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**AS Finance Council**

April 16, 2020 2:30 p.m. Teams Online Meeting

**Members: *Present:*** Nate Jo, Chair (AS Business Director), Lani Defiesta (AS President), Adah Barenburg (AS Student Senate Pro Tempore), Corey Griffis (student at-large), Keenan Kaemingk (Activities Rep), Christina Ngo (Resources Rep) ***Absent:*** Nicole Ballard (Student Senator), Rachel Walsh (Central Services Rep), Selome Zerai (VP for Activities),

**Advisors:** Leti Romo, Assistant Director for Representation & Governance;Raquel Vigil, Business Manager

**Secretary:** Cindy Monger, Dean of Students Unit Fiscal Specialist

**Guests:**  Jeff Bates, Publicity Center Manager; Dr. Fred Collins, Assistant Director for Viking Union Outdoor Recreation; Jenn Cook, Club Activities Manager; Joanne DeMark, Leadership Development Specialist; Karen Deysher, Student Advocacy & Identity Resource Center Coordinator; Casey Hayden, Assistant Director of Student Activities; Stephen Magnuson, Outdoor Center Programs Coordinator; Alicia Prokppenko, AS Assistant Director for Club Finances;

**MOTIONS**

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| **FC-20-S-01** | Approval of the minutes of March 11, 2020. ***Passed*** |

***Nate Jo, chair, called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.***

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of the Minutes**

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| *MOTION* | *FC-20-S-01* | *by Barenburg* |
| Approval of the minutes of March 11, 2020. |  |  |
| Second: Griffis  | Vote: 4 - 0 - 1 | Action: Passed |

**III. Revisions to the Agenda**

1. **Public Forum**
* Vigil asked if the process for Decision Packages would be discussed. Jo said they would be in Information Item C.
1. **Action Items**

**VI. Information Items**

1. AS Student Development Fund Policy (Deactivation)

Jo said they are requesting deactivation of this policy because the name of the fund and approval process has changed. It also references positions that don’t exist. It also prevents the AS Board from accessing funds. Jo said they are looking into moving this funding source into the Reserves Policy and therefore a new policy would be written. They suggest that the Personnel Office reference other policies that also handle development for student employees. There were no questions.

1. AS Budget Authority Policy (Deactivation)

Jo said they are requesting deactivation of this policy because students have not been Budget Authorities for a few years because the Budget Authority for the State lies with Professional Staff. There are now Student Budget Coordinators as identified by their Job Descriptions. Alexander said that at the time this policy was in place the students were also not official Budget Authorities and instead Vigil was the Authority for all of the AS Budgets. This model has not been used for several years and yet the policy remained active.

1. FY21 Budget Discussion

The AS has been asked by Services & Activities Fee Committee to put together a budget with a 5% and a 10% drop in enrollment. In summer there will be no events and all classes will be online. The original base budget requests were for $3,265,793. This would have left them with a $111,047 deficit. They have requested Budget Authorities to look critically at their budget specifically for summer to identify what they believe to be essential workers. Vigil also adjusted several budgets for the Hiring Freeze, for example they will not be replacing the Dean of Students at this time. They also planned to hire an Assistant Director to oversee the Ethnic Student Center and Student Advocacy & Identity Resource Centers, with the freeze they will not be hiring this year. The two student positions had summer quarter but were removed at the recommendation of the supervisors. Also, Vigil has moved her position to .8 for the rest of the year and will only work 4 days a week. Alexander thinks that it was a little premature to remove all of the funding for some positions, so they may not have as many reductions appears here. He will work with Vigil to review. What they are looking at is at least a $100,000 deficit for the year, prior to taking out any hours for summer. Jo said that the process for Services & Activities Fee (S & A) reduction was a lot of hard work for people, but it was also a successful process. Jo wants to find a successful process for next year’s budget as well.

Alexander doesn’t think that we need to have detailed reductions to bring this to Services & Activities Fee Committee. He thinks that they can just get the numbers from that committee and split it across the same percentages that were used last year. Unless the AS thinks they will ask for a larger percentage. Jo said at this point they are working forward to tell S & A how much they need, but then they may get the numbers from S & A and then they may have to work backwards. Jo said that if they look at the budget critically and there are things that they cannot cut, then the AS may need to ask for more from S & A.

Jo asked if Finance Council needs more information to help them make decisions. What would they need to help them? There were more questions about timeline and process. Jo told the committee that the final AS Budget passed by the Board has not been completed before S & A budget is completed for many years. What it comes down to is by the end of this academic year they have to make a decision on the percentage allocation. In terms of the budget presentation, they don’t have to have every line item complete by the time they present to S & A. Vigil said that given that students are doing remote work summer quarter and possibly fall quarter, would the committee be advocating again to reduce the fee to as low as possible again? If this is possible then they are looking at a potential of $400,000 that needs to be reduced and they wouldn’t necessarily have that much in AS Reserves.

Alexander said there is a group of folks getting together to look at the auxiliary services of the university, including AS and Viking Union, campus rec, housing & dining, athletics. These are groups that get no funding from the state or from tuition. Alexander said that he recommends looking at a 15% reduction based on national numbers. Students being online for fall and winter doesn’t impact auxiliary in the same way it impacts others. When there are no people on campus, it is hard to figure out how to collect funds for these auxiliary services. This is also not something that is paid into only when people want to pay them. There are some fees that are still required based on agreements. Alexander said that they know that they are going to come out of this eventually, but they can’t have the system be so reduced that they don’t have the services needed for students when they return. Jo said that they are limited in their knowledge and therefor have some struggles making decisions long term, but it is important to keep long term in mind. Jo said that if students would be better off having this money in their pockets now, then that is an important perspective to keep in mind. Romo was an employee during the first recession in 2008. It’s good to take free money, but also not good to have it so they do not have the services when they come back. Alexander said it is a lot harder to get funding than to reduce it. They can reduce now, but they can only increase at 4% from then on. They are still down 36 employees at Western from state-funded positions from before the 2008 recession. Those reductions didn’t come back in the same way. Vigil said that the students may think that the AS is operating at a 15% budget level, but really, they are taking funds from reserves and they had one-time cost savings from unfilled positions. Hayden said that the 5% and 10% reductions are based on less students, not based on reducing the fee costs to individual students.

