



# Western Washington University Associated Students AS Finance Council Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2024

4:00 p.m.

Teams Online

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

**Advisor:** Cynthia Sandstrom (AS Business Manager)

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

**Guests:** Ben Crandall (Outdoor Recreation Program Coordinator), Brody Hunt (AS Concerts Coordinator), Donna Wilson (Club Activities Manager)

## MOTIONS

**FC-24-W-08** Approve the minutes of February 22, 2024. **Passed**

**Trent Austin, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.**

### I. Call to Order

### II. Approval of the Minutes

*MOTION FC-24-W-08 by Bedard*

Approve the minutes of February 22, 2024.

Second: Lee

Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed

### III. Revisions to the Agenda-

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

### V. Information Items \*

- A. **AS Budget Process Updates-** Austin said that the AS budgets are overbudgeted [over the amount of projected revenue] because of minimum wage increases. Austin said it is great we can pay a livable wage at the AS, but with those increases, there has been a need to lower other areas. Recently, Austin, Monger, Sandstrom, and Dr. Fred Collins (Director of Student Involvement) met with the Budget Authorities to see where all the budgets stand and where additional reductions are needed. Currently, Budget Authorities are reviewing their budgets and working on making reductions in certain areas with creative solutions. Sandstrom said that the Services and Activities (S&A) fee can only be increased by 4% per year, and when looking at the total increase in wages for both students and regular staff, it amounts to a 12% increase. Sandstrom said the mandatory wage increases can't be changed they are set by the state with minimum wage and HR with any staff reclassifications. Sandstrom said Budget Authorities were asked to right-size their budgets, which has resulted budgets anywhere between 20% and 50% overbudgeted. Sandstrom said they are not wanting to see any anything more than a 12% increase, but that might be too high as well. Sandstrom said that this budget season is pretty serious. Sandstrom said the S&A Fee committee is having hard conversations about the need to cut some programming in their areas. The AS gives the budgets back to the advisors and

Budget Authorities and work to revise those budgets with students. Sandstrom said that as Finance Council, we don't want to be making decisions for advisors and Budget Authorities, but that when seeing budgets that are over that 12%, Finance Council needs to be asking those hard questions about where the numbers are coming from, and if there are ways to reduce/readjust. Sandstrom said that it is new to us to need to think about reducing this much.

Ryan said she knows we are in a tough place budget wise across the university and across the state in higher education. Ryan asked when it comes to budgets the council has already reviewed, are they going to be coming to the council as an information item again to go over changes? Sandstrom said the budgets the council has reviewed thus far were smaller, mostly auxiliary budgets and weren't too much over. Sandstrom said they were mostly all within the range of an expected 12% increase and only minor revision is expected. The budgets that will be reviewed today are already revised, and any other budget the council will review going forward will be already revised.

Ryan asked if there will be any changes in expectations for student working hours. Ryan said it would be great if job descriptions could be shown alongside the presented budgets so the council knows what students are being told matches up with the budget. Ryan knows of some students being told they could work a certain number of hours, but those hours weren't budgeted for. Ryan said that if changes are being made to people's positions, it would be great to see those physical job descriptions as well. Sandstrom said that is a great point, and position descriptions were recently due for everyone to submit. At this point, they aren't all submitted yet, but the council can ask Budget Authorities going forward to present position descriptions along with their budget. Ryan said that would be great to see. Ryan asked if the council will be reviewing budgets that contain professional staff pay. Sandstrom said yes, the council will be reviewing the FXXVU budget, which is the main budget that all the professional staff are paid out of. Monger said the reason that FXXVU hasn't appeared on the agenda is because there are many position reclassifications out right now. They are probably going to wait until the end to present that budget to have the most accurate numbers. Typically, the budget just shows the total number being paid for each staff type. This is because they don't have control of what people are paid, AS pay level is set by state ranges that are assigned by HR.

Monger said since students aren't paid for holidays and there are things like midterms, finals, etc. to consider for students, Budget Authorities propose an amount that they think people are going to spend in a year. They don't want there to be a huge difference between that and what is in the job descriptions, but the two don't have to match. Monger said this is because in general, it has been found that people don't work their full allocated hours for their position in the year. They have done studies looking at this. Monger said for example, for the AS Board, their job descriptions say 19 hours, but by the end of the last fiscal year they had left about \$59,000 unspent in their budget. For this fiscal year, there was about \$26,000 unspent between summer and fall quarter. Monger said this is an area that is still having money left over because they haven't budgeted as tightly. In other areas where they budgeted more tightly, for example saying in the job description students can work 12-15 hours and they budget for 12, the money is spent more accurately. In areas where the spending went over what was budgeted, it was primarily because they didn't accurately budget for training hours. Because of this, they added in additional hours for training. Monger said because the budget is a guesstimate about what will be spent in a year and because of how much money they have seen left

