**Western Washington University**

**Services and Activities Fee Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 29, 2022; 1:00-2:00 pm**

**Microsoft Teams**

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

**Absent:** Eric Alexander, Steve Brummel

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

**Agenda Items:** 1) Approval of 4/22/2022 Meeting Minutes, 2) Budget Discussion, 3) Next Steps

Quin Wilder called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

**Approval of 4/22/2022 Meeting Minutes:**

Quin asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes of the April 22nd meeting. Travis suggested a correction to comments Mary made during the DRAC presentation – Mary clarified the specific comments. Debbie remembered the reference and agreed to make those corrections. Quin asked for a motion to approve the minutes as they would be corrected. Mary moved to approve the minutes as Travis and she requested and Mac seconded that motion. By a show of hands, the minutes for the April 22, 2022, meeting were unanimously approved as corrected. No one abstained or opposed.

**Budget Discussion:**

Quin began the discussion by asking the student voting members for feedback on the questions he proposed in an email prior to today’s meeting. The students did not engage in conversation regarding the questions, but Glory and Mac shared that their group, both AS and Athletics (respectively), were in favor of and are suggesting raising the fee by the full 4%.

Adam responded that they had not requested a fee increase, based on the assumption that as a committee we would not be taking an increase, but if we do, Adam reminded the committee as he had mentioned in the notes of his budget presentation that Campus Rec would like to keep their current percentage of 6.9%. If we take a no dollar increase and the rest of the constituents go up by 4%, Campus Rec will continue to drop which is also something I mentioned in my presentation we do not want to continue to happen. Campus Rec used to be over 7% and now we are under 7%. I would like to keep our portion at the current 6.9%. And if the committee decides to go with an increase, obviously the Rec Center will take one accordingly to keep our percentage where it is right now.

Travis stated he felt DRAC students were in favor of raising the rate to 4% because they believe the reasons behind their recommendation “are for good reasons”: #1 we are trying to get back to normal, and #2 even though the programs that are travel based may find themselves with a bit of money to bridge the gap, they know that money will be gone in a year or two and we are really worried about waking up one day to the reality that we may not have enough to support all of our activities.

Travis added his second comment spoke to Adam’s point as one of his programs was cursed with money, not allowed to spend funds due to the virus, and he was sympathetic to Adam’s position feeling the committee should think about how their decision this year can also not punish programs for things beyond their control so that in the future we do not find programs have lost out due to a virus. It is worth considering Adam’s comments. Programs may not need it now, but in a few years, they will be back to normal and they will certainly need that kind of overall percentage. Travis indicated he was sympathetic to their cause because he has experienced the same thing with his forensics department.

Quin thanked Travis and Adam for their comments which he felt helped student voters understand constituent’s positions, where their leniency and boundaries lie and help us focus our discussion on real needs.

Rebecca commented that she felt that DRAC, like Campus Rec, wants to protect their percentage of what is allocated, which is the reason we are in support of raising the fee to help maintain our percentage of the revenues going forward, maintaining our 16.6% or 16.7% of the revenue share.

Quin again asked the student voting members if they had any questions, comments, or concerns.

Mac shared he had proposed the fee be raised by 4%, understanding that would raise the fee and result in an $8 added cost to students. He had given this a lot of thought and did not take the suggestion lightly. He added that he had looked over budgets of the other programs and it appeared to him this decision would not be a waste of funds. We are only allowed to raise this fee once a year and if we do not raise it this year, then that money is gone and he felt sure there would be other expenditures and needs down the line. Mac again advocated for the 4% increase.

Quin thanked Mac for his perspective and transitioned the floor to Linda Beckman to walk through portions of the worksheet which had been updated with the actual numbers discussed at last week’s meeting.

Sharing the spreadsheet with the committee, Linda began with the current scenario which included the projected fall headcount of 15,000. She had added the suggested 4% increase based on today’s conversation into the spreadsheet. With a 4% increase, the enrollment & fee increase assumptions and the amount to housing and dining the committee ends up with a projected $6.962 million of funds available for the constituents. If we are allocating what was requested by each constituent group, we would have $89,000 extra that could be allocated or saved for reserve or however we want to deal with it.

Linda further explained that the 4% increase is an effective rate of 3.43 % because we are not raising the proportion of the fee that is pledged to the housing and dining bonds. What the students would see is a 3.43% overall increase in that total fee. Linda then showed several ways to configure dollar amounts the constituents could receive and providing examples as she explained her changes on the spreadsheet.

Steve commented he did not put forward a full need request Athletics which is documented in the 22-23 budget request where it shows a budgeted deficit for next year of $152,000. If he wanted to present a request that met Athletics full need, their total request would have been about $253,000, not $70,466. Assuming the committee decides to increase the fee by 4%, he cautioned in doing so – it would adjust the percentage distributions which we are trying to protect and that has been said by two constituents already, Campus Rec and DRAC. Steve felt they are all in the same position and he wants to be careful about that as the committee moves to the next steps, approving the increase in the fee and the fee distribution.

Quin thanked Steve for his input and also advocated for a cautious approach ensuring at each step we all understand where we all are to avoid any misconceptions. He again extended the opportunity to the voting members to share their thoughts and where they would like to take the conversation.

Without further conversation, Mac made a formal motion to raise the S&A Fee by 4%. Glory seconded the motion. By a show of hands, the vote was unanimous to raise the Fee by 4%. There were no objections or abstentions.

