Finance & Budget Committee

2019-2020 Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 8, 2019, 1130am
HUB 314: GPSS Board Table

PRESENT:
Shane Schrader – Treasurer; Committee Chair
Becky Tran - Budget Specialist, Staff
Ted Cohen, GPSS Senator
Ken Wolkin, GPSS Senator and Proxy for Danielle Brown
Terrence Pope, GPSS Senator
Jared Canright, GPSS Senator

NOT PRESENT:
A.J. Balatico, GPSS Senator
Simon Crean, GPSS Senator
Danielle Brown, GPSS Senator

Shane calls the Meeting to order at 11:35am.

OVERVIEW

Becky gave each member an agenda, copies of last week’s meeting minutes, Special Allocations Applications (from the Career Development Organization for Physicists and Astronomers for their Networking Days event, November 2019 & Taiwanese Overseas Student Association for their Timeless Taiwan event, February 2020), and Departmental Allocations Application (from the School of Oceanography for their tOASTER event, January 2020).

1. Call to Order
   a. Approval of Agenda

      Ken moves to approve the agenda. Terrence seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

   b. Approval of the Minutes

      Ted moves to approve last week’s minutes. Jared seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

2. Presentations
   a. Special Allocations Presentation: Career Development Organization for Physicists and Astronomers (CDO) - Networking Days 2019 Event
Presenter(s) from the CDO did not show.

b. Special Allocations Presentation: Taiwanese Overseas Student Association - Timeless Taiwan 2020 Event

Presentation
Taiwanese Overseas Student Association (TOSA) is a group of enthusiastic Taiwanese students and want to showcase Taiwanese culture. Timeless Taiwan is their big annual event, held in the HUB Ballroom. Last year, there was 2000+ attendees. There is food sold at the event as well as performances. TOSA works closely with the Taiwanese American Professionals (TAP) in the Seattle area. Having TAP’s presence at this event will help to connect undergraduate students, graduate students, and professionals. (In turn, TAP also invites TOSA members to their networking events.)

Shane inquires about their plans for getting funding for food, marketing, advertising, and other items.
Presenter acknowledges that GPSS’s funds cannot go towards food. If they receive this Special Allocations from GPSS, those funds will go towards facilities since the HUB Ballroom will be $5,739.14.

Shane asks a follow up question; are the other funds guaranteed yet?
Presenter answers that they have not heard back from other funders yet.

Shane inquires about how TOSA will ensure the event will still happen even if other funders do not come through as expected.
Presenter informs the committee that they are also reaching out for sponsorships from US Bank, Cathay Bank, alumni, and the Taiwanese government. And they have their some of their own money.

Jared asks where did the event funding come from last year.
Presenter answers since they were not the financial director for TOSA last year, they are unsure. But they do know that the event was fully funded last year with sponsorships from alumni, Cathay Bank, and US Bank.

Shane asks about TOSA’s marketing process to students on campus.
Presenter answers with online promotions and social media. TOSA also has a lot of small events throughout the quarter with lots of opportunity to publicize this event. TOSA is also reaching out to the Chinese Seattle Times to announce TOSA’s events on their newspaper.

Ted asks for clarification on the budget. There’s a line item for ticket sales - will TOSA be making money selling tickets because in the application, it states the event is free to attend.
Presenter clarifies that the event has free admission but they sell $1 vouchers, in which
attendees will use to purchase events and play games with. Based on last year’s numbers, they are expecting $7,000 in revenue from selling tickets.

Ted asks about what will happen to the profits and explains that one of GPSS’s funding conditions is that if the event makes a profit, that 15% of the net profits, up to the amount funded, will be returned to GPSS to keep this Committee running. Presenter explains that any profit will be kept in their account to go towards next year’s Timeless Taiwan event and agrees to GPSS’s conditions.

Ted asks if TOSA has meetings scheduled with ASUW and UWAA. Presenter answers that they have not heard back from either organization yet but UWAA’s advisors said they go through their process without meeting with TOSA. Waiting for a response from ASUW.

Shane explains that if TOSA hears back from other groups / sponsors and receive less funding than expected, and if GPSS approves to fund at this lower level, that TOSA can re-contact GPSS to see if GPSS will relook at the presentation for additional funding.

Terrence asks if TOSA as already requested the Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) funds. Presenter says TOSA has not contacted the ECC yet; TOSA has only applied to all the HUB funds.

Discussion
Shane mentions he is concerned about the very specific amount ($239.14) that they requested because it shows that TOSA is assuming they will secure the rest of the funds. But they will have to pay for the location event upfront. But also mentions that if we approve them, then it might make it an easier sell for other sponsors to see that they’ve received some funding.

Terrence is curious if it is common for student organizations to receive funding from banks. Ted says it’s normal; any company can sponsor an event. And with bigger events like Timeless Taiwan, it’s typical to see bank sponsorships.

Ted points out that they mentioned all their UW applications for funds, but did not go into detail about off-campus / company sponsorships. But he is good to give them their full asking amount.

