



# AS Finance Council

April 12, 2023 1:00 p.m. Teams Online

**Members: Present:** Brandon Denny, Chair (AS Business Director), Sargun Handa, Vice Chair (AS President), Bella Bedard (Activities Rep), Madi Gilbert (Central Services Rep), Gabe Wong (Delegate for AS Student Senate President), **Absent:** MJ Manaois (ADEI Rep)

**Advisor:** Raquel Vigil, Assistant Director for Business Services and Planning

**Secretary:** Sam Hughes, VU Business Services Program Support

**Guests:** Casey Hayden (Assistant Director Student Activities & Media), Jamie Hoover (KUGS General Manager), Erica Richardson (Earth Week Event Coordinator)

## MOTIONS

**FC-23-S-02** Approve the minutes of January 31, 2023. **Passed**

**FC-23-S-03** Approve the Earth Day Large Event Funding Proposal for \$2,145. **Passed**

**Brandon Denny, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03p.m.**

### I. Call to Order

### II. Approval of the Minutes- January 31, 2023

*MOTION FC-23-S-02 by Handa*

Approve the minutes of January 31, 2023.

Second: Gilbert

Vote: 3-0-1

Action: Passed

### III. Revisions to the Agenda

### IV. Public Forum

### V. Information Items

#### A. KUGS Operations Manager Position Grant Proposal

Doc. 1

Hayden said that this proposal is for a 2-year grant from the reserve fund totaling \$145,000 to cover the salary of the KUGS Operations Manger. This position has been a stated need by KUGS since 2012. The preference is for this position to become operationalized, but Hayden stated this is currently not a realistic goal due to budget constraints. Recently, using operational dollars, KUGS was able to create a temporary position (Engineering and Operations Support Specialist) with similar responsibilities as the KUGS Operations Manager will have. They have seen gains from this position and expect similar gains from the KUGS Operations Manager. This position will help reduce the workload on the KUGS General Manager and student staff and help support the needs of student volunteers. Overall, there has been an increased student interest in being on the KUGS station, and the KUGS staff are doing their best to respond to that interest. But due to the challenges of managing a high workload, there has been a difficulty keeping innovation and automation going to continue this opportunity for students. Hoover said the hope is that the KUGS Operations Manager would assist in bringing back more of that innovation. Some of the responsibilities of this position include supporting onboarding and training, supporting day-to-day functions of the station, covering shifts during intercessions and holidays., and to be there to bounce

ideas off of and plan what is needed and what comes next in terms of services to provide for the community and support students. Hoover said there are currently 79 volunteers on the air and 30 in training, which is close to pre-COVID-19-pandemic numbers of 100-120 student volunteers. Wong asked where this position will lead in two years. Will it become a permanent, necessary, and beneficial addition to KUGS that will continue indefinitely? Or will it only last the duration of the grant? Hayden hopes that this position can become a permanent addition to make the experience at KUGS more accessible for students, but acknowledges that it will be a challenge due to budgeting constraints. The plan is to work with leadership over the next two years to explore operationalizing the position, but if not possible, the plan is to ask for a grant extension. Denny said given the exponential growth of volunteers and student involvement, would there be any recently graduated students that would be interested in the position? Or will KUGS be searching for someone externally? Hayden said that they would want to be open to recently graduated students, and that they would be looking for someone with a certain number of years of radio experience as a student or as a professional. Hoover said that due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, KUGS has not been able to run the full radio-experience for students since 2020, so they would likely be hiring someone with post-grad radio experience or someone who worked with KUGS station pre-2020. Hoover said there is a lot of interest in the station in Bellingham and around the country. Denny asked if KUGS is growing back to what it was before the COVID-19 pandemic or is the station experiencing new growth? Hoover said the station is growing back to what it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is a lot of interest in the station other than just being on-air in areas such as public affairs, trainings, and more that they are waiting to get back to as they return to having a full level of student staff. Vigil asked "What is the plan if the proposal is not funded, or if it is funded and there are no available operational dollars (as we continue to experience flatlining in enrollment) after the two years?" Hayden said that if this grant proposal is not funded it will be a challenge to have technological innovation and there will be stagnation and continued overburdening of work onto staff that may jeopardize the future of the station. If KUGS is unable to extend the grant or operationalize the position going forward, they will need to reevaluate position duties for full time KUGS staff. Vigil said that typically grants are not extended over and over unless there are unused dollars from the grant that would then carry over into the next year by request. Typically, after the duration of a grant, there would need to be a discussion of operationalizing if the position worked out well or reevaluating if the position did not work out as planned. Hayden asked if Vigil recommends thinking about the longer term for this position. Vigil said it is difficult to say, but the Fund Financial Manger has been expressing greater concern about the approval of grants for staff positions. Denny said that where grant dollars are going and how sustainable the proposal is in terms of ability to operationalize has been something that there has needed to be greater scrutiny over. Vigil would not recommend extending this grant to three years and said a two-year grant for this position is a good option. As there is ebb and flow of staff members, there is an opportunity for the organization to look at the current salary allocation and better utilize funds that will become available. Wong asked if the salary level for this position was decided based upon comparable positions at other universities or radio stations. Hayden said the salary was based upon the advice of Vigil and Cindy Monger (VU Administrative Specialist), but it is a bit of a guessing game because it is not certain how HR will rate a position until it is presented to them with the job description. But the estimate is in line with other similar positions. Denny asked that in the event the

