



AS Finance Council

February 26, 2020 2:30 p.m. VU 460

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

Advisors: Leti Romo, Asst Director for Representation & Governance, Raquel Vigil, Business Manager

Secretary: Cindy Monger, Dean of Students Unit Fiscal Specialist

Guests: Victoria Matey-Mendoza, AS Ethnic Student Center Programming Manager

Nate Jo, chair, called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

FC-20-W-02 Approval of the minutes of February 19, 2020. *Passed*

FC-20-W-03 Move the UCWLC Grant Proposal to an Action Item. *Passed*

FC-20-W-04 Approve \$6,000 as a onetime Grant to the ASBDIV Budget for attendance of six individuals at the United Collegiate Women's Leadership Conference. *Passed*

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION FC-20-F-02 by Ngo

Approval of the minutes of February 19, 2020.

Second: Barenburg Vote: 6 - 0 - 0 Action: Passed

III. Revisions to the Agenda

IV. Public Forum

V. Training Modules

VI. Information Items

A. Setting the AS Budget Increase Level

Last week the council learned that excess or residual dollars come from increased enrollment, over budgeting, or salary savings. Jo said that the total requested in decision packages is \$72,584. This is the total amount as packages were due at the end of January. If this was all added to the Operating Budget it would be \$3,343,417. Even with a 4% increase of the Services & Activities Fee (S & A) and a \$50,000 deficit the AS Budget would still be short in funds by \$12,481. This includes asking S & A for a 4% increase which is the maximum increase allowed. In the last 5 fiscal years the AS has left at least \$150,000 unspent to go into the AS Reserves, the majority of this is from salary savings due to vacant pro staff positions. Jo thinks in looking at the budget they should consider precedent and how to move towards sustainable budgeting in the future. They could set a goal of stabilizing the budget. Griffis is puzzled as to why they are trying to figuring out how much to increase the fund first, instead of looking at how much they need and what would be needed based on that. Jo said that in a presentation to budget authorities they said that there is a finite amount of funding available for decision packages. Barenburg feels like they could have a values based discussion and not take action. Zerai thinks it makes sense to look at what is requested in the packages. Vigil said this would really become an advisory number. The council would still review the budgets and make decisions. Jo was thinking that the council feedback, Jo proposed looking at all of the decision packages first and then looking at what the levels should be. Ballard asked for data on how an increase to the Services & Activities Fee would impact students in dollars. For example in a 1% increase it would be x dollars per year, a 2% increase will

be x dollars per year. Jo would like to have an approved draft AS Budget from Finance Council by the first week in April.

B. Rubrics for Decision Packages & Grant Proposals

Jo presented a draft rubric created from the input given last meeting. They would like to add a category for need as well. The achievements of objectives section is only for proposals to operationalize grants. Zerai suggests looking at Western's values and strategic plans. She feels it will be hard to specifically measure the Mission Statement of offices. Vigil thinks that it is an assessment based on the proposal and the office's Mission Statements. There are concerns about the AS not having a current Mission Statement. Vigil said that until a new statement is passed the AS Program Standards stand. Vigil thinks for this particular year, because they didn't set the rubric before people applied for the decision packages, the council needs to give a bit of leniency. Jo said after the rubric is passed, it will be sent out to Budget Authorities to make changes to their proposals as they wish. Barenburg would like to see the council consider if decision packages are environmentally sustainable. Ballard agrees they should add another line on the rubric for sustainability. Romo suggested environmental impacts. Romo said that she also thinks they should think about the WWU Mission and Strategic Plan, she feels it's a good connection and opportunity. She suggested editing to say AS/Western Mission Statement.

C. ESC Admin Decision Package

Matey-Mendoza said they would like to hire one more office assistant for the front desk. Currently they are allocated for one office assistant that isn't work study. The work study positions cannot be hired until part way through fall quarter. Matey-Mendoza is happy to have work study students because they are serving a need, but really wants to start the year off strong. Barenburg asked if she thinks that without the opening of the MCC, will there still be enough for this position to do. Matey-Mendoza said they still have an opening kick-off for the ESC, the conference, and Indigenous People's day at the beginning of the year. This need has become more important with the expansion of the space. Walsh said that it is hard to get students started with work study due to the hiring process. Matey-Mendoza said they are office assistants, but in the job descriptions they do support the programs that are put on in the ESC and therefore are called Program Assistants. They help with last minute tours, room/event support, etc. Jo said it is an option to suggest funding it as a grant and then more gradually add money to the operating budget. Jo does agree that this feels less sustainable. Matey-Mendoza said they just hired someone last week partially due to difficulties with the work study hiring process. Zerai asked if the work would mostly be in fall quarter. Matey-Mendoza said that currently they have 5 assistants, but there is not always coverage for the hours needed at the front desk. She said that this would be a need for the year.

