Minutes: Official Meeting of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate Finance and Budget Committee
February 8th, 2013

I. Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 9:05 am

II. Roll Call
Chairman Senator Eddie Schwieterman, Astronomy
GPSS Treasurer Vera Giampietro, Landscape Architecture & Urban Planning
Senator JD Ross Leahy, Marine Affairs
Senator Seyda Ipek, Physics
Senator Evan Firth, Oceanography
Senator Alexandra Kaufman, Public Health

Guests
Kevin Hicks for Microbiology

III. Approval of the Agenda
Approval of the Agenda passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes
Committee approved minutes from 2/1/2013 unanimously.

V. Consideration of Departmental Allocations

Departmental Allocation for Microbiology
Before the guest presentation, Chairman Schwieterman asked if there were any concerns about the request. None were stated. Senator Ipek asked about the Special Allocation, to which Chairman Schwieterman told her they had been completely funded by ASUW. Kevin Hicks from Microbiology arrived at 9:10 to present the request. Kevin Hicks said his department was seeking funding for their graduate student retreat to Friday Harbor. This is an event that they have been hosting for over a decade. The retreat is about getting everyone together, boosting camaraderie, provide an informal way for students to present their research, and give people a chance to show what they are working on. There is a lot of discontinuity with the first year graduate students so this is a way to get involved with them.

Chairman Schwieterman asked if they had looked for other funding and how much the retreat was per person. Kevin said their only sources were GPSS and support from his department, and that currently they were asking $40/person up front to cover food, while the department helps out with the lodging. Senator Kaufman also noted that the funding was for transportation. Chairman Schwieterman asked for any more questions, and said the application looked good.

Senator Firth moved to fund Microbiology for $350
Senator Ipek seconded the motion.
Motion passed unanimously.
VI. GPSS Budget Update

Chairman Schwieterman opened by asking for questions on the budget. Senator Ipek inquired about the issue of raising hours and wages for personnel. Treasurer Giampietro clarified that the officer staff is paid hourly during the summer and has an approved ASE salary during the school year. She said the hours for the officers would be increased to 20hrs/week but the wage would come down to $17 from $20.58. The ASE salary is increasing because it is mandated by the union contract. Overall, the goal of this part of the budget is trying to bring all the staff to a more balanced equal pay scale, and one strategy for doing this is for the officers to take a pay cut.

Treasurer Giampietro began leading the committee through each budget item and the changes made to it. Chairman Schwieterman asked if the copy of the budget was online. She stated that the committee has to decide on the total amount they want secured from SAF. Then the officers will meet on how to divide those funds to each budget line. Chairman Schwieterman directed the committee to look at everything highlighted. He also asked if it is a problem if the committee approves a different budget than the executive committee to which Treasurer Giampietro did not have an exact answer. Chairman Schwieterman expressed having a problem approving a budget that says TBD in it and that the money will not add up, especially in regards to the salary portion of the budget. Chairman Schwieterman asked if this is in the Bylaws. Treasurer Giampietro pointed out that on Pg 27 in Clause 1- the officers have to tier the positions, which will influence how the wages are set. She asked if his concern is that this could result in something unjust or if it just does not look good. He responded, “it doesn’t look good.” Treasurer Giampietro again said this will not be the final budget. Senate will still have to approve all the numbers. She emphasized that the committee’s concern is voting on the amount to present and get approved to SAF.

There was a brief confusion and mix up of budget versions that were to be talked about, but everyone settled on the shared document in the Google Drive.

Treasurer Giampietro described that for the last two years, GPSS has requested same amount from SAF. SAF is comprised of a quarterly fee that students pay as part of their tuition, and that GPSS is given some of it. The money received from SAF cannot be used for food or alcohol, unless it is a special designated meeting or conference (i.e. Senate). This year $18,000 was budgeted for food and alcohol. For next year, it has been proposed to raise this to $20,000. This is because of the increase in summit events. The increased request from SAF is also to reflect the increase in tuition and officer salary. This was estimated at 5% increase in tuition, totaling approximately $4,000, and another 8% increase at $5,000 to reflect the salaries.

