

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Sustainable Action Fund
Tuesday, September 22, 2015 VU 567**

Committee Members Present: Emma Palumbo (ASVP for Student Life)

Absent:

Advisors:

Secretary: Bryce Hammer, Board Assistant for Representation Committees

Guest:

MOTIONS

SAF -15-SU-I Table the E-Bike vote to the next meeting. **Passed.**

Emma Palumbo, Chair of Sustainable Action Fund, called the meeting to order at 4:05pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes to approve.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Small Grant Proposal for Climate Fest: Palumbo

There was a concern about Climate Fest being a political event and the restrictions on the AS when it comes to funding political events. A few changes were made so that this event falls within the policy. The Attorney General of the school has given a list of dos and don'ts for the SAF during this event. Are student fees subject to the same rules that state funds are? Once student fees are collected by the state they become state funds and are held to the same standards. What about once the event leaves campus? A distinction is being made that once the event left Western's campus it will no longer be a Western event, for liability reasons.

B. E-Bike

Beth said that she and her team have been looking at exploring the utility and use of E-Bikes. We considered using them in two different categories, off campus (or

commuting) trips and on campus trips. Right now very few employees commute by bike, and while 42% of off campus students have access to a bicycle only 17% use their bikes on a regular basis. Our vehicle fleet has a couple hundred gas fueled vehicles, five electric vehicles, and no bicycles. So why get bicycles? Health benefits, people who cycle take fewer days of sick leave, they have better cardio-vascular health, better balance, a sense of belonging to a community. Bicycles are used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease, arthritis, stroke, and MS. And bicycles are cheap, they're cheaper than cars to take care of and repair. They don't require parking spaces or insurance. And bikes don't produce very much pollution. Electric bikes produce about 1/10th the amount of emissions that electric cars do. So why isn't everyone riding bikes all the time? One reason is Sehome Hill. It's steep and requires a certain level of fitness to get up. Also, whoever does ride up it has to have a plan for when the sweat. Cargo is another one, transporting cargo or people is something that bikes need to be able to do. The third reason is equipment and experience. Two or three thousand dollars is a lot of money to spend on something that you have little to no experience with. There aren't any opportunities in Bellingham for long term trials of electric bikes, no bike shops and only one electric shop stocks one type of electric bike so there isn't a lot of opportunity for experience. Another concern is the weather. What do you do when it's cold or wet or dark outside?

Another presenter said so how do we bridge this gap? In two ways. First, we'll offer up the opportunity to any faculty or staff member to lease an E-bike from us for a quarter. Second, we'll have one E-bike for students that they can take out for shorter term loans, which would be done through the Sustainable Transportation office. The goal of the project is to line up with the statewide goals for sustainability. Right now we're looking for bikes that will do that as well as which bikes would be better for the people using them. We're looking at different models for different things, like which bike would be better for people delivering paper to the AS Review and which bike would be better for people that have to take their kids to school. The big goals are to get less people to drive to campus so that we can lessen the strain on parking spaces that everyone knows about, lessen fuel emissions, and to let people get more familiar with E-Bikes in general. Recently Spark Mobility did a test ride of E-Bikes here, and one of our alumna works for the company and she identified Western's campus as a good place for one of those test places, because we're up on a hill. That trial, which lasted for three or four hours, saw a lot of people excited about this. Based on that success we could definitely get a lot of interest in this project. And we'd get to spread knowledge about E-Bikes.

A third presenter broke down the budget. It would be \$50,000 for two years. The biggest cost is the bikes themselves. A student worker would run the checking in and out of the bikes, this student already has a job and this would be added to their job description.

Beth said that they've chosen the bikes that would be best for campus. Four bikes were chose, six bikes total would be bought. One is the Solex Public models, one is Yuba Spicy Curry, and one is Butchers and Bicycles MK1-E. Earl's Bike Shop has agreed to contract for bike maintenance of this fleet.

The third presenter said that we will have safety training for people that want to rent them. We would store them in a building behind the art building. If after the two year pilot the project fails we could incorporate the bikes into the campus fleet, we could get more funding from the transportation office, if Sparks Mobility does end up setting up a fleet on campus we could fold the bikes into that. Our liaison at Sparks said that they would be willing to do that.