D. ESC Retreat Decision Package

The Ethnic Student Center (ESC) Retreat has been happening since 1990 as an off campus time to connect, cultivate identity exploration, learning from peers and colleges and learning about resources. It is a time for first year students to meet with peers when they may have just left home for the first time and returners to provide mentorship. In general because marginalized students are growing in numbers on campus they are starting to outgrow the Camp Casey space. They always have students that they have to turn down in spite of having 130 student spots available. The sweatshirts or t-shirts are an intentional expense because it is a piece of the conference that you take with you and students continue to wear them, even two years later. In the last two years the \$40 fee for attendance was removed and the assessments have said that it is would be a barrier to attendance. This year was the first year they had more third year students attend, but they are working with Residence Life to involve more first year students. This year they did go over budget again this year, but only by a little bit because they only went for one night. This budget has been underfunded for a few years. This year they were also able to get a discount because there was an

issue with the nutritional value of the food. Zerai asked if they would leave Friday afternoon after class. She wondered if they would get an additional impact in having the conference start later on Friday versus leaving Saturday morning. Matey-Mendoza said that this year things were back to back that it did not allow for people to decompress or engage naturally. Barenburg asked how many people were unable to attend. Matey-Mendoza said that there were about 15 students that were on the waitlist and unable to attend this year. There was a rubric for deciding which students would be offered a spot. In 2016 there was a storm predicted and the conference was cancelled. The next year there were only about 70 students attending in 2017 because they did not have the continuity from the year before. 2018 was the first year that they offered not to charge a fee and registration was full. In the last two years there has been a really good rationale for dropping the \$40 fee to create more access. Matey-Mendoza said that departments have been committing funding to sponsor student attendance at the conference. Whatcom and Northwest Indian College pays full cost to attend the event. There is a concern about how many students... Ballard asked if they have looked at other locations. They looked at North Cascade and that is really expensive. Matey-Mendoza doesn't think that it is feasible to change venues this year. Jo said it was two nights, but was reduced to one night. Vigil said the ESC Retreat was a two night retreat at Camp Casey for many years. When the AS was going through some budget cuts. They cut the funding and made a grant to allow for some more assessment. She believes during that time it was a one night retreat, but students benefited more from a 2 night retreat. When it came time to put the funding back in the operating budget for the two nights, but they didn't account for the inflation that occurred over the 3 years. It was underfunded. In 2018 there was a determination not to charge and they thought they would be about \$4,000 over budget. There was a recognition that there would be savings within the ESC. It ended up being about \$10,000 over budget. In 2019 they had not asked for an increase in funds and to save funding they stayed on campus the first night and then moved to Camp Casey. They were approved to increase by the AS Fund Financial Manager to \$21,000 is the true cost of one night. For two nights it would be about \$4,000 more than the base budget request. Zerai is still critical of the impact of two nights away. If students are leaving at 4:30 or 5 pm what time would they get to Camp Casey. Ngo said that they get there about 7 pm on the bus, they have dinner and then go to the auditorium for the opening session. Jo said that personally it was nice to do homework here, pack and meet people in the ESC before leaving on the trip, but on the other hand there is a connection that happens with multiple days. Time away over night with a group of people has a transformative impact. Although they are not sure if two nights is enough to make a strong connection. Ngo feels like it could be a struggle to make it to the bus, she was almost late once. Ballard said that there are also students who have later classes. Zerai asked for a better cost breakdown and some Assessment information.

E. Diversity Initiative Fund Grant Proposal

This is a grant proposal from AS Reserves for funding for the Diversity Initiative Fund. The budget in the current year is based on sending students to the Oregon Students of Color Conference (OSCC). Instead the AS VP for Diversity would like to send 6 AS Employees to a conference in New Jersey. This would be a \$6,000 grant to cover the cost of transportation and lodging of the additional students. The operating budget funding would be used to send three students as well for a total of 9. Kaemingk clarified that in the past it was available to all genders, and now it will only be available to womxn identified. The feedback was the last few years the Oregon Students of Color Conference has fallen short and it became centered on one identity. They are requesting to attend a different conference. Kaemingk said that he attended the students of color conference in Washington last year at Whatcom Community College. He is confused as to why they aren't bringing a lot of students to a local conference, instead of 9 to a national conference. Ngo said that OSCC was good in the past because of what they focused on, but that is not the case anymore. Vigil wants to make sure that Council members understand what they are

looking at right now is very different than the budget process. The AS Finance Council now can make allocations from the AS Grants of \$415,000. The reason that they are looking at it now instead of after the AS Budget Process is complete is that they are wanting to go this year. Ballard said that she understands, but also it is all student dollars and it is important to include values about where our money is going and how many students are being impacted. Kaemingk is concerned about impacting 9 students versus many more students. Romo said that they don't get to tell the AS Vice President for Diversity where to go for a conference, instead they are making a decision about this proposal. Jo said these voting members are the decision makers and the voice of the students on the financial affairs of the Associated Students. With there being in some cases veto power by the Executive Board and the Student Senate. Jo said that anything that a student brings up here is valid, however they do need to evaluate it based on the proposal that is in front of the council. For instance, the rubric includes impact on Western students, this could get a low rating and Kaemingk could not support it. Jo said that anything under \$20,000 the AS Finance Council makes the final decision.

