



Finance & Budget Committee

2019-2020 Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 28, 2020, 11:30am
HUB 314: GPSS Board Table

PRESENT:

Shane Schrader – Treasurer; Committee Chair
Becky Tran – Budget Specialist, Staff
Danielle Brown, GPSS Senator; Committee Vice Chair
A.J. Balatico, GPSS Senator
Ted Cohen, GPSS Senator
Simon Crean, GPSS Senator
Julia Overfelt, GPSS Senator
Jacob Ziegler, GPSS Executive Senator, Guest

NOT PRESENT:

Jared Canright, GPSS Senator
Simon Crean, GPSS Senator
Terrence Pope, GPSS Senator

Shane calls the Meeting to order at 11:31 am.

OVERVIEW

Becky gives each member an agenda and copies of last week's meeting minutes.

1. Call to Order
 - a. Approval of Agenda

Becky moves to approve the agenda. *Ted* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

- b. Approval of the Minutes

Danielle moves to approve last week's minutes. *Julia* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

2. Proposed FY21 Budget Draft

Shane sent the committee the newest version of the budget, including some document data from previous years - this is reflected in the tabs; no individual line items were changed.

Shane will walk the committee through each line item, review the endowment funds, how SAF funding works, funding sources and timelines.



ADMINISTRATION

Shane starts with the Administrative line item, which is used for things in the office. Line items that are staying the same: **office supplies**, and **materials + equipment**.

Julia asks why did the **materials + equipment** line item increase from \$400 in FY19 to \$1000 FY20.

Shane answers that part of that is for the equipment we used for marketing. *Shane* further adds that after we purchased new desks, chairs, and computer equipment - this line item wasn't being used for subsequent years and thus, rolled back into our general funds.

Shane shares that **staff onboarding** is being decreased by \$100 based on this year's actuals.

Shane explains for **SAGE Day on the Hill Travel (DC)** - last year's committee created this line item as a way to fund an extra (non-officer) person to travel. This year, we got a lot more interest and the person running this is actually a GPSS staff member who doesn't have their own travel line item - so this would cover their travel expenses. Plus, we want to send 4 extra people who applied and got approved to attend SAGE this year. So this line item is being pulled together from other officer's travel line item budgets except for the VP External. Especially since next year is an election year, we expect to have similar interest from people who will want to attend SAGE.

Ted asks if travel budgets have increased, overall, for this year.

Shane says this line item is where all the travel budgets are getting rolled into for next year.

Becky clarifies that this \$4000 **SAGE Day on the Hill Travel (DC)** line item is not going to any GPSS officers. And with about 4 interested attendees, that comes out to about \$1,000 per person.

Julia asks if that's how much travelling costs to go to SAGE in DC.

Shane answers yes if we cut costs through people sharing rooms, sharing transportation, or using public transportation in DC. Before, we were budgeting \$1,500 per person and that turned out to be a very high cost.

Julia asks if this includes any food expenses.

Shane answers no, this does not cover any food.

Shane combined the two separate line items: **printing** and **promotional materials** into one line item to give next year more flexibility into how to promote GPSS.

Julia asks why did **promotional materials** increase from \$300 to \$1000 from FY19 to FY20.



Shane answers that we wanted to increase our **promotional materials** because prior to this year, it was basically nothing.

Julia wants clarification that we do not feel the need to increase it again from last year.

Shane answers yes, we used the allocated amount according to the budget and did well. So we can keep similar numbers to this year.

Shane moves on the **special projects fund** was created in FY19 but for FY20, it got reallocated to different line items elsewhere, so *Shane* is not creating it again for FY21.

Shane talks about the **officer travel fund**, this is money that wouldn't be coming from the officer grant line items from last year. This is something we could use our endowment reserve distributions to cover. This is a line item that would not be funded by SAF. This is a brand new line item that will be paid by money we already have on hand.

Danielle asks if there are any rules on how distributions have to be spent.

