 

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**Date: 3.26.21**

**Topic: March 26 Public Meeting**

**Present:**

**- Voting members:** Claire Kelling, Alex Zhao, Lexy Pathickal, Nora Van Horn, Shakay Simpson, Sarthak Vij, Darius Williams-McKenzie, David Pool, Tony Shi, Zachary McKay, Adeline Mishler, Emory Robertson

**- Nonvoting members:** Madison Camara, Alyssa DeLuca, Barry Bram, Jolinda Wilson

**Outside Attendees:** Sara Thorndike (Finance and Business), Zane Gonzalez, Damon Sims (Student Affairs)

**Action items/Next steps**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WHAT** | **WHO** | **BY WHEN** | **NOTES** |
| * Applications are due April 2nd | Everyone | April 2nd | At-Large applications are due April 2nd, please encourage people to apply. |
| * Look out for the transition meeting | Everyone | TBA | Keep an eye out at Barry and Claire plan to schedule the transition meeting for the next Fee Board |

**Agenda:**

1. **Call to Order and Opening Roll Call**
2. **Adoption of the Agenda**
3. **Adoption of the Minutes (March 19th, 2021)**
4. **Public Comment**
5. **Topics of Discussion**
   1. **Presentation of Final Fee Recommendation**
6. **Old Business**
7. **New Business**
8. **Chair Report**
9. **UPAC Chair Report**
10. **Comments for Good of the Order**
11. **Closing Roll Call**

**Transcript:**

1. **Call to Order and Opening Roll Call**

*Meeting called to order at 8:01 AM.*

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

***C. Kelling****: Is there a motion to adopt the agenda?*

***S. Simpson****: Motion to adopt the agenda.*

***N. Van Horn****: Second.*

1. **Adoption of the Minutes (March 19th, 2021)**

***C. Kelling****: Is there a motion to adopt the minutes from March 19th?*

***S. Simpson****: Motion to adopt the minutes.*

***Z. McKay****: Second.*

1. **Public Comment**

*No public comment.*

1. **Topics of Discussion**
   1. **Presentation of Final Fee Recommendation**

***C. Kelling****: I would just like to share this presentation with a rundown of all of the funding recommendations the Fee Board voted on. Starting with Student Legal Services, the Fee Board voted for full and flat funding at $520,000 with the notion that the amount should be adjusted if the Commonwealth Fee Board’s request for funding of SLS is approved by the Board of Trustees to reflect savings due to shared resources and support staff. Any remaining funds should be returned to the Fee Board before the beginning of the funding year and should be combined with the UPFB Facilities Reserve. The Gender Equity Center requested $58,000 and the Fee Board also voted on full and flat funding. The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity requested flat funding and the Fee Board voted on the full, flat funding of $147,838 (rounded down 78 cents). The Paul Robeson Cultural Center requested a $35,000 increase compared to the last funding cycle for PRCC to co-sponsor events and expand the outreach with multicultural student organizations while providing food. This increase was granted and the full funding amount the Fee Board voted on is $233,000.*

***D. Sims****: Is this $35,000 strictly for food?*

***C. Kelling****: I do not believe that it is strictly limited to food as Carlos from PRCC mentions room reservation costs but I can have a conversation with him about the specifics.*

***D. Sims****: Thank you.*

***C. Kelling****: The Student Parent Childcare Subsidy requested flat funding of $206,362 to which the Fee Board voted on full, flat funding. The UPFB believes the Student Parent Child Care Subsidy program is a critical resource for students with children and shares the belief that they would not be able to attend Penn State without such a program. Due to the critical need of this program, we believe the University should begin considering models on how to support the program with the use of general funds in the future. We are adding a strong recommendation to begin the transition of this fund, for example either gradually over four years (75% UPFB/25% PSU, 50/50, 25/75, 0/100) or a full transition in one year, next year. Next on the list is Student Orientation and Transition Programs - this office requested a decrease of $5,000 while also verbally committing to incorporate more graduate and professional student outreach in the next year so the Fee Board voted on the decrease and the full funding amount of $97,000. Counseling and Psychology Services (CAPS) requested full, flat funding of $872,008 that was voted to be allocated by the Fee Board. The UPFB recognizes that as the physical space afforded to CAPS grows, the CAPS request may increase in future years. We also recommend continued and strengthened efforts to recruit and retain BIPOC and multilingual staff. The Bryce Jordan Center requested flat funding of $200,000 from the Fee Board and the board voted on full, flat funding. We also* ***strongly*** *recommend that the Bryce Jordan Center create an active Student Advisory Board before Fall 2021, to ensure accountability and transparency through student input.*

