Minutes: Official Meeting of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate Finance and Budget Committee
January 25th, 2013

I. Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 9:03 am

II. Roll Call
Chairman Senator Eddie Schwieterman, Astronomy
GPSS Treasurer Vera Giampietro
Senator Evan Firth, Oceanography
Senator Colin Bateson, Mechanical Engineering
Senator JD Ross Leahy, Marine Affairs
Rene Singleton
Alexandra Kaufman (pending member)

Guests
Stephanie and Shari from Neurobiology

III. Approval of the Agenda
Treasurer Giampietro moves to amend the Agenda to include Discussion of new chairman
Motion passes

Approval of the Agenda passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes
Committee approved minutes from 1/11/2012 unanimously.

V. Consideration of Special Allocations

Special Allocation for Neurobiology and Behavior Brain Week Community Outreach

Before the guest presentation, there was a discussion about the application and its relevance to the graduate student body. Senator Leahy wished to consider that this going to be beneficial to the graduate students who put this on, however the cost per person is too large as this is more of an outreach program. Alexandra noted that because it involved high school students it was an outreach program, but Chairman Schwieterman clarified that funding outreach events is not the purpose of the F&B Committee. Alexandra asked if they were requesting funding from ASUW? Chairman Schwieterman said he didn’t see it, but it would make sense that they come to us seeing that its mostly graduate students doing the promoting. He also noted that by the merits, this is a very solid even, but it is mostly outreach and if it is to be used as a recruitment event it should be funded by the university. Senator Bateson then suggested that the committee could fund them at a smaller amount, for example $5/ graduate student attending the event. Senator Leahy then observed that they were requesting $750 from ASUW.
Chairman Schwieterman advised telling them if they were having a conference for graduate students, then that is something that could be funded as it directly benefits the professionalism of the graduate student. Treasurer Giampietro proposed adding up all the requested funds and breakdown the cost between ASUW and GPSS, which would fund a quarter of what they are asking. Senator Firth liked the idea of funding at $5/student.
Guest Presentation:

Brain Awareness Week, held in March, funded by a private donation. The purpose of the event is to host a chance for students to come to campus and participate in workshops and conferences about neurobiology and behavior. This year, there are an anticipated 660 students coming and 14 groups presenting with about 40 exhibit tables for students to explore and partake in. This entire event is run by graduate students from the neurobiology department. Students decide on all of the event topics, man various exhibits, interact with the students and the teachers, and give presentations.

Senator Leahy asked how many graduate students would be participating, to which Stephanie said in the past it usually included around 50 graduate students with some undergraduates. She also stated that this is their biggest event so almost the entirety of the group gets involved.

Chairman Schwieterman asked why this was the first time requesting GPSS funding, and where they had received it in the past. Stephanie said generally the event is funded from private donations, and previously it was at a different, cheaper location due to the HUB being under construction. Before, they only had to pay to reserve parking for the event. Chairman Schwieterman discussed that usually the committee funds events directly advertised to graduate students, that the cost breakdown for their request is much higher than what is generally given, and thus funding the full $1000 request wouldn’t be possible. As an idea for the future, he recommended holding a workshop that benefits the grad students, even if it is to enhance outreach experience.

Treasurer Giampietro asked what the percentage of graduate volunteers is. Stephanie said it is about 70% graduate and 30% undergrads, whom are within the neurobiology community. Senator Leahy inquired about their other strategies for funding the event and Shari responded that they were looking to the Alumni association, Wells Fargo Fund, and ASUW. Chairman Schwieterman strongly advised going to Wells Fargo as they don’t have bylaws and strict guidelines, they also support community enhancement.

Shari emphasized that they do advertise to graduates all across the campus, and this type of event is something that a lot of graduate students do not get to experience. Senator Bateson agreed that the value of this opportunity for students is great, but the nature of the request does not fit our guidelines. He pointed out that events funded for $1000 were targeting 400-600 graduate students for same dollar value. Senator Leahy said consideration for this opportunity for graduate students is important and that $10/graduate student would be appropriate, putting the total at $350. Treasurer Giampietro noted the past funding for LSRJ was at $6-10 per person.

