



Finance & Budget Committee

2018-2019 Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 15, 2019, 11:30
HUB 314: GPSS Board Table

PRESENT:

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

NOT PRESENT:

Shane Schrader, GPSS Senator

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

OVERVIEW

Jasmine distributes meeting materials to the Committee including the Agenda, Special Allocations Application Information, 2/1/2019 Meeting Minutes, and Officer's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2020.

1. Call to Order

Robby calls the meeting to order at 11:32am.

a. Approval of Agenda

Varun moves to approve the agenda. *Zhiyun* seconds the motion. There are no objections.

Motion to approve the agenda is approved.

2. Special Allocations Presentation: Veritas Forum, UW Veritas Forum 2019

Presentation

The event has been hosted on UW campus for the past four years in the Winter/Spring time frame. The purpose is to engage students and faculty in conversations regarding their academic disciplines and areas of study and the merits of different worldviews. Previous topics of discussion include the meaning of success, bioethics, and politics. This year, they invited a mathematician from University of San Diego to discuss his understanding of mathematics in the context of his Christian worldview who will be in conversation with a



UW professor from the Department of Philosophy who studies philosophy of mathematics with an agnostic worldview. The format is not a debate. Both speakers present on their belief systems and their academic disciplines and engage the students in discussion in the students' own spiritual and academic, how they may or may not intertwine. The event is open to people of any belief and that the organizers try to vary the religious beliefs that are represented. Typically the UW professor in conversation will be agnostic or atheist, as Seattle is fairly secular.

Robby asks if the speakers are paid to present. *Presenter* responds that they work with the Veritas National organization to get a speaker from another campus. This speaker's expenses are covered and are paid by Veritas National. The speaker from UW has not been compensated in the past.

Robby asks for the marketing plan for graduate and professional students. *Presenter* states that she is a third year pharmacy student and is in charge of graduate marketing. In the past, graduate marketing was poster in the Health Sciences building. This year they also will include reaching out to graduate student departments and graduate-focused RSOs, such as Christian Fellowship, as well as graduate student listservs.

Varun inquires about plans to reach out to religious groups in addition to Christian Fellowship. *Presenter* mentions they are talking with the Muslim Students Association, as they have discussed collaboration in the past. They are also talking to science-focused RSOs and a videography RSO.

Alex seeks clarification on why the total cost of the event is less than the requested funding amount. *Presenter* clarifies that they have applied for slightly more than required because some services do not yet have certain costs and that there is uncertainty with funding. ASUW has not scheduled the group.

Ted asks what the options are if the event is not funded in full by the committees. *Presenter* notes that other RSOs have offered to help cover funding with food provisions from other groups. Veritas National can be asked for funding as well-- they have sponsored more components of the forum in the past, but trying to gain financial independence for this event.

Discussion

Ted likes the event. It sounds like a good speaker's forum and would like to fund at a high level, potentially in full. However, they do seem to have other sources of funding.

Varun mentions that the event is in three weeks and they have not yet secured funding.

Robby states that last year Veritas Forum applied for funding last year at a level of \$1000 and was awarded \$350. If they are not yet scheduled with ASUW yet, it would be surprising if they will be heard.



Varun asks what happens if the Committee awards funding to an event, but the event is canceled. *Robby* clarifies that we would get that award amount back, unless it was used on a nonrefundable item.

Ted speculates that the Committee may have funded the event at a lower level last year because of a lack of graduate student engagement. This year, the group seems more intentional and this is enough reason to fully fund the event.

Robby states that we can fund in full if the Committee wants. There are stipulations on spending Special Allocations funds on Speakers, but this is in the case of political speakers which is not the case here.

Alex moves to fund in full at \$750. *Varun* seconds.

Zhiyun wants to discuss the option of funding in full given that their graduate and professional student involvement seems relatively low in comparison with previous events the Committee has funded. Those with similar rates have not been funded in full.

Ted comments that Veritas Forum is making efforts to collaborate with graduate and professional student-focused RSOs that a lot of other organizations don't.

