



PennState

Student Fee Board

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 10/21/22

Topic: Public Meeting

Present:

- **Voting members:** Lawrence Miller, Xiaoru (Tony) Shi, Jada Quinland, Noah Robertson, Brian Johnson, Conor Kelly, Ava Philips, Najee Rodriguez, Sydney Gibbard, Dallas Zebrowski, Cierra Chandler
- **Nonvoting members:** Alexa Clayton, Zander Golden, Jolinda Wilson, Barry Bram

Absent:

- **Voting members:** Yidi Wang

Agenda:

I. Call to Order and Opening Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 8:01 a.m.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

Motioned, seconded.

III. Adoption of the Minutes (October 14, 2022)

Motioned, seconded.

IV. Public Comment

V. Old Business

VI. New Business

VII. Topics of Discussion

A. Financial Overview of the Fee Board

Jolinda: During the meetings, I think it would be important information to cover the financial overview. When you start to think about how much money you'll allocate, you're using estimates, based on enrollment. From my standpoint, my background - I'm the financial liaison to the board, technically I'm a co-chair. But I'm still really in that financial role, trying to administer the finances. I'm working with the budget office, and the money coming to Student Affairs for distribution. The Fall/Spring allocation is being paid in with tuition funds throughout the summer and spring. The budget office is who distributes the money, to Student Affairs and the Controller's Office. Last year, they came in a couple times to talk about the facilities project. They hold the debt reserves and facilities reserves, stockpiling money. Otherwise, you don't have much communication with them. On Student Affairs, their job is to receive the money and transfer to the units you've awarded it to per the schedule. On my side, the money comes in, and I send it out. The budget office distributes the funds, when they have it to distribute for all office areas. The funds have been distributed to Student Affairs last week. As subject matter experts, you may hear that some offices haven't received their allocations. They are correct, and the offices will receive notifications when they receive the funds. It is one full year for the summer allocations before they are distributed. The 2022 summer allocation is distributed during the summer of 2023. Looking at year-end numbers, it is always a little distorted because of the timing.

This is the 2022-2023 allocation, the Controller's Office side of things. If we don't know where money is supposed to land, that's what also goes into the Controller's Office - \$10M is going there this year. With summer funds, a little over \$15M is going to be distributed toward Student Affairs. You're distributing over \$25M between Student Affairs and the Controller's Office.

Just because funds haven't been distributed, doesn't mean they can't start spending the money. Some units do get worried as they have costs early in the fall. They may come in at a deficit. At the end of the fiscal year (June 2022) is when they determine if they have spent all the funds. They can either carry forward, or return to the Board. Most carry it forward. If they aren't in a position to spend the money, then they have to return the unused funds. Never in the history of this board has this been an issue, until COVID. This is because of UPUA, which could not allocate all of their funds. So \$4.5M came back. My stewardship is the opportunity to reconcile.

As I said before, if you start allocating funds, you base it on enrollment. But the Budget Office gives a base allocation at the beginning of the year, funds they know they will collect. Toward the Spring, they determine what was actually collected, called a True Up - year-end budget allocation. Technically, if it was overestimated, the money would be pulled back. That has not happened during my tenure.

They do the true-up, and a tack back / give based on enrollment numbers. But from a Student Affairs standpoint, COVID has only been a time where carry-forward was significant. Carry-forward is not appropriate for distribution, when it is one-time only. At some point, we look at year-end balances, and may elect to transfer to the Controller's Office. Currently, we're calculating that balance as the carry-forward is getting too high in the Student Affairs Office. We'll maintain and reconcile those balances. I'm here to answer questions about the financial issues that may come up for you as subject matter experts. I can work with directors occasionally, and I am a resource when you have issues of administrative or financial issues. I'll answer any questions, if you have any.

Lawrence: The carry forward is getting too big in the Student Affairs pot, what's going to happen to those funds?

Jolinda: It's going to be a transfer over to the Controller's Office. It would increase your facilities reserve, as you have much jurisdiction over those reserves. That is probably the easiest place that gives most latitude for how you want to spend it.

There was a question about how we can raise student hourly wages. You have money sitting in your funds, and it's a combination between numbers being higher than expected, that did allow you to up the wages.