**Senator Leahy moves to fund Neurobiology and Behavior at $350**

**Senator Bateson seconds the motion**

**Motion passes unanimously**

Shari inquired about funding for retreats and asked about restrictions. Chairman Schwieterman explained that kind of request is from Departmental Allocations; it depends on the number of students in your department and they would be eligible to apply for 200% if you haven’t requested in the past. Senator Bateson said the event must be hosted by a state owned property. Treasurer Giampietro said they must also have a senator to present the application. Senator Leahy there must also be a professional or academic component, and Senator Bateson suggested poster sessions or conferences.
VI. Approval of GPSS Budget Timeline

Treasurer Giampietro presented the timeline for reconfiguring the budget, and the Executive committee would need to write up a narrative on why they are changing and how they are changing the budget. Then at a summit, there will be discussion to finalize what will be presented to F&B, Exec, and Senate. Next Friday F&B committee can discuss the reaction to the next year’s budget. Alexandra asked about the time gap between February and May. Treasurer Giampietro noted that there are two different budgets that will be considered. It is a tight timeline because SAF moved up the budget approval by a few months. ASUW already has an extension, and GPSS can usually get the same. On February 20th, they want a preliminary budget, but we can move to extend this period if needed. Chairman Schwieterman stated that with travel grants we are looking at having two budgets to have to draft, redraft etc and try to find a way to merge them. Treasurer Giampietro said currently, the Executive committee is acting as if the Travel Grants are already going to be approved. Chairman Schwieterman noted that Travel Grants because it has not passed yet. Senator Bateson asked how travel grants affect the F&B Committee, and Treasurer Giampietro responded that is was important to be prepared for the approval. Chairman Schwieterman said if they aren’t approved, the F&B Committee will not see the budget without Travel Grants, and thus don’t know where the money is going. Treasurer Giampietro clarified that is why SAF moved it up so far because now there is a committee to decide what gets added into each budget. Senator Bateson said the main point for concern is who is deciding how much is going to travel grants and how they will justify it. Chairman Schwieterman noted that the Executive committee sets the tone for what they expect to pass in the next year and what they suggest to the Senate, this includes the money they expect to pass for travel grants. Treasurer Giampietro pointed out that there is a general fund between $200,000-300,000 that is sitting in the budget because not the entire personnel budget is used. Last years officers created a budget with a 40,000 operating deficit and that this was deliberate to cut back on our general fund spending. Chairman Schwieterman clarified that there is an operating fund from SAF and general fund from many years accumulated. Treasurer Giampietro said it accumulated $6000 in interest last year. Alexandra asked if discretionary requests be made from the General Fund, to which Treasurer Giampietro said that is what happens. Chairman Schwieterman then asked if travel grants come out of this extra money. There was discussion that yes this was possible, but it would only last a few years. Chairman Schwieterman suggested implementing this strategy for just this year, compare having higher staff levels vs. having travel grants, and have a comparison between the two types of budgets to help justify future budgets. Senator Bateson was in agreement. Regarding travel grants, which Chairman Schwieterman verified were being recommended to be reinstated, Senator Bateson and Treasurer Giampietro discussed the individual contribution of students to the SAF fund, where the funds went, and the potential impact being more sensitive and powerful at the individual level.

Chairman Schwieterman requested that communication be made with the other officers that F&B is skeptical in carving out the piece of the operating budget for the travel grants. He also discussed that if travel grants get funded at the budget level, senate will vote to reestablish the Travel Grant Committee, and amend the bylaws. In the Travel Grant committee, they found people were very disappointed and upset with the committee. Most people got denied because of the high volume of requests. His proposal is if the money comes from an unsustainable source for one year as a preliminary period, then if they can justify the travel grants as an adhoc committee and compare it to this year’s budget.

Treasurer Giampietro inquired again if the committed wanted an extension, because it needs to be done today. Senator Bateson said the timeline provides two possible meetings with the Senate, which should be enough. Treasurer Giampietro said Monday the 4th is the redraft of the budget. On the 4th we can tell Senate they have a comment period open until the 8th.
VII. Discussion of new Chairman
Chairman Schwieterman has an internship in the spring in Edenberg, Scotland. A new chair, preferably from the committee, will have to be voted on by Senate. Treasurer Giampietro described the duties to include sending out emails with agenda, minutes, requests, by two days before the meeting. Senator Bateson volunteered to do it, but if anyone else has more interest he is not determined to do this. Treasurer Giampietro said she would send out an email, everyone can think about it and a decision will be made next week.

VIII. Announcements
Chairman Schwieterman- if you are a registered voter in Seattle there is a special vote about capital and levies for Seattle. Voting is on February 12, 2013.

IX. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 10:19 am.