



Western Washington University Associated Students AS Finance Council Draft Meeting Minutes

April 18, 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), *Late:* 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 (Interim Assistant Director for Viking Outdoor Recreation), Dr. Frederick Collins (Director of Student Engagement)

MOTIONS

FC-24-S-05 Approve the minutes of April 11, 2024. **Passed**

Trent Austin, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION FC-24-W-05 by Ryan

Approve the minutes of April 11, 2024.

Second: Lee

Vote: 5-0-0

Action: Passed

III. Revisions to the Agenda- Information item A1a was added as FXXCHL. Item A1b was corrected from FXXOUT to FXXOCA.

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

V. Action Items

VI. Information Items *

A. Budget Review

1. Outdoor Center- Ben Crandall

- a. FXXCHL- This budget is for the Challenge Course and has not been operational for the past few years and the budget is zeroed out. In the future, Crandall is hoping to bring back this program, but it needs some redesigning before that can happen.

Wong joined the meeting.

- b. FXXOCA- Crandall said the ADEI/Retention/Belonging goals for this budget are about recognizing that the Outdoor Center (OC) believes in creating a community and ensuring OC employees feel supported. Crandall said when employees feel supported, they can go out and support the broader Western community. This also supports retention of employees. Changes to this budget include the addition of a printing cost to make the

OC Policy and Facilitation guide books, the addition of food during employee training which is held twice per year, the AORE annual membership cost was slightly reduced to match spending in past years, a subscription for Gaia maps services was added to support the program, and the gas line item was removed since the cost can be moved to another budget. The biggest change to the budget is due to mandatory minimum wage increases and reducing hours during the summer for the Student Coordinator positions. Due to the budget situations they looked for areas for reduction and decided the OC is a lot less busy during the summer and 5-7 hours per week will be enough time to get the essential prep work done for the Fall quarter.

- c. FXXOEQ- This budget is for the Equipment and Rental Shop. Crandall said the focus of this budget is to provide low-cost gear rentals to students and teach students how to use their bikes, repair their gear, and other important skills. Crandall works hard to make the OC an open and welcoming environment and also hire and train staff that can support students in that capacity. Crandall said getting students involved in the outdoors can connect students to a deeper sense of place and belonging.

Crandall said revenue comes into this budget from rental fees. Supplies and materials were raised to include Chartwells shop/towel services to keep the shop clean and keep bikes in working order. The line item to repair broken equipment shop rental gear was removed due to the existence of the amortization account FXXOAM which can cover this cost. 40% of the cost of each rental goes into FXXOAM to fund repair and replacement of anything the rental shop rents out to students. This budget does not cover the cost of new gear or gear used by the excursions program; this would be out of the Equipment Reserve.

Ryan said it is really cool to see the intentions written out on the budget sheet as a student and what the Outdoor Center does is really impactful. Other changes to the budget include \$560 added to wash sleeping bags once per year, as they were not washed frequently in the past. An expense for food for OC staff was added for their meeting once per quarter that falls over dinner time and works to build community in the OC. Crandall said the biggest reduction to the budget came from reducing operating hours for next year and not double staffing the OC. Hours for the OC will now be 12-4pm in the summer and 10am-4:30pm during the academic year, which is their peak hours. In terms of staffing, in the past, the OC would double staff the front desk and the bike shop on their busiest days, Friday's and Monday's, this has been reduced to 1 staff person. To make up for this change, Crandall said the OC will be working to cross-train Bike Techs and Front Desk staff so they can help each other out. Crandall will also step in to help if needed.

- d. FXXOEX- This budget is for the OC Excursions program. Crandall said the ADEI/Retention/Belonging Goals for this budget are about paying students for the trips they lead, which hasn't always happened, and also providing free or low-cost excursions for the campus community. Crandall said it's important to recognize that not all students have the financial means to pay \$100 for an activity. As part of these goals, they will be working with different partner organizations and clubs on campus to provide free trips. For example, participants from the Black and Brown Men's Club, Honors College Peer Mentor Group, NASU, and Alma Clark Glass Hall are provided free trip attendance. Crandall said they are trying to change narratives around what outdoor recreation is, who it is for, and how much it costs. Changes to this budget include an increase in expected revenue because students will be charged \$20 per day for

activities. There are three free spots in each trip saved for students going through financial hardship or facing other barriers funded from a Foundation account. This operates on a trust-based system. Crandall said when students are trusted, they become trustworthy. Other changes to the budget are removing surfboard and wetsuit rentals for cost savings. Crandall said it is more cost-effective to buy the gear than to continue renting. The cost for other rentals/gear was reduced. There was an increase in the cost to cover special use permits and annual user pays for land-based agencies in the state, and the subscription cost for the Garmin emergency communication devices also increased. Gas costs also increased due to rising gas prices. A big reduction to this budget came from removing the 5-day spring break trip and removing one of the Adventure Break trips per quarter.