B. Internal Development Changes

1. Operating Guidelines Changes

a) Committee Definitions

b) Public Comment Duration

Lawrence: We will vote on these changes next week. First up is language for the communications committee: "Update UPSFB's social media channels and website, maintain working relationships with all relevant media sources and outlets, serve as primary contact for these media outlets, and manage the UPSFB's website to ensure transparency, and ease of use." I would also add language about working with the Director of Communications.

For ID, "This committee proposes and drafts the change of language to the handbook and operating guidelines based on initiatives from the members of UPSFB that is readable, in a transparent manner."

Barry: Add drafts and proposes "recommendations."

Lawrence: For Equity committee, "...responsible for reviewing initial applications for the Equity Fund and making a recommendation on hearings to the UPSFB."

When you add "recommendations" and "Director of Communications," it will be ready to put into the operating guidelines.

For public comment language, if any student has a public comment, they will have a maximum of 2 minutes to speak. If they wish to represent an organization, they should contact UPSFB via email to confirm upcoming comment, with a maximum of 5 minutes. If members of UPSFB choose to respond to the public comment, the commenter has 1 minute to rebut.

Are our meetings open to the public or just the student body?

Zander: Clarification, if we can't verify they aren't from the organization, then we will allot them the 2 minutes, instead of the 5 minutes.

Tony: I think at least the student body.

Barry: I've always assumed, we've always invited offices in during hearings. I consider that to be public as well. I don't know if it's members of Penn State.

Jolinda: The media used to come in as well.

Lawrence: Therefore, we can change "student" to "any individual" - so this would include any offices. This will stay with the handbook. We'll be good to vote on those changes next week.

C. Viewpoint Neutrality

D. Possible Addition to Section 8.1: LIMITATIONS OF FEE USE

E. Standing Allocation Stuff

VIII. Committee Chair Reports

A. Communications

Sydney: I wanted to set up a weekly meeting with the committee.

B. Environment Sustainability Fund

Noah: Did we change UPAC chair voting rights or skip over public comment?

Tony: We haven't proposed on that yet, but we will put that on the agenda next week.

Noah: We are in contact with HSSC and Eco Reps. wanted to present ESF with those orgnaizations, hoping to bring students into the loop. We haven't heard back from offices, but currently in the process of ESF.

C. Equity Fund

Najee: Penn State article posted applications to the equity fund. Planning a meeting with Brian Pachowski, separate from the interim director. We have conveyed the application to Housing and Food Services, which will be exploring the LiveOn grant, and possibly expanding that to the 2+2 students. I'll be planning a committee meeting sometime next week to go over list of outreach, which has included most of the caucuses. Dr. Whitehurst has offered the opportunity to attend one of the equity units, that was one of the most effective things we did last year, which gave exposure to Student Disability Resources.

Lawrence: Have you or Noah received any applications yet?

Najee: I can get back to you on that.

D. Internal Development

Tony: We had a meeting last week. I plan to set Sunday 2-3 pm as the recurring meeting time. I plan to have one meeting this Sunday to draft language on UPAC representative.

IX. Subject Matter Reports

A. Sydney

Sydney: I had another meeting yesterday with Andrea and Dr. Kraut from UHS. We talked about the health fee and how that fits into the student fee. We talked how we'll work collaboratively

with the office that worked with where tuition goes. It's likely that tuition and student fee will contribute to the health fee. Really thinking holistically. We talked about setting up a meeting with Dallas, Jolinda, and Barry because there are a lot of moving parts, but we wanted to set up a meeting to talk about the new request. I plan to also conduct outreach with other Big10 schools to benchmark their health fees vs. other revenue services. We're most closely linked to Ohio State, which also doesn't charge a health fee, specifically for University Health Services. All other Big10 schools charge \$250-900. We talked about being realistic about what we're asking for the SFB. Talked about the incremental increases.

I want to talk with the other Student Fee Boards from these colleges, determine how much involvement from administration. As if we implement this fee, this will heavily affect students' health decisions, what insurance they choose.

Bruce Kraut, director of UHS, and potentially other members. They were thinking of coming in to do a presentation to get feedback on potential different basic services, and to glean what student perceptions are of UHS. A big question is, if they offer basic services, does UHS have the capacity to offer that to all students? That's something to keep in mind. We also talked about doing focus groups. I could also help out from the UPUA perspective of A,B,C options. There is a potential for the fee to cover co-pays or basic needs. The problem with co-pays is that some students don't have health insurance. Are we incentivizing some students to not pay for health insurance. In order for them to commit to an idea, they want to have a sense of how the Fee Board is feeling about this. But there are definitely ranges, and I think it is important for SFB is talk about that. We would not be looking at a \$250 health fee in the first year.

