Cody Fowler, Lucy Caples, Travis Cram, Rebecca McLean, Ichi Kwon, Mary Piekarczyk, Quin Wilder

**Absent:** Jack Herring

**Guests:** Megan McGinnis (DRAC), Susanna Schronen (VU Operations)

**Agenda Items:** 1) Approval of 2/3/2022 Minutes, 2) Electing Chairperson Reminder, 3) Fee Overview,
4) Last Year’s Spreadsheet Overview

Michael Sledge called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

**Approval of 2/3/22 Meeting Minutes?**

Michael asked for a motion to approve the minutes: Noemi moved to approve the minutes. Mac seconded that motion. By a show of hands there were five votes to approve, 0 nays, and Glory abstained because she had to leave the meeting early. The meeting minutes for February 3, 2022, were approved.

Michael asked if there were any questions on topics covered in meetings so far – there were no questions.

**Electing a Chairperson**

Michael reminded the committee of the need to elect a chairperson among the student voting members soon. The committee will conduct constituent presentations the next two meetings (2/17 and 2/24) and the committee would like to have a person identified by the end of the presentations.

Michael asked if there was anyone interested in the position – there were no responses. Michael asked students to please give this additional consideration and suggested if someone felt one of their peers would be a good fit for this role, they should encourage them to consider it.

**Fee Overview**

Michael indicated that he wanted to give the committee a big picture account of what the fees student’s pay look like. Michael shared the [Tuition & Fee Page](https://sbo.wwu.edu/tuition-and-fees#fees) showing the various fees paid by all students (link had been shared in the agenda sent to the committee prior to today’s meeting) and explained that some fees are flat fees, some link to part-time or full-time students, and some connected to the number of credits at enrollment. This year’s full-time student S&A Fee per quarter is $226.38.

The referenced chart also includes the breakdown for the following additional fees students pay: Health Services Fee, Technology Fee, Non-Academic Building Fee, Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund Fee, Student Recreation Fee, Alternative Transportation Fee, Legislative Action Fee, and the Multicultural Center Fee. These fees are also tied to number of credits taken per quarter.

Addressing the Student Recreation Fee, Adam recently received information regarding their bond refunding savings. This savings indicates that the Recreation Center Mandatory Fee will likely remain at the current level of $109.46 per quarter. Although he cannot make any final assumptions at this point, he feels it is likely the recommendation may be that this fee remain the same. The Recreation Center Fee is a fee independent of the S&A fee. The fee that Adam talked about is not related to the S&A portion of Intramurals and Sport Clubs revenue. He was speaking on the other mandatory fees (including the Rec Center) and the impact they will have on total tuition and fee costs for students.

Michael asked if there were questions or comments. Quin asked if there was a way to see the historical records for fees that have been paid. Linda indicated that information does exist and was able to bring up data from the Budget Office and offered to go back further if it was helpful. Quin thanked Linda for the files she shared and indicated additional year’s data would be appreciated, but for the time being this information was a great place for him to reference.

Noemi asked Linda if other fees were also increased or if it was just the S&A Fee. Linda responded it was only the S&A Fee that increased last year.

**Review of Last Year’s Worksheet**Michael asked Linda to walk the committee though a copy of the spreadsheet used to inform last year’s committee’s thinking in balancing the budget proposals presented by the constituent areas. Michael indicated this spreadsheet is not exactly what we will be using this coming spring, but it’s similar enough to give this committee a good perspective of what’s to come and help us understand the complicated factors involved in the fee structure and seeing where decisions may need to be made in the future.

While this spreadsheet looks complicated and overwhelming, once the students spend some time working in it and taking time to play around with the numbers, seeing the various scenarios that can play out, the process will make more sense.

Michael encouraged the committee to ask questions as Linda walks through the spreadsheet, adding this isn’t something you will master today, but if something is unclear, please feel free to ask questions.

Linda explained various sections of the spreadsheet, the purpose of those sections and how they interrelated. Areas she touched on included how the RCWs can affect decisions or obligations, how the Housing and Dining System Bonds affect the bottom line, what the Music Copyright Fund is, and the effect enrollment has on revenue.

She also showed a section of the spreadsheet where constituents can input budget amounts by dollar and/or percentage to reflect different outcomes. It can also compare year to year.

Linda also shared final documentation from last year’s Board of Trustees meeting so the committee could see how the fee recommendations were finally approved. These documents also showed the housing fees, music/copyright fees, as well as loan fund notations, and the percentage of distributions made to each constituent group in 2021.

