



AS Finance Council

March 9, 2021 4:00 p.m. Teams Online

Members: Present: Noemi Bueno, Chair (AS Business Director), Abdul Malik Ford, Vice Chair (AS President), Ben Crandall (Central Services Rep), Sargun Handa (AS Senate Pro Tempore), Brandon Lane (Student at-Large), Ranulfo Molina (AS VP for Diversity), Kaylan Rocamora (Activities Rep), Daniela Rodriguez (ESC Rep), Selam Swier (AS Student Senator), Nichole Vargas (SAIRC Rep)

Advisor: Raquel Vigil, Viking Union Organization Business Manager

Secretary: Cindy Monger, Viking Union Organization Fiscal Specialist

Guests: Eric Alexander, Executive Director for Student Engagement; Annie Byers, AS Exec Board Program Assistant; Casey Hayden, Assistant Director for Student Activities

MOTIONS

FC-21-W-13 Approval of the Minutes of March 2, 2021. **Passed**

Noemi Bueno, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION FC-21-W-13 By Rocamora

Approval of the Minutes of March 2, 2021.

Second: Crandall Vote: 5 – 0 - 4 Action: Passed

III. Revisions to the Agenda

IV. Public Forum

V. Action Items

VI. Information Items

A. AS Exec Board & Student Senate-

1. FXXBAD Board Administration

Byers said that there were some changes to the wages for students. One of the AS Board Assistants will be working over the summer to help support the increased training that will happen with the Exec Board and Student Senate. The Board Assistants were collapsed into one line item with 4 students indicated, instead of by title. There is a chance that they will hire more than 4 students, depending on schedules, but they will use the total hours for the four as their guide. The Assessment Coordinator has been underutilized and this year they did not hire this position. This position has been approached in different ways but hasn't quite taken the shape that is needed for an annual student to be hired. There were some additional hours that were included in the budget for the AS President and AS Vice President for Governmental Affairs. Ford and Alexander spoke about it and decided not to move forward with the additional hours. Ford said the Senate Pro Tempore has been increased to 25 hours in order to give time to support the Student Senate, participate in the Exec Board, and attend Faculty Senate. Also,

they support 20+ Senators. Alexander said if people work more than 19 hours per week on average then they are essentially a part-time employee and there might be more benefits for that area. Due to the part-time nature of this work people take significant time off during breaks, holidays, etc. So, this is a range of less than 19 hours per week.

Lane asked about the Assessment Coordinator position removal, he thinks it's good for the students to know that there is a position in the VU that is looking at every office and how they can do their best. Alexander said that the Assessment process has taken many forms over the years. It has sometimes been a helpful tool in finding out challenges and resource needs for the offices. About 90% the answer is they need more money and resources. Alexander said separate of that there could be a resource request, but assessment should live on its own. He said that short term, not hiring the position is a reduction during a time when it is needed. They want to take time to really look at outcomes, how assessments are done in other areas, and tying it back to the university strategic plan. The resource needs are going to be more in Business Services with looking at the future needs forms to help with planning organizationally. Lane finds it concerning that the only position that was dedicated fully to working to make the AS run the best it can, is being eliminated. Especially in a year where there have been a lot of criticisms about how insular and unrepresentative the AS can be. He thinks it is concerning that it will be handled by each office now. Alexander said that assessments will live in each office, but it is not going well having it as a one-year position. Vargas has gone through assessment a couple of times and doesn't feel that it is the most efficient way to do assessment. She does feel that they should be trying to make each office better and it should be baked into what each office does. Her position is partially assessment for her offices. Rocamora said "being a new to the AS (and the first year we cut this position) I was unaware this position held such impact....do we have some time to hear some more testimony of this positions form anyone else?" Hayden said this is not at all a reflection of ASWWU value of assessment. He believes it should be expanded. A while ago there was an assessment every four years, that moved into being an opt in process. There used to be a professional staff position in the VU Org that focused on assessment, but that position was not rehired. Hayden has been advising for the last few years. They are looking at having a graduate student or professional staff because of the amount of knowledge necessary to start to look at assessing in ASWWU. They are looking at a work team of students and full-time staff members to look at assessment. The position holder for the last two years said that they shouldn't keep the position because the position wasn't doing what they wanted. Lane's big fear here is that a lot of ideas are thrown out, but because there is no one tasked with this role then it might not move forward as well because there are a lot of committees already. Lane likes the idea of one person who is not attached to other office in charge. Hayden said that there was a Structure & Program Advisory Committee and over the years it had a few issues that derailed it. Bueno also had a conversation with Alexander when she saw that it was removed as well. Vargas said "I like the idea of an outside council/group for assessment, having one single student being the assessor they weren't able to offer much guidance on how to make the program better since they didn't know

the program and didn't have much expertise.” Vigil said “The Viking Union is going through a Reorganization, and the AS is still in a Restructure plan for the future. Right now, Assessment (Coordination and Planning) may fall into my portfolio. Know that I am unsure what that might look like, and what area of the AS would assist with the Coordination of Assessment. Right now, I could see where we would pull together (similar to what Nichole Vargas spoke to) those positions in the AS that have Assessment as part of their title to work towards a comprehensive plan.” Lane said “I’m really glad to hear all that. I still would like to see a person who is overall in charge of coordinating whatever form assessments take. In my dream world there would be a position that offers outside guidance to each office’s designated assessor. This could allow for assessments to incorporate views from both inside and outside the offices.”