Lawrence: I would like them to come to speak with us.

Zander: How much do you think it would raise the student fee by?

Sydney: It is still working, but \$35 would probably be the minimum. This sounds like a big increase, but hopefully, students feel a 1:1 impact on them. But this is a ballpark to start from.

Najee: Do you want to gauge how people feel about it?

Sydney: I am curious too. \$35 is a lot, but it's an entirely new benefit for them. I think it's important to talk about now vs. when they come in.

One other thing we did talk about as well is, if SFB has buy-in for a certain amount, we could use that as leverage. Looking at \$35, it's leverage for UHS to prioritize health and wellness for next year.

Brian: What kind of services would be offered?

Sydney: Different Big10 schools offer different things. Considerations are an annual check-up, potential tests like lab work, common illnesses that you get prescriptions for. The problem with that is that's what students are mostly going to UHS for - temporary illness. UHS needs to determine if they have the capacity for these more common illnesses.

Alexa: Would this be a new fee request this year?

Lawrence: This would be another new fee request.

Najee: I'm in support of it to an extent. There would be a balance, given this fee request coming in. It's important to have health-based equity. Most Big10 does that, but this may alleviate health inequities that exist in the future.

Brian: I'm not necessarily in the same position as Najee. I think something like this needs to take more consideration. I think it's great to talk about the idea of access to healthcare. But there's no doubt it will become taxing on student dollars.

Dallas: Point of inquiry: what other options are available to students in the same price range? If the \$35 falls through, what is the back-up option for students, dealing with continued health inequity?

Lawrence: The university has at least a couple healthcare plans. It's pretty inclusive, but expensive.

Brian: Around \$300.

Lawrence: A lot is pushed toward the student account, like STI testing.

Najee: Specific doctors are contracted, within certain miles, for example. Those are months-long wait and some are dental-long wait. It showcases the inequities for Commonwealth students and out-of-state students. Those students are cut off from services when they come here.

Natasha, the student service advocate, discussed with me the level of underinsured students 600, those that didn't fill out the insurance form was around 4,000.

Jolinda: I thought the level of underinsured is 13%

Najee: I think personally, with underrepresented communities, there is a tendency that they don't use these services.

Alexa: One things I'm hesitant about is putting potentially a \$35 increase on something that is a one-time expense, as it's currently a new fee request. What is the process of becoming a standing allocation?

Lawrence: They need to submit a new fee request for a year, then the next year, they don't have to submit a new fee request.

Alexa: The pilot program wouldn't count for UHS?

Lawrence: The pilot program for UHS was an exception, stated submit a new fee request next year based on findings from current year.

I do understand the exigence of healthcare inequities. But before I make more judgments, I think we need to get more information of where are they going to get alternative funding - before Student Fee puts more money down.

Sydney: If they put down basic needs or copays, this will not apply to all students. We did talk about preventative education and services - alcohol information, developing healthy eating habits. A huge investment in students is long-term, which goes with preventative measures.

As far as having numbers, they have a spreadsheet that talks about funding from UHS, the health fee, revenue services, and what the health fee is for other Big 10 services. They're also looking into the decisions and who makes those decisions - to give us more of a sense of the data.

Najee: If they're asking for this, they need this to supplement what the UHS has been operating. So I would ask the SFB should utilize the student perspective through the MOA.

B. Yidi

Lawrence: Last year, they requested two new positions. The new director has done a great job, holding a meeting with 280 members of the audience. They worked with the police force, involved the perspectives of students. For future insight, CAPS need space, currently 2 on, 1 off

campus, and therapists spend much on transportation. In the future, Natalie also thinking about working with Commonwealth to gain more POC therapists. A side note is that due to concerns of private information, therapists needs to have sessions with students in person. CAPS does have virtual sessions, but therapists there aren't aware of Penn State community. This is through a third-party.

X. Chair Report

Lawrence: For subject matter experts, make sure to reach out to your people, especially OGEEP, Lion's Pantry, Student Disability Services, and Sustainability Institute. You've all reached out to these people?

