 

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**Date: 1/21/22**

**Topic: Public Meeting**

**Present:**

**- Voting members:** Erin Boas, Sean Terrey, Claire Kelling, Schönn Franklin, Megan Minnich, Latisha Franklin, Xiaoru (Tony) Shi, Warren Sipe, Nora Van Horn, Najee Rodriquez, Jake Snyder

**- Nonvoting members:** Yidi Wang, Alexa Clayton, Kate Rutter, Barry Bram, Jolinda Wilson

**Absent:** Noah Robertson

**Agenda:**

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

*Meeting called to order at 8:04 a.m.*

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Adoption of the Minutes (February 18, 2022)**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Public Comment**

*No public comment.*

1. **Old Business:**

*No old business.*

1. **New Business**

*No new business.*

1. **Topics of Discussion**
   1. **Student Farm Standing Allocation Hearing**

Claire Byrnes and Sarah: We are requesting $215,800 which was 200,000 last year. That increase is to got the full time food system coordinator. This is focused on our staff, student wage with our interns (farm interns, graphic interns, and hydroponics intern), and student engagement for programming and events. In terms of program history, we are a 6-year-old program and started with the facility fee advisory committee ($223,434). UPUA is in supposed of the student farm. We have three main goals: farm to campus, learn and grow, and rooted in community including volunteer hours. We have had 132 courses and 73 interns over the years. We get our funding from Housing and Food Services, College of Agriculture (11,000), PA Dept. Of Ag. Grant (25,000), etc. We want to increase student employment and opportunities across all the colleges at Penn State. We want to get more volunteer groups and on-site events/programming. We want to support the expansion of the hydroponics operation because the farm is so important to the community. This is our initial operation, and we want to take it further. We provide produce to the dining commons and others in the community. Transportation has always been a struggle, so we need better accessibility. Providing more tools and equipment to increase production which is vital. Active seasons for farming are fall, spring and summer. This projection includes student engagement and staff/student wages. We have expanded to 4 acres and are in the works to develop the top half of this plan. We have 3 high tunnels, and we are installing a fourth including WIFI. Future expansion would be a farm HUB. Been able to have more programming and that is only going to grow in coming years. We give access to students, staff, and community members to organically grown produce. SFB allows for student wages for our interns. There are 26 student interns from across at least give colleges. Increased engagement has been amazing. 320 volunteer hours occurred in fall 2021 and we were able to build a community. We grew fresh produce for the Lion’s Pantry. 11 events in the fall that reached over 1,000 students including Lion’s Fest.

Claire: I was curious about the transportation effort. Can you talk about how that’s going?

Claire and Sarah: In recent years we have tried to get two bus stops outside of the farm. However, these two routes require students to pay however the student farm gets passes we can give out. If you don’t have a car, spin bikes and busses. For events, we rent out busses.

Nora: Can you talk about the collaborations you have done and future collaborations?

Claire and Sarah: We have worked with organizations during Harvest Fest and plan to continue collaborating with various student and community groups. Our Grow How event will be similar. We have cooking collabs downtown as well.

Yidi: I have a question about the student projects funds. Can you explain more about these projects and how you choose them?

Claire and Sarah: We are hoping to create more programming in the future. Since the farm has expanded, we need more help and engagement. We want to utilizing funding to help other student orgs.

Claire: How does the selection process go?

Claire and Sarah: Mostly through student connections so far.

Claire: Full time equivalent position: how was that last 50% funded in the past?

Claire and Sarah: We are still a pretty young organization, and we are trying to establish ourselves especially after the pandemic. SFB was the first stable and committed funding. Other sources are pieced together from wherever.

Claire: Spending history document has been much more detailed in the past but would love a spending history excel document. We don’t fund any allocating bodies other than UPAC so I want to make sure we don’t cross into that territory.

* 1. **Lion’s Pantry Facility Renovation Hearing, Environmental Sustainability Fund**

Catarina (+Speakers): Food insecurity exists everywhere and it’s such a large spectrum. It comes down to a lack of access to nutritious, safe foods. We were founded in 2014 to alleviate student food insecurity and poverty. We are entirely student run. Student leadership brings constant innovation. Since 2014 we have gone from serves a few students to over 2,100 in 2021. The usage and demand continue to increase. How do we continue with space and in an operational aspect? The gaps are from the functionality from the main facility. We want to renovate and transform in a fully functioning food pantry. Phase 1 is a freezer wall and HVAC system which has been completed. The total project cost is $317,000 but we do get help from other student organizations. Our total need for phase 2 of this project from SFB is $165,855. Phase two is access security (15,000), windows (19,000), etc. We plan to start on May 9 and hope to be done by August 15 when most students aren’t on campus. Why does it matter? The renovations ensure the facility is up to code and the foundation framework to expand our operations and help students. We strive to have zero hunger, food health and well-being and responsible consumption and production which are a part of the 17 sustainable development goals. We want to lower our carbon footprint, reduce food waste, and maintain a sustainable food procurement. We want to expand on our inventory and with this funding we can create a safer environment, meet increased demand, and provide clients with more. This helps us utilize data collection tools and facilitate more donation. Why should SFB fund the pantry? We need your help and support to ensure no student goes hungry.