Questions from the group: Would there be charging stations in the bike locker behind the arts building? The bike locker would be just for storage. The battery is removed from the bike and you charge it in your office or overnight. How is this benefitting everyone on campus if there are only six bikes? Five bikes would be checked out on a quarter basis to departments or offices so more than five people would get those at a time. The sixth bike would be on a much shorter basis, a couple days to a week. We want to increase the familiarity with E-bikes on campus. How is safety going to work on campus? Especially if the project succeeds and we have more electric bikes on campus later in the future? At the scale of six bikes it won't be a big problem. If the project scales up then safety trainings will certainly be important. But overall these bikes are intended to get people onto campus, not move them around once they're here. Plus if we're replacing the vehicles on campus with E-Bikes then a bike is likely to be safer than a truck would be. Have you thought about doing an online weekly check in system that would be more convenient for the renters? Yes, and the program that we've designed now, which is three questions once a week for the ten weeks they're involved wouldn't be a large enough imposition to outweigh the risks of an online system. If we're wrong then we'll reevaluate and redesign. Is there a time limit for renting? We can't know for certain what the right time frame would be but there is a research team at Portland University that is doing a similar program and they're renting the bikes for ten weeks. We can see if that works for us down the line and then come back to this. Have we thought about integrating this program with the Outdoor Center? We pursued that but the Outdoor Center told us that was not within their scope. They don't have the space or the time. Maybe they'll expand in the future but for now they wouldn't be able to handle it. How are you handling the risk side of this project? We're working with Paul Mueller to develop release forms that renters would have to sign. There will be four types of forms and they will depend on whether or not the renter is using the bike for long term or short term and if they'll be for office use or personal use. What are the state laws pertaining to state vehicles for personal use? There is a law about leasing vehicles to staff which is why we've decided not to go down that road. What are the warranties on the bikes? It depends on the bike in question but one to two years is pretty standard. And that wouldn't be voided by the program itself? We don't know but the user would be agreeing to pay for loss

and damages. So the renters would be paying for all maintenance at Earl's Bike Shop? No, regular maintenance would be included in the program budget. If there was something extraneous to that then they would be liable for it. How many total hours does the student have in the budget? 4 to 5 hours per week. What will the student be doing? It was written as variable hours and they would be coordinating maintenance, maintaining publicity and outreach, keeping in touch with renters, etc. Wouldn't that be a onetime thing? Not for the bike that's only being rented for a few days. Overall we don't really know what that job will be like in its entirety. If there is extra hours then they will probably be working on outreach. The position title would be Campus Bicycle Educator. Would it be leasing or loaning? Loaning. How are we picking who gets them? Criteria is listed in the application and our goal is to reduce car trips so the applicants will be crucial. Right now we're thinking quarterly review and the student worker.

After these bikes are used for long periods of time I have faith that people will like them. The shops in the area already seem to like them a lot.

The guests left and the council went into deliberation. Palumbo asked for initial responses. One person responded that it seems like there is still so much to figure out about this project. For example, how is the bike share going to work? How is the electric bicycle going to work with the density of people on campus? How are the bikes going to be able to handle cargo? How are we going to deal with a person that isn't using the bike to its full capacity? Someone else said that they didn't think the students would be getting as much use out of this as the faculty would. Nate said that there are a lot of strengths in this project and that the students would be able to use the short term rent bike. It's an innovate project and it's worth a shot. Someone else said that success of the project would look like long term adoption. Someone else brought up the risk of insurance. If the bike got stolen or damaged then having to pay for it out of pocket would be a deterrent for people, particularly students. Do enough people at the school have renters insurance? If not then we can add the cost of insurance to the budget. What about things like helmets in the budget? Should the renter have to provide that for themselves? Palumbo moved to table the vote until the following meeting.

MOTION SAF-15-SU-1 by Palumbo

Second: Rusk Vote: 5-0-0 Action: Vote for the E-Bike Approval is tabled until the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:08pm.