Adventure breaks are free to participants are on campus or close to campus trips that focus on community building and getting outside. Crandall said the trips are organized so they are lower barrier such as walks in the arboretum, a bike tour around town, etc.

Wong asked if the new wage totals have been implemented in this budget, and when those will be reflected in these budgets. Austin and Monger said they will be updated for next week.

- e. FXXOLT- This budget is for training Trip Leaders. Crandall said their mission is to break down the narrative that in order to work in outdoor recreation at the OC, you must be highly skilled and have a lot of privilege, experience, and money. Instead, they want to hire people that have a passion for the outdoors. They can teach the technical skills, but they can't necessarily teach people to be excited about going outside. The ADEI/Retention/Belonging goals are about recognizing that people from all backgrounds can go into trip leading. Crandall said within a year of training, they can lead trips for other students. Crandall wants to make sure that outdoor recreation can be accessible for everyone. Crandall said unspent funds from the WOOT Program (Western Outdoor Orientation Trips) will be transferred into this budget for the upcoming year to help cover the cost of training, since trip leaders also lead WOOT trips. The WOOT program takes new incoming students on a week-long trip prior to the start of the quarter to allow them to meet other students, set goals for their year, and experience the outdoors, examples are sea kayaking or backpacking.

Other changes to this budget include a slight increase in supplies and materials to match what was actually spent in the past year and adding a line item for campsite reservations and ferry tickets for training. Education and training fees were also reduced because the Wilderness First Aid and Mental Health First Aid training is proposed to be added to the AS Reserves distribution. The cost of food for staff during training was also decreased because the plan to partner with Chartwells was unsuccessful, and instead they will be doing bulk shopping. Another reduction came from removing more advanced trainings that were offered in the past such as level 2/3 of trainings. If students want those more advanced trainings, they can explore funding through other means.

- f. FXXOYG- This budget pays for free yoga for students which supports the well-being of the campus community. Supporting students' well-being helps them thrive and find a sense of belonging. Crandall said this program is not fitness focused, and their goal is to recognize that yoga can be for many different body types and many different types of people. The only changes to this budget are a \$100 reduction in supplies and materials

since the yoga mats can be cleaned with supplies they already own, and increase due to mandatory wage increases.

- g. FXXOPO- This budget is for marketing for the OC with the goal of getting the word out to students about what the OC does, why they do it, and addressing concerns of students who have hesitations about participating in the OC or outdoor recreation. This budget also provides funds to put on a film festival called No Mans Land, which is a nation-wide event that promotes and uplifts women and non-binary people to get outdoors and celebrate. This year they are expecting an increase in revenue because they will have two events in the year instead of one. They are also not planning to donate part of the revenue to the Shifting Gears Organization like they did last year, since they do not have the budget capacity to donate. Other changes to the budget include a reduced cost prediction for the film rental, and an added cost for 4 banners and stickers. There was also an increase in copy services cost which will go towards WWU print and copy services and the Publicity Center to allow for more extensive marketing. The allocation for promotional materials was decreased with the plan to offer less merchandise for the year.

There was an increased cost for VU Event Services and the PAC box office due to the additional event. The planned revenue from the additional film festival allowed for a significant reduction in the overall budget. Crandall said in terms of the all the budgets presented today.

Overall- It is a difficult balance to maintain because there are waitlists for all of their trips. In the 16 months coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, there were around 1,000 students waitlisted for trips. Crandall knows students are interested in what the OC is doing, and they want to be able to do more, but they needed to recognize that this year the OC can't do more. Bedard asked Crandall to talk more about the Adventure Breaks. Crandall said all of the OC's programs are designed by and run by students. The focus of the Adventure Breaks is on more relaxed introductory level experiences and are free to attend. A recent challenge for the OC with these trips has been having people sign up and not show up. Sandstrom said she wants the council to understand that the OC has a philosophy around not wanting to charge much for trips to make it accessible to all students. Sandstrom said even on the trips they charge for, the price is incredibly economical compared to other organizations that also offer trips, like REI and the American Alpine Institute.

Cheikho left the meeting.

