



**Western Washington University Associated Students
Sustainability Equity & Justice Fund Meeting Minutes**

April 5, 2022, 5:00 PM

Attendees:

Committee Members: Jasmine Fast, Laura Wagner, Zinta Lucans, Johnathan Riopelle, Rosa Edwards, Charles Barnhart, Jose Ortuzar

Guests: none

Staff and Assistants: Delfine DeFrank, Jennifer Black

Motions:

Laura Wagner, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM

I. CONSENT ITEMS

- a. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. Not needed at this time, just some minor changes to update it

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

- a. Spelling Laura's Name on the agenda

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. **Jen Black** – I just wanted to show you guys in teams where to share documents. Your teams should look like when going to the SEJF Team. You will just go up to this files tab, and at the very top, I've pinned these two folders here. Anything that has to do with the upcoming meeting that you want to be posted or put onto the agenda will go here. There is this lovely little blurb at the bottom if you're confused about what it should be. I ask that you have them on there by noon on Wednesday before the meeting up unless you get back to me and let me know that you have a late submission. I'm trying to be more organized this quarter because it is not the only committee, I have this quarter. This way, I can ensure everyone is being well taken care of. Additionally, if you open this Spring 2022 folder, there are these little subfolders for the day for whichever meeting and so, like Laura, put the documents in here for the meeting today so that they were all

in there and I will put the previous minutes also in there. I will also continue to include them in the chat like I did previously and in an email, so you can look at them before the next meeting.

- b. Laura Wagner** – Eric isn't here right now but should be here for the second half of the meeting. I thought it might be nice to have him here to provide some of the context of conversations that he's been having with people about SEJF and its past, present, and future. First, we will discuss the referendum. I wanted to share that with everyone I shared it last quarter in the posts for the SEJF teams, but I just wanted to provide this opportunity to open the document up so that people could look at it. Here are some of the comments on the old referendum. For the ATF referendum this is the language that was passed for the active transportation fee, and it went through some edits that people proposed in ATF committee. Then it went to executive board as an information and then action item and got approved. This is a good example of the type of wording that we should expect or that we should have for SEJF. With the old SEJF referendum language you will see my note at the top. Ultimately this is pretty long selection of wording. I figure it might be nicer to have something straight forward and to the point, maybe bulleted like that ATF wording, because if it is too long, I feel like students who might be voting will not read all of the information. I also noticed in the language there are two separate sections. One at the beginning and one later on, specifically pertaining to what students will be voting on. It would be nice to have all that information. In other words, here is what you are voting to approve or disapprove all at the beginning and then maybe just the second half or even there could be a hyperlink to a document about further information about the fee or about SEJF as it exists now. Johnathan, since you're the program manager to connect with altogether, you can look at the financial information from these past few years to see what would be feasible for a fee for students. Those are my initial thoughts that I have right now. Also, Melinda Huskey has volunteered to look over this for us. I can contact her down the line once we have more of a solid selection of referendum language. Looking at the expected timeline for the referendum to totally be ready and campaigning to spread awareness for voting is not allowed to be open until the beginning of May. That alleviates a little bit of pressure with the timeline that we did have developed that should be accessible to everyone in the SEJF teams. The plan is for next meeting to have a proposed first draft of the referendum language that multiple people will be able to edit or leave comments and suggest changes. For

this meeting if people could share a comment or something that you would like to see in our referendum, keeping in mind the ATF referendum I shared.

- c. **Charles Barnhart** – What is the high-level change? What has changed and what is the idea behind the change, or the motivation or the ideology?
- d. **Laura Wagner** – As per the last referendum that was approved, we just have to have a vote every four or five years, I believe. Reaffirming that students will support it or reflecting the students do not support this fee for students anymore. This is what this referendum would be asking students to vote on like the conditions and the amount of money that they will be charged each quarter specifically to go toward this fund.
- e. **Charles Barnhart** – In plain language, has it been steady on but with slight increases with inflation?
- f. **Laura Wagner** – Yes, it has, and I will be connecting with Johnathan and Zinta to see if financially we would need an increase because that is probably the most important part of the referendum is making sure that the financial aspect of students is only what needs to happen.
- g. **Jasmine Fast** – No thoughts or comments currently
- h. **Johnathan Riopelle** – This is way too long in my opinion, and I think the transportation ballot language is too long to. I think that there are some valuable things here, but to your point of not wanting to alienate or bore the reader on this, it can be substantially edited, and I would love to see if we can make that happen. I'm happy if anyone wants to hear more about the financial facet of it, but I'm not going to take up time right now.
- i. **Laura Wagner** – I am glad to get moving forward on this, and I agree. Four pages for voting language is too long and I think that will need to be shortened and hyperlink some of the information.
- j. **Jose Ortuzar** – I agree. I think it needs to be shortened and maybe a little bit more concise, not so much about the entire history. One more thing that could be added is may be more of the metrics, like how much money you spent on each grant or like some sort of summary of past grants. Some statistics, so students can see exactly where their money is being used.
- k. **Rosa Edwards** - This is too long and should be shortened, may be infographic length. Something that doesn't feel like you must sit down and read it. A couple of sentences about how much you personally pay into the program. A couple of things the program has given to the school, especially if they're things that students see in their daily life.

