



## Student Fee Board

### MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 12/2/22

**Topic:** Public Meeting

#### Present:

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

#### Absent:

- **Voting members:** Jada Quinland, Noah Robertson

#### Agenda:

##### I. Call to Order and Opening Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 8:02 a.m.

##### II. Adoption of the Agenda

Motioned, seconded.

##### III. Adoption of the Minutes (November 18, 2022)

Motioned, seconded.

##### IV. Public Comment

##### V. Old Business

##### VI. New Business

##### A. Student Legal Services Hearing (8:15 - 8:45)

Lawrence: This is Kelly from Student Legal Services. It is 8:12, we'll have 15 minutes.

Kelly: I submitted the written report. Proud to present what we're working on. Consistent with last year, but there was an error in the budget, which was why the number of the budget was low last year. We had one full-time member become part-time, so that resolved itself.

Student Affairs contributes \$58,000 fringe offset, \$45,000 rent and janitorial. \$515,000 general budget, asking for \$525,000.

Name change vouchers started two years ago. Worked also to advocate to get publication waivers. Publications are an extra cost and an extra fear for many. Asking \$5,000 for this project.

Landlord tenant pilot. Doing anything new at Penn State is difficult. With this program, it was different and new, but didn't have it started into November. Working smoothly. 10 vouchers per month, and we will go through these 50 vouchers total. Typically, will be a result of a roommate conflict. About 50 students and vouchers (\$100) for next year as we don't have the data yet.

Top 3 current challenges. 1. Recruitment and retention - having difficulty. Vacant attorney position left us short of immigration services. 2. Usage of service. Civil up, criminal down. Usage patterns suggest students know about our services, but they're getting in less trouble. 3. Inflation connects with recruitment and retention.

I did cost compare. We have always been on low end at \$515,000, compared to Big10. We are really lean, using money as carefully as possible.

How we keep our SIF cost so low. Student Affairs contributions. Law school relationship, though that may stop due to recent news. Leverage free and reduced cost services (\$14,160/yr savings). Internal efficiencies - so handle more cases per attorney.

You see overall impact, usually 96% is very satisfied or satisfied. The better we serve them, the better they are able to focus on academics.

Advocacy initiatives. We sometimes see issues no other office sees. Never one size fits all in terms of what we may advocate for, to make sure it's fitting overall. 1. Mixed-gender housing issue with a national company. It was anxiety-producing for students. Worked with SLS offices across the country to produce an advocacy letter. 2. Name change search issue. Advocated for waivers of publication. 2/4 counties will now perform searches so that name changes filed in another county are not published.

Yidi: Question is about you mentioned one of current challenges of usage of service. Accessibility of SLS. What are the ways you are trying to improve accessibility? Do you have any connections with other offices?

Kelly: No one wants legal services until they need it, so the answer is complicated. Recurring stall stories and tabling so that freshmen see we are visible. For criminal, close relationships with Student Accountability Office, police carry business cards, magisterial justices have printout. We have visibility at every step of process. Civil is more complex, so we have connections with immigration office, Reslife coordinators, grad school. Different places along the line.

Lawrence: First, have you looked into services from law schools?

Kelly: Job is to provide wide-ranging services. If there is a clinic that does a better job, we refer students to that clinic instead. We do have relationships with clinics. Drop-in Tuesday's have been successful.

Lawrence: With the news happening at the law school, have you started thinking about mitigations?

Kelly: Our first thought was hiring a business lawyer. Hoping law school keeps entrepreneurship infrastructure. But so much we don't know. We won't have patent lawyer, and having that clinic is so valuable.

Cierra: I did see a comment about conflict of interest (e.g, suing university). How do you go about that?

Kelly: Still have 50 or so a year conflicts of interest in tenant pilot program. Not sure if that's solvable when a conflict of scope comes in. We try to respond as quickly as possible and let them know what their options are - general information of their situation, referrals, and they can still talk to us. Just have to stay in ethical limitations. This seems to be working smoothly. Can't always take all cases and keep law licenses.

Tony: SLS has great student advisory board. Could you give insight into operating that? Second, in regard to your vacancy, do you see the salary going up?

Kelly: I think we'll have to make tough choices salary-wise. Finding a way to trim staff to stay in range, for example. 6 turn down offers based on salary. Had to go higher.

Advisory board is super important. We are student-fee funded. Law school faculty, attorney from community, UPUA rep, GPSA rep, at-large members. Only meets twice a year, but invaluable to us, especially in terms of accessibility questions.

Zander: Have you sought funding anywhere else to compete with big law salaries?

Kelly: Immigration lawyer, we're hoping to find one. Not all SLS have an immigration lawyer. Attorneys affected less than other salaried positions. Law school, some may come to us. Finding people to work at salaries has been difficult.

We've made some donor approaches, not really grant funding. Mostly how we impact bottom line.

Conor: Reading through request, how many cases do you see throughout the entire year?

Kelly: This year, it will be 1700-1800 per year. Pandemic has been 1500 a year, and we are inching back up. Usually 1900 per year.

## **B. OGEEP Hearing (8:45-9:15)**

Lawrence: OGEEP using materials from last year, as they weren't able to start many plans and use money from last year, hiring freeze. They're looking for an extension from last year.