Linda added that the spreadsheet is something she will be happy to maintain for the committee as they are having their discussions further into the budgeting process.

Michael added that he hoped he and Linda would be able to make the spreadsheet less complicated before the committee launches into the budget discussions, adding that there were many variables last year due to Covid that will not be in play this year. Michael feels the university is back to a bit more certainty around enrollment, although we are always going to be fiscally conservative, he doesn’t anticipate the complications of the last couple of years.

Because he is new to this committee, Michael asked advisors who have been around longer if the enrollment number was more or less stable three or four years ago. Steve responded that prior to Covid, there had been a steady yet modest increase in enrollment and not nearly as complicated in years past.

Steve also wanted to point out to the committee that the 2.93% left on the table last year was done because of sensitivity towards the cost of education and the impact that Covid had on individuals. This single fee increase went towards funding the minimum wage increase and staff salary increases mandated by the legislature and adopted by the institution and university’s commitment to those obligations. Steve further explained that the university was against reducing wages, laying off or furloughing staff during Covid, so it was essential those things were funded to avoid having to reduce student programs.

Michael thanked Steve for his explanation around the enrollment expectations. Michael also shared that he will be working closely with Shelli Soto, VP for Enrollment Management, who oversees admissions. Shelli typically is conservative in her estimates which helps the committee in their estimations.

Michael stated that the spreadsheet Linda reviewed with the committee will be copied and placed in this year’s S&A Fee Committee Team’s site so it is available for student voting members, advisors, and budget representatives to play with.

Raquel asked Linda if it was possible to make this spreadsheet fully editable for people to work with indicating that the spreadsheet seemed hard to work in last year. Linda indicated it could be made fully editable for use as a play copy.

Michael did request that anyone wishing to play with the spreadsheet not work directly in the one placed in Teams, but to please download a copy of it so that others can do the same.

In reference to Steve’s comment made earlier regarding the 2.75% left on the table, Eric felt this was an important Point Steve made concerning the hard yet critical balance this committee will have to manage; for the students to understand these fees, how they impact student’s access to education, and how they impact each student here who will be paying fees. Balanced with the challenges we are faced with in the operations of these systems and decisions that will have to be made that that affect those operations. Eric felt it was important that the committee understand that it wasn’t just money sitting on the table, but money that cannot ever be reclaimed in the future. There is a 4% cap, which is a powerful cap when inflationary rates may be higher than 4%, for instance. This may be a tension and dynamic that this committee could wrestle with again this year and it may not be easy.

Raquel asked Linda if she knew why fees show up lumped with tuition, and then sometimes with tuition waivers some fees are waived and sometimes not. Linda indicated that she’d asked that question too but hasn’t gotten an answer that has been easy to explain. There was a brief discussion around varying reasons this happens and how fees are viewed under different circumstances. Linda offered to check in to this with the Student Business Office and get back to Raquel with what she learns.

Steve added that the S&A Fee used to be considered part of the tuition, but about 6-8 years ago the legislature moved to decouple the S&A Fee from tuition. Steve also confirmed that the S&A Fee is waived for athletic waivers; waivers have been handled this way since its inception, 30+ years ago.

Michael asked student voting members if they had any pressing questions to ask Linda before the meeting ends – there were no questions.

Michael reminded the committee that the spreadsheet would be available in a couple of different versions filed on the Teams site for them to access and practice with.

Noemi asked if it would be possible to get copies of the fall and winter quarter distributions. She found it very helpful seeing it in a quarter version rather than annual. Michael responded that can be done.

Steve shared with the committee that he typically does forecasting based on a six-year weighted average and based on historical percentages and what’s been distributed so far for fall and winter he believes we should exceed the budget, which is good news for our constituents. Not a ton of money and it will depend on how much is collected and what enrollment looks like, but it appears we will be starting from a positive direction. Steve reminded the committee, this is just a forecast, but they have proved to be accurate over the years.

Michael thanked Steve for that information and Linda for attending today and for taking the time to walk the committee through the spreadsheet.

As a reminder next week (17th) Athletics and Campus Rec will do their constituent presentations. The following week (24th) Associated Students and DRAC will do theirs.

Today’s meeting adjourned at 1:51 pm

Next meeting: Friday, February 17, 2022, 2:00-3:00 pm, Teams Virtual