



Finance & Budget Committee

2019-2020 Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 22, 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
Julia Overfelt, GPSS Senator, 2020-2021 GPSS Treasurer
Ted Cohen, GPSS Senator
Jared Canright, GPSS Senator

NOT PRESENT:

Simon Crean, GPSS Senator
Terrence Pope, GPSS Executive Senator
A.J. Balatico, GPSS Senator

Shane calls the Meeting to order at 11:37 am.

OVERVIEW

Becky provides each member an agenda, copy of last week’s meeting minutes, and copy of the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (FY21) Guidelines.

1. Call to Order
 - a. Approval of Agenda

Danielle moves to approve the agenda. *Jared* seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

- b. Approval of the Minutes

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

2. Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (FY21) Guidelines

Shane thanks *Jared* for putting in comments in the FY21 Guidelines documents. Shane explains that this is just a recommendation for the next year’s Treasurer, they are not required. They should reflect what the F+B Committee thought went well this year, or didn’t work as well. Starting with *Jared*’s first comment about the phrase “funds may not be used for off campus events”. Shane agrees with *Jared*’s note that we could add some language in here about funding for virtual grants or the Travel Grant exception that we created during



coronavirus times. Maybe we can change it to say, “If you have requests or inquiries about funding for virtual events, feel free to reach out to gps@uw.edu”.

Jared recommends saying, “funds may not be used for off campus, in person events”.

Shane agrees with that suggestion. Moving on, Shane brings up the specifics for net revenues coming back to GPSS. Shane explains that in the past, it has been an honor system, and we have had some people who reached out to us directly to pay us 15% back. But there’s not a timeline on how this is done. Shane also acknowledges Jared’s comment that there isn’t clear mention that the 15% is up to the amount that we funded.

Julia asks if there’s a rule of thumb for how much money an event makes before we request it back because sometimes we’ll waive that requirement. Or if the group is planning to use the sales from this year to help fund next year’s event.

Shane replies that it depends. For example, if the profits are going towards scholarship funds or something, that’s not something he’s going to ask money back from. It’s not something that’s in our bylaws and therefore isn’t enforced, so we have that kind of flexibility.

Becky mentions that in her Budget Special Manual for next year, she’s planning to create an email template to the RSO about a week after their event takes place to see if they made and profit, and if so, to please send 15% of those funds back to GPSS.

Shane agrees that creating a standard language would be good.

Danielle suggests also including language like, “if you took photos during your event, we would be happy to receive them”. Danielle moves on to the line item that states “graduate and professional students involved in planning the event”... but in the Departmental Allocation linen there isn’t mention of mandatory graduate student involvement. After hearing from the Scandinavian Studies Department’s administrators last month, it wasn’t a project led by graduate students. Danielle recommends adding clear language that it has to be initiated by graduate students.

Shane is definitely in favor of this and says that in the past, we’ve assumed it’s always graduate students. He asks Danielle to add in some language and we can approve it in the document.

Danielle suggests taking the same language about graduate students for the Special Allocations line and copying/pasting it to the Departmental Allocations section, except change the language of “planning the event” to “requesting the funds”.

Shane approves this language change and moves on to funding caps. Shane mentions that Ted and Jacob had had opinions about this, and wanted to raise the funding cap for RSO’s. Currently, F+B has the ability to fund up to \$1,000, and anything above that, has to go to Exec for approval. Shane says that maybe this is something we don’t have to raise,



considering what in-person classes will be like in the Fall because if in-person activities don't resume, then there might not be a need to increase it.

Danielle thinks the opposite and that increasing it preemptively will be good because if classes don't resume in the Fall, then RSO's are probably planning bigger events in Winter and Spring. Danielle wants to recommend pushing the funding cap to \$1,000.

Julia agrees that if that's the case, then we will have more money to spend at the end of next year's academic year.

Jared agrees to upping the funding cap to \$1,000 because \$750 has been our cap for so long that it's become so aged.

Shane asks the committee what they feel about small and medium events. It's something we haven't dealt with much because we usually only hear from larger events. So he doesn't know if it's worth bumping up the cap or leaving it the same, and waiting until Fall to change it since it's just a guideline.

Jared, Danielle, and Julia all agree it should be raised.

Julia questions by how much, or what percentage would we raise it by?

Shane asks if the committee would be comfortable with raising the funding cap for small/medium events to \$500/quarter.

Ted agrees on the basis that that's what we've funded in the past. And Ted expresses that he thinks raising the funding cap to \$1,000 is long overdue. Yet, he brings up the clause in our bylaws that state if F+B funds an event over \$750, that it has to be mentioned to Exec.

Shane acknowledges this is says he thinks the Treasurer can easily incorporate it into their Treasury update at Exec.

Julia, as the next Treasurer asks how does she amend this next year, if needed? Does it back to be a vote?