Robby pulls up current trend information. If this event is categorized as a cultural event, we have funded 2 cultural events in full this year (Japanese Student Association and Micronesian Islands Club) and the rest of the cultural events have been funded at \$600 and above.

Vote: *Ted, Robby, Alex, Zhiyun, and Varun* vote YES. *Jasmine* abstains.

3. Approval of Minutes 2/1/2019

Varun moves to remove a line from the Minutes. *Robby* seconds. No objections. *Jasmine* confirms that the line will be removed from the Minutes.

Varun moves to approve the Minutes as amended. *Alex* seconds. No objections. Motion is approved.

4. Scheduling

Jasmine informs the group that due to the campus closure on 2/8/2019 and the subsequent cancellation of the Committee meeting, three presentations will need to be rescheduled in the next three meetings. However, there is overlap in the schedule because the Committee must have a proposed budget for the presentation to the Senate meeting on 3/6/2019.

Jasmine asks if it is possible for the group to stay for a longer meeting in the next three scheduled meeting dates.



Ted and *Varun* state that they do not have formal items or commitments immediately after the meeting.

Robby says that the meeting can at most last for 1.5 hours, as he has a meeting at 1:00pm on Fridays.

Jasmine thanks the Committee for their flexibility and will keep them apprised of meeting times.

5. Officer's Proposed Budget Discussion and Modification(s)

Ted asks if the purpose is to vote to approve the budget by the end of the meeting. *Robby* clarifies that this is not the purpose and that the timeline for budget approval will be presented shortly.

Presentation

[The following notes are in accompaniment to a slideshow presentation that is provided at the end of these minutes.]

Robby begins by giving an overview of the timeline for the budgeting process. The presentation of the budget to Senate will be on March 6. The Committee has three meetings to create a proposed budget based on the Officer's Proposed Budget. Sources of funding include: SAF (Student Activities Fee), Provost for food and alcohol (not guaranteed for FY20), endowment distributions, and the general fund. GPSS has not been vigilant in maintaining the correct amount in that fund, now at \$400,000. The bylaws require 25% of operating budget contingency in the general fund, so there is about \$232,000 of spendable reserve funds.

Varun seeks clarification on the distribution versus the general fund. *Robby* responds that the distribution is separate and comes from the endowment. There are no policies for how to spend or use distributions, so by default endowment distributions are transferred into the general fund.

Robby continues: The budget proposal is close to the current year's budget. Sources of funding assumes \$30,000 from the Provost, spending down \$15,000 from the general fund, and using this year's endowment distribution. This results in a decrease in our SAF requested funding. A decrease in requested SAF funding is atypical. Talking points from the Officers include the role of the Officers during the summer (last summer was part time and unclear rules for the expectations of work given summer payment comes as a stipend). An additional talking point from the Officers is how the office is staffed in that every officer wishes to increase hours for their staff.

Varun asks for clarification on staffing for GPSS. *Robby* clarifies that there are 5 GPSS Officers and 9 GPSS staff members that are hired to support the Officers. All staff works somewhere between 7 and 19.5 hours each week.

Robby states that the rest of the presentation is split by budget sections and budgeting decisions. The presentation given at Executive Senate on February 13 took the form of



tabling big talking points for debate until a later time for in-depth discussion. There is a decision to be made about how much of our general fund we want to spend. Once an annual budget is decided on, then it will be easier to decide on how money needs to be allocated.

Robby informs the group that there is significant restructuring of the budget for FY20 and that some budget lines have changed.

Robby begins talking about the Administration Budget. Office Supplies is invariably over-budgeted and was cut to more accurately reflect yearly spending. The new budget line of Materials and Equipment combines and replaces Officer Materials, Computer Equipment and Software, and Equipment Replacement budget lines. The former three budget lines previously included funding reserved for new computers. The total in the Materials and Equipment budget line is less than the sum of the former three budget lines.

Varun asks if we have the actual amount spent in each of these categories. *Robby* explains that tracking actual spending has not been done very well in the past year and that trying to backtrack through the budgeting software is very convoluted. Most changes were made by digging up numbers from years before FY18.

