



Western Washington University Associated Students AS Finance Council Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2023

4:00 p.m.

Teams Online

Members: Present: Trent Austin (AS Business Director, Chair); Keara Ryan (AS President, Vice Chair), Sarah Cheikho (AS Club Rep), Kasey Lee (Central Services Rep), Ava O'Neill (AS Club Rep), Lola Thompson (AS Student Senate President delegate) *Late:* Bella Bedard (AS Activities Rep)

Advisor: Cynthia Sandstrom (AS Business Manager)

Secretary: Cindy Monger (VU Fiscal Specialist); Sam Hughes (Business Services Program Support)

Guests: Casey Hayden (Assistant Director, Activities and Media), Reign Head (Outback Farm Permaculture Coordinator), Jamie Hoover (KUGS General Manager), Brody Hunt (AS Concerts Coordinator), Stephen Magnuson (Viking Outdoor Rec Manager), John Tuxill (Faculty Advisor for the Outback Farm/Associate Professor at Fairhaven), Donna Wilson (AS Club Activities Manager)

MOTIONS

FC-23-F-04 Approve the minutes of November 15, 2023. **Passed**

FC-23-F-05 Approve the KUGS 50th Large Event Request for a total of \$16,000 (Doc. 1). **Passed**

Trent Austin, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes- November 15, 2023

MOTION FC-23-F-04 by Lee

Approve the minutes of November 15, 2023.

Second: Ryan

Vote: 5-0-0

Action: Passed

III. Revisions to the Agenda

IV. Public Forum (*comments from students and the community*)

V. Action Items

(*Current Large Event Reserve Balance \$59,236.32*)

A. KUGS 50th Large Event Request

Doc. 1

O'Neill asked why these particular bands were chosen for the show and had concerns that they are more niche and might not have as wide of an audience. Hoover said that the student staff got together to choose these bands based on the fact they are broadcast on KUGS. The bands that were chosen are a mix of bands that have been regularly on campus and ones that have more national recognition.

MOTION FC-23-F-05 by Ryan

Approve the KUGS 50th Large Event Request for a total of \$16,000 (Doc. 1).

Second: Lee

Vote: 3-2-0

Action: Passed

VI. Information Items *

(*Current AS Grant Reserve Balance: \$402,476.83*)

A. Temporary Club Coordinator Grant Proposal (\$30,000)

Doc. 2

Donna Wilson, AS Club Activities Manager, requested \$30,000 to hire a temporary AS Club Coordinator to assist the Club area in a 6 month position. In June 2022, there was a grant approved for a 2-year Club Activities Coordinator project position, which is the position that Wilson currently holds through June. Due to staffing changes, Wilson has transitioned into the Manager position. This means that they are currently without a Club Activities Coordinator. Currently, only one staff person is available to assist the 230+ AS Clubs, which has become difficult especially with increased engagement events this year. This grant would allow someone to be hired right away to provide the much needed extra support, and the grant covers wages and overtime benefits for the temporary position. This position would be working with new clubs, helping the club form, helping them manage their budget and plan events, and help out by assisting student staff. Currently, the plan would be to come back and request a 2-year position when a new position description has been created and a plan for the future.

Ryan asked about the capacity issue the Club Hub is facing. Wilson said they like to meet with AS Clubs one-on-one to answer questions and show them how to do things. Due to limited staffing and capacity, right now they have had to just send videos which isn't the best way for everyone to learn.

Bella Bedard joined the meeting.

Wilson said they have also not been able to help clubs think about different ideas for their events, do programming for the clubs, do training for professional development, nor teach them how to navigate the club system. With more capacity, they will be able to focus on helping to develop events, meet with students, provide support to club advisors, and more. They are also hoping to implement a Risk Management program for clubs doing outdoor recreation, but due to lack of staffing haven't been able to get to it. This position will help to greatly improve engagement with clubs so the club can achieve all of the things they want to and have resources to go to for support.