- l. Zinta Lucans** – I basically echo with what Johnathan talked about. I think we have to be really careful about updating language surrounding this. The older referendum uses the Sustainable Action Fund, which was the name of our fund before it got changed to SEFJ. So, making sure that we touch on updating all of that information so that it is accurate as well.
- m. Laura Wagner** - I am hopeful to have a first draft by next meeting. With that our next topic of conversation is talking about where SEJF is right now. This is the first meeting of the quarter and getting an understanding about how you all as committee members are feeling about this model of this committee specifically to serve the purposes of SEJF, and I've had conversations with Eric, and this was the one that I intended to invite him for about function vs form. I just wanted to maybe for one- or two-minutes think about the experiences that they've had and how do they feel. The committee aligns with the intentions for SEJF program. I have thought about this, and I feel like one could totally dive into a meeting outside of this committee, but in theory I really do like the idea of having this student fee that exists. Then there is a committee comprised of majority of students that decides if these proposals can or should go forward. In practice, with the committee of this size and just with committees in general, there's always issues with them. Scheduling meetings, Quorum, meeting to update bylaws, legality, that's quite normal for committees. One thing that I was hoping would happen today is that Eric would provide a little bit of context about how the journey from the past leading up to now, what SEJF exists as now and the process that proposals went through and what they go through now. I am sure Johnathan can touch on that on his turn, but those are kind of some of my initial thoughts.
- n. Charles Barnhart** – I think it is important for students to have a voice. It is their money. One of the most critical things that we should do is let the student body know the power they have and by spending this money, they're doing good things. So, they should be excited about it. I really hope they don't view it as a tax. Instead, they view it as an opportunity, as a leverage as a crowbar to affect change and it's putting their own money on the line to say we want these things to happen and however I can help facilitate that, I'm happy to do so. The intent was never to take money from the students and then steer it in one direction or another. I want them to really understand it. It is their power, and it is for them to do good things. Let us not cut each other down by saying one thing is better than another. I think they're all initiatives that are positive.

- o. Jasmine Fast** – I agree with you Laura, it is difficult to meet Quorum and have such responsibility falling on students and trying to get students that are passionate and engaged on this topic is important. I think reducing quorum to 50% as opposed to 2/3 was also helpful in being about to reach quorum and get these decisions past and moving forward.
- p. Johnathan Riopelle** – I am worried I could go on a lot because I have been doing this for six years. We have had to deal with attention of members of the program, the members of this committee, all the administrators that want to see this be successful, we have to deal with the tension between making sure that students have the purview and they have the opportunity to participate in speaking their mind and vote on it, and the responsibility we have to make sure that 15,000 students out there have maximum access to this with few hurdles as possible. I want us to be invisible people who have good application. They're funded, they do beautiful things. So, there's tension invariably arises which is how do we make sure that students are a part of the process and how do we make sure the process is relatively seamless and invisible. If there's a quorum issue for example it doesn't inhibit the students that want the opportunity. I think about outreach we were doing, until the pandemic. At the end of every year, we would showcase 6,080 individuals to come visit and see what we did, and that was great. I'm really looking forward to that happening in a new and even better way starting next year now that we are in person. The two years prior to the pandemic, we had more than 30 grants approved. So, what everyone has experienced in the last six months has been unusual.
- q. Jose Ortuzar** – Laura could you clarify more about what the other sort of model would be because I mean I think as a student committee makes sense for now. I feel like that is what the model that I have in my head is. But I don't know if Eric has other alternatives.
- r. Laura Wagner** – The purpose of the conversation today and what Eric was coming for was to see if what SEJF provides for students and what students need is lining up between, students SEJF program, and then this committee that ultimately decides medium and large sized grants moving forward. I just wanted to hear peoples input specifically about their experience on this committee so that we could get an idea of if needing to expedite things is an issue. If committee members think it is an issue, I can share that with Eric and hopefully for my successor that conversation can continue.

- s. **Jose Ortuzar** – There has been a lot of miscommunications between the AS and this kind of work for the SEI. I think there is just a conflict. There's just like set up organizationally just because the two groups. One is in one committee section and oversees handling the grants and then the other side is handling it, improving. I think a dual sort of system has some downsides. I guess I would be open to other possibilities.
- t. **Rosa Edwards** – I know there has been some tension like Jose and Johnathan brought up between the student section and the faculty section of this committee, but I feel that it is essential it being a student committee. We are supposed to represent exactly what the students want. I think it is understandable because it is an unusual circumstance and in other quarters there is a lot more interaction with the student body at large. I think it's very important to keep that in mind and, I love that this is student committee based.
- u. **Zinta Lucans** – Just speaking more on the tension between the SEJF program and the committee I think the structure of each organization is just different and that is where the tension exists. So, to make our grant program run as smoothly and efficiently as possible, SEJF needs the voting members to be as responsive and flexible as possible because we have committee meetings set up every other week. Grants unfortunately don't come in an expected pace. So, some weeks we have zero grants coming in and some weeks we have 6 and it's not something that we can predict ahead of time. So that's required us to ask for a lot of flexibility from the committee members. This isn't always ideal because committee members are largely students who have full time classes and potentially other work schedules. So just that inherent tension of needing meeting flexibility on both sides but then also needing to respect what are personal boundaries and what are professional boundaries. I think it is great to have student voices involved in the approval process.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. **Next meeting April 19, 2022**

Laura Wagner, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 5:48 PM