Zhiyun asks if it is possible for the Committee to look at actuals spent before moving to a final decision. *Robby* says he will do his best to piece together last year. What is more doable is providing broad category spending rather than per-budget-line spending. UW is supposed to switch to a new software soon, so hopefully in the future this will not be a problem.

Varun inquires if the Treasurer must use this financial tracking system. *Robby* says that this is the only system we have that is connected directly with our accounts. We have an independent spreadsheet where we are tracking spending ourselves based on receipts returned to us through the Officers and Staff.

Robby removed the Staff Training budget line because it had not been spent in previous years.

Varun asks what the intended use of this budget line was. *Robby* responds that this year it was used for a Tri-Campus event, but in previous years it had a larger association.

Varun inquires about a hand-off procedure between Officers. *Robby* states that there is supposed to be, but that as he stepped into the role, there was no transition period. This year, elections have been moved so that there is a month of overlapping work.

Robby formed permanent budget lines to items that were funded through the Special Projects Fund and removed the Fund because the structure of that budget line item was strange. The biggest increase was creating permanent funding to send two chosen delegates to Day on the Hill (Washington, DC advocacy day) under "Conference Travel (Non-Officers)". There will be interpretation of any and all of these lines in the future and that definitions of spending will be created.



Varun asks about restrictions on how funds are distributed and whether spending can be blocked. *Robby* responds that it is not possible to spend SAF distributions on food and alcohol because all of our funding is managed by the SAO office.

Robby continues to the Programming Budget explaining that this is money from the Provost and includes the only money that GPSS can spend on food and/or alcohol. In the past, all event budgets rolled into the Admin budget thereby making it unclear where money was being spent from. This move is to increase clarity on what budget number to put in place for budgeting. The Events agenda is now converted to quarterly event spending buckets. A new budget line was created for graduate committees to spend on event programming rather than calling out specific committees.

Varun seeks clarification on the selection process for a committee obtaining funding. *Robby* clarifies that there currently is no writing about it and the default will be that the Vice President of Internal Affairs would decide. An option is to ask Executive Senate to develop guidelines.

Ted points out a typo in the percentages for the events budget agenda. *Robby* clarifies that those percentages are correct because there is additional budget amounts from different budget lines. Overall, the Events budget increases by \$1,000 this year.

Robby finishes explaining the Programming Budget with the professional development and Huskies on the Hill events.

Robby continues onto the Vice President of Internal Affairs budget stating that there were no changes here.

Ted clarifies that the distribution of funds between the Programming and Vice President of Internal Affairs is just an accounting thing, but the same overall. *Robby* confirms.

Robby continues onto the President budget and explains that the general programming budget line is intended to fund internal events. Discretionary funding is to be spent on whatever the President wants and is usually not spent.

Robby explains the Vice President of External Affairs had all budget lines maintained. Conference travel was reduced to \$2,000 because the initial thought was that this would be sufficient, but upon further discussion, this funding is intended to cover two large conferences and a regional conference and will be insufficient.

Robby describes the Treasurer budget. The biggest change is that the HUB provides accounting services but the money that has been in the budget has never been transferred to HUB administration. The HUB expects that their services for us costs them about \$4,000 per year. The HUB is asking for SAF to cover that funding because they provide services to a lot of units in the building without charging them. It is a personal opinion that we should pay for the services that the HUB provides.



Varun inquires if the HUB administration service fee from the past years will be taken by them as losses. *Robby* responds that he has discussed with Justin from the HUB administration and Justin says that backpayments are not necessary.

Robby continues onto the the Secretary budget. Many budget lines were increased. Diversity Fund has \$6000 in sum split by \$4000 for Diversity Committee events and \$2000 for funding. Their funding distribution process is similar to the Finance and Budget Committee funding process. Conference travel and promotion and marketing funds were added.

