 

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**Date: 03/21/22**

**Topic: Public Meeting/Deliberations**

**Present:**

**- Voting members:** Warren Sipe, Noah Robertson, Sean Terrey, Najee Rodriguez, Claire Kelling, Latisha Franklin, Megan Minnich, Jake Snyder, Nora Van Horn, Erin Boas, Schönn Franklin

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

**Absent:** Xiaoru Shi (excused)

**Agenda:**

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

*Meeting called to order at 4:03 p.m.*

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Adoption of the Minutes (March 19, 2022)**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Public Comment**

*Giselle: A member of the student advisory board. We hear from a variety of students and our experiences. This will support thousands of students. I believe it is critical to act with the upmost support of our students.*

1. **Old Business:**

*No old business.*

1. **New Business**
	1. **Student Poverty Unit New Fee Request Hearing Vote**

Claire: Can someone from the New Fee Request Committee please tell us the outcome of the vote?

New Fee Request Committee Recommendation: Vote passed

Claire: Does any member of the committee want to discuss the vote from the committee.

Warren: I voted no. I don’t think we have enough time to investigate this sufficiently. There are also some governance issues with accepting a proposal this late. I would love to see it in future years.

Erin: While the points that Warren addressed are valid, I can see there being concerns about time for investigation. But to be frank, the additional meetings would be with myself, Najee, etc. I would consider the precedent the availability of hearings like this after the deadline but also the impact on the student body (deserves at least a hearing). This new proposal has line items. I do think this proposal follows these merits.

Najee: One of the criticisms we discussed that administrators could steam roll the fee board. I do think it is an autonomous body.

Claire: Any other discussion before the vote?

**Vote: 5 yes’s, 6 no’s for Student Poverty New Fee Request**

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| --- | --- |
| Warren Sipe | No |
| Nora Van Horn | No |
| Megan Minnich | No |
| Latisha Franklin | No |
| Erin Boas | Yes |
| Jake Snyder | No |
| Noah Robertson | Yes |
| Xiaoru Shi | Absent |
| Najee Rodriguez | Yes |
| Sean Terrey | Yes |
| Schönn Franklin | Yes |
| Claire Kelling | No |

1. **Topics of Discussion:**
	1. **Student Poverty Unit New Fee Request Hearing**

No hearing due to prior vote.

* 1. **Deliberations**

**Sustainability Institute**

Claire: It was clear that the interns would be undergrads, but we want to make sure they have it open to graduate students as well. They said they could reduce to 3 films each semester. The rest of their programs would be held virtually. Speakers, programming and marketing and outreach are also a part of the request

Nora: Can you talk about the room reservations and do other organizations do that?

Claire: Most of the other units are student affairs so they have deals with the HUB for room reservations. I would be lowered or non-existent if they were in student affairs.

Latisha: I am in support of this request in totality. It is a solid proposal

Noah: I agree with that

Warren: I would agree as well, and it is an important filler for the fee board to support

Claire: Is anyone concerned about the room reservation cost? It is flexible in this proposal.

Nora: Are there avenues to reducing that cost?

Barry: It might be possible. Trying to shift it to be more collaborative.

Latisha: They have collaborated with other colleges in the past

Claire: People seem supportive as is except for reducing the room reservation cost in the next proposal

**Student Disability Resources**

Claire: Standing allocation is $65,000 for a cocurricular programs coordinator salary and fringe but leaves our programming for this person.

Warren: Is there any relationship between this and facilities request they made?

Claire: I think this person can be in place without the facilities change. They are requesting it would the office being complete

Noah: I think the position is really critical for community building and helping students with disabilities outside of the classroom.

Latisha: I agree with Noah

Claire: Any concerns with the position? (no concerns from the group) Do people want to ask about the programming costs that were committed from Ed Equity and SDR?

Schönn: We should ask about it. If they continue to not have funding, I think we can step up for student facing activities

Nora: I think it would be helpful for them to document that in terms of that cost sharing so they can advocate for the expansion of it.

Schönn: We should also review on how flexible the next fee board would be on replacing funding. They should review the flexibility for providing funding for student programs for SDR.

**Student Disability Resources Facilities**

Claire: They want to increase accessibility and have a new meeting room. Mobile furniture is a part of the plan. Any unused funds are returned to the fee board. It would be good to remind them of that in our recommendation to them. The Bouke project was moved to the next facilities master plan. This alone would be approximately a $20 increase to the fee, per student, per semester.

Warren: That $20 increase to the fee would just be for next year? Can we finance this? Spread the cost over 5 years?

Claire: It is a $20 one-time cost. We would need to talk about it from the finance end. It is worth exploring.

Nora: Do we have money in the facilities reserve to fund this? I support in doing something like this

Claire: The way the 8 scenarios are working right now, are being funding out of the facilities reserve.

Alexa: Is the student fee already increase aside from the $20. Do we know this cost?

Claire: Yes, given our general consensus. Don’t know the actual amount yet.

Warren: Taking 1 million from the reserve wouldn’t alter how we finance things down the road

Schönn: Why wasn’t tis facility request handled like the rest of the facility requests?

Claire: This is a new fee request. The others were a part of the of a master plan

Sean: Will it still be a $20 increase with the other decreases we made in other places?