2. FXXBDS Board Discretionary Fund

Travel has been moved into the FXXBAD budget. The discretionary budget was not used very often. It was sometimes used to cover expenses if travel was required for Board of Trustees. In the last few years, it hasn’t really been used for other Board initiatives. Lane thinks it is important to give elected officials leverage to do projects that they are interested in. This would include funds they could move around with minimal red tape. Alexander said that one of the things that have changed is the AS Reserve Policies that give more leeway. This has moved to being approved by Finance Council, so it is not as readily available as the FXXBDS fund would be.

3. FXXLAF Legislative Affairs

Legislative Affairs fund is ASWWU portion that supports the lobby trips to Olympia. The expenses are requested at the same level as past years, even though there were not expenses this year due to Covid-19.

4. FXXSBR-ASBAAX Senate Initiative Fund

Vigil said this has been rolled into FXXSSN. There is no reason to have separate accounts.

5. FXXSBR-ASBDIV Diversity Initiative Fund

This was to allow attendance at a conference for BIPOC students. They used to attend the Oregon Students of Color Conference, but in the last few years they decided this didn’t meet their needs anymore. They went instead to a more regionally focused conference. It also supports the Vice President for Diversity’s efforts to bring people on campus doing diversity based work to meet and share a breakfast at the beginning of the year, sharing the initiatives they were looking to work on this year. Alexander doesn’t feel this budget should be reduced because this is important work. Molina said there is a lot of support for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives on campus and feels this money is necessary.

6. FXXSBR-ASBSAQ Worker's Rights

The Bookstore has agreed to take on this expense that has paid a portion in the past towards having sweatshop free WWU logo items. This also applies to AS t-shirts. This budget will no longer be needed.

7. FXXSBR-ASBSCS Federal Lobbying Trip

This budget was addressed in the Black Student Organization Demands to be repurposed to support the BSO’s new efforts. In the past a few elected officials would travel to Washington DC to lobby on a national level. This sometimes

happened with the WWU President. However, there is funding available through the Legislative Action Fund or AS Reserves if it is felt that there is a need to lobby nationally. It may not be needed yearly. They are requesting zero dollars in this budget. Vargas thinks it is great to eliminate not so important budgets, but did she miss where the money is going? Is there a separate budget for Black Student Organization? Alexander said that there is a lot to that question, partially because BSO has asked not to be part of ASWWU. This year they have hired three students with savings to start to look at what will happen moving forward. Vargas said that ASWWU is a known entity with infrastructure, versus an unknown process. She understands them wanting to build something better because of history. Handa asked if it is “going to be held in separate holding account under the board administration umbrella until it will be transferred? Or are we gonna do the difficult way of trying to transfer it outside the AS as per the BSO’s wishes?” Alexander said that it is not decided at this point. They are starting this work. Vigil said at this point the funding is going nowhere. The budget requests are higher than the amount estimated from the Services & Activities Fee.

When the BSO Coalition is more formed, Vigil is advising that they use a 2-3 year grant program to allow for time for them to decide if they wish to be part of ASWWU. At that point, it could be operationalized within the ASWWU. The AS Grant would come to this council as part of the approval process. At this point there are a lot of things under the BSO demands that would be handled at the university level. So, they would want to look at how much would be supported at the university level and how much would be appropriate to fund with student fees. Bueno hopes to have more answers in the coming weeks. Handa asked how the students were being paid this year. Vigil said it is funded from other unfilled positions. The \$4,200 for this year is currently in a special account and if it is not able to be spent this year, they could request a carry forward at the end of this year.

8. FXXSSN Student Senate

The Student Senate was voted on by the students in 2017 and that was a mandate to always have a Senate. The AS Grant is ending this year. The students also voted spring election in a special election that just concluded. They will have spring to spring terms (4 quarter) at 9 hours per week at this point. She thanked the council for prioritizing the Senate this year. Handa said that there is an effort to have Academic Departments contribute funding, but this is difficult to ask for right now due to the economic conditions following the pandemic. The Senators will not be working during the summer but will be training and building community. Crandall would like to see Finance Council somehow support this program more in terms of its recommendations at the university level. He agrees with funding this program, but if they are going to invest this kind of funding, then they should be taken seriously. Specifically, how can finance council further support senate outside and in addition to monetary means. How can we use the power inherit to finance council to further support this? Vigil said that student representation is a value of the Finance Council. This is only the third year that the Student Senate has been in this format. Sometimes it takes some time for additional knowledge of new groups. The Deans and Faculty have gone on record as supporting the Senate. Handa said that it starts with the Board of Trustees, who haven’t even passed the

Constitution. Alexander agrees that it does sometimes take time to build these relationships and find the best ways to engage. Alexander said that Handa is doing good work. He thinks people are mostly trying to figure out how within their structures they should engage. Handa thinks the problem is the higher ups. There is group wide support of the Senate, but when they start individual work, it is difficult. Hayden said "Another major support to the Senate (and Exec) is getting this new Governance Advisor hired because they will be a dedicated support person with continuity, rather than the tacked-on/substitute advising support that the Senate is getting now (pointing finger at self here). And that full-time position is also AS / S&A funds." Vigil dittoed. Lane is really excited about getting to vote on this budget. In his past experience on the committee, they were not even sure if they Senators would be paid. It is really exciting to see it getting operationalized. Vigil said "Handa Your Leadership has been instrumental in moving the Senate forward in this third year...Assessing the first and second year and moving in a direction of representation for students at WWU! Thank you Sargun."

B. Office of Civic Engagement (OCE)- These items were tabled due to the meeting time ending before they were able to get to that.

VII. Other Business-

- A.** The meetings will be at the same time, same day next quarter.
- B.** Open forums for the Vice President for Business & Financial Affairs are soon, contact Bueno for more information.

VIII. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.