



Finance & Budget Committee

2018-2019 Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 25, 2019, 11:30am-12:30pm
HUB 314: GPSS Board Table

PRESENT:

Robby Perkins-High – Treasurer; Committee Chair, Foster School
Jasmine Chan - Budget Specialist, Staff
Shane Schrader, GPSS Senator
Alex Thompson, GPSS Senator
Zhiyun Ma, GPSS Senator
Varun Kao, GPSS Senator

NOT PRESENT:

Ted Cohen, GPSS Senator

Robby called the Meeting to order at 11:32am.

OVERVIEW

Jasmine gave each member an agenda, previous meeting minutes, and copies of each presenter's funding application.

1. Call to Order

a. Approval of Agenda

Alex moves to approve the agenda. *Varun* seconds. Motion to approve the agenda passes.

2. Special Allocations Funding Request: Chinese Student and Scholar Association Chinese Spring Festival Gala

Presentation

CSSA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1984 to help Chinese students balance life in the US and to provide community while Chinese students acclimate to US life. The nonprofit is sponsored by the Chinese Embassy. Each year the Embassy also funds money for the event and the RSO. The group also supports departments helping out with career development and aiding students in finding internships and job opportunities. The Spring Festival Gala happens during the Lunar New Year and is the biggest Chinese festival. It is a time to visit family and to watch shows. Red envelopes are filled with money that are given from elder generations to young generations. Because the students here cannot go visit their family during this time. The goal of this event is to bring the students together to watch shows in a great atmosphere, to make it feel like they are with their family. Faculty,



graduate, and undergraduate students are invited to watch the show together. The show will have dancing, singing, and magic shows.

Zhiyun notes that part of the budget Excel are missing. *Jasmine* apologizes for the error in printing.

Robby asks how many graduate students are involved in the event. *Presenter* says that they do not yet have hard numbers for this, as they are currently selling tickets. However, last year, 150-200 graduate students attended the event.

Zhiyun asked if there are any graduate students on the planning team. *Presenter* says yes, including himself. The organizing committee has 81 members with 20 graduate students. Committee members help with planning and set up.

Robby asks about the \$10 admission fee. *Presenter* clarifies that the fee is charged for all attendees and in part refunded to guests in Red Envelopes, ranging from \$5 to \$50.

Alex comments on the high price tag of the event and asks if the group has other sources of funding. *Presenter* clarifies that CSSA has sponsors providing set up (covering karaoke, lights, food, and beverages) and funding from ASUW. The goal is to make \$2500 in ticket revenue.

Zhiyun asks about the sponsorship from Chinese Embassy. *Presenter* clarifies that each year, CSSA will host visiting scholars and recruiters from China that the Embassy asks they help with grocery stores and housing. Typically, the Embassy will provide money for the gala, but this year they have not yet committed.

Varun asks if the event is to be fully funded by requested support? *Presenter* clarifies that ASUW should be funding at \$2300-2400, though \$3000 was requested. *Varun* follows up asking if this funding is to cover the full cost. *Presenter* responds that yes, as they need funds to cover room reservation fees, and other sources were found for first and second prize.

Alex inquires about the cost of the room rental. *Presenter* states that the Kane Hall rental is \$3200 that seats 750. The goal is to sell 600 tickets with the remaining 150 tickets for faculty and sponsors.

Zhiyun asks if there are backup options if funding does not come through. *Presenter* says that they would deduct the amount that gets packaged into the Red Envelopes, but that they are not thrilled with this option. They will try to negotiate costs for performers.

Discussion

Shane asks if they applied last year. *Robby* informs the Committee that last year, CSSA applied for \$750 in funding and the Committee funded at \$500.

Alex comments that the \$15,000 price tag for the event is a lot.



Robby mentions that the group has a pretty good graduate school presence and that they plan to count attendance of graduate students after ticket sales. They also have sizeable engagement on their board. *Shane* agrees.

Alex asks how much funding we have left in the total pool. *Robby* states that we have spent \$5000, leaving \$12,000. *Robby* is going to ask Executive Senate to increase the Special Allocations budget line using distribution from the endowment interest. If we receive the same number of applications this year as last year, then we have spent about $\frac{1}{3}$ of funding on $\frac{1}{4}$ of the applications.

Alex comments that the connection with the Chinese Embassy is crazy.

Robby asks for clarification about whether CSSA is making money off of the \$10 admission price. *Shane* comments that they are making a little, as they are not redistributing all.

Varun moves to fund at \$600. *Alex* seconds. *Zhiyun* asks to debate.