Claire: If we put it into the 8 scenarios, there wouldn’t be a $20 increase. The other decreases are minimal so far.

Schönn: The board has indicated in increasing tuition next year. I personally am hesitant to support in any way, an increase in the student fee. Not just for this project but in general. I think we should consider the whole student spending experience.

Claire: for the 2023-24 to 2027-28, there is a plan for renovations to Bouke. We could push on the university for conversation the HVAC renovations to Bouke. Is there interest in asking about that?

Noah: Do you know the cost of the HVAC plan? (answer unknown) I would say yes but if not, then this project should still move forward

Latisha: Where did this come from?

Claire: Student disabilities resource hearing.

Barry: It said it’s a $12 million wedge for the whole building

Claire: Personally, I think there is no harm in asking.

Noah: What does the timeline look like? Would this renovation happen after the HVAC renovation happens? I would still support it.

Claire: I don’t remember the timeline from the proposal, but I assume it is going to happen in the next couple of years.

Yidi: I support this because it will provide student disabilities. Bouke is a very old building and faces problems for students with disabilities

Claire: Are people okay with me asking about matching funding? (everyone agreed) I’m getting general support while looking for financing options and asking about HVAC funding due to its inclusion in the next facilities plan.

**Equity Fund**

Najee: There is precedent for allocative bodies being established within the student fee board to provide support for subject interest. It sets aside a specific amount of $400,000. We worked on the criteria to match with the SFB guidelines. We invested the DEI scope, funding considerations and out of class experience. The justifications were immense for the positive impact for historical underrepresented communities. We had communications with diverse caucuses and students as a whole.

Schönn: Do we have proposals within the equity fund? I think it’s a good proposal, I look forward to see how it operates.

Najee: Yes.

Warren: I am in support of the proposal. It provides accessibility and clarity. How did we arrive at the $400,000 amount?

Najee: That was through background research. There are primitive versions of this at other universities. Some projects exceeded this cost, and some hit $100,000 which is on the lower end of the scale. There could be a greater analysis of what is needed through research. I think there would be amply utilization of this.

Alexa: We expect this amount to increase?

Najee: If this passes, it will be a good sign. With university budget cut, there will be a further reliance on this for the out of class experience.

Claire: This is approximately $5 increase to the fee per semester, for context

Najee: The idea of a student fee increase is a hard one to grapple with at first. In the context of the last decade or so, either way there has been a component about it in past boards. Underrepresented students have always played a role in the student fee. I think the increase is justified even with the rising cost of Penn State

Latisha: I am in support of the equity fund. Considering the things, we have shown thus far, this alone would be a $5 increase?

Claire: Yes, approximately.

Noah: I would also express support of this. With budget cuts, units will turn to the student fee for equity or DEI funds. I also recognize for an urgent need for the things that the equity fund would fund. The need can be provided by the equity fund but outweigh the risk of the universality sending funds to the fee board.

Nora: From that list of projects, can you give tangible projects?

Najee: The most direct example would be student disability resources. The ultimate idea with those prices, those are already high cost. The outreach in itself shows it would eventually pile up. The bottom line is that the money is needed and necessary. I see the $400,000 getting exhausted in its first year

Latisha: Is there any way to prevent to not earmark the money to specific offices?

Noah: In the rubric, there is room to evaluate the cautionary. This gives students to leverage the money and combine it with university resources.

Najee: Ultimately it is to add capacity. Future fee boards will be able to direct weather or not a unit is taking advantage of it. The idea is to empower students and support them as a whole.

Claire: Are you open to having the amount reviewed? We could suggest they take a formal look next year.

Najee: 100%. Nothing like this exist anywhere which is hard for research.

Najee: Understanding how the vote for the hearing for the unit to address student poverty. I want to say 8 months of work led up to what this was. Understanding the concerns of administrative overuse is warranted but in the long term for this is immediate and could have helped students as a quicker rate.

Erin: Very similarly, I understand the concerns, our vision as a board is that we are supposed to commit ourselves to follow the processes. I’m disappointed and embarrassed as student that we didn’t allow a hearing. This new fee request followed the guidelines except for the timeline. If we are following our mission, we would dedicate any hour we have possible to following out our vision.

Schönn: I heard several times, whether or not what students need. Every proposal at this stage is important. I think we need to do a better job as a body, for the scenarios we put forward, we need to review them, so students aren’t prohibited to coming to Penn State because of the costs. Every project we received shouldn’t be funded as a whole and we should meet about how these prices can be reduces. Those student increases are going to add up.

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

*L. Franklin: No report*

* 1. **Environmental Sustainability**

*N. Van Horn: No report*

* 1. **Standardization**

*S. Franklin: No update*

* 1. **Communication**

*N. Robertson: No update*

* 1. **Zero-Waste**

*Nora: No report*

* 1. **Equity Fund**

*Najee: No report*

1. **Chair Report**

*C. Kelling: Timing. We have a meeting to 8-10 this Friday and I am guessing we need more time. 8-10 am on Monday March 28, and 8-10 on Tuesday March 29? 12-2 p.m. on Sunday? Try to finish voting from 12-2 on Sunday but if it is not finished, we will meet 8-10 am on Monday*

1. **UPAC Chair Report**

*Alexa: No report*

1. **Communications Intern Report**

*Kate: No report.*

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

*Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m*