***D. Sims****: I have seen this recommended in the past - is there anything we can do to help the BJC?*

***C. Kelling****: This is something we’ve been in contact with the BJC regarding, it fell under the radar due to the pandemic but now they are using the right resources to get it up and running. Next, the Center for Performing Arts requested an increase of $15,000 for student engagement which was voted on for full funding at $220,000 but the UPFB would like to be able to evaluate the increase granted in 2020-2021 to assess the need for further increases to the Student Engagement Opportunity Fund. Campus Recreation requested an increase of 2.5%. However, the Fee Board voted to only fund 1.8% as it better aligns with the rate of inflation - the final voted recommendation amount is $4,937,809. The voted allocation of $4,178,500 reflects a $50,000 increase towards equipment allocations and $150,000 and program allocations. The UPFB voted for a partial increase for the Office of Student Activities allocation at $1,870,534.75. For the Student Programming Association, the UPFB voted to fund a $3,000 increase to the Noontime Committee but did not allocate $20,000 to the Concerts Committee, as the increase was not justified in the proposal and the SPA student representatives did not know about the increase. For Homecoming, the UPFB voted to fund the increase for the Day of Service (increase of $373.75) and the Movie Night (increase of $112) but did not allocate the remaining parts of the increase request. The remainder of the increase, in the categories of the MLK Jr. Commemoration Committee, Student Organization Support, and Campus Programming was approved. Service & Leadership was granted flat funding, as requested. A large portion of the increase is being transferred from UPAC’s request to the Office of Student Activities’ request. The UPFB voted to fund the Sustainability Programming, in the Student Organization Support section of the budget, as a* ***pilot program*** *where the next Board will reevaluate the amount allocated to this program. The Student Farm requested flat funding at $200,000 which full funding was voted on by the Fee Board and the board appreciates the Student Farm’s efforts to locate additional funding sources and their contributions to the Lion’s Pantry.*

***D. Sims****: Has the Student Farm been able to fully utilize the past funding that the fee board has provided it?*

***C. Kelling****: They have had some issues with the pandemic and funding, but they are quite vocal and we have not heard from them recently so I believe they are alright. UHS requested a second-year pilot program for the STI Testing Program that was not given the opportunity to live to its full potential during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was voted to be allocated $420,000 that will allow 10,000 “free” STI tests for students without having to go through insurance, this amount will be evaluated by next year’s Fee Board. This year, the Student Fee Board has introduced a requirement of annual hearings from the student governments, even though the amount will still only be reviewed every three years. This is to encourage accountability and transparency. There are no major concerns with the student governments. However, we recommend more standardized reporting by the student governments, coordinated by the SFB, in future years. This includes, for example, statement of UPFB values and a 6-year spending history. In addition, the SFB leadership will meet with UPUA leadership to clarify spending on elections and CCSG leadership to clarify spending on awards, retreats, and banquets. Spending on these items should be noted by future boards. The HUB Reserve requested flat funding of $200,000 which full, flat funding was voted on with the intention of the HUB Reserve presenting any funding proposals to the UPSFB before utilizing those funds.*