Jo asked what the thoughts of the council are about the fee level itself for summer quarter. Barenburg asked what the fee is for students during the summer. It is $14.95 per credit for up to 10 credits. Griffis asked if they can find out how many credits people typically take during the summer. Alexander said that this is a portion of that charge, the rest is to Campus Recreation and the Departmentally Related Activities Committee which may not be able to continue with reductions.

Vigil said that the S & A fee is kind of like a membership, more so than a tax. People pay a gym fee and they pay the same if they use it once per quarter or every day. It remains the same price. Vigil asked the committee to think about what they think a fair fee would be given the reduction in services, balanced with the need to continue to think about the future. Barenburg asked how many students will be working for the AS over the summer. Hayden said there are 62 positions that are either working all summer or have planning hours. This is not counting the trip leaders because there will not be trips this summer. The work varies a lot over the summer, there are some people working for summer and some people who are primarily planning for the launch of fall. The organization has discussed for years what the returns are there for the students paying the fee during the summer because they try to give returns to current students when they pay the fee. It is possible to do a one-time savings but can’t continue that without real impacts on delivery. Vigil said that the summer fee of $170,000 doesn’t go very far towards what the AS is paying out. The academic year subsidizes the summer at almost a million per quarter. Summer funds things like the Child Development Center, Ethnic Student Center is open, summer concerts, some Outdoor Center, and there is some representation & government. Barenburg said that it is hard to think of how these can be accessible to student this summer. Alexander said that a decision has not been made yet about whether people will be allowed on campus during summer quarter. He said that if summer should allow people to utilize services on some level, there could be a scenario where Outdoor Center could be accessed. Alexander knows that 65-70% of students don’t take class, but they still may live in Bellingham and may utilize services if enrolled in the fall. If the AS took an 85% reduction again for the summer, they would only get about $25,000 in fee money. Griffis thinks that there is uncertainty about what the AS can provide in person programming, and also just because the service is accessible, doesn’t mean that people will utilize them. Griffis asked if there any data from this quarter about utilization of resources at this point for spring quarter now that we are online? Jo thinks that this is a great question and looking at the cost/benefit analysis. Hayden said that people are paying attention to online efforts there were 117 students served by the pop-up pantry. Hoover said that KUGS Webcast access for last week was167,759 total, daily 23,965 listeners. This is good news in terms of engagement.

Defiesta knows that this is a complex decision to make and it is important to remember that they are working within a system. They have to see what they can do within the system to benefit the students. They want to benefit the students, but a lot of the money is connected in ways that most people don’t know about. Defiesta wants to support what students need and want, but also to think of the long-term impact on students.

Jo said that the hard deadline for budget completion is by the end of the Academic Year and it needs to be passed by Finance Council, Senate and AS Board. This would mean 3 weeks before the end of the quarter. Jo believes the AS will present their budget to S & A in 2-4 weeks.

Jo said that there is an adjusted column in the budget summary that is reflecting the reduced or vacant positions during the summer. They are looking at how to come up with the 5% and 10% reductions. Alexander thinks that the raw numbers from Vigil, with some adjustments, will help. Alexander says that they don’t know what the S & A committee will move forward with in terms of reductions. They may decide to move forward with a 10% reduction based on opening in the fall. Alexander thinks that they might be a little ahead of the process until a decision is made by S & A. One of the things that needs to be decided is if they wish to ask for a higher percentage. Vigil said that it is hard to recoup money once it is let go. She doesn’t think that the reduction in enrollment doesn’t really make sense at the S & A level, it would make sense to talk about what level they believe the fee should be set at and decide on percentage splits. This would be done knowing that the enrollment may drop, and this could impact the budget this is an internal process. Jo said that typically in AS budgeting enrollment is a secondary characteristic that is handled more internally. Jo is hearing that we need more information to even come up with a process.

Jo asked if there are any comments or thoughts about decision packages this year. Jo does think that some can be funded from discretionary reserves as well. Vigil said that they could decide to review all packages through the grant process. Romo said that some of the proposals are dependent on if people are back on campus. She wondered if it is in the best interest to wait and see how to move forward. Jo said that the advantage in keeping them in Grants is that if funding isn’t spent then it just stays in the Discretionary Reserves. The decision packages were reviewed throughout this year and were to be considered with the entire budget. Deysher was surprised there wasn’t more of a public forum for the proposals. They think this could be helpful in terms of people understanding how things all fit together. Jo has put information online about how to access these meetings as well as the budget recommendations being heard before public meetings Student Senate and AS Exec Board. Alexander said that the AS Finance Council is new this year. Alexander hasn’t ever seen an integrated process. The process has been changing almost yearly. He thinks there is a lack of collective conversations about the AS Budget as a whole. Jo said that there will be an assessment at the end of this process and they welcome feedback for transparency and improvement.

The S & A Committee meets after this and hopefully they will get more information about that process. Budget Authorities can make changes to their budgets in teams now if there are known changes.

**VII. Other Business**

**VIII. Adjourn**

***The Meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.***