



# Services and Activities Fee Committee Meeting

January 31, 2025 | 1:00 PM | Husky Union Building 303

## MINUTES

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### Call to Order

The Services and Activities Fee Committee Meeting was called to order at 1:07 PM on January 31, 2025.

### Roll Call

- Present
  - ASUW: Haley Chee, Annie Chen, Jack Prichard, Aiden Reeder, Crystal Tran
  - GPSS: T Marzetta, Althea Rao, Alec Solemslie, Ryan Wicklund
  - Advisor: Lincoln Johnson, Kristian Wiles
- Absent
  - ASUW: Khushi Loomba (Absent Excused)

### Approval of Agenda

The agenda for November 22, 2024 SAF meeting was approved. Motioned by Jack Prichard, Seconded by Aiden Reeder; unanimous vote to approve the agenda

### Public Comment [10 minutes]

### Old Business

### New Business

### Discussion

## **1. Budget Presentations:**

### **1. Counseling Center**

- a. Speakers: Natasha Foo Kune (Director), Marilyn Carreth (Director of Wellness Shared Services)

The Counseling Center focuses on student mental health, offering short-term counseling, small and large group counseling, drop-ins, Let's Talk for students who are unsure if they need it or not, and more. As more students are utilizing the services, the Counseling Center have partnered with an agency for more intensive patient services such for students who need to meet more than once a week. So far, this program is slowly ramping up with 9 students.

Most of the budget is for wages and benefits for the mental health counselors to provide more competitive wages to keep up with costs for maintaining these professional mental health employees and therapists at UW.

### Questions

**Ryan** – For ongoing therapy services, what would it take for ongoing counseling services to be provided to students even more?

- Funding is the biggest issue since the Counseling Center would need to hire more mental health providers and the space to maintain them. There are efforts to work on a Student Health Fee which would be one way to help offset these costs, but this fee would need to be on the higher side to match the ongoing services which is a recognized costly constraint for students.

**Alec** – In terms of current staff and their Wages & Benefits, how much would be needed to make counselors at the Counseling Center have a competitive wage with private providers?

- As an example, a newly licensed provider gets paid around \$76,000 here [i.e. Counseling Center] at UW where in comparison other jobs in the area or in private practice can range between \$95,000 - \$120,000.

**Aiden** – On the Student Senate side, there have been a couple bills aiming towards expanding counseling services, especially by putting pressure on the administration. How is your communication with UW administrators in terms of resolving these issues?

- There hasn't been much progress, particularly since UW's upper administration is busy at this time of year.

**Jack**- Can you tell us more about how students utilize in person services versus remote ones? Which is generally preferred?

- An in-person appointment usually has about a 1.5 to 2-weeks wait, while virtual appointments are about a week's wait. In-person services are usually preferred because of the social interaction aspects, such as with group therapy, and the ability to develop stronger connections. Over the past year, the Counseling Center has been able to meet these demands relatively well. However, this eventually leads to a "cancellation list" where the Counseling Center tells students they can't book appointments since the Center is fully booked appointments for the next 2 weeks. The Counseling Counter found that if they scheduled appointments for more than 2 weeks out, there are higher rates of no-shows which leads to fewer students with access to counseling.

**Althea** – How many staff does your budget serve? How readily available are student appointments, and are there any backlogs?

- SAF supports almost 2/3 of the Counseling Center's budget which covers 40 staff members, 6 of which are embedded counselors, with the majority being support staff. In terms of full-time counselors, they have about 30 counselors or mental health providers. The Counseling Center has been able to expand its staff through partnerships with academic units that hire and fund embedded counselors within the system or department.
- Students have many options for therapy including weekly group counseling which is the primary and one of most effective treatment plans. Students can also schedule one-on-one appointments where students can usually meet with a counselor within a week.

**Alec** – Could you elaborate the role and responsibilities of the Student Advisory Board?

- The advisory board started last year and meets monthly to gather student feedback from undergraduates, graduates, and diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Discussions have been focused on improving the online presence and implementing more group services. Group services is one of the ongoing services for the Counseling Center and has been scientifically proven to be one of the best treatments. The Advisory Board asks questions and brings back input for potential improvements and implementations. For example, the focus of student concerns today is the political climate and how it's affecting those in the LGBTQ+ community.