over in budgets, they don't want to overbudget certain areas. For example, the OCE had \$19,000 left over, which could have funded 2-3 student positions. Ryan said she understands the reasoning behind that, but it frightens her that we are telling students they can work a certain number of hours, but not budgeting for that especially if students end up working the exact amount of hours they are promised in their job description. Ryan said she had several long talks with Melynda Huskey (Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services) bringing this to her attention and said Huskey agrees that is not good. Ryan said there will probably be further discussions that don't happen on a student level, but that she personally can't vote yes to any budget that is going to be underbudgeting student working hours compared to what students are being told they can work, even if there have been unspent dollars in the past. Wong said she understands that the budgets are only one part of our financial situation, and that there is some validity in Ryan's point. Wong said that if there is time, there should be discussions about trying to standardize how position descriptions are related to allowed working hours. This is so there can be more consistency across offices and they can come to a shared understanding about how Budget Authorities are ensuring that they not overspending nor unexpectedly cutting hours, nor doing anything that could materially harm student employees or threaten stability of the AS's financial situation. Sandstrom said that we need to have full transparency around this, because budget authorities need to be planning how many hours students can work within their budgets. Sandstrom said this needs to be reflected on the job descriptions to have full transparency as well. Monger asked if the budget summary will be shared today. Sandstrom said she doesn't think that is needed if we are letting the council know where we are at, that Budget Authorities are working to revise their budgets, and that only the revised numbers are being presented. Sandstrom said looking at the summary is a bit scary right now since people are asking for far more than the AS can afford, and right now collectively they somewhere around \$450,000 overbudgeted, but this is the original proposal before Budget Authorities have taken on revisions.

## B. AS Budget Review

### 1. Club Activities- Donna Wilson

- a. FXXACT- Club Activities Admin: Wilson said the biggest change to this budget is the student wages and benefits. Right now, there are three different positions within the Club Hub. Out of the three, it has been decided that the Promotion and Outreach Coordinator will be removed from the budget, leaving only the AS Club Event Coordinator and the Club Financial Coordinator next year. This decision was made because none of the positions seemed to have enough hours and because the Promotion and Outreach Coordinator seemed to not have enough to do. Right now, they are also trying to shift to using the Publicity Center more in the coming years for design work. They will also be giving the social media tasks to the staff position. There is no one returning in the Outreach and Promotion Coordinator position, so this will not be affecting any student returnees. The other two employees will have their hours increased from 12 to 17 hours per week.

The WIN contract is ending, and they are getting a new quote for renewal, which was discussed more in depth in the February 22, 2024 meeting in information item 4a. An area of decrease is for printing, as they haven't been doing banners for every event. This is because the majority of events are just for clubs and not everyone on campus.

Instead, they are only planning to use a banner for the one event that is open to everyone on campus. Speaker/performance expense was increased to cover the cost of a speaker at club awards. The speaker is an incentive to get clubs to come to their events and make the event more fun. Last year they had a DJ for the event. Promotional Items and t-shirts were increased since in FY24 they have already spent \$163 in that area. Promotional items include things like stickers, pins, t-shirts, etc. and things for Info Fair. Food costs for events was increased due to rising cost of food, and because offering food gets people to come to their events. Event Services expense was increased to cover more in-person events since the COVID-19 pandemic. Feedback from clubs following the lockdown showed that they were not a big fan of the online events. The ADEI/Retention/Belonging goals for this budget are that clubs foster connection among students, not just those in the club, but those that come to their events as well. This budget provides the Club Hub with the tools to train and support all those clubs for all identities and backgrounds. The sense of community keeps students at WWU. Sandstrom said that the AS has over 300 clubs, and club activities for students has increased a lot. Sandstrom said when talking to students, there seems to have been lot of attraction of new members to clubs, when in the past there had only been a few new people. Sandstrom said Wilson has been doing great work with the Club showcases.

Ryan said she knows how busy the Club Hub can be with over 300 clubs, and asked if reducing one student position would still allow the physical space in the Club Hub to be sufficiently staffed and address all student needs. Wilson said that there was a proposal for a temporary Club Activities Coordinator, which would have been a 6-month position through June 2024. Wilson said there was funding found to make that position permanent. With the guarantee that there will be another full-time staff member, they will be able to be fully staffed and meet the needs of students. Part of that position's responsibilities will be staffing the front desk when the student employees aren't there and supporting the student employees in their work. Wong asked where funding was found, and if it was from the FXXVU budget. Sandstrom said we plan to operationalize that position and it will be paid out of FXXVU like all other salaried employees. Sandstrom said this position is needed to support the Club Hub, and it is just a matter of making sure there is funding.

