 

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**Date: 11/19/21**

**Topic: Public Meeting**

**Present:**

**- Voting members:** Erin Boas, Najee Rodriguez, Noah Robertson,Schönn Franklin, Claire Kelling, Jake Snyder, Warren Sipe, Xiaoru (Tony) Shi, Latisha Franklin, Nora Van Horn, Sean Terrey, Alexa Clayton

**- Nonvoting members:** Yidi Wang, Kate Rutter, Barry Bram

- **Other:** Vice President Damon Sims

**Absent:** Megan Minnich (excused), Alexa Clayton (excused)

**Agenda:**

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

*Meeting called to order at 8:01 AM*

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Adoption of the Minutes (November 12, 2021)**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Public Comment**

Carter/Aidan: Here to support the Equity Fund

Sam: Support of the Wellness Fund

1. **Old Business**

*No old business.*

1. **New Business**

*No new business.*

1. **Topics of Discussion**

**Preparation for hearing**

*Claire:* Changed our hearings from 40 to 30 minutes. Last year we had little time for hearing time, so it was pushed in at the end. First 15 minutes is presentations and the last 15 is for questions. Every Monday, before midnight, I will send out the presentation, funding, and spending history on Google Drive. Everyone is responsible for viewing them. (Example: Campus Rec proposal put on screen). Amount allocated vs the amount spent over the last couple years. They have specific pages for the last two years of funding. Good graphics. Talk about how they use the fund, specific experiences, callouts for programs, values in a lot of details and how they share their values. In terms of where to find them on our google drive, 2022/23 for next year’s academic year funding in folder named hearing materials. The hearing materials are due to me Monday morning at 9 am. If you get an email late with me on Monday, you can follow up with me but should be around noon.

Latisha: It is necessary to understand the current request by looking back at a previous request?

Claire: Not an expectation of everyone. Spending history document gives a good summary of what they have allocated over the last few years. If you have any concerns of any program, please reach out. Inflation increases. Some offices might request inflation increases. They can market it to specific students, but they have to have it available to all students. SOTP targets events for undergrad students but have to be open to grad students as well. In the Fee Board you can see the last several funding years, offices are listed out in the folders. Your role is not to advocate for an office but scan the proposals and ask questions. Providing an initial recommendation for an office in March. Not necessarily what they are requesting. Hearings are a very critical part of our process. There is a way to make up hearings. Set up a meeting with me to go over the minutes and what was discussed. Still be counted as an absence but will be able to vote at the end of the year. Reach out to me if you want to schedule a makeup hearing. Last call for any questions on preparation hearings. We have one vacancy in the existing schedule but a slot on January 14 available.

FACILITIES DELIBERATION

Claire: Recap of last meeting. Got through the Natatorium. Didn’t get a decision on Fischer Hall. Start with HUB affinity group space. We don’t vote on anything until the end. Try to schedule an off-cycle meeting on December 6. As long as we have 4 we can have the meeting, our availability is not going to matchup other than 8-10 on Friday. Try to get as close as possible to be done with facilities. Tuesday, December 7 off-cycle meeting from 5-7. Hopefully get closer to being at a good place on facilitates. Talk about the HUB expansion and affinity spaces. Do you think the affinity spaces should be a priority?

Warren: Not feasible to do the expansion, Natatorium. Can cover 80% of either of the projects. If we can’t take out third year funds, need to pay more per year.

Latisha: At this point we are deciding between the priority between the HUB and wellness building? My priority

Sean: While the HUB would benefit by another expansion, HUB works as is. CAPS having a lack of space, a wellness building would be a priority over another HUB expansion.

Warren: Do you think the expansion is the answer to that?

Sean T: We should have a say on how the plan are deliberated. They are trying to building a kitchen we don’t think is necessary. We can ask for more space for CAPS. People don’t know where to go and how to make the first step with CAPS. A building is a clear sign on where students can go for those services, all students on campus, grad or undergrad. Goes neck and neck in the polls from the focus groups.

Najee: Good for student utilization groups in the future. As long as they stick to the original concept, it can go a long way for student utilization

Latisha: Beneficial to revisit our concerns and questions regarding Warrens points.

Tony: We should have a say on what goes into the building. We want to make sure if we are funding 200 million dollars it is doing all of the benefits. HUB is quite new and a is a stage by stage process any way. Personally support wellbeing building.

Nora: In favor of the expansion over the wellbeing building. Utilization of the new building is concerning me. I don’t think CAPS efficiency will get better with a new building. New building screams a marketing ploy.

Erin: A lot to be said about he consolidation of resources. A lot of things are dispersed around campus. For example, disability services can be in the wellbeing building. Current part of White Building can provide additional academic space. Provide more visibility to students.

Claire: HUB expansion and wellness center were on the same level from last years meeting. Stone Valley was not highly supported by the fee board.

Warren: HUB expansion would be for a student work space. Haven’t personally used the space with any student run orgs.

Sean T: There is orgs sharing one office. Which has worked out for the most part. It would be nice for an individual office but not necessarily needed at this present moment. Can be moved 4-5 years down the line.