Zhiyun is inclined to fund at a lower rate. The relationship with the Chinese Embassy is potentially not great. *Varun* asks for clarification. *Alex* comments that the use of CSSA for recruitment is worrisome. *Zhiyun* clarifies that CSSA is framing this as a partnership for the Chinese companies who want to recruit UW students, but is concerned that the financial sponsorship for the event or for the running of the organization itself blurs the line between an RSO and something trickier.

Shane seeks clarification: Is the point of concern that CSSA may be compromised based on the monetary relationship with the Embassy?

Varun points out that if we don't fund this, Embassy funding is not impacted. From the presentation, he sees a graduate student coming to present an event for graduate students. Are we worried about GPSS money getting tied up with the Embassy?

Shane agrees with *Varun*, saying that funding sources don't have a say for how the event goes and that to the most that we know, there isn't anything there.

Robby states that this assessment is out of the purview of our organization.

Zhiyun agrees with all points offered and brought up the concern to start a conversation.

Robby asks if there is a motion to vote. *Varun* so moves. *Shane* seconds.

Vote is Called: Shane, Varun, Alex, and Robby vote Yes. Zhiyun and Jasmine abstain.

3. Approval of Minutes 1/18

Shane requests an additional clarification on Page 6 regarding the Departmental Application.

Alex notifies the group that the federal government is partially open again.

Robby moves to approve the agenda. *Varun* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

Minutes approved.

4. Special Allocations Funding Request: Foundation for International Understanding Through Student: CulturalFest Expo

Presentation

Organizers are raising funds for yearly FIUTS CulturalFest, an event to promote cultural diversity with exposition and performance (2/2, 2/7). For the exposition, people from different places present their cultures through booths. They talk about food and anything else that they think is relevant or of interest. Usually 700 children from Seattle Schools and about 1000 other people from UW and outside of UW. FIUTS is a nonprofits and the UW student board is an RSO on campus. In terms of graduate student involvement, a lot are coming to the US from their home countries for the first time. FIUTS gives them a platform to display their culture, get involved, meet other international students, gain cross-departmental exposure. This is a way for students to feel at home, reconnect or connect stronger with their culture. CulturalFest is a good way to connect with people of the same country around UW campus. Because the event is so large scale, funds are required to help enable the management.

Shane asks how graduate students outside of this community can get involved. *Presenter* states that there are graduate students participating in events throughout the year as notified through an email list. There is also a role on the student board entitled Graduate Student Participation expressly for reaching out to graduate students across UW.

Varun inquires about what students are not on the email list. *Presenter* says that each country has Facebook groups for UW community, previous volunteers or event participants serve as publicity for them via Facebook and flyering graduate student areas. Additionally, FIUTS has emails for all the international students.

Zhiyun asks for clarification on the description of student involvement on the application. *Presenter* clarifies that the FIUTS student board has 15 members, with most role filled with co-chairs.

Robby asks how FIUTs plans to close funding gaps. *Presenter* says they are planning a bubble tea fundraiser that will help cover some gaps, but not all.

Varun asks how much of requested funding has been approved. *Presenter* lists Wells Fargo \$500 of \$1000, HUB \$500 of \$1000, and ASUW \$2300 of \$3000.

Discussion

Shane observes that their communications are geared only to international students. It is important, but the Committee did not hear a lot about domestic students who might want to become more culturally aware.



Robby asks if anybody has more connection to the group and their mission. *Jasmine* mentions that last year, a friend encouraged domestic students to come to the Expo.

Zhiyun mentions that when they had the event last year, it was really well publicized. She had cohort-mates who were really good at promoting the event. A class project about FIUTS funding and mission informed her that the biggest struggle that FIUTS has is that UW views its main function as organizing international orientation. FIUTS board tries to save funding from orientation to plan for their ongoing events throughout the year to branch out more. This funding structure limits the group in terms of being able to bridge the gap between domestic and international students.

Varun asks if the Committee had heard of the event before today. *Shane* says he has never heard of the event or group. *Jasmine* mentions that she received an email about flyers being sent to print ahead of a funding decision in mid-January.

Varun's impression is that FIUTS is a safe place for international students. He likes this group and agrees that they do see the point of reaching out to domestic students who want to learn about other cultures.

Shane mentions it is good for domestic students to learn about other cultures.

Alex moves to fund at \$600. *Zhiyun* seconds.

Vote: Alex, Zhiyun, Varun, and Robby vote Yes; Shane and Jasmine abstain.