Shane answers no. When they created the endowment, they created two budget codes; one is a general student fund and the other is called the travel fund, but they did not create any policies on how to spend that money. The travel fund budget currently has \$7,000 in it right now and makes about \$1,000 a year. Based on what we currently have in this travel fund, if we do not put any additional money into our endowment, we can fund the **officer travel fund** for at least two more years.

Danielle clarifies that we are reallocating SAF money to other graduate students to attend SAGE in DC, and pulling from the endowment distributions to fund GPSS officers' travel.

Shane answers yes, and this way, it's more representative of supporting graduate students.

Julia asks if we're worried about tying the \$4,000 to only SAGE Day.

Shane says that he has talked to other officers and they have discussed the concern if one year, there is much lower interest in attending SAGE, that officers would be able to reallocate the excess funds to other line items.

PROGRAMMING BUDGET

Shane explains that this is money that comes from the Provost for all things food and drinks. This is the riskiest part of our budget because it's not guaranteed from year to year. This is why last year's treasurer (Robby) made the entire Provost funds for **programming** (food and drinks), so that if it goes away, all of it goes away and it's easier to track on our budget.

Julia asks what's the difference between **staff training** (under **programming budget**) and **staff onboarding** (under **administration**).

Shane answers that the **staff training** is just for food/drinks.



Shane points out that the **committee events** line item ballooned up to \$5,000 for FY19 and was lowered to \$3,700 for FY20, but *Shane* has decreased it down further to \$2,000 for FY21 because food/drinks for the various committee events doesn't cost or occur as much.

Shane moves onto **professional development events**, which was a new line item created for FY20 because GPSS created their own academic conference during FY19. A lot of effort was put into the event but it wasn't well attended. So this year, there wasn't any interest to hold a second annual academic conference. So we're cutting this line item for FY21 because based on the feel around campus, not many are interested.

Danielle asks what the academic conference's theme was about.

Shane explains the idea around this event is meant for students who do not have the finances to attend conferences, this would give them the opportunity to present their research in front of other graduate students for feedback and experience.

Shane asks *Ted* and *Jacob* how many people went to GPSS's academic conference last year.

Jacob answers about 60 students.

Shane goes on to talk about our **fall events** / Night at the (Burke) Museum this year and how we spent over \$10,000 on food and drinks. But it was such a successful event and worth it to spend that much money for a major turnout event. Since the **professional development event** / academic conference did not get a lot of traction, GPSS would benefit more from reallocating those funds towards something like the Burke event where it's our introduction to graduate students at the beginning of the year.

Julia asks why the **Huskies on the Hill / Grad Day on the Hill** line item go down from \$2,000 to \$1,200 for FY21.

Shane explains we spent close to \$1,000 on food and drinks for the **Grad Day on the Hill**, so he's decreasing the amount based on this year's actuals and rolling any excess expenses into **fall events**.

Julia asks why the overall **programming budget** went down from ~\$45,000 to \$30,000 this year and next year?

Shane answers before, the **programming budget** included both the Provost and SAF funds, now, it is solely Provost funds. *Shane* has to present a SAF funds only budget to present to SAF and mixing it with the Provost funds for **programming budget** made it very messy. This way, it's a lot cleaner to manipulate and track funds/expenses.

Shane also adds this year, the VP Internal and Events Director discussed pushing **Winter Events** down from \$7,000 to \$6,000 and adding that \$1,000 to **Fall Events** but will leave it up to next year's officers to make that change if they think it's necessary. Right now, allocating \$9,500 for **fall events**, \$7,000 for **winter events**, and \$7,000 for **spring events** is a bit more equitable.