B. Outback Farm Grant Proposal

Doc. 3

Stephen Magnuson (Viking Outdoor Recreation Manager and support in the advisement of the Outback), John Tuxill (Faculty Advisor for the Outback Farm since 2007 and Associate Professor at Fairhaven), Reign Head (Outback Farm Permaculture Coordinator), and Kate Conway (Outback Engagement Coordinator) introduced themselves. Magnuson explained that this proposal is a result of actions that were taken largely during the yearly budget process last year. However, it was back in 2020 that discussions began about the shift in perspective as it relates to the Outback Farm and the engagement with the Associated students.

Last spring the decision was made for the AS to transition out of direct management of farm and transfer the responsibility to Fairhaven, including the funding. There were some conversations about where the farm might match for funding and advisement if it isn't with the AS anymore. There is a possibility of the Outback joining the Departmentally Related Activities Committee (DRAC).

The AS decision was to fund through December of this year with the hope that the 6 months would be a transitional time for the Outback to get funding from another area. In this immediate ask, the Outback is asking for an AS Grant to support the 3 student Coordinator positions and summer apprentice positions totaling \$21,000. Building on this, there is a request to have a critical look at the transition out of the AS and continue

to explore the AS relationship with the Outback. This would include looking at the university structure to find where the farm would best fit.

Jack Herring, Associate Vice President, advises DRAC. There are ongoing conversations surrounding a transition over to DRAC, and it is not ruled out that the Associated Students may still be a good fit for funding. Magnuson shared that Outback student staff, Fairhaven staff, and community members are questioning the decision to move the responsibility for funding the Outback out of the AS.

Conway shared that the Outback Farm is an invaluable resource to the campus at large. For the last 16 years, it has been a collaboration between the AS and Fairhaven College. The AS has funded the student employee positions, operating needs, and several capital projects. It also serves as an on-campus outdoor experiential learning site which offers 3 year-long leadership opportunities in the form of Student Coordinator positions open to any student with an interest in sustainable farming methods, permaculture, agroecology, habitat restoration, ecosystem restoration, and other related topics. The Outback also hosts Fairhaven, the College of the Environment, Woodring, the Honors College, and other academic programs and clubs for use as an outdoor classroom or for the experience.

The Outback also runs the Community Garden, which is open to all students, staff, alumni, and community members to have a garden plot. This provides an opportunity to build community as well as practically apply some things learned in classes and at the Outback. The Outback also contributes to the Fairhaven and WHOLE Food Pantries and play a key role in fighting food insecurity by providing fresh produce, eggs, etc. on campus. They also help people learn how to grow their own food which is critical for food security and food sovereignty. The Outback also hosts events such as Fall Harvest and Jubilee, bi-weekly work parties, speakers, workshops, and skill building opportunities. This provides student a space to engage with the university and the larger campus community. They also are home to a beloved chicken flock and bee hives, which enrich the lives of students as they are involved in their care. Conway said the Outback is a resource for all students, including employment opportunities, classes, work parties, clubs, volunteering, etc. Some people have academic interests in the farm, but many have personal interest as well. Conway feels that this is an invaluable resource, and it is important that it continues operation past this quarter.

Tuxill said last spring was really the first time that the students and Fairhaven Dean were informed of the possibility of transitioning funding out of the AS. Tuxill feels that there was a narrative about whether the Farm served the campus or whether it was a Fairhaven program. Tuxill said there were not discussions with the people working at the farm about this. By the time the Outback was in conversation with the AS administrators about a transition, they were surprised by the proposal. They recognized the concerns about demands on administrative staff, and they are willing to explore another institutional home for the Outback. But a full exploration of that process will take more time. Tuxill said that is really what the proposal today is requesting: funding for additional time to explore what support is needed for the Outback.

The Finance Council approved the proposed FY'24 budget which including ending financial and advisory support for the Outback as of December 31, 2023 as a part of the yearly budget process. Tuxill appreciated the statements by administration in support of the importance of the Outback and continuing funding until they are able to have a sustainable transition.

