



Western Washington University Associated Students AS Finance Council Meeting Minutes

April 11, 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: Adam Lorio (Director of AS Governance Advising Programs), Dr. Frederick Collins (Director of Student Involvement)

MOTIONS

FC-24-S-04 Approve the minutes of April 4th, 2024. **Passed**

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

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION FC-24-S-04 by Ryan

Approve the minutes of April 4, 2024.

Second: Wong

Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed

III. Revisions to the Agenda

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

V. Action Items

VI. Information Items *

A. Budget Updates

1. Draft Budget Summary (still in progress)

Doc. 1

Austin briefly reviewed Doc 1. via shared screen. Austin noted that this document is still in progress and a new column was created for revised budget requests. Wong asked what the percentage change represents. The percentage change represents the revised request compared to the allocation of last year, it was an increase of 13.3% and is \$359,662 over projected revenue.

2. AS Student Wage use as of end of Winter Quarter

Doc. 2

This document shows the total unspent wages for each budget as of the end of Winter Quarter. Ryan asked why the approach being taken is to remove hours from student positions instead of addressing why some students aren't working their full hours, or auditing specific student positions to understand if they truly need as many hours as is

being budgeted. Sandstrom said that when asking Advisors to look at their budgets with their student employees, they are being asked to look at everything based on what they think they need- [positions needed, hours needed, quarters worked, etc]. Budget authorities were asked to revise their budgets since the S&A Fee is only being increased by 4% this year and increases were above that, and they are typically asked to look at reductions in other areas before removing student hours or student positions. Sandstrom said Advisors will reduce student hours if needed.

Ryan asked if there has been an internal audit of student positions within the AS or if there are plans to do so in the future, since unspent hours have continued to be a problem. Sandstrom said there has not been an audit of which positions are working what hours, but ideally the Advisors are already tuned into that. Sandstrom said an audit would be helpful. Dr. Collins said one of the things he, Monger, and Sandstrom have done is look at historical use of these positions over the last few years. Dr. Collins said they have seen a trend in some positions where they consistently don't work their allocated hours, and he recommends having an audit to see which positions are needed, which need more hours, and which need less. Monger said they [Administration, Budget Authorities, and Finance Council] have been looking at this for the past 8 to 10 years and adjusting over time for areas that are chronically overspending or areas that need more support. Some budget authorities have also lowered hours on position descriptions or kept them the same based on what was needed. The budget has gotten tighter this year, and the reason this document was made is because of big changes made last year [reducing by 1 week overall and other changes]. Monger said the Finance Council and Administration do talk with Budget Authorities about it, but leave it mostly up to them because they're the people that know what has happened in the year (for instance if it is a one-time issue of a vacancy, medical leave, or if it is a recurring issue of underspending/overspending). Wong asked if there are any projections on this document or if it is just unspent dollars. It is actual dollars spent.

B. Budget Review-

1. Student Gov- Adam Lorio.

- a. FXXBAD- Lorio said this budget has historically taken on all of the staffing for AS Government except for the Senators. For FY25, Lorio is moving the Senate President and Gov Assistant into FXXSSN. Lorio said one thing to be aware of is that this budget has been based on the potential that there is a referendum going forward to the student body for the spring election to update the AS Governance Constitution. If passed, this would add a new role, the Vice President for University Operations (which is included in this budget), and the Senate President would no longer sit on the Executive Board. Lorio said due to the reorganization by Vice President Melynda Huskey and the President, Sabah Randhawa, there has been a renewed focus on engagement and work being done by the governing bodies to represent students across Western. With that comes the expectation that the basic elements of the jobs for the elected officials are closer to the allocated hours in the job descriptions. Sandstrom said with the President's and Vice President's renewed oversight of AS Governance, they have philosophies of what things should look like, but they are not in close contact with the budget.

Lorio said these student government positions are unique because they are not technically guided by HR. Lorio said as a budget manager, he also doesn't have the unique administrative levers to reduce this budget like he would be able to with others. For example, changing the hours of the Vice Presidents would require a Bylaw change

and way of governance. Ryan said via chat, "Removing a position from student government is a vote from the entire student body compared to other AS offices where an advisor decides to remove a position. Just an example of how simply different these positions are". For this budget, the biggest change is a reduction in the number of training hours and a reduction in the pool of summer hours. The hours for the Student Government Assistants level 2 position were also changed from 15 hours to 12 hours per week.

Sandstrom asked how they came to the decision to hire another position in a year when so many other areas are reducing hours and eliminating positions (VP for University Operations). Lorio said there was a Constitution Working Group that went through to make sure the Constitution was updated to reflect changes in the Charter. What the charter suggests is that the Senate is an independent body representing students in Academic Affairs and the AS Executive Board is an independent body representing students in issues beyond the classroom. Lorio said the move of the Senate President would take them down to six positions on the Executive Board, which could pose problems due to it being an even number. Additionally, an area lacking in representation was Business and Financial Affairs, and University Operations. After identifying that gap, the working group recommended the new position be added. Ryan said adding this position will help create more of a connection with other parts of the university.

Austin is concerned about adding a new position in an already overbudgeted area, and finds it a bit troublesome. Ryan said this position will be going to a vote of the whole student body. Austin is concerned about having the money to fund this position. Lorio said there are additional budget scenarios to see what reductions would look like in the budget.