Claire: One of the concerns your outline doesn’t fall within the SFB timeline which doesn’t happen until July.

Catarina (+Speakers): The Lion’s Pantry has funding from ASA to begin this project. In the interim period they would help this renovation move forward. If we don’t do it now, we wouldn’t be able to do it for a year.

Claire: Would it be a lower budget if we only support after July 20th?

Catarina (+Speakers): The concern we have is that we must deplete the ASA fund. We don’t food the bill until the end of the project. We could ask to hold the costs until the end of July until those funds are available.

Claire: Is it possible what portion of the budget will happen after the 20th?

Catarina (+Speakers): We can ask.

Nora: Can you provide more detail about the environmental benefits? If you’re not able to, we would love to advertise the environmental benefits and project impact.

Catarina (+Speakers): Some of those benefits are implicit. For example, our current reliance on snack foods. They are popular because college student grab snacks on the go. It is used as a substitution for healthier products. We want to reduce waste with home grown foods instead of the processed foods.

Nora: It would be cool for the fee board to see how environmental sustainability are implicit but do exist.

Catarina (+Speakers): There are some in our report bur we are happy to come up with more. This is the first time we have heat and proper electricity, and we can get something to track for more data.

Claire: Given that ESF is budget limited. What happens if ESF doesn’t’ fund the project?

Catarina (+Speakers): We would have to use a large portion of the ASA and the university may have to step in but it’s going to be very detrimental and drain our funds. We would have a facility but an empty facility.

Claire: We are also giving $100,000 to the Lion’s Pantry for those supplies from the SFB

Jake: In producing food waste, is there practices for repurposing it?

Catarina (+Speakers): We have compost and recycling in place at the facility for damaged goods we can’t give out.

Claire: What does UAC stand for?

Catarina (+Speakers): University Accessibility Committee. We are required to bring it to compliance and APA guidelines.

* 1. **Student Farm Expansion Hearing, Environmental Sustainability Fund**

Claire Byrnes (+Speakers): We want to design a sustainable multi-use engagement space. We worked with an OPP landscape architect and a master’s student to develop a plan. There was a community forum in 2021 and from Feb-Sept we are further developing the concepts and plan. We are requesting $200,000 for the final design phase to start in Sept. 2022. This prepares us for bidding and construction phases to seek donor funding. We have expanded to 4 acres and a pilot of 1 acre for three years. Installing WIFI, electricity, water with frost-free hydrants, etc. We had a community check-in in 2019 where over 100 PSU students, staff, etc., pre-Covid. We want to align with the academic year, better support campus dining, give space for classes/clubs, expand engagement, flexible event space and engage students for entrepreneurship. We have gained inspiration from Purdue Student Farm, Stanford Education Farm, etc. Our design features recycled materials such as renovated shipping containers. They are painted white to help with the reflection of the sun and minimize heat. The design includes a wash/pack work area (placed a little far from the outdoor classroom to reduce disruption), 4 shipping containers (bulk storage, dirty storage, clean storage, and produce storage), outdoor classroom, intern/volunteer muster area, restrooms, covered stage, etc. This project increases student leadership and engagement because it allows for more group service trips and tours and create a facility for student interns. Student organizations can hold retreats here off-campus. An outdoor kitchen can enable the sharing of food and farm-to table catering. We are hoping more classrooms will visit and get hands on experience. The diversity of classrooms that visit the farms is amazing. This space will support sustainable development goals. We want to increase farm to table to support no hunger and our relationship with the Lion’s Pantry. We want to install solar panels which will support affordable and clean energy.

Claire: I am wondering if you anticipate that the student farm will come back with more expenses? How likely do you see yourself getting the full construction costs?

Claire (+Speakers): How hope is that through the design process we can inspire donors and get external donor funds. We are now focused on the more visible aspects of the farm. You can’t guarantee it but its hopeful. It’s hard to know if the funding will be raised because we can’t anticipate the exact timeline especially coming out of Covid.