- b. FXXGRN- Club Grants/Loans/Underwrites- This budget is for clubs to request funding for events (event services costs, promotions, etc.) or request supplies for their club. Wilson said this budget is a bit higher than last year, at \$30,000 rather than \$25,000. Wilson said they try to split up the total funding by quarter, but they have had to dip into Spring quarter funding. The increase is because there are more clubs than before.
- c. FXXCLC- Club Conference Funding: Wilson said this budget is a travel fund for clubs for conferences, trips, etc. Wilson said the travel budget has already been fully spent this year, which was budgeted at \$15,000. Originally, Wilson wanted to request an extra \$5,000 for this budget, but after the budget conversation, decided to keep it at \$15,000. Wilson said this is because the funding for travel would benefit a significantly smaller number of students (around 10) compared to the number of students that can benefit from an event (which can be in the hundreds). Instead, Wilson will just let clubs know that they need to request travel funding early and that they need to primarily fund raise.

Ryan said she is excited to see an increase in the budget for Activities Council because she learned several years ago in 2012 there was more in that budget compared to now [about \$5,000 more]. Ryan said this increase is great for meeting the needs of 300 clubs on campus. The ADEI/Retention/Belonging goals for this budget are that this supports clubs to travel and provides learning opportunities, skill building, networking, and club satisfaction. Clubs and their programs provide community and belonging for a wide variety of interests and backgrounds such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more. Having spaces for these folks creates long term retention at WWU.

- d. FXXQGC- Queer Guild Council- Wilson said the Queer Guild Council (QGC) functions similarly to Activities Council (AC), but is specifically for queer identified clubs to request funding for events, programming, supplies, etc. Wilson said queer identified clubs can also request to AC because the QGC hasn't been funded at the level needed, but they need to go to QGC first. This budget was funded by Reserves for the past 4 years, and Wilson is requesting to operationalize the budget at \$4,000, the same level it has been at for the past 4 years. Ryan said that there is a pool of money for student clubs in the Multicultural Center to access that is not available to other clubs, and that is run by the Multicultural Center. Being that the Queer Guild Council funding is a collaboration between the AS and LGBTQ+ Western, Ryan wonders why funding is planned to solely come from the AS. Monger said this was discussed with LGBTQ+ Western, and that there was a request to increase this budget. Monger said that JoeHahn (Director of LGBTQ+ Western) is looking for additional funding for this and wants to slowly build it in. Sandstrom said a collaboration was the original intention for this budget. Sandstrom said she thinks that Huskey (Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services) mandated that funding for this budget needed to come from the Reserves for this year. Now that the budget is being operationalized, they can start to decide where funding should come from and ask different areas to make contributions. Wilson said that LGBTQ+ Western also contributes in other ways. For example, they are paying for a retreat for Queer Guild clubs, food at meetings, club promotion, etc. The ADEI/Retention/Belonging goals for this budget is that this budget provides funding for queer clubs to hold events and programming that builds community among LGBTQ+ folks at WWU.

## VI. Action Items

### A. Outdoor Center Large Event Request

Doc. 1

*Current Budget: \$43,236.32 OC Request: \$19,500*

Trent said that the Large Event Reserve would be exceeded by this request and the AS Productions request (Information Item C), and to keep that in mind when reviewing the next two requests.

Ryan asked why there is a line item for student staff included in the request. Crandall said that the student trip leaders typically staff the event, which is around 30-40 people. This is an event outside of their normal duties, and so when they budget FXXOEX (Excursions Budget), they only include wages for their trip leading. Crandall said this is their third or fourth year doing the Outdoor Extravaganza, and they have always had their student staff run the event and wants them to be paid for their time.

Lee asked if one of the things being offered for the Outdoor Extravaganza is to tie dye material like t-shirts, and if students will be encouraged to bring their own items to dye but that the Outdoor Center plans to purchasing clothing to dye that has branding on it.

Crandall said this is correct. Last year, they ran out of materials for tie dying halfway through the day. Lee was concerned because of fast fashion, and wondered if it was necessary to purchase t-shirts over having students just bring their own.

Lee said she also noticed an increase in the funding request of about \$6,500 compared to last year, and asked why they are offering music as an accessibility feature. Bedard said the goal with the music was to provide a space for students of all abilities to sit and enjoy Lakewood and create a variety of ways to engage that have varying levels of activity. Sandstrom said that Lakewood is known for not being super accessible, and if you are someone that is in a wheelchair, it is very difficult to navigate. Bedard said she is aware of that, and they are doing their best to work within the bounds of the space. Bedard said one thing they did last year and will be doing this year is leaving the road that goes down to the boat house open, and that area has relatively flat ground. Bedard said that she recognizes that it is not a perfect solution nor a perfect place to hold an event in terms of accessibility because of the nature of the land. Sandstrom recommends being careful about the marketing for this event and said if the event is marketed as an accessible event, that would not be accurate.