Quin shared with the committee that although he is the committee chair, he is also a voting member, and wanted to be transparent about the fact he does carry bias for DRAC. He agreed with points that Steve had made earlier on maintaining percentage increases while trying to account for amounts they knew would not fully fund their needs, but that those numbers were meant to signify the constituent’s bare minimum request. Quin encouraged a conversation around maintaining percentage increases and wanted to be sure nothing was being overlooked before the committee moves on.

Raquel asked if there was a way to determine the impact of mandatory wage increases on the larger budgets like AS and Athletics, suggesting it could be that DRAC and Campus Rec are not as heavily impacted by mandatory wage increases. Travis responded he felt it important to recognize mandatory wage increases are not the only budgetary constraint that programs are facing. Travel-heavy programs in DRAC are facing greater than 10% increases in energy, transportation and lodging costs. Rental car rates have increased up to 25-30% higher than two years ago and DRAC needs to be sure we are including the whole comparative picture and not just one facet. Agreeing with Travis, Rebecca added that although DRAC does not have many full- or part-time staff on payroll, we do have a large number of student employees and various departments have a significant amount of their allocation requests dedicated to those student employees, making the point that just looking at one cost increase is not necessarily equitable.

Glory responded that Raquel mentioned mandatory wage increases because they are mandatory, whereas other increases may not necessarily be mandatory in the same way. Raquel agreed with Glory adding all of the inflationary values that were mentioned by DRAC are also true for Athletics and the AS. Raquel added she had asked the question in reference to groups wanting to maintain their percentage split. Using the Sport Club area as the model, by maintaining their 6.9%, they will actually receive $27,000 above what they had requested. If they in fact do not need to maintain their percentage split and go to 6.5% and 2% is distributed to Athletics because they have mandatory increases – there is some parity around these mandatory expenses and we are all trying to figure out how we are funding the cost of inflation in our programs. If the groups are opposed to considering a mandatory increase over a programmatic increase, Raquel stated she was okay with that.

Steve responded that the 4% increase is the largest percentage increase this committee has seen in several years. The constituents have articulated their needs and the amounts of money needed is well in excess of what a 4% increase would be in raising the fee 4%, assisting all constituents in catching up over the last three to five years. Adding that all constituents have all collected fees beyond what our expenses where during Covid years, but we have continued to have staffing issues where we have had to fund salary increases because of the university’s commitment to not lay off or furlough employees during Covid, and then the minimum wage increases that have been continual over the last several years, yet there has not been a concurrent increase in the S&A Fee. We all have needs and he was not sure that getting into the weeds in terms of splicing the funds versus looking at maintaining existing percentages is a healthy way to go and advocated for maintaining the existing percentage split.

Adam responded that he does not want to see Campus Rec’s percentage get buried any more than it has been. He was anticipating getting a distribution of $480,000 next year. We have travel costs over $550,000 and that is just for Sport Clubs-just as other areas are experiencing because of the outrageous increases in rental cars, air travel and the like, in addition to mandatory salary increases for pro/classified staff and student wages. Adam reiterated again he made all assumptions knowing they were not going to take an increase for the Rec Center fee (passed earlier this week), he did not want to see any of the fees go up and feels like their percentage request is fair especially considering the volatile nature of our Sport Clubs area. Our allocation request does not come close to covering Sport Clubs, let alone Intramurals.

Quin thanked Adam, appreciated everyone’s input, and felt as a student voting member it is helpful in understanding our common goals and what we are trying to achieve in terms of raising the fee and how to distribute it. Quin suggested, based on the time remaining for today’s meeting, the committee consider moving any decision on this matter to next week. He also felt, speaking as a member of DRAC, allowing extra time to revisit these conversations within our constituent groups may prove to be a good use of the committee’s time.

Quin added as an FYI he had received numbers from Linda showing that anything above 2.72% would leave the committee with a little extra wiggle room. As all voting members have voted to raise the fee, he feels the constituents are looking towards the needs of their group beyond just what is being asked for. He felt everyone was clear in communicating that their requests were not necessarily reflective of their full needs and that each group will have uses for anything over and above what is allocated.

Noemi added that she personally would like to continue playing with the percentages and felt continuing the discussion around where the overages go, how much would be distributed, and how they will be used would be helpful.

Steve added that he wanted to be sure the minutes reflected as the committee deliberates over how the percentage splits would go up 4%, dividing it over the existing percentages would not meet everyone’s need; it would maintain the percentage split for Campus Rec. He wanted to again advocate for that and be sure it was very clear.

Mac asked to make a motion to keep the current percentage allocations of funds for each program into next year which he felt was the most equitable increase for every program and ensures equal distribution of the financial pie already allocated.

After additional comments from other voting members, it was decided to table Mac’s motion and further discussion on this matter to the next meeting. Mac’s motion will lead off the discussion at the next meeting.

Steve requested the minutes reflect the full need for Athletics as $2,288,026, or a $223,037 increase over FY22 actuals.

Noemi requested the minutes reflect the full need for AS to be $3,304,076.

Raquel responded to Noemi and Glory within the chat that with the projected enrollment and the 4% increase, keeping the current percentage split in place will not be harmful to the AS.

Today’s meeting adjourned at 1:53 pm

Next meeting: Friday, May 6, 2022, 1:00-2:00 pm, Teams Virtual