Erin: The ballroom need reservations for larger groups to book up those areas. Student organizations would use the space.

Latisha: Are we able in our recommendation for university buy in?

Claire: In terms of increased funding for CAPS? We can definitely voice our support for it but can foresee a stipulation.

Sean: Worried it will become a student led issue. If we don’t make the initial step, the university won’t. If we do make the step, the University may grab on.

Nora: I don’t think that’s accurate. I think there is an absence of that advocacy but needs (wants) to see some for the fee board to move forward.

Barry: created 16 new staff last year

Najee: When is comes to prioritization, the wellbeing has the potential to support the student population. Holistic idea of wellbeing. What is being put in that building is important rather than it being a showcase. Leveraging the support of MOUs. The kitchen could be temporary students who are homeless. While I understand the HUB being more immediate, there is a potential of taking an opportunity to help students. We can make recommendations and suggestions for them to listen to.

Schönn: Mention the biggest benefit of the HUB is not the org space. Do you think the longer we wait to fund the HUB space, the mor permanent the DI space will be?

Latisha: In the committee, we talked about the real intention of the HUB affinity space. If we choose not to fund the space, takes away that concern for why are you renovating that space? There going to build an affinity space, why do the short term affinity space right now? Well this is the oldest part of the HUB. How will the renovation look? Third floor space to only be for DENI space without the expansion.

Claire: Anymore questions? Speak as an individual. Solid sense of your own priorities based on what we hear from outreach. We will talk about each project individually. For now we are establishing our priorities but down the road we can increase the fee but for now we are addressing more immediate priorities. Still continue this on December 7 then regroup to hear what is decided in March after hearings. Rule of advocacy in the student fee board then any other questions for the remainder of the meeting. Talking a lot about student advocacy in the fee board meetings. I just wonder, in terms of standing allocations and facilities what do you see as the role of the fee board?

Vice President Damon Sims: I’m sure you have heard of viewpoint neutrality. I think you can advance a whole lot of purposes. Heard a group talk about funding sustainability purposes. The university has sustainability goals and ambitions and tying funding makes it pretty easy for you. Stay away from ideology business. Funding practical and achievable projects, understand the practicality before funding. How do you measure a course? Gets more complicated the more layers you add to what you’re trying to achieve. Viewpoint neutrality issue gets very confusing very quickly. You are not the final authority but having conversations about recommendations you are going to advance to the university.

Najee: In terms of the architectural process, in what ways can we include certain modifications to other parts of the building? How can we engage in these conversations when these projects are taking place?

Damon Sims: There is a long process where you get to a conclusion. Get further student involvement. We don’t see any place, we think the university identify a certain place students design. We all work with OPP and other people of actually building a specific facility.

Warren: I think we are in an interesting spot of 12 young students but we are in a position where the recommendation is usually accepted. There has been lacking in communications. What is recommendation about communicating with the university?

Damon Sims: Be clear. We don’t know this or this. The university will dot he ebst to provide it. These facilities are very broad until they go down that really long process I mentioned before. We have to see exactly what you need from us. Reciever all the information before your called upon if something is worth millions of dollars. It is a long history, only once was a recommendation not accepted. This process is credible. The decisions you make are the ones presented up the line.

Latisha: Been discussing the wellbeing building, wondering about the universities buy in.

Damon Sims: Hard to project the capital spending. We have anew president coming our way, new priorities come with that. If you guys were to say, we are willing to contribute this proportion but the rest of the funding has to come from other services, you can always say that and limit you contribution. Doing that however could mean the building doesn’t get built. If you were to say we are going to fund 1/3 of the well being building, there’es potential its not enough for the building to get built.

Nora: At the end of last year, I mentioned a lot of conversations about equity and environmental sustainability. I asked for more information regarding that for the fee board can partner with the university on funding. What would that information and communication look like?

Sims: Sustainability and equity are large topics. You would need to focus it down and be a little more targeted in your question. A lot of it comes from the president on what our plans are. If they have specific questions, it would be easier to get the information and respond. They are important questions but not specific enough to be purposeful.

Nora: From my perspective, more worried about the budget the equity fund has. Would you recommend we talk to the president?

Sims: There is a task team that focuses on equity. The president is the only person that can answer questions like that. The equity office is not a huge enterprise but its embedded in multiple universities. My budget doesn’t involved student affairs. 40 millions dollars in the current campaign has been put toward scholarship programs. More going on then appears on the surface.

Sean T: Do you foresee that (new administration) having any issues with the projects with them coming in?

Sims: We are talking down the line, not tomorrow its hard to project what the circumstances are going to be. It is based on what resources are available. We don’t know what a new administration will list as their priorities. The person coming into the role has to accept that they are long term projects that are already underway.

Claire: The HUB expansion and wellbeing building are seen as priorities but yet the Natatorium is not seen as a priority. What should the fee board contribute to the Natatorium? Talk about going lower than the ask of 26 million.