position is not viable long term, will KUGS be reduced in regards of what they can do? Or will it shift the overall model of how KUGS operates? Hoover said there would likely need to be more student positions, but that would also become another training issue. Part of the problem is that KUGS is still adapting to having student employees hourly instead of salaried. Hayden said they would look at it in partnership with the KUGS Operations Manager and see if a plan can be made.

*Hoover left the meeting at 1:36pm.*

Vigil said, "Any questions you would like Denny to follow up with for the KUGS proposal?". Handa said considering that there are hundreds of previous KUGS employees, volunteers, and alumni, that they have a good chance of finding someone that will be a good fit for the position. Denny asked the council how they feel about this grant proposal in terms of longevity, should the council have more scrutiny because it is not a long-term fix? Or is this position something necessary and needed given KUGS is getting back to pre-pandemic numbers of student volunteers? Denny also asked if the proposed amount for the grant is in line with other past grants like this. Vigil said the asking amount for this grant is right in line with what a position like this one would cost, but it's not about the amount of the grant, but more about the impact when you hire personnel and have the position for 2 years. After the 2 years, we become accustomed to personnel. If the organization is set up to absorb that and the need is there, the hope is to repurpose funds as they become available and sustain this type of employment model. It is about the intention behind the funding. Wong said this position seems necessary given there seems to be overworking of KUGS staff and felt better about the prospects of continued funding for the position after Vigil's comment about the ebb and flow of staff giving opportunity to better utilize funds. Wong also commented on the Club Activities grant ending this year and said the council should be weighing these grants in comparison. Vigil said, "Perfect comment. Yes the Club Activities Coordinator has one more year of funding. There is also one employee hired in the Outdoor Center, currently funded from the VU Reserves, so technically there are three positions in the que". Handa said, "My main concern is the sustainability of the grant. For me the amount is not the problem, future planning is the issue...If this is the solution [KUGS] is needing and they truly believe that they can make this work, I think it's a matter of having a good backup plan and a good plan for when the grant ends...My whole point is asking if we are putting Band-Aids on bullet wounds. The whole conversation we are having right now is trying to figure out if this is a band-aid or a blood transfusion, and I'm leaning more towards blood transfusion. This does seem like something that is worth it, there just needs to be a plan after the two-years". Vigil said, "KUGS does have 9 student positions. In the future the paid student positions in coordination with the paid staff positions is the strategic planning that needs to take place. Two years would for sure allow for time needed for a strategic plan for KUGS and for the VU and Student Activities".

## B. Earth Day Large Event Funding Proposal

Doc. 2

Richardson said this proposal is for a lot of the Earth Week related expenses that can't be covered by the ESP budget. Earth week starts next Monday, and the goal is to provide joyful, educational, and other events for student engagement on campus around sustainability. There has been a major focus this year with programming around educational sustainability and having more of an environmental justice focus to events