**Alec** - What are concrete examples of things you have changed due to student feedback?

- One of the methods of receiving feedback is through the Counseling Center's student satisfaction survey. One of the biggest change from the survey is with the Counseling Center's central wellness website. It serves as a general location for students to be redirected to a particular unit within the Counseling Center based the services being offered and the student's needs. However, having several units on the website did make things more confusing to find specific information on there. As a result, when students typed in their inquiries via web search, they'd land on the mental health resources page, which didn't have enough information on there, instead of the main wellness website.
- Other changes throughout the year include addressing students' specific needs during times of political instability by strengthening support connections with students and providing necessary resources.

**Annie** – In regard to the liaison counselors, are they being utilized to their full capacity/availability by students? If so, how? If not, are there ways that you are planning on doing outreach so that students are more aware of the available services?

- Last year, there was talk about a petting zoo which was organized by the liaison counselors however their main responsibilities fall under what the students want (i.e. individual counseling vs outreach). For example, the law school's liaison counselor is often fully booked with individual counseling, while other department's counseling may focus more on outreach if individual counseling demand is lower. Departments with liaison counselors includes pharmacy, Information School, College of Built Environments, social work, and dentistry. Depending on the unit or department, they can pay for a full- or half-time counselor where the main responsibilities include outreach and Let's Talk sessions.

#### 1. **STLP**

- Speakers: Ryan Hursh (Manager of Program Operations), Akilesh Konda (Student STLP Lead), Joseph Esteban (Student STLP Lead)

#### Questions

**Aiden** – What do you mean specifically by expansion of equipment inventory? What does that look like?

- STLP has some ideas about finding an alternative to its current office location to increase the total space to house even more technological devices and equipment.

**Aiden** – What would happen if STLP didn't receive their full funding?

- The current SAF funding supports student wages so not receiving the full request will affect daily operations by reducing the number of locations open or cutting down service hours. Overall, this would limit the number of students that STLP would be able to serve.

**Alec** – What does student demand look like? Do you all have a way to track denial of a tech loan?

- STLP doesn't have a good metric for tracking the loans aside from the Google Forms and STLP reservation system. However, STLP is one of the most widely used and reserved student services with almost all of their inventory reserved every quarter.

**Aiden** – Are there any devices that frequently result in maintenance and repair that you are looking to phase out, and are you able to recuperate your cost from the loss of these devices?

- STLP always has an inventory of a certain number of laptops, where there are some older models in which STLP is working towards phasing out. With more funding, this process can be done faster. With new equipment services, STLP has a 4-year purchase plan to help maintain those devices where 4 years is usually also the average lifespan of devices and equipment anyways.
- **Aiden** – As a follow-up, what is the process of retiring equipment? Does STLP receive a return amount or percentage back for doing this?
  - STLP typically waits to phase out old devices before acquiring new ones. These devices are often sold through a surplus store via public auctions, other colleges, etc. The revenue generated from the surplus store is very little, ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000, depending on the items' value and the amount transported.

**Alec** – How do you all collect student feedback and utilize that information?

- STLP has a student survey included the email when a student returns their borrowed equipment. If STLP receives any feedback through any of those revenues, they review it and possibly redirect related incidents to customer support services. Every quarter, STLP sends out a form to gather suggestions for any new equipment that students would like to see in the future.

**T** - Do you also have an option for students to purchase technology equipment?

- There is no option to directly purchase equipment from STLP. However, there is an option for students to go to the surplus store where they can purchase equipment for like \$50 or more.

- Y – Has STLP considered encouraging students to go to the surplus store to purchase used computers or equipment? This could also be a way to generate some revenue by imposing a percentage fee on sales from the surplus store.
  - STLP doesn't do this.

**Alec** – Do you all keep track of undergraduates vs graduate student usage?

- STLP doesn't have a good way of tracking. The system solely looks at enrollment for the current quarter and doesn't track anything beyond that.

Motion by Aiden Reeder to recess until 2:20PM when the next Unit arrives, seconded by T Marzetta; unanimous approval.

## **2. Student Publications**

- a. Speakers: Diana Kramer (Director), John Tomasic (Interim Director / Editorial Advisor), Sophia Schwarzwald (Managing Editor), Morgan Bortnick (News Editor), Teddy Nguyen (Advertising Manager)

### Questions

**Aiden** – What would you say the degree that low pay is impacting the quality of your work and the student ability you can bring in?

