

AS Student Senate Funding

Grant Proposal

Overview

Title: Student Senate Funding Proposal

Contact: Nate Jo (AS Business Director), Adah Barenburg (AS Senate Pro Tempore)

Summary of proposal: This proposal is aimed at addressing the inequality between the Executive Board and Student Senate. Moving senate elections to the spring and increasing available work hours for senators will allow senators to receive better training and accomplish more in their roles.

Total fiscal impact: Option A increases the current grant by \$7,700 per year, Option B increases the current grant by \$32,120 per year.

Information

AS Student Senator wages are currently funded via a reserve grant at the level of \$55,000 per year. This is a two-year grant that will end in fiscal year 2021. After operating the student senate for a second year under the new Associated Students structure, it is clear that senators should be elected in the spring preceding their academic year term. This requires adjusting the funding available for student senator wages.

While the student senator wages must eventually be incorporated into the AS operating budget, a short term solution is increasing the current grant funding to allow elections to occur in spring and so that senators can have training hours and increased work hours during the academic year.

Fiscal Impact

Option A – Move senate elections to spring, add training hours

30 training hours	\$10,197
32 work weeks (5 hrs/wk)	\$54,384
Total Cost:	\$64,581
Increase to current funding:	\$9,581

Option B – Move senate elections to spring, add training hours, increase work hours

40 training hours	\$13,596
32 work weeks (7 hrs/wk)	\$76,137
Total Cost:	\$89,733
Increase to current funding:	\$34,733



- Student Senator wages are currently funded at \$55,000 per year via a Reserve Grant passed in 2019 and senators are paid \$16.50 per hour according to the 3B AS employee classification. Wages are adjusted at a 3% increase for FY21, due to an expected increase in minimum wage.
- In Option A, 30 training hours refers to attendance at AS Fall Staff Development (1 week).
- In option B, 40 training hours refers to attendance at AS Fall Staff Development (1 week) plus an additional 10 planning hours to be used for senate specific training or else to begin working on projects that senators will carry out though out the year.

Justification

Need to Shift Elections

Because the AS Student Senate is elected in the fall of the academic year and the Executive Board is elected in the spring of the previous year, senators are at a disadvantage in terms of training. If elections were shifted to the spring, senators would have time to train prior to fall quarter and hit the ground running at the start of the academic year.

Need for Additional Work Hours

Student Senators currently work approximately 5 hours per week 19 hours total per month. They also are supposed to sit on at least two committees per quarter, meet with the Senate Pro Tempore to review work, hold office hours, maintain their email, meet with their deans, commit two hours every other week to student senate meetings, and commit time to projects that their constituents care about.

For example, an At-Large Senator sits on the AS Executive Board which meets for two hours each week, the Academic Coordinating Commission which meets for two hours every other week, and the Student Senate meetings which are two hours every other week. Taking into account these three committee meetings (16 hours) there are only three hours left in the month to do the rest of their important work. Increasing available work hours to 7 per week would allow senators to better balance their committee meetings, office hours, and projects and better serve their constituents.

Alternative Approaches

If elections are held during fall quarter, it takes at least a month for the filing period, candidate meetings, and voting before senators can be elected. Once elected, senators must be trained in order to work effectively, which takes additional time. Senators are left in catch-up mode for the rest of the year.

If work hours are not increased, the number of committees assigned to senators must decrease in order to make the work sustainable. This may lead to some committees not having senate representation which would be detrimental to the spirit of academic shared governance.

