



# Western Washington University Associated Students Student Enhancement Fund Committee

April 8, 2020, – 11:00 am – Microsoft Teams

Present: Rachel Zamora (SEF Coordinator); Nate Jo (AS Business Director); Soumya Ayelasomayajula (AS ESC Assistant Director for Logistics); Raquel Vigil (VU Finance and Business Manager); Sargun Handa (AS Senator at-Large); Travis Felver (AS Club Event Coordinator); Alicia Prokopenko (AS Assistant Director for Club Finance)

Secretary: Jude Ahmed (Executive Board Assistant); Elain Morado (Executive Board Assistant)

Guest(s):

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Zamora calls the meeting to order at 11:02am.

## II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

## III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

**MOTION SEF-20-S-1** By: Jo

Motion to approve the minutes from 3/6/20. **Passed.**

Second: Zamora

Vote: 4-0-2

Yes: 3

No: 0

Abstaining: 2

## IV. Action Items

a. Eliane Rodriguez

This was from an event in the past which was approved in the Fall. However, the actual costs were more than expected when it was approved. The original amount was \$616 in funding but the actual amount is \$901.85 so they would need to approve the updated amount. The actual amount was higher because the booking of lodging and flight was last minute so the cost was higher. Jo says it is an incurred cost so they should approve it. Handa says it seems like it was an uncontrollable situation and they should approve it.

**MOTION SEF-20-S-1** By: Felver

Motion to approve an increase of funding for Elian Rodriguez by \$289.85. **Passed.**

Second: Ayelasomayajula

Vote: 6-0-0

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstaining: 0

## V. Information Items

## VI. OTHER BUSINESS

All applicants approved for travel before May 31<sup>st</sup> are unable to attend their conferences due to COVID and have been denied. Zamora is still figuring out how much money came back to the SEF. If conference dates have changed, those expenses are still included but if the money was refunded, the fund will get that money back.

Zamora pulls up the UW travel grant and likes how this fund phrases their application questions. Ayelasomayajula says it makes it easy to understand what the fund is about and what their specific goals are. Zamora asks if they should include a word count on their application. Felver suggests having a recommended word count by not a minimum or maximum. Handa likes the question which starts with “One quality this committee views favorably...”. Ayelasomayajula says that the optional question is useful because it gives an opportunity to share other information with the committee but does not add another barrier to the application. Vigil asks if they would want to include WWU Community Outreach. The institution has looked at the travel grant and feels it could be considered financial aid if it doesn’t directly tie to WWU. Vigil says it would be helpful down the road to prevent it from being considered financial aid. Felver agrees they need to do whatever they can to make sure it is not moving money from one pot to another. Jo says that there is a distinction between gifting of public funds and travel grants because travel grants allow students to go to professional or academic events representing Western with the mission of continuing Westerns goals and that is important to include in the application. Zamora also points out that the questions about whether the applicant has previously applied to the grant or if they have looked for other sources of funding stood out.

The committee looks at the UW travel grant application which is very robust and has a lot of requirements such as faculty recommendations and GPA requirements. Handa feels those are a barrier to students and are not necessary. Jo also points out how the UW Huskey Union Building does make the naming very accessible by having very clear names for all the funds. Handa asks what the process of changing the names for funds are. Jo says the Unified funding forms or publicity would just be clear with the names of the funds when advertised but the committees don’t necessarily have to change their name. It would be useful to have a form which helps students navigate what grants they need to apply for without having to know the intricacies of what they can apply for. Zamora also asks how they feel about having application deadlines. Jo says they are in a first-come, first-serve system in which they are more lenient about what they pass at the start of the year but are harder in judging grants at the end and there are some benefits to that. Felver says this does allow a lot more students to use the fund without the deadlines. Ayelasomayajula says that this method allows more people to apply, unlike with deadlines that SEJF uses. Prokopenko says that they should continue to be clear that there is a certain amount of time they need to present their grant beforehand in order to get their money in time. Felver suggests using a timeline tool that lets students know when they need to submit funding requests so that they can get travel grants funded in time.

could be an opportunity to start conversations about creating a Diversity Travel Fund.

The Committee reviews the AS SEF Proposal Rubric. Vigil suggests rewording the Educational Development section of the rubric, potentially to explore using the term Educational Enhancement, because tying the proposal so tightly to the applicant's area of study can make it difficult, especially for students of color, to access these funds. Ayelasomayajula has also noticed that it keeps coming up and changing the wording could help because personal experience are a part of your educational development and would bridge the disconnect between the committee and the applicants. Jo recognized that conferences would be beneficial to students in their development but not necessarily to their specific field of study. If they want SEF to stick to direct academic development, there should be another fund that they can easily access and the Diversity Travel Fund may benefit that. Ayelasomayajula says that Student Enhancement Fund is a vague name because enhancement can mean a lot of different things and the committee needs to be clearer about that. Jo agrees that naming is really important. They envision the committee could have two different sources of funding, such as having Diversity Enhancement Travel fund and Academic Development Travel Fund.

Zamora asks what the possibilities would be for starting a diversity travel fund. Jo says they could revise the rubric, but that it can also lead to confusion about the grant is for and what the mission is. Ayelasomayajula suggests that the change in the Office of Sustainability and SEJF would be a good opportunity to start working on the Diversity Travel Fund. Zamora feels the rubric gets messy if it gets more vague. Jo agrees that the committee needs to be able to focus on what their mission is and make sure students know what qualifies for funding.

Vigil wants to ask what an academic event means and if that means conference. Zamora says that they did not want to limit it to conference and used that word to broaden it. Felver asks what the difference to the committee is between a conference and convention. Ayelasomayajula says that both are forms of academic development and academic event would capture that conventions can also contribute to academic development. Vigil suggests out-of-classroom enhancement of learning or proposal instead of academic event because that makes it seem like something the department itself should be funding. Ayelasomayajula agrees that proposal would be a good term. Felver asks if it is possible to have a pot of money for academic events and another for enhancement under one fund and one committee.

## **VII. ADJOURN MEETING**

Zamora adjourns the meeting at 12:11.