***D. Sims****: Has there been any resistance to this idea?*

***C. Kelling****: There were no major objections to this decision though they may see it as a minor inconvenience to the schedule. The next item the Fee Board voted on is the implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Fund, with the full proposal of $250,000 distributed and serves the purpose of holding the Fee Board accountable for incorporating more sustainable projects into the annual funding cycle. One of the items funded under the Environmental Sustainability Fund is the Bike Master Plan. The plan requested an allocation of $200,000 but was voted to be allocated $170,000 with the department match of 15% funding. This project in particular is new and did not have to apply directly under the ESF, but this project and similar projects will be required to do so in the following years. The rest of the $80,000 in the ESF will go into a reserve.*

***D. Sims****: In regards to the Environmental Sustainability Fund, is this an allocation BY the board FOR the board, you must access the fund through the UPSFB?*

***C. Kelling****: Yes but it is more of an annual commitment to sustainability efforts and is not allocated towards any single office or organization.*

*S. Thorndike: Would you be able to clarify the price matching of the ESF?*

***C. Kelling****: Sure - so we have three levels in the rubric for projects in the ESF checklist and the stronger the price matching, the more likely we will consider the project. The last items are the facilities reserve, recommending an allocation of $8.5 million in order to keep the fee flat with the Wellness Center being the favored priority and the HUB Expansion in second. It was voted on by the board to keep the fee flat at $265. It is important to note there is ongoing debt from the previous HUB Expansion and Health Center committed to by the previous Fee Boards. Finally, I would like to move on to some discussion items - What is the advocacy role of the UPSFB and how do we codify our priorities for facilities projects when projects are not ready to come to the UPSFB?*

***D. Sims****: I think everything here looks great. I think in terms of advocacy, it comes from the Fee Board urging the institution in a new direction through these offices and organizations. For instance, I think the incorporation of racial diversity in the staff at CAPS that the board suggested is a great reflection of that. With facilities, you’ve managed to gauge what the student priorities are. Were you surprised to see so many offices request flat funding?*

***C. Kelling****: I personally was not surprised after the nature of this year, many offices felt this was not the year to ask for an increase. Offices such as the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity made an effort to optimize all of their funds and reallocate priorities rather than asking for an increase in funds which is a great mentality.*

***S. Thorndike****: I want to echo Damon’s thoughts - the work you’ve done is amazing and it saves so much time on our end knowing the Fee Board is responsibly allocating these funds and looking for the betterment of student life and the university.*

***M. Camara****: I would like to add how much support we’ve seen for the Environmental Sustainability Fund. In multiple meetings, numerous students have voiced their support for sustainability efforts during public comment and it has been great to see how passionate students are about that.*

***S. Thorndike****: I have had a few students reach out to me as well and I think it has been great to see the impact the potential of sustainability has on the student body.*

***D. Sims****: What are things we could do or things that have been helping the Fee Board run more efficiently?*

***S. Simpson****: I will say, I think Subject Matter Experts was a great idea and having individuals connect with an office one-on-one was much more helpful and eye opening.*

***D. Sims****: I agree, I think it is important for you all to be experts on these topics and this appears to be one of the most efficient ways to do so.*

***C. Kelling****: I agree, it was previously the role of the Chair to meet with all offices/organizations which can be very overwhelming and not as clear when relaying those messages to the rest of the Fee Board so this is something I hope continues down the line. I would also like to add that it was a bit difficult to evaluate the facilities reserve when the budgets are unknown and we are unsure where the budgets are coming from, I think having that information would greatly fundamentally change the discussion around those topics and add more value.*

***S. Thorndike****: I agree, Claire. I feel a feasibility study could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars so, depending on the size of the project, it may not be seen as necessary until the project is taken more seriously. At the same time, it is tough to know when to take a project more seriously until you know the cost and what is preferred so it is a tough scenario. Now that we know what is prioritized, we can offer some feasibility studies and assistance from the finance group for more resources on our end.*

***D. Sims****: I think this is the perfect time to do that as the projects had not entirely matured when you first began evaluating them and now more consideration has gone into them.*

***S. Thorndike****: I think there are a few conversations we need to have in the future sooner rather than later in regards to these projects to start to get the ball rolling so once the new Fee Board is in place Damon and I are happy to get that dialogue started.*