Robby begins discussing the Personnel budget. The bulk of our operating budget is spent on personnel. Officer's tuition cost is not something that we can control. Salary lines in the past year have not changed although this has been overspent. Budgeted \$117,000 for tuition compensation which was determined by looking back at every year since starting.

Varun asks if tuition is already budgeted for and if it was necessary to put more in the tuition pool, would it be possible. *Robby* clarifies that GPSS accounts get zero'd at the end of the year. If the budget is negative, then SAO pulls those funds from the general fund.

Robby continues the presentation on how personnel budget lines are distributed. The SAO office is responsible for distributing funds for tuition waivers and wages. It is possible to untie Officers from the TA/RA restrictions, but this is potentially difficult to do.

Robby discusses the summer budget for FY20. The summer budget mimics to summer 2018. No hourly staff will be hired; Officers will be paid a stipend equivalent to a 20-hour per week wage. There are many different interpretations for summer work, including taking full-time internships and working remotely. There is no real consensus on how to structure summer wages: 20 hours per week is not enough to live on but not enough time for a second job. The rationale for the 20-hour per week stipend was there was the equivalent of 20 hours per week of work in the summer.

Ted asks for *Robby's* opinion. *Robby* expresses that all Officers except for him believe there is the equivalent of 20 hours per week of work. The Treasurer position would benefit greatly if there was a requirement for office time and a transition period, the next Treasurer could be up to speed in a month or a couple of intensive weeks. This summer, *Robby* learned this information by reading through old binders and meeting with Rene Singleton. For the other positions, there are many summer activities: the President has meetings; the Vice President of External Affairs is coordinating and communicating with legislators in Olympia to build relationships; the Vice President of Internal Affairs is responsible for all office staff hiring and preparing for the events agenda; and the Secretary prepares for all graduate and professional programs' orientations. Officers expressed that in addition to the nominal preparatory tasks, if given more hours for work in the summer, then transitioning and backlogged items could be addressed.

Robby continues the presentation discussing hourly staff. The spreadsheet shared ahead of the meeting via email includes a tab on hourly staff work. This budget proposal includes staff starting two weeks before school. FY19, the current budget, has a strange personnel



budget because there are half weeks of work and everyone is working different number of hours. For FY20, every week will be a full-hour work week except for 1 week for Thanksgiving, 3 weeks for Winter, and 1 week for Spring Break. The personnel budget includes the addition of a Director of Communications, because as things stand today, there is not a clear person in charge of marketing and the website. The proposal from the Officers is to transition the liaison management work to the President's Assistant and that the current University Affairs Director would be replaced with the Director of Communications position.

Robby continues: The Officers also propose to pay Executive Senators a stipend each quarter. Currently Executive Senators are not paid anything, but they do a lot of work for GPSS. There are mixed feelings about this regarding appropriate incentives and logistical challenges.

Zhiyun says that this proposal is very challenging. As far as an international student is concerned, it is illegal to go beyond 19.5 hours per week of paid work through the university. An RA position that is 19.5 hours per week will prevent interested individuals from participating as Executive Senators. Because the goal of the stipend is to increase access, let's be careful that any solutions do not increase barriers.

Robby thanks *Zhiyun* for her input and clarifies how the stipend amount of \$450 per quarter was obtained by accounting for 2.5 hours each week for meetings and 0.5 hours in addition per week.

Robby continues: another change for FY20 is that the weekly hours for each staff member will be the same. This translates to a cut in weekly hours for the Office Manager and Director of Events. The cuts were necessary because otherwise there would be insufficient funds for training prior to the start of Fall Quarter. This distribution can be changed, however this is some issue this academic year having staff that have different numbers of weekly hours.

Ted moves for a 5 minute recess. *Varun* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

Ted moves to resume the meeting. *Varun* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

Ted moves to extend the meeting by ten minutes. *Varun* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

Varun asks if the work expectation 15 hours per week for all staff and Officers. *Robby* responds that Officers are salaried to work at 19.5 hours each week, and the 15 hours per week of work expectation applies to Staff.