VP IINTERNAL

Shane cut the **conference travel** and moved it under the **administration** section. The \$100 **discretionary funds** that all officers get are things like the VP External buying policy books to better understand their job - and these things are kept/left in the GPSS office at the end of their term. \$100 is not a lot, but could go towards anything officers think would help their position or the office. All of the VP Internal's **supplemental funding** stays the same except for the **Committee Events - Supplemental Funding** line item is decreasing from \$2,300 to \$1,500. Since this money cannot be used for food or drinks, it's used for things like honorariums, promotional materials for committee events, or for room reservations. This decreased amount is based on this year's actuals.

Danielle asks this these **Fall/Winter/Spring Events - Supplemental Funding** is going towards things like room reservations.

Shane answers yes. We had to dip into General Funds this year to cover renting the Burke. But it's hard to budget that expense for next year since we were the Burke's first big public event when they reopened, we don't know if that cost is going to go up next year.

Julia clarifies that these expenses were previously included under the **Programming Budget** that we have since separated out since this year.

Shane answers yes.

PRESIDENT

Again explains, again, he cut out the **conference travel** expense. The two other line items: **general programming** and **discretionary funds** stay the same.

VP EXTERNAL

Shane says there were two different line items for **Travel Expenses (Olympia)** and **Olympia Parking Permit**, so *Shane* just combined the two. The \$75 **parking permit** expense is also per month, not per duration/stay. And *Shane* is increasing the **Travel Expenses (Olympia)** from \$3,000 to \$4,000 anyways because this year there are only 60 legislative days and next year is at least 105 legislative days because it's a budget and election year, so next year's VP External will have to devote more time living in Olympia. The VP External's position is most financially burdened because we're already saying that they need to have a car to commute back and forth between Seattle and Olympia, they need to have a professional wardrobe, parking permit, and any incidentals they may incur from traveling back and forth.

Shane moves onto **Grad Day on the Hill**. This is a new line item for \$2,000 that *Shane* is created for next year, based on this year's actuals, that will cover the bus ticket to Olympia.

Julia mentions that for the Health Equity Lobby Day, drivers got gas reimbursements if they drove their car to Olympia - is that something GPSS could do for **Grad Day on the Hill**?

Shane answers yes.



Danielle asks why the **Grad Day on the Hill** expense falls under **VP External** as opposed to the **Sage Day on the Hill Travel (DC)** is under **Administration**.

Shane answers that the VP External handles all participants for Grad Day on the Hill where they do not have final say on who gets selected to go to SAGE in DC, which the latter is a reviewed application process.

TREASURER

Shane explains his **insurance** is for the GPSS office in the HUB. All of the Treasurer's expenses have to do with keeping up with the office.

Ted asks about the **HUB Admin Fee**, he remembers we weren't being charged properly in the past and wants to know if it has been sorted out since.

Shane answers that they are for HUB accounting costs, and it was worked out until they lost a bunch of HUB accounting staff. So *Shane* will need to talk to the HUB staff and discuss what is going to happen to that fee because it hasn't been charged yet for this year.

SECRETARY

Shane says the **Conference Travel** was reallocated to **Administration**, as with other officers'. **Discretionary Funds** stay the same. And based on the consistent need, there was no need to bump **Diversity Funds**.

Ted mentions that he knows the Diversity Committee has been thinking of restructuring themselves. He wonders if the Diversity Fund should be renamed to the Equity and Accountability Fund.

Shane agrees. And informs the Committee that the Diversity Committee has spent \$3,000 of their \$6,000 budget so far.

PERSONNEL

OFFICER'S SUBTOTAL

Shane says that the first thing you'll see are **salaries**, which are remaining the same. These numbers are paid at the average UW RA/TA rates. For **Tuition**, it was always around \$117,000 but last year's treasurer (Robby) discovered we were never paying near that amount so they brought it down to \$100,000. Based on this year's actuals, *Shane* is bringing it back up to \$115,000.

AJ asks if this **tuition** amount accounts for out-of-state tuition.

Shane answers no, any out-of-state expenses are waived.