Nora: I am curious about the cost of the consultant and the rationale of the $200,000. If we are only offer half, is that helpful or is it an all or nothing ordeal?

Claire (+Speakers): The amounts are set from OPP. It is based around percentages and how big the spaces need to be. The design costs are a portion of full construction costs. Internal to Penn State, it is an equal kind of project. The current anticipated bill is 1.5 million which is cheap to other constructions on campus. Partial funding can help, it would delay the timeline further. Overall, we want to move through the phases quickly.

Yidi: Can you please explain on the inclusion part? How will you include all colleges and backgrounds from Penn State?

Claire (+Speakers): Inclusion on diversity of majors and cultures is an important part of the student farm club in general. The clubs and tours that come to see us come from all different colleges and activities. For example, club gymnastics does tours on the farm. This is a space for everyone. For the inclusion of cultures, we hold cooking collabs and with this farm space we can hold more of these collabs.

Warren: Can you give us more details on the conceptual phase? Why are you looking for the next phase before this conceptual phase is complete?

Claire (+Speakers): We ask different questions from OPP, and we want to get student feedback on the conceptual phase. It’s two-fold. Timing. This is for the next fiscal year, and this is the most exciting phases because it’s the most tangible.

* 1. **Consumer Compostables Creamery Pilot Hearing, Environmental Sustainability Fund**

Philip (+Jim Brown): The purpose of this project is to test the concept from switching to disposable food service ware to compostable products at the Creamery. We want to reduce single use plastics on campus. This is a joint venture and the idea for this stems from student interest expressed over the last several years. The idea would be to do this pilot in fall semester of 2023 with preparation occurring this year if we receive funding. We would prepare throughout the fall and spring for a transition to these products. During the pilot, student interns will help customers split their compostable products. The Creamery is one of the most iconic landmarks within the Penn State brand. There is a desire by the creamery to improve the sustainability of its operations. We surveyed the student body in 2017 and there was support for the use of compostable products. In the fall of 2020, there was a Styrofoam petition to get rid of Styrofoam cups (2,000 signatures). There are also zero-waste initiatives with UPUA/SSAC. This project would go a long way in most of us to being a waste free facility. Our goals are to reduce environmental impact, increase consumer understanding of the dangers of single-use plastics, gain experience to apply to future efforts, etc. The ESF utilizations includes a conversation to compostable products, marketing and employ student interns. The proposed budget is $1,995,150. From the SFB the total request is $294, 832. $99,000 for the pilot, year 2 is $67,980, year 3 is $35,010 for the price premium and student intern wages costs $36,300. The timeline is the fall of 2022, we will start implantation planning. In the spring we will identify resources and develop processes and marketing. In fall 2023 we will implement the plan, college data and evaluate. Then in fall 2024 and 2025 we will transition compostable product purchase to self-supported financial status for Creamery operations. Provides real-life opportunities for students. The weakness we have identified that this is not a reusable solution. We will get a life cycle analysis if we receive funding. The Creamery also have been and will be the most well-known element of campus. We strive to make everyone’s visit to Penn State more enjoyable. We want to make the community for everyone, thus sustainable. We couldn’t financially support the transition.

Jake: It seems the production process is linear. So, are going to match it with increase recycling efforts?

Philip (+Jim Brown): We first want to start with the actual store because of customer traffic. It is the most immediate part of the plan, but we can move from there after we implement it at the Creamery. Doing it all at once could pose problems

Yidi: Can you explain what the OMP phase is for? How long will this last?

Philip (+Jim Brown): That is the universities composting facility on the east side. It stands for organic materials processing center. All compost on campus goes here. The process is pretty old, and it won’t be to handle the material we are getting from the Creamery. We initiated a study for $35,000 on how to improve our operations to accept this material in the future.

Alexa: You mentioned a robust marketing plan. Can you tell us more about that?

Philip (+Jim Brown): We will work with students either independently or out of class experiences. It would be a multi-media campaign to promote the switch and educate the consumers. We have created partnerships to go digital.

1. **Subcommittee Reports**
   1. **Provided over email**

*No reports given*

1. **Chair Report**

*C. Kelling: A reminder, this is our last day of hearings. Next Friday are deliberations. You can’t vote on a hearing you missed and haven’t made up. Slides are due on Monday. Please do those over the weekend. If you have any questions, please let me know. Barry and I are going to review the slides on Monday before deliberations on Friday.*

1. **UPAC Chair Report**

*Alexa: No report.*

1. **Communications Intern Report**

*Kate: No report.*

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

*No comments.*

1. **Closing Roll Call**

*Meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m.*