Lee asked for a more in-depth overview of the stage setup and event services cost. Lee said in combination with the cost of the music, it is almost \$3,000. Lee said she is concerned this is a really big part of the budget for something that might not be impactful as we wish it to be, considering that it was marketed as being an assessable part of the event. Crandall said the bulk of the stage cost is for paying an external company to set up the stage. The reason the cost is high is because last year they discussed this with the previous advisor to Finance Council, Raquel Vigil, and came to the conclusion that they could technically set up the stage themselves and bring in all the supplies, but the legality of doing so themselves was a risk they didn't want to take. The professional can also get the set-up done in a much shorter time. Crandall said if the council sees the cost of paying a professional to set up the stage as too high, that is something they could try to work with. Crandall said that Lakewood is a venue that they have to work extra hard at making more accessible, while recognizing that they can't make it totally accessible. Crandall said an example is thinking about the different levels and layers of accessibility. Last year, they had a student reach out asking questions about the accessibility of the event, and they provided the student information about the different paths, and which activities were more or less accessible. Crandall said that part of having music and a wellness speaker is to bring in students that might not see themselves as "outdoorsy" and inviting them to be in nature and come enjoy an activity that is typically done indoors but in an outdoor space. This allows them to reach a wider audience of students that might not have seen themselves as interested in outdoor recreation beforehand.

Austin asked about the \$6,000 price for free food being offered. Austin said he doesn't really know if that is the driver of what the event is about, and \$6,000 is a really big expense. Ausin wondered if there was a possible way of just having the food trucks there, and if students want to bring their own lunch or buy concessions if that could be a better expenditure. Sandstrom said that \$6,000 is a lot of money to pay a food truck, and knows the incentive is providing 450 free food vouchers, but that is something that they don't typically do for events with food trucks. Sandstrom said that last year they had less free food vouchers and given the high attendance, wondered if the free food incentive is still needed. Sandstrom asked what the capacity of Lakewood is for this event. Crandall said it is correct that last year there were about half of the free food vouchers, but last year they ended up having a turn-out of students that was about 3x what was expected. Over the

course of the whole event, they saw an attendance of about 800 students, which had Lakewood at full to overfull capacity. Crandall doesn't know the exact capacity of Lakewood since it is an outdoor space. The adjusted ask for the number of food tickets is to match the large attendance of last year. Sandstrom said she wants the council to know that the food vouchers wouldn't be enough to feed everyone attending the event. Sandstrom wondered about the equity of that. Crandall said the main intention of offering food at the event is wellbeing, recognizing that some students face food insecurity, and offering incentive to attend. Lakewood also doesn't have any places to get food that are easily accessible. Crandall said that while the cost is high, it is an incentive in the same way as ASP offering a headliner show for an event. Crandall said removing this would hinder the wellbeing of the event. Crandall said students would still come, but that the Outdoor Center would be going against some of their values set out for the wellness event. Lee said she is concerned because a big portion of the budget request is centered around the food truck rental. Lee wonders if there are better options invest in, such as putting this money into the campus food pantry.

Ryan thanked Crandall for presenting today, and wondered if it would be possible for the Outdoor Center to look at this budget again and see if there are any reductions that could be made, then come back again next week so that they can all feel better about the budget as a group. Ryan said she thinks it is an amazing event, and she wouldn't want it to not go through since there are some hesitancies about a couple of the line items. Crandall said they are getting close to when they need to start ordering things for the event and pushing the approval back a week might inhibit some of that. Crandall said the students have put a lot of work and effort into this. Ryan said that since there were hesitancies around food, one thing they could do is provide food for less individuals. Another thing could do is provide a packaged meal instead of doing a food truck rental. Wong suggested voting on approving a portion of the proposal now and voting on approving the other half later. Monger said that she has a large event reserve history showing the history of what events have been funded at in the past, and it might be helpful for the council to view. Ausin suggested approving \$13,000, which is what they asked for last year. Ryan said that is a significant reduction, and asked if the event could be run at all with that budget. Crandall said he doesn't know, but looking at staff wages which is at \$9,000, they wouldn't be able to do much else. They would also not be able to provide a shuttle for the event, food would be significantly reduced, and they wouldn't have as much crafting or art supplies. Crandall asked the council to consider that last year due to budget constraints, they decided against trying to operationalize this annual event, as is common in other areas *Crandall left the meeting due to technical difficulties.*

Voting for this action item was tabled to next meeting to allow for more discussion and feedback from the OC on a reduced budget.

## **VII. Information Items \***

### **C. AS Productions Large Event Request**

Doc. 2

*Current Budget: \$43,236.32 ASP Request: \$35,000*

*This item was tabled to next meeting due to a lack of time.*

## **VIII. Other Business**

- A. Please add Spring quarter schedules in Outlook- Austin reminded the council to add their Spring quarter schedules in Outlook.

**IX. Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Updates**

**X. Adjourn**

***The Meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.***