



CONTACT

Aditi Bhide, Megan Brewer
Director, Assistant Director
206-543-4375
director@exco.org, assistantdr@exco.org

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ASUW Experimental College To Take Hiatus for 2016-2017 Academic Year for Organizational Restructuring

SEATTLE, WA – The ASUW Experimental College was established in 1968 by a group of University of Washington students. It was built with the vision to offer fun, non-credit classes for university students and Seattle community members. To this day, ExCo offers a vast diversity of classes, ranging from arts and crafts to meditation exercises. Last Thursday, the Board of Directors approved an act to put ExCo on hiatus for the upcoming academic year in order to implement the 2016-2017 Experimental College Review Plan.

The organization is run entirely by students with the mission to serve students. However, two thirds of the individuals the Experimental College currently serves is comprised of community members, with the other third being students. Over the past several years, ExCo has witnessed a change in demand. Class registration numbers have been declining due to outside competitors and non-accreditation classes. This shifting market has been identified as a barrier for higher enrollment.

The ASUW and Student Activities Fee allocate \$50,000 to the Experimental College currently, consisting entirely of student dollars. This, paired with the rise in employee salary within the ASUW, has led the ASUW to implement a 2016-2017 Experimental College Review Plan, putting ExCo on a hiatus for the upcoming school year. The shift in metrics over the years shows that ExCo must take a step back and reevaluate, which is difficult to do while the entity is still operating, according to Megan Brewer, 2015-2016 ExCo Assistant Director: "ExCo needs to take time off in order to focus our efforts on restructuring the organization. We won't can't work on restructuring it if we're constantly just trying to operate it." Haley Moser, ASUW Vice President and Experimental College Liaison, notes that this has been a long term issue and something that was not caused by the work of this year's employees: "For years, ExCo has began struggling with declining numbers and lower student participation. We need to step back and identify the gaps, but this in no way reflects the work of this year's team."

The Experimental College will remain open and continue to offer classes for the summer of 2016, and the ASUW highly encourages students to take part in these. Starting in the 2016-2017 academic year, ExCo will not be offering any classes and will not hire any employees.

Though ExCo will surely be missed, the ASUW is looking forward to seeing a positive response from the Review Board with regards to the long term future of this unique entity.

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