Chairman Schwieterman requested that the committee starts at the top of the budget.

*Administration*- Treasurer Giampietro noted the only changes made were in the Events category. The proposed change is that each of the Fall and Spring socials be lowered by $1000. This is in an attempt to not try to provide substantial food at all the events, as it does not look good if we run out, and if there is not enough to feed everyone. With respect to the picnics and mixer, this year that money has not been spent because the Social Committee has not found any student parent groups to partner with. Moving Student Parent event money to the Small Events budget will allow the Treasurer and Social Committee to use those funds as they see fit, from year to year.
Committees-Treasurer Giampietro said that there are currently 15 GPSS committees. The officers would like to recognize what the committees are doing over the year. Currently, the $1000 allocated for committees only provides approximately $66 per committee for the year. To recognize the work of the committees, the officers have proposed doubling this budget.

Summits- This budget increased by $2000 to reflect spending on an increased number of events.

Advancement- Treasurer Giampietro presented the new position and budget line item. She described that GPSS historically has a substantial general fund. One of the ideas to spend this fund was to make an endowment, however this cannot be done with this money. The President suggested hiring someone for a year as a Director of Advancement to pursue donations that could then be put into an endowment. This position will include $5000 for fundraising efforts as well as hourly pay.

Chairman Schwieterman asked what the “resources” were and Treasurer Giampietro gave examples of travelling funds, poster printing, etc. She also suggested that an alumni mixer could possibly be included, as a strategy for pursuing contributions. Senator Leahy wanted confirmation that the creation of this position has been an ongoing process and presented to Senate. Treasurer Giampietro did not think that Senate was explicitly aware of it. Senator Leahy said the situation seemed sticky when there is a full removal/creation of programs, as it is only part of the process that there is thought going into it. Chairman Schwieterman observed that a description for the position is in the President’s narrative, and that even if it doesn’t work, it can be paid for using the General Fund. This is an investment that carries risk. Senator Leahy clarified that there are no guidelines set up yet on how this money generates revenue etc, it sounds reasonable, but it is questionable how it has been discussed with Senate. Chairman Schwieterman stated that the President will have to make his case. Treasurer Giampietro said it creates flexibility as well as sustainability. She also established that it was only last week GPSS found out that the General Fund cannot be used for an endowment, so this is the quick resolution to the problem. It also only returns minimal interest that would not become substantial for many years.

Chairman Schwieterman asked about a recent referendum to amend the Washington State Constitution, to allow the University to invest its endowment in the stock market. Chairman Schwieterman asked if it otherwise invested in bonds. Treasurer Giampietro responded that she thought it was only in low risk stocks.

Senator Leahy observed that the Director of Advancement had no wage associated with their position title on the budget sheet. Treasurer Giampietro said that this should in fact be filled out, and made those changes to the online spreadsheet. Chairman Schwieterman noted that the total staff budget is unknown.

Vice President- The current Vice President made specific recommendations based on what she spent over the last year. All of the changes seem reasonable because all of them are decreases.

Treasure- There were recommendations to increase funding for Senate meetings for the purchase of more healthful food. The current budget is not sufficient if it is to cover non-
processed food. Additionally, three Senate meetings were added to the calendar this year. This increase should hopefully provide more healthful food. Senator Kaufman asked who decides on the food being unhealthful, to which the Treasurer responded it was feedback from the Senate, and that she wished to provide more vegetables and fruit.

*Secretary*- The current Secretary proposed increasing funds for the Diversity Fair speaker and Diversity Events Fund by $4000. This is so there are more funds to distribute to diversity groups. Community feedback has indicated GPSS has poor diversity outreach. Senator Kaufman asked if there is a faculty representative for GPSS, to which Treasurer Giampietro said she did not think so. Senator Kaufman suggested looking into the programs with the Faculty Senate as they are increasing their efforts for diversity. *WebIT* will be removed as GPSS no longer pays for those services, and if there is a catastrophic event the General Fund may be used. Lastly, *SharePoint* is being removed, as staff and SAO advisors were not trained on how to use the program.