VII. Other Business

- A. WWU Student Employee Wage Schedule Update Doc. 1

Sandstrom said that the Student Employment Center, which serves the whole university and all students regarding jobs, just released a new wage schedule they are wanting to be implemented for May 1st, the same day that Bellingham increases the minimum wage. The new minimum wage in Bellingham will be \$17.28. Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services instructed that only the student positions that are currently below minimum wage will be raised to minimum wage. The wage of other positions will not increase. They are currently not able to give other upgrades above minimum wage. Typically, the AS has done these upgrades, and it is stated in the AS Wage Policy. However, Huskey reached out to Sandstrom and Dr. Collins (Director of Student Involvement) and let them know that HR had advised that they cannot make

changes to wages beyond adjusting for the new minimum wage because it could constitute an unfair labor practice because they are currently bargaining with students who wish to create unions.

The AS Wage Policy cannot supersede university policies or obligations. Because of this, the AS needs to adjust their planning for next year to include getting all AS employees to minimum wage but not making further adjustments to wages pending the completion of union negotiations. Sandstrom is unsure of when negotiations will be wrapped up, all she knows is that this quarter the negotiations are for academic student employees and from what she understands they are trying to wrap that up by the end of the quarter. For the rest of the student employees to be able to have bargaining rights, they have to go to the legislature and get a vote on it to get permission.

Wong said that makes sense broadly about the status quo issue and bargaining. Wong said she doesn't believe it was HR or Huskey that said the AS shouldn't be applying the additional raise above minimum wage, and said if we don't apply it, that would constitute an unfair labor practice. Wong said we need to follow the AS Wage Policy, because the policy is status quo and the wages themselves aren't. Wong will follow up with Huskey about this. Sandstrom said the university has taken a stance that the AS does not have official policies, but has procedures or standards. University policy supersedes AS procedures.

B. AS Wage Budgeting Proposal

Doc. 2

Wong said Ryan has raised concerns about wage budgeting a few times which have led to ongoing conversations. Currently wages are budgeted within the AS dependent on who the advisor is or what year it is, and this proposal is to create a uniform system for how wages are budgeted. Their idea is that the position description would have an expected hours listed, and the budget would be budgeted at the expected hours, and the employee and supervisor would adjust to stay within budget every quarter. Wong wants the council's thoughts on this. Ryan said this proposal is stemming from a place of wanting to create more transparency with students as changes are being made, and the desire to bring continuity to how the AS operates.

Dr. Collins said it is good to have this discussion, but there is a degree of flexibility that advisors use to staff areas. Having those ranges assists them in their programming. Dr. Collins said as this discussion moves forward, it would be good to have advisors involved in the discussion to talk about both sides of the issue. Ryan agrees and thinks advisors can be more flexible but that there is some benefit in creating a more uniform system in how the AS operates. Wong said something interactive happening during the year between student employees and their supervisors [in terms of hours] is the most important part of the proposal. Wong said there should be flexibility in how the budget is adhered to rather than flexibility in what students are promised in terms of what is being budgeted.

Ryan said that advisors don't seem to be having conversations with students when they are not meeting their expected hours. Sandstrom said if the advisors are doing their job, these conversations should be happening all year. Sandstrom said she knows a lot of advisors who do that but having that in writing could be good so there is full transparency. Wong said they have heard from students that advisors have not been having these conversations. Ryan said there has been a high overturn of advisors in Student Government, and personally Ryan only had one of five advisors have that conversation with her about hours in the three years she has worked in the AS. Bedard

said in the OC there are frequent talks about not going over their hours, and this is a balance that she has had to figure out later in her career at the AS.

Hughes said based on their experience as an AS a student, one idea could be listing the total allocated hours for the year for the position next to the weekly range of hours on the job description. Hughes said when they were a student (last quarter and 3 years prior) their supervisor had created an hours tracker that was updated at the end of every pay period so they could keep track of how many hours they have left for the quarter, and they found that helpful. Lee likes the idea of putting the total number of hours on the job description, but Lee is worried it might put pressure on students if they had to keep track of the number of hours they worked throughout the year. Lee thinks that should not be a concern for students. Wong asked for clarification. Lee wondered if it would be the responsibility of the student or the advisor to keep track of hours and allocate them throughout the entire year, and is worried that would put a lot of pressure on the student if that were the case. Hughes said their experience was that their student position was budgeted for 12-15 hours, and they were scheduled for 15 hours per week and would update the hours tracker at the end of every pay period. Hughes said they are unsure how much of a concern going over the budget would be for other students, but in their case, they never had an issue with running out of hours, even when they occasionally went over their 15 hours on a busy work week because it all balanced out in the end. They found the hours tracker helpful because at the end of every pay period they could look back and see what was left. Wong said if the council has additional thoughts about this subject, they can email her and Ryan so they can continue this discussion.

VIII. Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Updates

IX. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.