Varun inquires if *Robby* works 19.5 hours each week or more. *Robby* clarifies that on average, he works 19.5 hours each week but that the actual week-to-week amount fluctuates.



Robby continues: the staffing changes results in an increase of \$10,000 over the FY19 budget.

Ted comments that a large part of this increase which is not necessarily possible.

Robby continues to discuss grant applications. Departmental Allocations budget will decrease for FY20 because the Committee is funding essentially the same programs each year.

Ted asks about how much of the Departmental Allocations budget gets spent. *Robby* responds that we did not zero out the budget last year. We spent \$3,000. There is an impression that there are few Departmental Allocation funding requests because of a lack of marketing.

Varun inquires about the source for the increase in Special Allocations budget. *Robby* states that the sources of funding discussion will come later. Special Allocations used to be at \$22,000 in FY17 but was reduced significantly over the intervening years. With the increase of event space rentals, the proposal includes a \$3,000 increase to bring the budget up to \$20,000 for FY20.

Robby continues: Travel Grants budget is also increasing by \$3,000 over FY19. Currently, the Travel Grants team is funding $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the applicants but has had to deny $\frac{1}{4}$ of worthy applicants.

Robby recommends that a plan for what to do with the general fund in order to inform the annual budget the Committee has to work against. There are a lot of options here: move general fund dollars to the endowment for \$5,000 per year in distributions; or make a contract with SAF wherein the next several years GPSS takes a SAF distribution cut to use the general fund with an agreement to return to prior funding level after a certain number of years.

Robby also mentions that another consideration is how to use the endowment distribution. There is a chance we will stop getting funding from the Provost and GPSS may want to try to preserve the availability of these funds. Ultimately, this proposal includes a \$15,000 decrease in SAF funding requests.

Robby states that there are two more weeks for the Committee to discuss. He recommends each Committee member thinks about what to do with the general fund to develop a plan and inform the final figure for the annual budget. There is no way GPSS will get more money from SAF for FY20. The upper bound for FY20 budget will be equivalent to the SAF distribution from last year plus internal distribution from general fund or endowment distributions.

Varun asks if the slide deck will be distributed to the Committee. *Robby* commits to sharing the slides.

Varun moves to adjourn the meeting. *Alex* seconds. No objections.



The Meeting was adjourned at 12:41pm.

GPSS FY2020 Officer's Proposed Budget

Because everyone loves a good budget.

A dark blue diagonal graphic that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, covering the bottom half of the slide.

Budget Process

- 1) Creation of the Officer's Proposed Budget (DONE)
- 2) Budget review and modification by Exec Committee and F&B Committee
 - a) Exec will have two meetings to finalize a budget- 2/13 and 2/27
- 3) Exec and F&B budgets are combined where possible, differences noted
- 4) Budget presentation to Senate on 3/6
- 5) SAF budget hearing on 4/19

GPSS Funding Sources & Fund Balances

- Services & Activities Fee
 - Primary source of funding
 - FY19- \$442,570
 - Recommending no increase in SAF request
- Provost support
 - \$30K last year
 - Can be used for food/alcohol
- GPSS Endowment
 - \$100,440 endowment (cannot be spent)
 - \$22,664 in distributions
- GPSS General Fund
 - \$392,226 at beginning of this year
 - \$272,226 is spendable after meeting our reserves requirement (per bylaws)
 - Too big- need to spend down, transfer to endowment, or a combination

FY2020 Proposal Overview + Points of Discussion

- Proposed annual budget of \$484,472
- Funding source assumptions
 - \$30K from the Provost
 - \$27K of internal spending from Programming, Endowment, and General Fund
- SAF request of \$427,472
 - Reduction of \$15K, or 3.41%
- Major talking points
 - Officer's role in the summer
 - Staffing
 - Reorganizing responsibilities
 - Need for web maintenance skills
 - No consensus on hours per position
 - Exec Senator stipends
 - More \$ for marketing

Administration

DECREASES

- Office supplies reduced
- Materials + equipment reduced
- Staff training removed
- Special Projects Fund removed