*Personnel*- GPSS Officers are a part of the UAW and receive a standard ASE stipend. This year’s officers happen to be paid in the lowest tier. These tiers depend on the department the officers are from. There is potential for all four officers to come from departments that pay in the highest tier. The budget needs to account for that. Senator Ipek thought the raise did not start until 2015. Chairman Schwieterman stated that in fact these changes are set to unfold between 2013 and 2015. Senator Leahy verified that the amount indicated is the highest amount that they could be paid. Treasurer Giampietro said yes.

Treasurer Giampietro observed that the time was approaching 10am and that the committee might want to get through the remaining budget in 15 minutes.

Continuing on her discussion of tuition, she said she built in an increase of 5% from the previous year. She also described that changes to hourly staff (i.e. officers rate going down, hours going up) communicate that there is a lot of work for officers to do during the summer. She also mentioned there would be one additional staff member to be hired on this summer, the Archivist. When GPSS moved, a lot of the records got jumbled. The Archivist will go through, sort everything, send it to Archives, and set it all into place so that officers know how archive their work at the start of each school year. Funding for this position would come from the General fund and would only to be renewed if necessary. Senator Leahy pointed out that the Archivist’s total pay is higher than all the rest. Treasurer Giampietro said she assumed 14 weeks of work for the archivist while everyone else gets 12.

*Benefits*- This part of the budget is based on a percentage of what the GPSS staff is paid and the officer stipend. There is no control in this part unless the staff salary changes.

*Departmental*- It was proposed that Departmental Allocations decrease by $1000 because last year there was unspent money and this year is on track to repeat. However, it is believed that communication is an issue and not enough information is available to senators. There was a brief discussion about being able to apply for double the funding for retreats for departmental retreats. Chairman Schwieterman emphasized that this is important especially since departments requesting for the first time could get up to 4x the amount. Treasurer Giampietro discussed keeping the budget the same but adding money for posters and communication
efforts, so that the fund would be exhausted at the end of the year and would have served a larger number of graduate students.

*Special allocations*- Chairman Schwieterman said the major concern with this portion of the budget is that GPSS is funding a lot of undergraduate events that graduates students may attend. This money should be focused towards events that graduate students plan, develop professionalism and skills, make presentations, etc. Treasurer Giampietro suggested perhaps adding into the guidelines a funding quota for events sponsored by graduate students. Chairman Schwieterman added that setting a minimum number of graduate student attendees could be included in the quota. Senator Leahy indicated that it may be a problem with the application form. Senator Ipek expressed that since undergraduates contribute to SAF, who allocates GPSS money, GPSS should give back some to funding events with undergraduates. Treasurer Giampietro reminded Senator Ipek that the ASUW is set up to do just that, and that GPSS has a mission of serving graduate students specifically.

*Travel Grants*- Treasurer Giampietro said that no funding would be allocated for this item for the upcoming budget presentation, but that Senate would be informed of an upcoming Travel Grants presentation at a senate meeting, where they can amend this budget to include funding for Travel Grants. Senator Firth said it is important they know they are voting on the total SAF request and that Travel Grants would potentially come from General fund for 2-year trial.

Chairman Schwieterman included the individual $10,000 deficits anticipated from personnel and Travel Grants would bring the total deficit to almost $80,000 which is half of the General Fund. Senator Firth observed this reflected the $15,000 from deficit this year.

**Senator Firth moved to recommend the FY14 proposed request from SAF of $318,000**

**Senator Kaufman seconded the motion.**

Motion passes unanimously.

**Senator Firth moves to present said budget to Senate.**

**Senator Leahy seconded the motion.**

Motion passes unanimously.

**VII. Announcements**

None

**VIII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 am.