

**Western Washington University Associated Students  
Sustainable Action Fund  
Thursday, March 3, 2016 VU 567**

**Present:** Emma Palumbo (ASVP for Student Life), Hannah Brock, Sam Potts, Brian Rusk, Meghan Demeter, Anna Kemper, Nate White (non-voting), Seth Vidaña (non-voting), Ryan Peterson (non-voting)

**Absent:**

**Advisor:** Greg McBride

**Secretary:** Bryce Hammer

**Guest:**

**MOTIONS**

**SAF-16-W-11** Approve the minutes from  
**SAF-16-W-**  
**SAF-16-W-**  
**SAF-16-W-**

**Emma Palumbo, Chair of Sustainable Action Fund, called the meeting to order at 9:04am**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA**

A. Seth Vidaña said he had a question about the grant application. Emma Palumbo added it under "Other Business"

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*MOTION SAF-16-W-11 by Brock*

Approve the minutes from 2-18-2016

Second: Kemper Vote: 6-0-0 Action: Passed.

**IV. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Contingency Funding for Small and Large Grants**

Palumbo said the committee had seen this discussion before and now needed to vote on it. Contingency funding is allocated funds for each project to be spent only if the team is over budget. In the discussions they're had for small grants the consensus was around 25% of the original proposal for small grants but they had not discussed an amount for large grants. Palumbo said they would start with small

grants. Brian Rusk said they should define what the contingency funding would be for. The teams would be able to access more money, up to 25% of their original budget, if they overspend without having to come to the committee. The teams would not know they had the contingency funding, the committee would include it in their numbers but the teams would not include it in their budgets. Palumbo said it could go either way, it could be part of the proposal or they could set aside the funds without telling the teams. Greg McBride said there should be transparency between the SAF and the teams that apply. It does not have to be built into the proposal but they should be communicating honestly with the team. Nate White said it has been helpful for teams to know there is some padding, figuring the exact cost of the budget can be stressful. He said the contingency funding can be a line item in the budget so they do not have to keep track of a second contingency budget, which would be easier on his end. Palumbo asked for thoughts. Kemper asked what it would look like in their budget. White said they'd be granted overage upfront. Brock asked if they would tell the teams that. White said they would. McBride said often times when Facilities Management does a project they will have a project cost and then a contingency line and both of those go into the final cost. Brock said for the small grants 25% makes sense but it would have to be a lot less for the large grants. Palumbo said the 25% contingency for small grants, listed on the application, is the group consensus. McBride asked if it would be two separate votes. Palumbo said she wanted to do both small and large together, so one vote. She said, looking back through the minutes, committee members had thrown out 10%, 15%, and 20% as possible contingency funds for large grants. She asked White how much teams normally request when they come back to the committee. White said there is not an average number, it varies from project to project. McBride said a lot of the large grants generally have a construction piece, which is where the contingency funding is usually needed, and when they are building their budgets they are already including some contingency funds for that construction. He said they should be mindful about whether or not they're doubling up on contingency funding. Brock said the large grants are dependent on the project and should be a case by case basis, she'd prefer if they did not include an overall percentage for every project. She said it would be worth it to bring them to the committee. Palumbo asked if that would apply for smaller amounts too. Peterson said things like the Big Belly signage would not need to come back to the committee. McBride said the timelines along which the projects happen sometimes accrue inflationary costs and projects can get complicated, especially working with vendors. He said the workout bikes for the REC are a good example of that. Seth Vidaña asked if the committee could talk about a situation where they would not approve extra funding for a project. Rusk said it's a challenge to do that because the situations thus far have been teams spending a good chunk of the money and then coming back and asking for more so, if a team had already spent 50K then the committee is in a bind and would be hard pressed to say no. There is no accountability, which makes it difficult to say no and he'd like to see if there is a way to introduce that into the process. Kemper said she agreed, and the people applying for these grants are students, who may not have experience

