



Finance & Budget Committee 2020-2021 Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 6, 2020, 11:30 am
Online: Zoom Meeting

PRESENT VOTING MEMBERS:

Julia Overfelt – Treasurer; Committee Chair, Evans School
Danielle Brown, Department of Geography
Ted Cohen, Molecular Engineering Institute
Terrence Pope, Department of Psychology
A.J. Balatico, College of Education

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Stephen Lee – Budget Specialist, Staff

NOT PRESENT:

Jared Canright

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

OVERVIEW

Julia gave each member an agenda and a copy of the last meeting minutes.

1. Call To Order

- a. Approval of Agenda

Terrence moves to approve the agenda. **A.J.** seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

- b. Approval of Minutes

Ted moves to approve the minutes. **Danielle** seconds. Motion passes.

2. New Business

- a. Travel Grants

Stephen gives an overview of the Travel Grants Committee. He says that he's been working with Julia to find ways to improve the travel grants process for



students. For example, setting the required GPA to a passing score of 3.0 instead of 3.2, allowing students access to the travel grants even if they are not presenters in the conference. **Stephen** also mentions that he's been working on making the travel grants process into google forms, simplifying the travel grant application process for students. **Stephen** then asks the F&B Committee for any feedback on travel grants.

A.J. says that he's noticed that some of the grading criteria either didn't leave any consequential difference in whether we approved them or not. For example, the question asking if the student had previous funding didn't make much of a difference in the result and just caused confusion. Also, the ranking system on how much funding each student is asking for seemed unnecessary since everyone was asking for the maximum anyway.

Stephen thanks **A.J.** for the feedback and adds that he had been discussing the issue of asking if the student had previous funding with **Julia**. The grading criteria states that if the student had received funding in the last three years, they would be disqualified from consideration. **Stephen** notes that disqualification seems like an overreaction, especially since three years is a substantial period of time.

Terrence agrees with **A.J.** that the criteria seems to only benefit for bookkeeping sake and that it does not accurately reflect the behavior of the committee. **Terrence** asks for clarification on if we were trying to make travel grants more accessible.

Julia confirms that we are trying to make the travel grants more accessible. **Julia** says that the current travel grants application favors STEM majors, and that since she herself is not in a research program or in STEM, she is not confident she would have a strong application.

Terrence comments that travel grants are supposed to remove the financial barriers for students communicating their research to the appropriate conferences and forums. **Terrence** wonders if broadening the definition of a travel grant and what counts as a valid travel expenditure would allow the travel grants to be more relevant, especially with COVID making travel more difficult. **Terrence** notes that this could be difficult since there are many rules on what funding can be used for, but asks if anyone had tried framing travel grants differently to be more accessible.

Julia says the travel grants have been extended to seminars and that she had been thinking about changing the name "travel" so that it could also cover other expenses like registration fees. **Julia** says that it would just be a matter of changing the name, but she had not thought of a name that would encapsulate travel and registration expenses.

Terrence suggests "academic expenditures" that have specific rules for funding



academic work. He says he does see the current travel grant system favoring STEM research. **Terrence** asks if ASUW has something similar to travel grants for undergraduate students.

Julia says she is not sure and that she would email Alece to get more information. **Julia** also brings up that there is a criteria for writing the application in layman's terms that favors native English speakers. She asks if there is any reason to keep that criteria and wonders if we could change it to a yes-no grade based on if the applicant made an attempt to explain themselves.

Ted agrees with **Julia's** suggestion. He says that the other option would be to have feedback and coaching to support every applicant who is not as proficient in English, but since we do not have those resources, **Julia's** suggestion would be best.

Julia says she also wants to get feedback from the E&I Committee once we can so that there is another perspective on this issue other than the financial perspective. **Julia** clarifies that she wanted to get feedback from the finance side to be fair on any structural changes made to travel grants.

Terrence agrees with **Ted** and says that the alternative to feedback and coaching to assist applicants who are not as proficient in English is to narrow down the grading criteria to the ones that actually make a difference in the final decision. **Terrence** notes that going in this direction may limit the committee's flexibility to assist students who don't quite fit into the grading criteria.

Julia asks if any member had any feedback on dropping the GPA requirement from 3.2 to the passing grade of 3.0.

Ted agrees with the change and notes that GPA does not seem like a good predictor of future performance.

Terrence also agrees, saying that the GPA requirement is a huge barrier for some students. He says there is so much more that goes into academic performance than the student's competence and the quality of their work.

Julia mentions that there was consideration about dropping the GPA to 2.8 because that's the minimum requirement for pass-fail classes, but acknowledges that it is not the overall passing grade.

Terrence says that the 3.0 GPA requirement seems fair, especially since it is the university standard and that it might be difficult to go lower.

Ted suggests that the GPA section be optional, as he has seen on various forms.

Julia says she had considered taking the GPA requirement out.



Terrence says that **Ted**'s suggestion makes the GPA requirement less of a priority while still making it a criteria on the form.

Julia agrees with the suggestion. She says that the travel grants may come back into the discussion after more work has been done on the google forms.

3. Resolution

- a. **Ted** confirms that **Terrence** and **Danielle** have been added as sponsors to his resolution. **Ted** asks if **Julia** and **A.J.** would be willing to be added as sponsors.

A.J. says that he was already a sponsor last year and wanted to reconfirm as a sponsor.

Julia nods, also confirming sponsorship.

Ted says he sent the resolution to Logan on Thursday morning.

Danielle reminds **Ted** that resolutions only need to be sent before Sunday, which she confirmed with Logan.

Ted says Logan emailed him back saying he would put it on the agenda. Logan's comments were to ask **Julia** if she wanted to be a sponsor and that he was excited to see the resolution moving forward. **Ted** says that he added the memorandum numbers and asks for any feedback from the committee.

Julia asks **Terrence** if he was at the meeting on Wednesday.

Ted interjects and says that Logan had approved the senate agenda but did not send it out, anticipating changes. **Ted** asks if there will be another Executives meeting before the next Senate meeting.

Julia and **Terrence** nod.

Terrence says that the topic did not come up in the last Exec meeting because of how tight the agenda was, but he is sure that it will come up in the next meeting.

Ted mentions that he has seen things added to the agenda of the general meeting at the general meeting itself, so if it did not come up in the next Exec meeting, it could be brought up in the general meeting.

4. Announcements

- a. **Ted** mentions that he is going to be attending his first SAF meeting.



Julia asks **Danielle** if she will make it to the meeting.

Danielle confirms she will attend.

5. **Adjourn**

Julia entertains the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Terrence moves to adjourn the meeting. **Danielle** seconds. No objections. Motion passes.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.