***N. Van Horn****: I was going to go back to your earlier question about how we could get more support and I think in one realm is, this year with the new UPSFB values, I think that a lot of members on the Student Fee Board have brought up over and over again the ideas of sustainability and equity, particularly within the realm of racial justice. We’ve had opportunities like increasing the PRCC funding, we’ve responded to the Caucuses requesting to have food made available to them, and in our CAPS recommendation we included the note about looking to increase the capacity of individuals to provide for international students or BIPOC students through diversity in staff. I think that having the university's plans to frame our conversations about how we could best contribute to those values would be really helpful in future years.*

***D. Sims****: Yeah I think that's a great point Nora and, in the end, all these processes ought to be working with one another somehow I think that we can do a better job of communicating some of those things to you and have dialogues. I think what we're talking about in terms of the facilities really is more conversation, more dialogue, more interaction among us, and I think that's true on all these points. Actually, it would benefit the work this group does and the outcomes would even further improve what they are.*

***E. Robertson****: Sarah, with regards to the financial consideration for the bigger projects that you mentioned earlier, would those be public conversations or just within the Fee Board and office?*

***S. Thorndike****: I think it depends on the point at which we begin engaging in these conversations. Once there is a solid proposal for the projects in place, it is more likely that the conversations would be public.*

***A. Zhao****: Earlier, Claire was saying that it would be beneficial to have the Childcare Subsidy gradually transition off of SFB funds and be a university-funded organization, what are your thoughts on that?*

***S. Thorndike****: It is often very uncommon for a childcare facility to be sustainable on its own. Universities often have to contribute money to them because the operational expenses are just as high as what they charge people to utilize the facility. I would say that the university is probably already helping to subsidize that through central university funds through the provost office. I don't know that for sure, but it wouldn't surprise me. Whether the university and the provost are willing to subsidize that more so that the student fee is reduced, that's definitely I think a conversation to have with the provost, but I do not see it becoming a university-funded facility in the next year just with all of the other financial pressures going on.*

***D. Sims****: Sara and I are looking to create a phased and reasonable approach to making the Childcare Subsidy a university-funded organization but it is something we have to revisit in the future.*

1. **Old Business**

*No old business.*

1. **New Business**

*No new business.*

1. **Chair Report**

***C. Kelling****: Applications are still open for next year and are due April 2nd so I hope those who aren’t graduating are considering applying and please send the application to your friends and encourage them to apply. I will let you all know when we are planning to have our transition meeting for the next Fee Board, I am assuming April 16th or April 23rd but will let you know a definite date soon.*

***S. Simpson****: Will the Fee Board continue an online setting or have a hybrid setting next year?*

***C. Kelling****: I do not have a definitive answer but I do know rooms will become more flexible for the potential of a hybrid setting.*

1. **UPAC Chair Report**

***M. Camara****: UPAC funded another $28,500 towards programs and $1,026 towards travel so that covers virtual registration fees. We are also now accepting handbook policy recommendations so if you are aware of any like policies that you would like to submit to UPAC, please do. Policy recommendations are due April 12, which is a Monday at 11:59pm and then our official handbook policy review will be on the following Tuesday April 20 at 6pm and you can upload your policy recommendations on our website so if you go on our homepage there's a Google Doc that you can click to to submit your recommendation.*

1. **Comments for Good of the Order**

*No comments for the good of the order.*

1. **Closing Roll Call**

*Meeting adjourned at 9:18 AM.*

**Summary:**

* This week, Damon Sims and Sara Thorndike from Penn State Student Affairs and Finance and Business came in to watch the board present the final allocation recommendations
  + Overall, Student Affairs was very pleased with the recommendations and the work/structure of the University Park Student Fee Board this past year
* There will be no meeting next week, but keep an eye out for the SFB transition meeting which will likely be on April 16th or April 23rd
* Applications for At-Large member positions are still open and are due April 2nd