Jared has concerns that the expertise when organizing previous events is no longer around; and the current planners may be out of their depth for this event. There are discrepancies - the presenter quoted having 2,000+ participants last year, but on the GPSS application, there’s only 1,500 listed. But $239.14 is not super high risk to GPSS.

Ted points out that they have over three months to put together this event.
Terrence observed that the presenter seemed confident in TOSA’s ability to self fund the event.

Jared mentions their comment about having their own funds to help with costs.

Ken reiterates that they mentioned alumni support in previous years as well.

Shane mentions the Committee has the ability to fund at a higher level than they asked for but recommends funding at the level they requested and then let them see how other funds come through and give them the opportunity to present to GPSS again if they need additional funding.

Shane makes a point of information that there is a discrepancy on the paperwork. TOSA requested $239.17 in their application but on their budget spreadsheet, they listed $239.14.


**VOTE:** Shane, Ted, Ken, Jared, and Terrence vote YES. Becky abstains.

c. Departmental Allocations Presentation: School of Oceanography - tOASTER Retreat 2020

**Presentation**
The Oceanography All Student Educational Retreat (tOASTER) is an annual event for the Oceanography Department’s graduate students. The event occurs over a weekend at UW’s Friday Harbor Laboratories, which is set up to host students - they have dorm rooms, a cafeteria with meals, and lab/conference/meeting spaces. The main structure of the event is to drive up Friday night, that there will be conference-style talks by students and a guest speaker on Saturday, and then leave Sunday morning. This year’s guest speaker is Beth Curry, a UW PhD alumna and current works at UW’s Applied Physics Laboratory as an oceanographer. Last year there were 38 students, which is about ⅓ of the graduate program’s cohort. Based on an interest poll for this year, 37 students have expressed interest. The benefits of this event is to allow graduate students in the department to meet one other (as they would have little opportunity otherwise) and cover a diverse range of oceanography topics - an opportunity to meet people in the department from different years and labs. While science is discussed, other topics such as mental health, graduate school tips, and professional development advice is also covered. This event has existed for more than a decade now; it is an event that is ingrained into the department’s culture because it falls on the second year’s cohort to organize it every year. Budget is food, lodging, and transportation costs. The GPSS funds, if granted, would be used towards lodging. They have also applied for a HUB Travel Grant to help cover transportation - still to be determined; last
year, received $500 from the HUB. The department has guaranteed $2,750. All of the funding that they’ve applied for amount to $4,700, about 90% of the total costs.

Ted wants to confirm total costs and breakdowns per person. Presenter clarifies that the estimated costs includes 10 guests, based on last year’s numbers. But the university funds, if all were approved, would not fully cover the graduate students’ costs. Budget with guests come out to be $7,613.50; without guests it would be $5,268.35.

Shane inquires if this event is being marketed to prospective and/or incoming students as a way to get interests for the Oceanography graduate program; as a means of advertising for the program. Presenter is not sure if it is used as a marketing event, but will suggest doing so to the department.

Shane asks if, for transportation, is it possible to reduce the number of cars, and therefore reducing the ferry/gas costs. Presenter budgeted for 3-4 persons per car. Could potentially lower the number of cars, but will be dependent on attendees’ schedules. When applying for the HUB travel grant, they used UW’s transportation reimbursement rate; but in reality, it would not be enough to cover transportation, so they are planning to reimburse drivers for gas.

Ken asks if the department gives scholarships for students with financial hardships to help attend this event? Presenter answers no.

Ted wants to re-confirm budget numbers. If no funding except for the department’s funds go through, it will be $103/person for 47 people. With GPSS’s funding, it would bring it down to $87/person. With GPSS’s and the HUB Travel Grant, it would be $61/person.

Shane mentions that some of GPSS’s conditions for funding are getting pictures as proof. last year - textual summary. Presenter acknowledges that last year, the organizer sent a textual summary of the event, but can definitely do the same and add pictures.

Discussion

Shane requests a motion to extend the meeting to discuss and vote on funding for the School of Oceanography. Ted makes a motion. Jared seconds.

Becky makes a point of information that GPSS has funded this event for the School of Oceanography every year, at least, since academic year 2015-2016.
Ted mentions that bringing the cost down from $103/person to $83/person is a sizeable dent.

Terrence asks for clarification why the rate is high - are they paying a higher speaker fee than previously?

Shane notes that the cost has gone up at Friday Harbor Lab.

Ted asks what the guidelines for funding departments are.

Shane answers that it is $1,000 capital. Or for retreat-type events like this, the guidelines dictate $15/student up to $750 total. So this request is within the guidelines.

Terrence makes a motion to vote and fund the School of Oceanography at $750. Ted seconds. No objections. Motion passed.

**VOTE: ALL vote YES.**

3. Q&A Session

No questions asked.

4. Adjourn

Jared moves to adjourn the meeting. Terrence seconds. No objections.

*The Meeting was adjourned at 12:31 pm.*