Shane answers yes. If the Treasurer wants to make changes to the guidelines, they will bring it up to F+B to vote to adjust funding guidelines.

Jared moves to approve the FY21 Guidelines. Danielle seconds. No objections.

VOTE: ALL vote YES. No objections. No absentions. Motion passes.

3. Budget Updates

Shane informs the committee that SAF voted to cut grant funding increases for next year. What this means is they did not approve our \$3,000 Special Allocation increase for next



year. However, they did approve all our other budget changes. Shane doesn't think this is a terrible cut because we have other, internal methods of increasing our grant budgets. So, now, Shane has to re-propose a budget to Exec, F+B, and then get a vote from Senate so we have a finalized budget for next year. So Shane's proposal is to decrease the Special Allocation budget line from \$25,000 back down to \$22,000 for next year. Then, if next year's Treasurer wants to increase it back to \$25,000, they would have to go to Senate and get them to vote on taking out \$3,000 from GPSS Reserves. Shane asks if people have any questions and opens the conversation up for debate.

Ted says he doesn't have a problem with this for all the reasons Shane mentioned but also because he thinks we're going to get fewer Special Allocation requests next year because of massive restrictions on events, especially on the larger events that we typically fund. So, \$22,000 seems fine for now. And if we just want to increase this budget line by 3%, it's something we can essentially approve ourselves if we need to.

Shane agrees and mentions that while budgets are harder to increase for line items like personnel, it's pretty simple and straightforward if we want to give students more money.

Danielle, Becky, and Julia agree with this plan of action.

Julia asks why SAF made this decision, was it just to cut GPSS's grant increase or did they cut all organizations' grant increases across the board?

Danielle said they had to cut 3.5 million dollars of requests from 18 units and grant increases were the first thing to go.

Shane adds that this meeting was 8.5 hours long, from 1:00 to 9:30pm. We held onto our for a while. But from an equity standpoint, SAF cut grants from everyone. Yet, the committee did vote to increase SAF fees for next year, so it's going to be \$146/quarter, which is an increase of \$5 per student per quarter.

Ted asks if they're expecting a big drop in enrollment next year.

Shane says yes, they're anticipating a 5% decrease per quarter enrollments. Which will be hard because that's where SAF and GPSS money comes from. Shane adds that for the past couple of years, GPSS has sent SAF a pretty lean budget and has drawn from its own reserves already. So, GPSS is ahead of the curve when it comes to deficit spending versus other groups.



Ted moves to approve the new budget. Jared seconds. No objections.

VOTE: ALL vote YES. No objections. No absentions. Motion passes.

Ted moves to extend the meeting by 5 minutes. Jared seconds.

4. Travel Grants / Special Allocations Funding Update

Becky shares that we've taken quite a bit of money back from previously funded Travel Grants and Special Allocation requests because many events and conferences were either cancelled or moved online. At the end of our Winter Cycle Travel Grants, we spent \$14,486.91, which was about 58% of our budget. We had to take back \$4,700, which means we've spent about 40% of our Travel Grants for this year since not many people have applied for Travel Grant funding since coronavirus. For Special Allocations, we're not spending much money there either because most of the events we funded were in Spring. When we left at the end of Winter quarter, we funded \$12,165.64, which is 55% spent. We've had to take back about \$7,326.50, which leaves us at 22% spent.

Shane mentions that while it reflects a terrible situation, this is the reason why we've been able to spend a bunch of money into the COVID Emergency Fund. We were projecting about contributing \$50,000, but it looks like we can give more money.

Ted says that with no in person events, there would be little expenses. Like you wouldn't need to spend money on anything in person like food or room reservations.

Julia states that she recommends spending money on honorariums that they wouldn't have previously done. Julia is organizing an online conference this summer and was able to get special guests for it that they didn't have the budget for previously. But with lesser expenses online, they can afford a more prestigious speaker.

Ted thinks it would be a good idea to come up with some sort of 'tips and tricks for planning an event in the COVID world' document for RSOs to reference next year.

Julia doesn't know if this is allowed but if we can hire people to help with online events/conferences, it would be great to just hire someone to handle the logistics of running an online event.

Shane mentions that it's great that we have Zoom Premium access for free through UW; that really helps. He also adds that it would be nice to also make online events more accessible by providing an ASL translator as well. Online events have the potential to be more accessible.

Jared points out that the GPSS Event Manager role is going to be a weird one next year. He wonders if that position could be arranged to also be a sort of technology consultant as well, and have experience on how to run online events.



Julia says that's definitely something the new board has discussed - hiring people with more online experience.

Shane agrees and thinks GPSS should look into people who have more digital conferencing skills.

Jared also adds that maybe it's not necessary to have people with the best digital/online skills but also hire people who have enough social sensitivities and skills to understand online meeting dynamics; so that they're aware to not dominate the conversation.

5. Adjourn

Danielle moves to adjourn the meeting. *Jared* seconds. No objections.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:21 pm.