- b. FXXLAF- This budget pays for AS lobbying efforts which are coordinated by the VP For Governmental Affairs. Lorio said this budget will continue to be funded by the Legislative Action Fund this year, due to the budget situation.
- c. FXXSBR-DIV- This budget was not presented due to a lack of time.
- d. FXXSSN- This budget mostly funds the pay of 20 Student Senators. The biggest change to this budget was reducing the pool of hours for the AS Senate President to prepare for Fall and reducing training hours. The hours per week for the AS Student Government Assistants were reduced to 10 hours per week.

Lorio showed the council an alternate budget scenario via shared screen with reduced hours for other positions. Dr. Collins said in the current budget climate we are in now, budget authorities need to think about turning in a budget that makes sense. Right now, the AS is about \$300,000 over projected revenue, which leaves the question which areas will be reduced to cover this overage. Dr Collins said this is difficult, and everyone [Budget Authorities, Administration] has been doing their best to keep the budget low, but there is a lot more work to do. Dr. Collins is worried about where this money will come from, and that the AS is not there yet with the number of reductions or cuts needed. Dr. Collins said the numbers are really bad.

Ryan asked if the Outdoor Center has seen program cuts yet due to this. Dr. Collins said Ben Crandall (Outdoor Recreation Program Coordinator) has a strong ethic against cutting programs and charging students for trips. Sandstrom said one change is that the Outdoor Center has needed to close an extra hour early to work within their

budget, they will now be open 5 hours a day instead of 6. Sandstrom said the Council will hear from the Outdoor Center next week.

Ryan said via chat “I think it is essential to understand we will likely only have bad budget years from now on. While enrollment has been increasing, we are still impacted by Covid-19 and will be further impacted by future enrollment issues since there are simply less students entering higher ed in the coming years”. Sandstrom also reminded the council that the University President and Vice President have great philosophies about how they want to see the AS look and run, but they are not very close to the details of AS budgets. The Council as stewards of student dollars get to decide what the budgets will look like. Sandstrom said that the Council’s hands are not tied when it comes to making changes to the Executive Board or the Senate budgets.

2. Office of Civic Engagement- Lorio noted that these budgets were primarily developed by Casey Hayden (Assistant Director, Activities and Media) and OCE staff, and most in-depth questions about the budgets would need to be directed to Hayden.
 - a. FXXREP- This budget primarily supports staff and personnel wages for OCE operation. The biggest changes to this budget includes reduction in weeks worked for 3 positions for summer planning. Positions with weeks reduced include the Committees Coordinator, Director of Legislative Affairs, and Local Issues Coordinator. For the winter, the Director of legislative affairs had 1 extra week added to accommodate work done during the intercession. Ryan asked if the Legislative Education Assistant was made into a Coordinator position and bumped up to a higher pay grade. Ryan is interested in the difference between the Legislative Education Assistant job description and the Outreach and Education Coordinator, and wants to know the intention behind moving the position up a pay grade. Lorio will ask Hayden and come back with more information at a later time.
 - b. FXXELC- This budget is to promote awareness of AS elections and encourage voter education. This budget had a small decrease due to reductions made in food and beverages for receptions and meetings and reductions made in printing for Elections Advisory Committee Recruitment. The WIN elections Module cost was also reduced due to the WIN contract being updated. Lorio asked the council if they know the turnout rate for AS Governance elections on campus. Lorio said the answer is a 3.5% turnout, and at this point about 97% of the enrolled students on the Bellingham campus that are eligible to vote are also underrepresented students in the AS voting process. Lorio said their goals are to increase engagement, for example through partnering with The Centers [former ADEI/MCC area] to do outreach.
 - c. FXXLEG- Lorio said this budget funds the Director of Legislative Affairs (DOLA) for their participation in legislative action in Olympia. The budget pays for their moving expenses and rental costs during Winter quarter and costs for events during Fall and Spring Quarter. Lorio said this is a budget that could be investigated a bit further, and is a place where the Legislative Action Fund could potentially provide support. Ryan asked why there are travel reimbursements for parking when other DOLA’s have used the bus. Ryan said there is pretty robust public transportation in Olympia, and that is seems like a more sustainable option. Lorio isn’t sure, but will ask Hayden about it.
 - d. FXXVER- Lorio said this budget funds the voter registration education program and “Western Votes”. This budget also funds the programming of the Civic Involvement

Coordinator, which may include speakers, panels, workshops, media campaigns, interactive civic engagement events, or other formats that support the mission of the OCE (Office of Civic Engagement). The biggest change to this budget was due to FXXLGL being closed out, so those expenses were moved to this budget.

Ryan said that the S&A Fee requirements say that speakers or performers can't be paid with S&A Fee money unless their contract specifically says so. Ryan is unsure that rule has always been followed within the AS. Ryan also asked if the \$1,000 line item for housing for early-move in volunteers is still needed. Ryan said that there have been barely any volunteers since 2015 when they had 30 volunteers. Lorio is unsure and will follow up with Hayden. Sandstrom said for this budget, speakers are a new expense. Sandstrom said she oversees the contract process for AS Offices that bring in speakers on campus, and contracts are made and routed through Contracts Administration. This means that the speakers would comply with the S&A Fee requirements. Ryan said via chat "I think there have been speakers, but they have solely been Faculty or Staff from WWU". Sandstrom said faculty and staff speakers have a different process. For example, if a government professor did a talk on government policies, they would not be paid by the AS because it is part of their job at Western. But if they are speaking on something outside of their job, they can be paid through the AS.

VII. Other Business

VIII. Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Updates

IX. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.