Noah, Najee, Yidi, reach out to these people. In the SME folder, there are the contacts as these were the new fee requests from last year. Tell them to sign up quicker. Not everyone has signed up yet. This is so I can open up a new Calendly for the equity requests and new fee requests. Implore the units to sign up earlier rather than later. They do not need to have all their materials prepared.

For Monday, there are three groups - Uncensored America, Together We Are, and another group. One of the things I would like to do is, I would like for us to submit a statement, in relation to Monday's event. While we are viewpoint neutral in actions, we don't have to be so in our words. UPAC is not able to do so, but we are.

Sydney: From UPUA side of things, we did talk to Caucus leaders. We did want to release a statement originally, but they felt like releasing a statement would be giving Gavin a higher platform. UPUA did decide not to release a statement for those reasons.

Brian: I think it's important to realize what him coming here is about. What Uncensored America members explained is that their message is trying to promote the idea that you only gauge one perspective. When Uncensored America brings people to campus, the idea is that an individual

largely can be censored. I think Gavin is coming for a comedy show. You have to realize this is fueling the dark comedy this group is promoting.

Najee: I think it might make sense as we are the parent source of the funding. I think it would be important to reference the Supreme Court case, and why the student fee has to be spent in the way it is. I think it would be good to leverage that on Penn State Today, reaffirming the Student Fee's parameters, while also denouncing the event. But it depends on what everyone thinks.

Zander: I think explaining why this event is happening is appropriate.

Jada: There's only a level of control we have. I think we should do a statement, but the language is important. I don't think we should put out wording that further questions administration. The meeting we had with Dr. Joan was pretty enlightening. If it comes from a student group, it would more put the fire down a bit. Coming from faculty, it is harder to follow. GPSA did submit two statements, one passed, reassuring the graduate body that this is not what we want but we don't have much of a say. There's a big push and pull between what the administration is committed to.

Lawrence: Dr. Johanne Donovan's expertise is online extremism and disinformation campaigns. She gave a lecture on Tuesday, and backed up what the administration has been saying. I am personally in favor of submitting a letter. I think not saying anything is a more dissatisfying conclusion for students that feel this person hurts their community. I'd rather this letter goes out by Monday - basically along the lines that we denounce this event, we understand the frustration, here's what we're doing to change that, here's what students can do. Administration can only do so much because, legally, they're bound.

Jada: I think we should do this after the event, when things calm down. It would be more of a moving on language. Let the students know they can propose something too.

Zander: I agree, and if we do release it before, add language of peaceful protests.

Lawrence: Also explaining the Together We Are event.

Brian: I really like that idea.

Lawrence: Raise of hands - releasing after the event?

Majority.

Noah: When you say action steps, what are you referring to?

Lawrence: Around viewpoint neutrality. To add language that does not step on toes of free speech to how we can limit these events in the future. Also adding what students can do. Any event for the incitement of general unrest and a potential to incite high amount of unrest, then we will not fund.

Jada: Dr. Joan also suggested if we show that free speech is clashing with DEIB and safety policies, we can leverage that, so that the line is more easily drawn.

Brian: There could be cover-ups of what organizations can claim. The second part of the wording, "potential to harm," that could be left up to interpretation. "Where there's potential for" would be better wording.

Noah: I would tend to agree with that - focusing on consequences is a little ambiguous. I would be against language similar to the example you gave. That's more applicable to general organizations. It's hard to say, how do we define what will result in violence. It still comes down to free speech, especially when they market these events as a comedy show.

Lawrence: It does, and I'll look up the language.

Brian: There is precedent for that. Didn't the university fully restrict someone in 2017?

Lawrence: Also someone in 2020.

Jada: How do we feel about part about DEIB and free speech clash?

Alexa: Even in UPAC handbook, we do have a statement that is a DEI statement, and we still allocated toward that event. Unless the university changes their stance, then we can't change the way we fund.

Lawrence: Which is fair. It's not UPAC's job, it's ours.

Tony: I did see in University's statement is that Uncensored America is a recognized student organization. So how did they get recognized in the first place?

Barry: There are protocols that any student organization has to go through. There are precedents Hughey vs. James that requires even here viewpoint neutrality.

Zander: Don't student organizations need someone who works for the school a faculty sponsor?

Brian: OrgCentral doesn't say anything.

Barry: Just like with any other student organization, faculty advisors can hide their identities. There is also a difference between sponsors and advisors.