working on projects of this scale. Palumbo said she'd like an explanation more than an opportunity to vote no. McBride said accountability comes into play when the projects get an estimate from Facilities Management, they build in a management design fee which is designed to cover contingency plans. If that estimate was wrong, then the responsibility would go to FM and the committee might decide to not fund the excess costs. Palumbo said she'd be comfortable with getting a report from the SAF Coordinator. Brock said the VP of Student Life should then get to decide if it needed to come to the committee, which would allow it to be checked by another pair of student eyes. Palumbo said if that were a part of the process she probably would not bring most of the contingency funding requests to the committee for the sake of everyone's time. She said a 10% contingency makes sense but anything past that would be brought to the committee. Peterson said something with a time scale, like with students that are graduating and want to finish their projects, could go through a faster process. Sam Potts asked if they would encourage students to factor the contingency funding into their applications. White said he generally tells teams. Palumbo asked if people think the contingency for the large grants are a good idea. Rusk asked if it would be a line item. Palumbo said yes. Rusk said he thinks the percentage should be smaller than the small grants, or could even be a dollar amount instead of a percentage, and anything above that limit should come back to the committee. He said even if they're not saying no the committee should be informed and have an opportunity to give feedback. White said the same thing could be accomplished informally and would provide more flexibility. Brock said the higher amounts could be taken to the committee by the SAF Coordinator. Rusk said they could make it a 10% or \$2,000 rule, whichever is higher, if they wanted to be specific. There have to be some boundaries, even if there is grey area. Palumbo said it could be 10% or the discretion of the chair, she'd like to have some sort of number to stick with. McBride asked if that would apply to things under or over the 10%. He said they need to be clear with people. White said things over 10% should go to the chair and then they would decide if it needed to go to the committee. Brock asked if they're still building the 10% into the application. White said it makes more sense not to advertise it for the large grants. They should know it's available but not advertise it. McBride said the inflation in large grants usually affects them more. Vidaña said he likes not advertising to large grants. He said the SAF staff could figure it out. Kemper said the students who are doing this for the first time need to have the accountability. Palumbo said it wouldn't be part of the line item. White said it would be internal, which would take more budgeting but would not be impossible. He said some grants will have their approved committee budgets, some will have approved maintenance costs, and the contingency budget will be a third shadow budget. He said the committee would approve a project but they have three projects. McBride said he's concerned about making it too complicated and it might be a challenge going forward. As the amount of complexity gets higher it'll be harder to get people up to speed with the committee members turn over every year. He said it should be tracked in the same project/pool so it's not coming out of a separate budget. Vidaña said there could be a total amount that the

committee would approve and on the budget sheet it would be broken down into the three sections that White just explained. White said that's doable it just makes it more complex. Rusk said the committee doesn't really have to understand it. It's the budget people that have to understand it. McBride asked if the contingency would be for any purchase for the whole project. For example, if they go over the contingency and then have small purchases left to make does the committee want to see it even if it's for a small amount. He asked if teams, when going into the last phases of their project, should consider every item they have to buy as a whole and bring it to the committee if it's over the 10% or if they should buy what they can with the 10% and then bring everything that goes over it to the committee. White said the first option is simpler. Teams don't plan for the contingency and having the hard cap will make it easier to handle. Palumbo said if it got to the cap then it would come back to the committee, even for small purchases. White said there would be a check in at the chair's discretion. Rusk said that sounds good, especially when they're stringing costs along that might not be the last. McBride asked if they want to have the conversation when they start chipping into the contingency or close to the end. White said close to the end. Palumbo asked if they feel good about 10%. Rusk said 10% or 15% is good with him. Brock and Palumbo said they'd feel better with ten. Palumbo asked if they're having it be at the discretion of the chair. Committee said yes. Palumbo said for both the small and large grants the contingency funding would not be included in the line item budgets. For small grants it will be 25% and for large it would be 10% or the discretion of the chair beyond 10%. She asked for other thoughts.

*MOTION SAF-16-W-12 by Palumbo*

Approve contingency funding for the SAF, with small grants receiving a 25% contingency and large grants receiving a 10% contingency automatically with anything beyond the 10% being approved at the discretion of the chair, neither being a part of the line item budget.

