

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Sustainable Action Fund
Thursday, January 21, 2016 YU 462B**

Present: Emma Palumbo (ASVP for Student Life), Hannah Brock, Meghan Demeter, Brian Rusk, Anna Kemper, Ed Simpson (late).

Absent: Ryan Peterson, Eric Alexander

Advisor: Greg McBride

Secretary: Bryce Hammer

MOTIONS

- SAF-16-W-4** Approve the minutes from 1-7-2016. **Passed.**
- SAF-16-W-5** Move the item Aquaponics Contingency Spending to Action Items. **Passed.**
- SAF-16-W-6** Approve \$385 to go to the Aquaponics small grant. **Passed.**
- SAF-16-W-7** Approve the transfer of \$3,800 into the Office of Sustainability budget to send students and staff members to OHESC for travel reimbursement. **Passed.**

Emma Palumbo, Chair of Sustainable Action Fund, called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

- A.** Emma added two discussion items, one on contingency funds for small grant projects and one on the recommendations made by the SAF Taskforce and how the committee would like to move forward with them.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION SAF-16-W-4 by Brock

Approve the minutes from 1-7-2016.

Second: Palumbo

Vote: 5-0-0

Action: MotionPassed.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

- A.** SAF Small Grant Application—OHESC Travel Scholarship
Seth said the application is a small grant request to send thirteen people to the Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference at the Lane Community College in Eugene. This is the semi-annual conference that is put on by OHESC, the Oregon counterpart to WAHESC (Washington Higher Education Sustainability Coalition) which Western helped found. The conference is held by WAHESC one year and then by OHESC the next, so on and so forth. The request

is for about \$4,700. Three of the thirteen people are staff members from the OS, four are from the ESP, and 5 would be for students at large. The event is February 4th/5th. The OS can't afford to send this many people because of budget constraints which is why Seth is bringing it to SAF. Seth said if the request was approved they would start advertising for the at large students that day. The OS and the ESP would choose the students together. They would go to the conference, learn, and network, and then a month after coming back they would give a presentation on what they learned. Anna asked how the at large students would be decided. Seth said they'd send out an application asking why the students wanted to go and then the ESP and OS staff would evaluate them on some sort of rubric. He said if the committee wanted they could loop the applications back through them, though it would be a lot of work. Brian asked how it would be advertised. Seth said they'd do it through Facebook, online websites, a distribution email list, and Western Today/Western newspapers. Brian asked if that could be done by the end of the day. Seth said yes. Hannah asked why staff costs are so much higher than student costs. Seth said the main reason is students bunk together and staff don't. Hannah recommended making it clear in the application that students would have to bunk together. Seth said they can make it equitable by saying everyone will have to share a room and if people aren't comfortable with that then they can't go or they can put a cap on the money and then use it however they see fit to meet the needs of the students. Hannah asked how many people it would be to a room. Seth said two. Emma said this application isn't one they've had before because the taskforce restructured things like conference funding. One thing the committee hadn't talked about is sending staff members to conferences. She said the fee language is ambiguous about sending staff members and she wanted to get everyone's opinion on it. Hannah said when she was personnel director they had a similar fund, the Student Staff Development Fund, and she made a request from it and then sent the decision to another committee so it wouldn't be a conflict of interest. Because this application is coming from voting members on SAF she can see why it might also be seen that way. Hannah also said the requests normally come sooner and because this committee hasn't decided on a process to deal with requests like this, there might not be time. Greg said which pool of funding this would come from. Seth said it would be coming from the grant funding pool. Nate and his staff will be going via the budget that was set out and approved and this request would be from the grant pool, not operational dollars. Greg asked if the money is granted would the OS deal with all aspects of the travel and business. Seth said yes. Greg said it just wanted to make it clear who was taking the leadership/ownership of the travel because it's very specific. Seth said they're capable and willing to do as much as they can. Seth said, responding to Hannah, he would be happy to leave the room if it makes the conversation easier. Anna asked if she could abstain. Emma said when Ed Simpson gets to the meeting Anna can abstain because they'd still have quorum. Emma asked if they should move on and come back to the conversation when Ed gets there. The committee said yes. Emma moved the conversation back to this topic after voting on the Aquaponics small grant was done. Seth said the generational capabilities of staff and faculty will increase exponentially if they go to this conference. Ed asked if the staff will have oversight of the student while they're there. Seth said yes. Brian said they'll be able to pass on the knowledge they get from the conference through teaching the students when they come back and