Vigil said that last year students went to a different conference in Yakama. This year they have evaluated that and feels that this is this is the correct conference. Romo said that did go to SEJF for funding and Personnel Committee for the Employee Development Fund. Zerai clarified that there is already \$3,600 to attend a conference. Romo said there were applications through the Womxn's Identity Resource Center (WIRC) for this conference. They will take at least 3 students, but would love to take 6 more. They had applications for 12 students. Romo said that there were a group of students who went to a regional conference for ACUI. They found that opportunity to see how other campuses do their work was very beneficial. From that experience Battsengl wanted to take students to a national conference. Romo said that they would like to do a program for Womxn's Herstory month. Kaemingk asked if in the past the conferences were all AS Employees. Jo said that it was always AS affiliated students that attended in the past. Jo is cautious of travel because it could seem like they are collecting money from all students and sending just a few people across the country for a conference. Jo said that if they have limited funds, they feel travel would be one of the first things to be reduced. Jo wondered if they should be opening these opportunities up to more than just AS students. Barenburg said that there is a high environmental impact of flying across country. The rubric should not be used to discount proposals as it was not sent out. Vigil would like the expectations to be public, clear, and accessible. Kaemingk would like to know if it was limited in who could apply, is it only AS Employees and only female identified. Romo asked for this to become an action item as the conference is next week. Ballard would have preferred to know the timeline ahead. They have been working on this since the beginning of fall quarter. They did not anticipate being denied from the other committees. Walsh asked if it was an all or nothing proposal. Jo thinks that they could approve what they feel is appropriate. Vigil asked if there are 9 students who feel like they are going on the trip. Romo said that they know they applied. They are trying to save money by having 6 people in the suite. It was about \$900 for the suite alone. They are opting out of per diem so that they could have the experience.

Barenburg left the meeting to attend a university meeting.

MOTION FC-20-F-03 by Walsh

Move the UCWLC Grant Proposal to an Action Item.

Second: Ngo Vote: 4 - 0 - 1 Action: Passed

Vigil with caution asked if there were other avenues that were approached for funding other than the two options, there were not. Vigil said that when they speak of general fees they are for the benefit of all students at WWU, this feels like a limited opportunity for AS affiliated students. It makes her feel like there should have been discussions about the limited, targeted, or closed nature of this opportunity and where this funding should come from. Ballard is struggling with

this being only womxn and only AS affiliated. Romo said that they are wanting to come back with their gained knowledge and present a session at AS training and a campus wide event for herstory month. Ballard said in that case why is having the six extra people go important. Romo said it is more about the experience. Ngo said that the thought process was they would be seeking students from more departments so that it isn't always students from the WIRC or ESC doing this work. Walsh said they used all of the funds the Personnel Committee couldn't fund it, but normally this would be very applicable to that fund. Walsh has made efforts to request more funding for next year. Zerai asked if the same students that went to ACUI are going to this conference. Romo said that the Vice President went to ACUI as a presenter and will also go on this trip. Vigil invited Eric Alexander into a conversation, Eric is the Fund Financial Manager for all of the operating budgets and the AS Reserves. Vigil believes no one here is saying this isn't a worthy grant, but this was just moved to an Action Item. Vigil asked if it would be appropriate to spend out of the Viking Union Discretionary Fund. Jo reminded the council that they were already 10 minutes over the meeting time and to please be succinct. Vigil said that time will have to take a backseat to good process. Alexander said that it is all coming out of the same pocket- AS Reserves. The two have similar missions, but the grant one doesn't have a lot of descriptors of how funding should be spent. Alexander said that if the Council believes this is a good use of funds then they should approve it. If it is over \$5,000 for Alexander's fund it has to go to the Exec Board. Walsh asked if it would make a difference to transfer the funding to the Employee Development Fund and then expense it. Griffis clarified that an abstention changes the core number needed for a vote, and is essentially as if a member is absent. Alexander asked about the selection process and if it was wide. Walsh thinks it is better that some people go instead of no one at all. Zerai said that there are already 3 people going to this conference.

MOTION FC-20-F-04 by Ngo

Approve \$6,000 as a onetime Grant to the ASBDIV Budget for attendance of six individuals at the United Collegiate Women's Leadership Conference.

Second: Walsh Vote: 3 - 2 - 1 Action: Passed

- F. MCC Programming Grant Proposal
Item tabled until next week
- G. WIRC Coordinator Decision Package
Item tabled until next week

VII. Other Business

VIII. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 4:18 p.m.