Second: Brock Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed.

**B. Subgroup Formation for Implementing Taskforce Recommendations**

Palumbo said the taskforce said the taskforce decided on three things that need to be implemented, the tier system for grants, the new student positions in the ESP, and offsetting carbon emissions. They have been approved by the board but need to be implemented. Rather than do it in the committee setting they've decided to do it in a subgroup setting to help it move quicker. She said as it stands now the members would be herself (the VP of Student Fife), White (SAF Coordinator), and McBride (Assistant Director of the Viking Union). She asked if anyone else wanted to join and said she'd be willing to let people think about it before they volunteered. Vidaña said they should define where the committee ends and the office begins. Thus far the approach has been the OS manages the program and the committee approves requests. With the subcommittee they are now starting to work on the management side. He'd like to know how it looks to the committee members and

how they'd like to see the implementations being made. He'd like to know if they need a subcommittee at all. Palumbo asked what the alternative would be. Vidaña said the alternative would be the committee entrusting the recommendations and the implementations to the OS and White. White and Vidaña feel confident they could do it and bring the results to the committee but Vidaña feels like the committee would like to have a hand in creating the system, which is the grey area between the OS and the committee. Also, on the back end the OS could be moving into some committee functions, like when they approve small grants under 5K. He'd like to know where the line is. Kemper asked what the timeline would be for the subcommittee. White said if it was the subgroup it would be winter quarter of 2017 but if it was just White it would be before the beginning of Fall 2016, or by the end of summer 2016. McBride said the charge and charter of the committee says they can recommend changes, which gives the committee a managerial responsibility. White said the committee could set the management goals but SAF staff could implement. It would give more flexibility and a shorter timeline. Brock said whatever they create would come to the committee for adjustments and changes. White said yes, there would be changes to the Rules of Operations, which have to be approved by the Board and thus, have to be approved by the SAF committee. Brock said she feels okay with that but wants to hear from others, especially if other groups want to be a part of the process. Palumbo said the subgroup would address the grey area, which would help move things along in the future. At the end, passing it off to the OS/SAF for the operational side of things would be beneficial but there is value in having the subgroup. White said the subgroup could help craft the understanding. He said he'd like to handle the tier system with SAF staff for maximum flexibility and then submit it to the committee. McBride said the understanding the subgroup would be creating would blur the lines even farther between the OS and the committee, he said they should clarify the lines before they get to the implementation. Vidaña asked if the RoO need to be adjusted. White said yes, especially for the ESP positions and the carbon offsets. McBride said the RoO are a governing document and need to be changed. Vidaña asked who would approve the changes. McBride said the committee would and then it would go to the Board for a final approval. White said the SAF Committee has to approve them but he wanted to know who has to start the changes. He believes it could be done more nimbly and quicker if it was SAF staff. McBride said they're asking the committee to give up its responsibility to manage their Rules of Operation, which is their governing document, because the SAF staff could do it quicker. Peterson said the SAF staff work with the SAF everyday so they could generate opinions quicker. Palumbo said the subgroup could meet regularly to address that concern, the committee setting would be necessary for the RoO. White said that could still happen with the SAF staff because they'd be bringing it back to the committee, which is their opportunity to provide feedback. Rusk said they could do the same thing with the subgroup and they'd have a bigger sounding board. He said the SAF staff could still do the work, they'd just have to bring it to the subgroup. White said there is more potential for delay, with the same outcome. McBride asked what pieces need to be clarified because in the proposal to the Board they said the gaps would be filled by the SAF staff and the committee working together, so they need to identify the gaps. White said application oriented details need to be clarified, which he thinks will be difficult to craft as a committee.

Vidaña said the further they get into the weeds as a group, the harder it becomes. He said the committee work will take a long time and the SAF staff know the program well enough to put together a draft document for approval. The committee lost quorum when a few people left the room, so they could not vote. Palumbo said they would discuss it next quarter and send out an electronic vote.

*The meeting was adjourned at 9:56pm.*

DRAFT