and seminars. The amount requested in the original request was reduced, and Hayden shared the new budget information. The areas of reduction included the outdoor film, which previously had a \$3000 budget but was dropped due to the allocation of funds being too close to the start of the event. Instead, there will be an indoor film. Canopy cost was also reduced to \$1,000. The new ask is \$2,145. Richardson said they have been super lucky to have so much engagement around Earth Week and that there were lots of ideas for Earth Week events. The original plan was for the events to last a week, but it was extended to two weeks to fit in everyone's ideas, as well as promote club activities that are happening as well as partnerships with local businesses through the Earth Fair, a large market-style event. Earth fair will include over 35 different vendors from students and the larger Bellingham community. There will also be showings of 5 different movies, with 4 being educational in nature. There will also be Outback Unplugged, a storytelling and panel style event, and this part of the budget will go towards performers and food. Throughout all of the events, the goal was to incorporate arts and music along with sustainability so that Earth Week has more of a community feel. There will also be several different styles of events to get the greatest amount of community engagement across all levels. Vigil said that the ESP Earth week budget is \$3,500, but recalls allocating more for Earth Week in the past. Hayden said this is correct. The reason for the smaller budget is that some events are co-sponsored by the College of the Environment, which accounts for \$2,500 of additional funding. Wong asked that given that conversations that seem to be happening about the Sustainability Engagement Institute (SEI) taking over a lot of the ESP responsibility for the event, is funding for Earth Week going to continue coming from the AS? Or will this shift over to the SEI? Hayden said there are good conversations moving forward on the SEI taking on all sustainability engagement on campus. Right now, SEI is feeling confident they can take on Earth Week Celebration. This year, SEI is part of the planning committee for Earth Week. Future event funding for Earth Week would likely not come from the Large Event Fund unless another AS Program got involved as a co-sponsor. Denny asked if there is a goal for Earth Week in regard to turnout for these events? Richardson said for the Intersectional Environmentalism event the expected turnout is around 150 people. Hayden said the minimum would be 300-400 people for Earth Fair. They will also be putting up a banner in Red Square for promotion to attract more people to the event. For the movies, they are getting help from ASP, SEI, and a few other offices help with promotion. Richardson says that they hope to engage 500 people or more over the course of the events. Vigil said, "I'd be curious to hear the student perspective of allocating \$500 for swag and promotion for an event such as this". Wong asked if the promotion items are for paying the Publicity Center for posters and banners. Richardson said that is correct. Denny asked if there is a structure for how swag giveaway items will work during events. Will it be a raffle, attendance, etc.? Anderson said the swag giveaways are for sustainable materials such as reusable straws, beeswax wrapping paper, and other similar items. A lot of times there is a barrier to entry for sustainable materials and trying to get people to move away from single use plastics. The idea is to reduce that barrier to entry by giving away these types of items. In the past, they were given away with a "Wheel of Fortune". Handa said that everyone loves free stuff, but it's about whether or not it is useful free stuff. Reusable straws and beeswax wrapping paper are things that students will want, vs stickers, buttons, or other materials that are more likely to be thrown away or sit at the bottom of a student's backpack for months. Handa thinks it is a really cool idea that the giveaway items are actually related to sustainability and will introduce students to these items while reducing the barrier of

cost, especially for students of marginalized identities. Bedard asked, “the performer line item suggests it’s tentative, were you all able to get performers for the event?”. Richardson said there will be over seven musical acts performing. Hayden said the canopy cost is up in the air, and they may not use that line item to the full amount.

*Anderson and Hayden left the meeting at 1:55pm.*

Gilbert asked to see the reserve balances so the council knows how much there is to allocate. The AS Grant Fund is at \$47,2019 and the Large Event Reserve is at \$46,070. Wong said that the ask for Earth Week is perfectly reasonable, and that nothing stood out as unnecessarily large of an expense. Handa said that they cut costs for the event where they were able and were reasonable and realistic about the asking amount. They also have a future plan for funding through other opportunities and the presentation was very thorough with good reasoning. Gilbert agrees with Sargun and Wong. Gilbert thinks that the amount of programming that will happen given the asked amount of funding is rather significant. Denny said that the expected turnout numbers for the event are adequate, and that the market event being held in Red Square will be a good way to get even more turnout.

## **VI. Action Items**

### A. Earth Day Large Event Funding Proposal

Doc. 2

*MOTION FC-23-S-03 by Handa*

Approve the Earth Day Large Event Funding Proposal for \$2,145.

Second: Bedard

Vote: 4-0-0

Action: Passed

## **VII. Other Business**

## **VIII. ADEI Updates**

## **IX. Adjourn**

***The meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.***