he sees it as a benefit to the students. Greg asked what would happen if it's not funding and what would happen if the committee decides to partially fund. Seth said it is possible to only fund the students it would just mean all OS staff that isn't SAF staff wouldn't be funded. Hannah said she liked the idea of doing a presentation after the conference and she'd like to explore the idea of requiring groups to bring something back to the campus when funding conferences in the future. Seth suggested having each person do a small presentation. Brian said he likes the proposal and sees a lot of benefits. He said in the future if there was more competition for money he would want to look a little closer but since they have money to spend this would be a worthwhile thing to spend it on. Hannah suggested bumping the total up to \$3,800. Anna asked what the timeline of the conference is. Seth said Wednesday to Friday. He also said there is no set process for Nate or him to request funds. They've been requesting it from the SAF but they might want to explore different options. Seth said the disadvantage is a team could come in with the same amount and SAF could approve it without having to bring it to committee. Greg asked if it would make more sense to do it as a pledge and then reimburse. Seth said they can handle the temporary expense. Greg said they should reflect that in the motion. He also said, in times of budget cuts when staff wanted to be funded, they had proposed learning outcomes as a part of the application. Hannah asked if departments have set aside funds for staff development. Seth said they dedicate part of their operational budget to travel but this year they went over on paying student staff because usually the federal government helps pay that, this year they did not. Hannah suggested having a set amount to send in the future, it could be yearly or biannually. Greg said the VU does that as part of their operating budget. Emma thanked Seth for being patient with the process, especially because this is the first decision of this kind the SAF has had to deal with. She then asked for additional thoughts. Seth said they might not have room for 13 total slots so he suggested funding the amount and then maximizing the total number of people going. Brian said he'd guess the hotel rooms were under budgeted. Seth said they're getting a deal through OHESC.

MOTION SAF-16-W-7 by Brock

Approve the transfer of \$3,800 into the Office of Sustainability budget to send students and staff members to OHESC for travel reimbursement.

Second: Rusk

Vote: 5-0-1

Action: Motion Passed.

B. Aquaponics Contingency Spending

Brian asked how the project is going. Nate said it's going good, adding the fish should be the next step. The increase funding will be \$385 or 32% of the original estimate.

MOTION SAF-16-W-6 by Palumbo

Approve \$385 to go to the Aquaponics small grant.

Second: Kemper

Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Motion Passed.

Greg said they account for projects whose contingency funding would exceed the overall budget for the year, even under 25%. He wants to know if the committee wants Nate to come back to them in a situation like that instead of just approving it himself. Brian said they should have a regular budget update as well. Nate said he'd be happy to do that. Emma moved back to the small grant application.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Contingency Funds for Small Grant Applications—Nate White