SUMMER HOURLY STAFF SUBTOTAL

Shane moves onto the **Summer Salary Subtotals**, which are remaining the same but *Shane* wants to change the language from \$20/hour for 30 hours a week to \$30/hour for 20 hours a week. The former was good because it gave officers more time to get work done but



was rushed by UW's regulations of only working 19.5 hours a week. So the overall dollar amount is the same, but the expected working hours are less, which will give officers a more realistic vision for what they want to accomplish over the summer. And with less hours, it allows for officers to get a second job/internship.

Julia asks why the staff do not get any summer hours.

Shane explains that it's unfair to have staff over the summer because it would not allow them to work elsewhere and GPSS would not be paying them a lot. Plus, the officers agreed that it's better if GPSS just hires all staff and have them start at the same time before Fall Quarter to encourage a better office dynamic and allow for everyone to be trained at the same time.

REGULAR HOURLY STAFF SUBTOTAL

Shane says that the officers are recommending an increase in hours from the **Executive Assistant** position that also is called **Campus Partnerships, Chief of Staff, University Affairs**. What GPSS does not currently have is a consistent campus outreach person who works on special projects as well as to help with the president's scheduling, emails, and projects. Ideally, what they hope would happen is to bump the Executive Assistant's hours down and hire a new staff member to be the Chief of Staff, who would work on pet projects. However, to do that, it would be an additional \$12,000 for the Chief of Staff's salary, desk, computer, training, food, etc... So they do not think they will create a new position.

Julia asks about discussions around giving the clerk more hours.

Shane says it's been discussed but nothing has been decided. Ideally, the clerk would be able to take meeting minutes / notes for every major committee meeting that requires notes: senate, executive, and Finance and Budget. If the clerk would alleviate this responsibility from the Budget Specialist, it would allow the Budget Specialist to devote more time to financial projects.

Jacob asks, wouldn't it be better to have an elected member at the start of each year to handle F+B meeting minutes. Because due to schedule constraints, it might not be possible for the Clerk to make it to F+B meetings every week.

Shane says yes, but if there are no members who would be willing to do the clerk's duties, then it would fall on the Budget Specialist.

Jacob agrees, but points out that the staff member would be paid to do so.

Danielle asks what happens when staff work under or over their hours.

Shane says that staff are able to log up to their allotted working hours each week. However, they do not get paid if they work over the limit.



Danielle points out that sometimes if a staff member wants to keep their position next year, they might be inclined to put in more hours to ensure that the work gets done. But wonders if the staff member doesn't get to something, does it get pushed on the officers?

Shane answers issues that are to be worked out between the staff member and their officer.

Julia asks who is GPSS's HR person?

Shane answers the Student Activities Office, Director Rene Singleton. But staff members are also able to talk to other officers, their staff coworkers, or anyone in the SAO office.

BENEFITS SUBTOTAL

Shane says that these amounts change every year, but it's not something we have control over and it's mandatory. So, these are just actual numbers from the HUB Accounting.

DEPARTMENTAL ALLOCATIONS

This budget line item would remain the same at \$5,000.

SPECIAL ALLOCATIONS

Shane is increasing this by \$3,000 from \$22,000 to \$25,000 based on increased room rental fees across campus. *Shane* is also working with Ted to increase the Special Allocations max limit from \$750 to \$1,000 to also reflect the increase in event costs as well.

Ted says he thinks this may be a bylaws amendment in which he'll need to speak to the Judicial Committee about.

Shane says that we can request to give more money but it would have to be approved by Exec every time.

Jacob clarifies that the bylaw for Finance and Budget do not specify a \$750 limit.

Ted explains that the GPSS bylaws specify the cap is \$750. Ted does not think it makes sense to put this language in the GPSS bylaw, so maybe it should just be struck from there and just be mentioned in Finance and Budget's bylaws.

Jacob says that the bylaws do not specify the max amount we can spend for Special Allocations, we would just need to bring it to Exec and tell them how much we spent over \$750. If Exec doesn't approve, then they can just overturn it.