Tuxill said the other element that evolved in the narrative was the question of how much and what kind of support Fairhaven College provides. Tuxill believes these conversations were one-sided and that the information presented to the council at the meetings was not entirely accurate as reflected by the minutes. More information is provided in the documents “Fairhaven Financial Support for the Outback Farm” and “Outback Farm benefits for WWU campus” that was provided to the council via chat and uploaded to the Finance Council Teams channel. Tuxill said the primary contribution of Fairhaven College to the farm was funding the Farm Manager position, a critical staff position, and funding a chunk of the farm’s operations budget. The Farm Manager was first funded by an SEJF Grant, with the AS and Fairhaven together, for 3 years and Fairhaven College has funded the position since then. Fairhaven has contributed work study funding as well for additional employees. In regard to moving the Outback funding to DRAC, this is part of a broader conversation about considering decisions that have been made over the past year. They explored moving the Outback to DRAC last spring. One of the key elements is that the Outback would have to move to DRAC with its own funding stream. They are hoping to have more conversations starting in winter quarter.

Ryan thanked everyone for coming today to share information. There are a lot of people who are concerned about the funding for the Outback. The Senate has been talking about this as well. Ryan recognizes that DRAC is a separate conversation but was hoping that Tuxill could share the conversation. Tuxill said that the longer timeline has a summary of the timeline for discussions last spring. It also includes a follow-up conversation with the Services & Activities Fee Committee. For DRAC, they are fully allocated at this point. In order to add a new project, they would need additional funding. Tuxill’s interpretation of the conversation is that the funding was scheduled to end in December and that additional funding would need to come from AS Reserves. The message from DRAC was that they can’t add in an area mid fiscal year. They could consider a proposal for budgets for the next fiscal year. Tuxill said the Outback is unique and would be a unique project that might require a change to DRAC’s program requirements. The Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services is looking at how funding is allocated for DRAC. Tuxill has not been part of those conversations.

Sandstrom said that the idea of the Outback not quite fitting in to the AS has been talked about for several years and the administrators agreed. The AS and administration support the Outback and everything that they do and feel that it is important. People are seeing that the Outback is very connected to Fairhaven in terms of staff support, and how it is advertised. The AS doesn’t necessarily have the expertise to help support this area. Sandstrom said that Magnuson, as the advisor of that area from the AS, really saw his role diminishing in supporting the Outback.

Magnuson said that there were some restructures, and the previous support and advisor from the AS side had their position rewritten assigning them to support different areas. Magnuson feels that here in the AS we are not positioned to be in the role of supporting the Outback. Magnuson is not a farm expert and feels that the Farm Manager is really the rock in regards to operations. Magnuson feels that his position acts as a rubber stamp for approving a lot of expenditures and processes, and he wonders if that is the best use of his time in this role as the Manager for Viking Outdoor Recreation. Tuxill appreciates that Magnuson is currently managing and advising for the Outback, as this is a big job. Tuxill said one of the key things to realize is thinking back to why the AS became involved in funding the student coordinator positions. He wasn’t part of the conversations involved in establishing this, but it involved an Outback Club, and the AS was how the

conversation got started initially. Tuxill said the real connection with the AS has always been the student employees. It is a recognition of the many ways that the Outback serves the entire campus community. It started out with one coordinator, it expanded to 3, then expanded to include summer interns. The AS has been part of all of the expansions. The staffing had to catch up with the student employees, which is how they ended up applying for a grant, and then Fairhaven has continued to fund the Manager position after that.

Sandstrom said that the key was that there would be a responsible handoff, the goal was not ever to endanger the farm nor its operations. At this point, the two staff people who were having most of the conversations surrounding the transition no longer work at the university, and therefore the new staff is starting to catch up. Sandstrom shared that the presenters felt that the council didn't have the context from the Outback Farm workers and that is why they are giving additional information today. However, the proposal in front of the council is to fund the farm through the end of this fiscal year in order to allow for a smooth transition. The request is for \$21,000 through June 30, 2024.

VII. Other Business

VIII. Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Updates- there were no ADEI updates

IX. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.