Stephanie: University went on a hiring freeze, though positions have been posted. So asking for an extension for current fiscal year. Two positions would be a student advocacy manager (education, student programming) and an administrative support assistant at the level F. Between two roles, bumped it down.

OGEEP's goal is to promote diversity. Recruitment and retention of underrepresented students. We actually reach and touch multiple students: international, law school, undergraduate. Scholarship with undergraduate introduces them to the graduate school and is funded for another 5 years. We provide fee waivers, Bunton-Waller scholars, professional development, and more.

Grad equity side is myself and Dr. Dinkins, and we service all of graduate education. Second side is McNair side.

Initiatives in the office. Recruitment: we make sure speakers are aware of issues underrepresented students face. Holistic review workshop for graduate admissions. STEM Open House is our signature program - speed network. Social Sciences Open House. Summer Research Opportunities Program - our McNair scholars participate and this is further open to all students across campuses.

Community and professional development, foster relationships between students and graduate students with similar affinities. Empowerment coaching, opportunities to engage with connections outside of the institution (e.g., FBI, CIA). Mental health. Connection Forum, a graduate student resource fair.

Work with Council of College Multicultural Leadership. We work collaboratively with them.

We provide students with opportunities outside of academia.

Looking on developing a series of workshops, related to our requests for funding. Establishing partnerships. Setting collaborative culture at Penn State.

Job responsibilities - first role is in charge of recruitment and retention of URM graduate students. Second role is overseeing daily operations of OGEEP.

Alexa: My first question is, when you're creating programming, what are the things you consider?

Stephanie: We consider topic, audience, and overall objectives in terms of what we want to do. Topic - ways to approach diversity education, for example. Audience - student-centered focus? Thought process, undergraduate student liaison board.

Brian: Do you see an tremendous costs that could affect allocation requests?

Stephanie: Idea is that this is only a spring board for us. These sorts are seed grant funding. I'm negotiating at times to wean us off of this. Begin to ask graduate school to transition onto permanent money.

Lawrence: RMS, do you have any plan moving forwards, where you engage more undergraduate students?

Stephanie: We mostly engage with undergraduate students. RMS funded by graduate school. No student is turned away at any point. Building programming around faculty, staff, and other students is broad reach.

Yidi: What are challenges office is facing? What can SFB help with?

Stephanie: Challenges - things move slow. Diversity hasn't been prioritized at this university.

Generating ideas and making sure we go in the right direction.

Yidi: OGEEP is targeted toward certain populations. What are ways you can help international students?

Stephanie: OGEEP services usually not limited to domestic students, with some exceptions on allocating funds. Working with Brian Pachowski, thinking about how to engage international undergraduate population. Special limitations to certain groups, concerted effort to invite them.

Yidi: Job responsibility, does that have to deal with recruitment?

Stephanie: That was from last year.

Lawrence: Student advisory panels?

Stephanie: Right. We have a student liaison board.

Tony: How do you make sure you have a diverse array of perspectives?

Stephanie: Looking at international, this is our intention, but limited with funding.

Cierra: Who funds luncheons, events?

Stephanie: Our budget. Anything professional development, I write for the funding. Also use other opportunities, like Giving Tuesday.

## **VII. Topics of Discussion**

Lawrence: Noah will be stepping down into alternate member, and Zander will be stepping into his position.

### **A. Update from Damon Sims on Sarah Thorndike**

Lawrence: Sarah Thorndike has been asking offices to do two years of budgeting, including ourselves. I am personally against that, as we would be allocating a budget until 2025.

Tony: Would there be a Fee Board next year?

Lawrence: It wouldn't make sense to have a Fee Board the following year.

Jolinda: I was in the meeting with Sarah. It was a one statement, the fee board would be recommending a rate through a fiscal rate 2025. The point is to be able to publish the amounts for students ahead of time.

Lawrence: In two years, most of use would have been graduated. There wouldn't be continuity.

Sydney: Could do two years out every year. I don't know if we have the capacity to make recommendations every two years.

Lawrence: We would have to switch to a Commonwealth fee board model, and move to more of a governing body.

Barry: It'll be interesting to reconcile what a unit might put in its second year, if it doesn't know what it's receiving from the fee board.

Sydney: I like knowing future recommendations beyond to give insight of their scaling plans. But the SFB shouldn't codify that budget into a fee. It should be an informal - this is our plans.

Lawrence: Also, what's going to happen when a board chooses to not follow recommendations?

Sydney: Also, they've decided against grouping of services.

## **VIII. Committee Chair Reports**

### **A. New Fee Request**

Dallas: Criteria for new fee request up on website and completed.

## **IX. Chair Report**

Lawrence: Want to make sure everyone knows. In our Drive, Hearing Materials, then Office Submitted Materials. Please make your offices send those in ahead of time. If you missed a meeting, we need to have a follow-up to fill you in. Please don't stop talking to your offices after their hearings.

**X. UPAC Chair Report**

Alexa: As of Monday, UPAC allocated \$2M. Last year, we spent \$2.5M by this time. So we are on track to get as close to \$4M as possible.

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

Barry: Any cuts to permanent salaried positions, need to have discussions with Damon and Sarah first. Do have the right to do that at the end of the fiscal year.

**XII. Closing Roll Call**

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.