Nate said he brought this to the committee because he wanted to create some clarity on the contingency policy for small grant projects were they to go over their budget. Last time the committee decided that because the small grant budget was approved Seth and Nate would have the ability to authorize any overage for individual projects up to the limit (\$40,000 a year for small grants). Nate said the Aquaponics groups is requesting about \$380 more dollars to finish their project and, in theory, Nate and Seth would just approve that. Nate said he wants to know how the committee wants to be updated about those kinds of things. Hannah said they could bring it as a consent item so they don't have to individually approve them but it would also keep the record in the minutes. Seth said they're also worried they'll violate a rule their not aware of so he'd like clarification on how far over budget a team can go before they can't individually fund them anymore. Emma said it's coming out of funds that Nate and Seth already have permission to give out as they see fit so she thinks it would be best as a consent item. However, if the entire budget were to go over the small grant cap of \$5000 then she'd like to see it come back to the committee. Greg asked for clarification on whether the \$5,000 limit would be applied to the total price of the project or the request for contingency funds. Emma and Hannah said total project. Hannah said she liked the idea of a percentage but with some projects, like the Aquaponics team, it wouldn't make sense. Brian said percentage makes more sense to him because if a project originally requested \$4,500 and then needed \$500 more it would be a small percentage but it would break the \$5,000 limit and if another project originally requested \$500 and then needed \$4,000 they would've under budgeted by 800% but not touched the limit. Emma asked what percentage Brian would want. Brian said between 25-30%. Anna asked if past requests could shed any light. Nate said there have been some projects relatively small, like Aquaponics, whose second request will seem a lot larger in percentages because of the amount of money they requested from the beginning. He also said with projects like this the students don't under budget intentionally they just don't have experience setting up these types of projects so they don't know the full costs when they start. Seth agreed and said they wouldn't advertise the contingency budget; they'd just have it in case they needed it. Hannah said the Aquaponics project makes her hesitant about the percentage rule but it might be a good tool in the future to evaluate if the project is still doing what it's supposed to, if it's still worth it, and what went wrong. Brian said he didn't imagine it as a reason to pull the plug but rather as a way to make

sure the committee is informed and being asked, which will help retain their ability to say no. Brian said it'll take pressure off Nate to make the decision as well. Greg said he agrees but they have to decide if the tipping point can be quantified with a monetary number. Also, the funds in small grants will be preapproved and it's up to Nate and his staff to manage them though the dollar amounts for projects are much higher so their fiscal impact would be larger. Emma said she likes the 25% suggestion and they could do it as a consent item. Nate asked if there would be no involvement from the committee up to the 25% mark. Brian said yes but if the original project was a substantial amount then it'll be different, as the money gets bigger the percentage should be smaller. The 25% would be for small grants. Seth said the large grant overages normally come back to the committee though there was never a formal rule. Ed said they could decide based on individual projects. They could put a percentage on each project and if it were to go over, the committee would have to see it again. Brian asked if they implemented automatic contingencies on large grants. Seth said it's been used occasionally but it's not a rule. Nate said they should continue to discuss this at a later time. The Aquaponics team is making a new request of 32% of what their original was. The biggest thing was food, they bought some with their existing budget but they need more. Also, buying the fish was more expensive than they thought and the biggest thing is they need a clarifying system to clean the waste so the tank doesn't get too cloudy. They also need supplies to euthanize the fish.

MOTION SAF- 16-W-5 by Brock

Move the item Aquaponics Contingency Spending to Action Items.

Second: Palumbo

Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Motion Passed.

B. Implementing Taskforce Changes

Nate put together a list of the current projects he's working on and gave each task a numerical value based on the amount of time they require and came up with the average complexity score of a reasonable level. He let the committee look at a chart of his quarterly plan. Right now his complexity score is 44. He said he and Seth think 25-30 is reasonable. By the end of the quarter his score will be 33. He plans on not advertising the grant system on campus. Nate said this will give him time to implement the tier system within the committee and work out all its kinks. Seth said they'd like to devote the attention that each project deserves. Ed asked what the status of the dashboard project is. Nate said it was approved three years ago and because of its complexity he hasn't been able to devote full attention to it so its low priority right now. He's taking steps to change that. Brian asked if Nate was asking them to not advertise for winter and spring term. Nate said just winter and then reevaluate come spring. Greg asked about Ryan's time because his primary function is advertising. Nate said he won't be advertising for new grants but he's pivoting Ryan towards advertising for current projects and the program. Emma wanted to clarify if they would still be accepting proposals even though they

weren't advertising. Nate said he'd like to get Emma's opinion on that. Greg said he thinks a blanket rule might not work because of the complexity level of different proposals. Nate said they could apply the tier system as a test run, they could also not accept applications at all. Seth said they could accept the applications but tell people the situation so they know it won't be top priority. Brian said that seems reasonable. Greg said it needs to be transparent, especially for graduating students. Brian said if it's a large grant the student shouldn't be submitting it a quarter before graduation. Seth said sometimes complex projects come at a small dollar amount.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00am.