INCREASES

- Conference travel (non-officers)

Programming & VP Internal

- Reorganized into event “buckets” without being overly explicit
 - Quarterly events
 - Committee events- Previously S&P and Diversity
 - Professional development events
 - Huskies on the Hill
- Split out into Programming Budget and VP Internal Budget to reflect how the money is actually spent
- Overall annual cut of \$6,000
 - Total of \$43,000 this year, proposed budget totals \$37,000
- Maintain conference travel
- Increase in Senate food by \$500

President

- Maintained all budget lines
- Funding to attend two conferences



VP External

- Maintained most budget lines
- Reduced funding for conference travel to levels of \$1000 for two trips



Treasurer

DECREASES

- Telephone lease
- Copy machine lease
- Computer replacement (cut)

INCREASES

- Insurance
- HUB fee for services



Secretary



DECREASES

- None- Committee event funding moved under Programming budget

INCREASES

- Diversity Fund up to \$6000
- Funding for conference travel
- Marketing up to \$1000

Personnel– Officers

SUMMER

- Budgeted for 12 weeks at \$20/hr, working 20 hours per week
- No consensus on this among Officers
- Clarify requirements and expectations

SCHOOL YEAR

- Salary lines increased to match avg expenditures from past two years
- Very big cut in tuition line
 - Set at \$100,825 (FY19 predicted spending)
 - Previous: \$117,105
 - Avg tuition: \$122,331
 - Avg, outliers removed: \$107,191

Personnel– Staff & Exec Senators

OVERVIEW

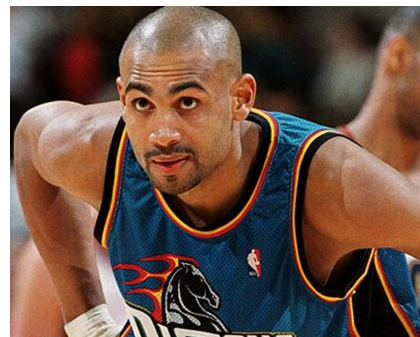
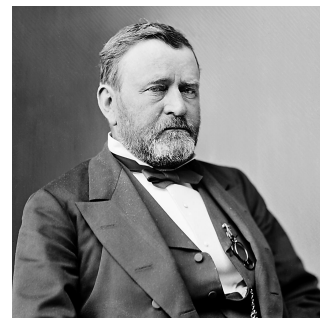
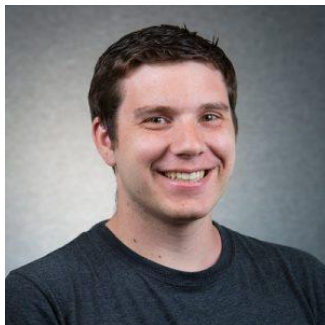
- All staff start two weeks before school (9/8)
- Full weeks every week, with the exception of five vacation weeks (T'Givs, Dec, SB)
- All staff paid at \$18/hr
- Reorganizing positions to add Director of Communications
- Exec Senator pay at \$450/quarter
 - Challenges with execution of this
- Overall increase of ~\$10K

WEEKLY HOURS

- 15 hours/week for the majority of positions
- 10 hours/week for Clerk
- VP External staff
 - 15 hours/week for Fall/Spring
 - 19.5 hours/week for Winter

Grants (Departmental, Special, Travel)

- Departmental Allocations
 - Decrease of \$2K
- Special Allocations
 - Increase of \$3K
 - Still below FY17 levels
- Travel Grants
 - Increase of \$3K
 - Back up to FY17 levels



General Fund Spending Plan

PROPOSAL

- Transfer \$100,000 to the endowment
- Supplement annual budget with \$15K for the next 8 years
- Leave remaining \$50K for capital and one time expenses (such as the website redesign)

ALTERNATIVES

- Maintain SAF funding request from previous years, use GF to increase annual budget
- Dramatically cut SAF request and spend down GF, under agreement that our funding levels will be returned once GF is depleted
- Transfer larger portion to endowment
- Any combination of the above