Sims: The athletic departments rests on its own bottom. Athletics should fund a portion of the new Natatorium as it is athletics. You are talking about a 90 million dollar building. The bleachers, diving, coaches offices, locker rooms are all significant costs. The student fee should support the recreational part of the facility. I would say that’s what the fee boards interest should be, not athletic purposes. I don’t know where athletics would come up with the money for a new pool and aquatics programs. A lot of schools let go of a lot of sports. Tahts a conversation that goes beyond my perpecitive of the fee board.

Claire: I don’t really know how the fee board has the responsility for the new pool. Hard to balance the pool and need to renovate the facility because its not a student priority.

Sims: If your going to fund any of it, my opinion is that you fund the recreational portion of it. The rest is up to you. A new Natatorium would be nice because the one we have is the worst in the BIG10. Repairing it is a waste of student fee dollars rather than rebuilding it or if it is necessary to Penn State.

Schönn: I went on a tour last week of the Natatorium. Do you think we should fund the locker room?

Sims: You cant fund all of it. It is a challenge to choose what to fund. None of the projects are without merit if money was not an issue. Your role Is to identify what is valuable for the student experience.

Claire: You don’t see our hands being pushed with the Natatorium?

Sims: We have a variety of viewpoints in the administration. I do not expect you to have your hands tied. I have not won friends in athletics with this viewpoints. There has to be a line drawn that athletics rests on its own bottom. If you can separate the athletic vs recreational portions of the pool, you can allocate resources and funding. Some people in the administration support the athletics. Natatorium is a high priority for athletics, pool needs repair but don’t know if they have the resources to fund the other portion. The president is ready, as well as athletics to provide $1 million dollars a year about $60 million dollars come from other resource.es Whatever is left becomes your funding.

Erin: Within the project revision review board, once they get to phase 2 they either find they need to increase or decrease funding for the project. Would they come back to the fee board to increase or decrease our contribution?

Sims: These projects evolve through time. Especially now where supply costs are changing. Say this is what we are committing to on this project. I have to approve any facility spending on the commonwealth campuses. We students involved in this discussion. Is this decision reflective of the student consensus?

Claire: more in the context of offices, in my perspective what the consequences would be if we don’t fund an office other than it hurting students. What would the outcome be of not funding offices for the students?

Sims: This has to be a partnership. Work with the focus in various rolls whether or not the administration is involved. They need to share those ideas with all of you and get feedback from you. We don’t know how the university is going to evolve in the upcoming years. We need to be sufficiently mailable. Allows for that kind of dialogue to occur, whatever you declare as a priority. If that evolves, it evolves.

Claire: Why do the student governments have such a big role in the fee board?

Sims: We have this fee, this is a committee that is going to approve this fee but there is only one student on this committee. Where I had come from one student wouldn’t fly. We have done it this way for a long time but we don’t need more than one student to speak upon all students. Another group had two dozens students. Neither of them were going to ply. These groups aren’t working, are you open to a compromise. A student run committee but members of the administration involved as well. It dates back to that history of creating a compromise of having a student lead committee.

Claire: What do you think the role of staying neutral on this body and how it operates? Hard when other legislation is involved with this body.

Sims: I am open to hear about your opinions about how the student organizations should be involved. It important to have a student lead, student owned process that make recommendations to the senior members of the administration.

Najee: The process of us finalizing a recommendation to present to the board. What is the process of disagreement occurring?

Sims: You do your work, it advances and its discussed then decided by the president what is taken forward to the board of trustees. Discussion will occur in the administration. Anything the fee board advances, if that is changed, there will be conversation with you about why it will be changed. I would bring Eric Barron to hear from the fee board directly to explore a little bit more and ask questions. Gives the president’s perspective and why. We want to maintain credibility of this process by avoiding conflicts and adding too many layers of complexity. I don’t think we haven’t advanced any recommendation made by the fee board

Barry: First step is a discussion to try to come to some kind of conclusion.

Sims: I’m only one. I can be a minority voice in the senior administration. It is important to include me and Sara. We don’t always see the worlds exactly in the same way which makes for an interesting conversation. Advocates for different things. This is a heavy responsibility. You are all very engaged students. I couldn’t be more pleased with how this is handled by students. Thank you for all the time and energy you put toward this.

1. **Subcommittee Reports**
   1. **Facilities**

*L. Franklin:* Claire, Yidi and I have talked about making a video of marketing the projects.

* 1. **Environmental Sustainability**

*N. Van Horn: No update*

* 1. **Standardization**

*S. Franklin: No update*

* 1. **Communication**

*N. Robertson: No update*

* 1. **Zero-Waste**

*Nora: Email will be sent out next week.*

* 1. **Equity Fund**

*Najee:* Meeting with Claire today to introduce the projects we are bringing forward. Make sure we are staying on track and time.

1. **Chair Report**

*C. Kelling:* Come prepared on December 7 for hearings.

1. **UPAC Chair Report**

*Alexa: No report*

1. **Communications Intern Report**

*No report*

1. **Comments for Good of the Order**
2. **Closing Roll Call**

*Meeting adjourned at 9:59 AM*