- The pay for a student publication group is more of an equity issue. When people are paid a competitive wage, it usually gives staff more motivation to work as much as they're being paid. Overall, struggles with the student wage will depend on the person's financial background. For example, even if one student is on a stipend, they'll probably have to work another job due to their financial restrictions. Student Publication has lost staff due to students prioritizing other factors such as money, time commitments, and school. However, the current students working at Student Publication are there because they're dedicated so it doesn't restrict the quality of work. The more funds that Student Publications can provide for the students, the more incentive it can be for students to put more for the organization and ensure they're fairly compensated for their time.

**Aiden** – You mentioned that you are revamping your website, is this work being funded by SAF and how goes this process?

- The revamping of the website is coming from STF. For a progress report, Student Publications is hoping to go live with the finalized website next month. All archives have been moved, and both front-end and back-end of the website are being handled by editors, where students are heavily involved in the process. The new website also offers opportunities to increase profitability like with ads.

**Haley** – Why has the reliability insurance increased?

- Per the University requirements, Student Publication is required to have insurance in case of any lawsuits. With the uncertainty in the media landscape, prices can fluctuate with pricing increasing to \$3,000 this year.

**Annie** – With the understanding that we're only able to increase the SAF fees by 4% a year, why did you choose to request the full \$35,000 (slightly above 8%) even though your expenses are only projected to increase by less than \$4,000?

- They are anticipating expected expenses and, although they have relied heavily on SAF, it has been some time since they received their full funding.
- **Alec** – Clarification if the remainder of the \$35,000 request after wages is all going to supplemental operations?
  - Not exactly, for example with printing costs. Student Publications limit their physical products due to rising printing costs and increased online engagement. Printing costs are sometimes influenced by hourly wages, which impacts the number of students they can employ.
- **Alec** – How would you make the hard choices if you did not receive the full allocation?
  - The main impact of reduced funding will be a limitation on travel money for students covering the Big 10 news. Students learn so much during this experience and create everlasting memories. While it's expensive, Student Publication already does so much fundraising to cover the costs, so a funding cut would require even more fundraising.



A potential solution is encouraging more news coverage, but this might lead to fewer podcasts, stories, or other content, which could result in students feeling less represented.

**Alec** – How has alternative revenue sources impacted your operations?

- Student Publications constantly explore new ways to advertise the website. However, they are limited by manpower and will not pursue revenue generation strategies that aren't aligned with their mission.

**Althea** – In the Budget Request on page 4, under question *b* (“How have your unit’s services and programming changed over time, and how have you adapted the use of SAF funding”), there is no graphs attached?

- They’ll send in the updated unit submission with the graphs later. Student Publication has 1.5 million views with an opening rate of 49%. They publish 3 newsletters per week.

#### Other Notes

**Kristian** reminds that SVL and Counseling Center have talked about increasing wages & benefits to keep up with competitive wages. He restates that SAF’s decision to fund or not fund these competitive wages doesn’t mean that the decision will permanently increase their wage. **Lincoln** cautions that if SAF decides to fund the competitive wages, other units might possibly ask for the same increases.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Jack Prichard motioned to suspend the rules to approve meeting minutes, Seconded by Ryan; unanimous approval.

Due to the next Unit arriving early for Budget Presentations, Ryan Wicklund motioned to table the meeting minutes, Seconded by Aiden Reeder; unanimous approval.

After the scheduled Units finished their Budget Presentations today, Ryan Wicklund motioned to bring the approval of the minutes from the table, Seconded by Aiden; 8-0-1 approval.

The meeting minutes from the 12/6/24 SAF meeting were approved. Motioned by Annie Chen, Seconded by Jack Prichard; unanimous approval

The meeting minutes from the 1/10/25 SAF meeting were approved. Motioned by Ryan Wicklund, Seconded by Jack Prichard; unanimous approval.

### **Announcements**

Haley explained the plans for future Unit field trips. There will be opportunities to join in before or after the SAF meetings every Friday.

During Unit Budget Presentations, Haley encourages every member to ask a question, at least every other week.

### **Adjournment**

The SAF meeting was called to adjourn at 2:40PM. Motion to adjourn by Aiden Reeder, seconded by T Marzetta; unanimous vote to adjourn.