5. Departmental Allocations Funding Request: Earth and Space Sciences Departmental Retreat

Presentation

This is an annual retreat for graduate students to let students step away from the department to discuss department issues with no faculty or staff present. This is a good opportunity to talk about curriculum, undergraduates, and funding. It is also an opportunity for people in the department to talk with each other. The retreat helps foster collaboration between research goals, as the department is under a fairly large span of subjects.

Alex comments that this retreat is also at Friday Harbor, like the presentation from last week.

Robby asks how the organizers are making sure the event is inclusive. *Presenter* says through department-wide distribution of emails and that they are open to people who cannot pay for it, as they can arrange to cover those costs. It is not a required retreat and there is no expectation of going. They try to make it clear that you don't have to go, but if you want to and have trouble paying, the organizing group will figure something out.

Shane asks how many are expected to attend. *Presenter* says 36 graduate students, and total of 50 including plus ones.



Robby inquires about the size of the department being around 90. *Presenter* confirms and states that this year they have the most number of RSVPs.

Varun asks about the weekend's agenda. *Presenter* says there is a thorough and long meeting on Saturday night where department representatives in faculty meetings can walk students through the latest minutes and answer any questions. Applications are now being processed, and graduate students like to hear about this as they host an accepted student event in early March. This is also a time to get updates about which labs are increasing or decreasing.

Varun asks about how much the event is with or without funding. *Presenter* says the cost is \$40 with funding. *Jasmine* asks if plus one's are also \$40. *Presenter* says plus one's are charged an extra \$10.

Discussion

Robby reviews Departmental Allocation guideline that states that attendance and participation of a GPSS senator at meetings can be taken into consideration. Andrew is a senator who comes to every meeting and is engaged.

Shane comments that he likes that there is a forum for students to discuss the program and department and how the students are being served.

Robby states that it seems like the group has checked all the boxes.

Shane moves to fund in full. *Alex* seconds.

Zhiyun requests a funding line update. *Robby* states the Committee has awarded \$1000 of \$5000. *Jasmine* mentions there is another application in the works at \$600.

Shane checks that the funding amount is within Departmental Allocation requirement of \$15/student. *Robby* confirms.

Vote: Varun, Alex, Zhiyun, Shane, and Robby vote Yes. Jasmine abstains.

6. Election of a Vice Chair

Robby mentions that the Committee can only have a meeting if a Chair or Vice Chair can attend. Due to the packed time schedule for the Committee, he wants to elect a Vice Chair to ensure the committee can meet as scheduled.

Shane asks if the Vice Chair would have access to documents for historical information. *Robby* confirms that this would be the case and that the Vice Chair really just needs to call the meeting together.



Varun asks if current Committee members have served on the Committee before. *Robby* states that *Ted* has.

Zhiyun asks if the Committee can nominate *Jasmine*. *Robby* says no, but that *Jasmine* will help whoever is Vice Chair. The process can be self-nomination or nomination.

Varun self nominates.

Shane asks if we know if *Ted* has opinions about this. *Shane* wants to be sure there is a chance for everyone who wants to self-nominate to be able to.

Shane moves to table this topic until the next meeting. *Zhiyun* seconds.

Motion passes. Vice Chair election is tabled to the next meeting.

Robby moves to add the Review of Accrual Policy to the Agenda. *Varun* seconds.

7. Review of Amend Accrual Policies for Special Allocations

Robby wants to make a recommendation to the Executive Senate to clarify the accrual policy. There are conflicting policies depending on where you look: some say 15% of profits to GPSS, others say 5%, still others say that if there are multiple funders, a proportional amount gets returned to GPSS. This is very hard to enforce. *Robby* recommends either clarifying this or getting rid of it. *Robby* asks the Committee for their thoughts or recommendations on the topic.

Alex states that if there are conflicting policies, then the policy is immaterial and it seems sensible not to have the accrual policy.

Varun comments that if at the time of funding and this was in the policy, we should have a policy of sending a generic email out requesting the accrual, but don't chase the lead if there is no response.

Robby states that RSOs expect it to be 15% because this is on the SAO document. It exists in the case where the event is a fundraiser for the RSO only.

Alex is in favor of raising the issue with the Executive Senate. *Robby* plans to raise this issue and will say that there should be an accrual policy that is consistent so that the Committee can respond when RSOs ask. The options will be one of the currently existing options, or eliminating the accrual.

Shane mentions that there should be a stipulation on our funding more often if the Committee moves to a no-accrual policy. Also, for this year, the Committee should stick to the 15% policy in the interest of fairness for RSOs that have already been awarded funds.

Robby thanks the Committee for their thoughts and he will bring their comments to Exec.



8. Adjourn

Varun moves to adjourn the meeting. *Alex* seconds.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:29pm.