Lawrence: Since the majority wants to release a statement after Monday, I would want to release on Tuesday. I will draft a letter by Sunday, and I will send in the Teams chat to get approval or denial.

Noah: On the content, if we're releasing after, are we still condemning the event that has already occurred?

Brian: I think it's more so the way you phrase it in the past tense. You could still make it work. I think the time placement is more important.

Cierra: I think Jada phrased it best: "moving forward." Also adding actionable things we could do. I think Lawrence proposed policy changes to the handbook. My question is, is that still possible? If we instill hope but cannot actually implement those changes, then that would be ineffective.

Barry: Even though this is a group of students, this is an arm of the administration. Any language does have to be approved by the university. There's nothing wrong with exploring these processes. But it might be worth it inviting people who can approve to discussions.

Noah: Yes, we should explore DEIB and adding that to the handbook. Being able to contest events that may be limited by those changes. One thing that still stands out to me is that, while I understand UPAC funds things on their own guidelines, even if we have those initiatives, there's still not a way to contest funding decisions on the grounds of our interpretation of the handbook. It would be worth it to expand UPAC committee abilities on grounds of interpretation of our handbook. But any student outside of UPAC should be able to file some sort of appeal process. The only person that would be able to appeal is Uncensored America, and that would be if they didn't receive all their funding.

Alexa: But that is on the basis that students know UPAC protocols better than UPAC members.

Lawrence: I think one of the hallmarks of the free union is the ability to think you are right. However, this is a lot of work. UPAC does upwards of 500 student organizations a year. That has the potential to be 30-40 appealing at a time.

Noah: Talking about Fee Board and UPAC policy, most wouldn't know how to go about the appeals process. I don't think we would get overwhelmed.

Alexa: I spoke to Barry about the comment from last week. And the administration would not let this happen anyway.

Barry: The UPAC handbook is based off the Fee Board handbook. You can't institute these changes without understanding the long-term implications. There are process changes to address some of the concerns this fee board has. These should be done in conjunction with administration and UPAC.

Jada: I agree with Cierra. Thinking about DEIB, it's not a law, not guaranteed. I still want to depend on the administration's commitment to DEIB. Maybe we could send something out of how we don't support this event. Then send a separate message on what we can do in the future later.

Noah: Even if these speakers can't be uninvited, we could use this moment as a catalyst to make changes - allowing students to contest UPAC decisions. Expanding UPAC appeals.

Lawrence: If we extended the time, we might have more say over appeals process. "After further review, this does not go with our policies." I do agree that this could be the reason to actually get things done this year.

With that, I will draft two letters - one is denouncing the event and the second is one moving forward. I will have these finished by Sunday. Please approve or deny by Sunday night.

Noah: We should also refrain talking about the protest, given the controversy there.

Lawrence: I'll make a note to stay safe. The one on moving forward should go out by Tuesday.

If you go on Monday, please stay safe, but also keep your ears open. Listen to what students believe about this matter. We'll continue with that conversation as we move into next month.

XI. UPAC Chair Report

Alexa: UPAC funded some mini-programming related to the "Together We Are" event. If anyone chooses to protest, I strongly encourage they do it peacefully.

XII. Comments for Good of the Order

Jada: When we do do this statement, I'm asking us to acknowledge our role and privilege. At the end of the day, if you're not a part of the group that isn't targeted, try to check yourself and mold what you want to see from the statement into what others are saying. Many times, being passionate makes your forget your own role in that situation.

Najee: Just so everyone is aware, I've been meeting with the Office of Student Care and Advocacy to better assess student basic needs. The same essence of what was brought up last year. The proposal is around \$2-3 from philanthropy from the Student Affairs and a co-funding. The refined nature of last year is coming back again, but more set and on-time with expectations of what the staff aims to do and what this entity will be in perpetuity. But there needs to be cautionary in terms of what needs to be happening in perpetuity. Please let me know if you have any questions to ensure we're doing this fairly and correctly. The case managers for Student Care and Advocacy are going to reach out to those students demonstrating a need from the Food and Housing Services survey. To be able to reenroll in Compass, Medicaid companies, food stamps, that saves people much money. The idea is, with basic needs centers, they assist with those cost saving measures, and student statistics back it up.

Lawrence: Please be safe on Monday. If you get any hate from any students, please forward it to me.

XIII. Closing Roll Call

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.