Shane proposes a worse case scenario: if Finance and Budget approves a request at \$1,000. Usually we would send that money within a week. And we might have to wait a week and a half before telling Exec (if it's a Senate meeting the following week), and by that time, the money is already sent and maybe spent.

Jacob points out that we do not approve funds for events that are happening the following week. So we could just hold off on informing the RSO or sending the money until after we inform Exec.



Shane mentions we should be on track to fully spend the **Departmental and Special Allocations** budget this year.

TRAVEL GRANTS

This budget line item would remain the same at \$25,000.

Shane mentions that this **total budget** increases by 5% from FY20 (\$505,171.99) to FY21 (\$529,356.40). This increase comes from our increase in **Special Allocations** and operating expenses.

Shane adds that he would like to keep the amount they request from SAF within 1-2% because there is a high chance of receiving pushback if we request more and based on our general funds reserve.

Shane asks for any further questions since this budget will need to be approved by Exec, our Finance and Budget Committee before it gets presented to and voted on by the Senate on April 1, 2020 before it then passes onto SAF.

Ted clarifies that it seems our increases are coming from: tuition (\$15,000), benefits, increase staff hours (\$1,124), Grad Day on the Hill (\$2,000).

Shane agrees. And mentions that most of the budget is reallocating and moving funds around to line items based on actuals for things we actually use. *Shane's* intention is that we're budgeting for things we're actually spending money for and not creating any surplus at the end of the year.

Becky makes a motion to extend time by 5 minutes. *Ted* seconds. No objections.

Shane moves onto the funding sources and refers everyone to the "Projected Account Balances" tab. The General Fund currently has \$418,648. Per our bylaws, we have to have 25% of our Operating Budget amount in the General Fund at all times (\$126,293). From 2013-current, we have \$29,413 in our Endowment Distributions. *Shane* also included a tab that covers all the Endowment Distributions from 2013 to current. And a final tab that includes the Endowment Ideas from FY19.

Shane says that one thing we need to discuss that the budget is not contingent upon is: if we want to do anything with the General Fund reserves to increase our Endowment amount, and if so, how we should go about that. There were opinions in Exec between either depositing a lump sum or over time, adding incremental amounts into our Endowment.

Jacob asks for clarification - if we want to put money into the Endowment, I think it says we have to put a minimum deposit each time and that we can't just put a small amount here and there.



Shane is unsure. That sounds right, but *Shane* doesn't know the minimum amount.

Jacob does not think that we should approve putting in \$250,000 into the Endowment. 1. It is ethical for a single board to have the power to exercise over such a large sum, especially since it's about 50% of the yearly operating budget. At minimum, it should require two boards and two F+B's to approve that. 2. Locking away \$250,000 into our Endowment is a good idea, \$100,000-\$150,000 is more reasonable to give GPSS more flexibility with the General Fund for future generations and for future years to spend as they see fit.

Shane acknowledges that *Jacob* makes a good point. *Shane* says that from his point of view, the reason why he thinks putting away \$250,000 was a good idea based on uncertain future funding from the school. *Shane* will make a new document, similar to last year Treasurer's (*Robby*) Endowment Ideas. One of *Shane*'s major disagreements with last year's ideas is that they did not increase annual budgets by 5% each time but instead kept it consistent for the 10 years they projected.

Jacob adds that last year's Treasurer (*Robby*) was more interested in spending down our General Fund as opposed to requesting additional funding from SAF. *Jacob* is also against that through process because SAF already factors in general raises as "no increase in funding". So, us asking for general raises is expected in SAF. Also, GPSS may be doing this, but ASUW is not - ASUW is constantly applying for new positions and funding. So, there's no precedence or reason for us to do it.

Shane requests the Committee to review the minutes when they come out.

3. Adjourn

Ted moves to adjourn the meeting. *Becky* seconds. No objections.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:35 pm.