Finance Board Meeting Minutes

 April 9th 2013

Meeting was called to order at 5:31pm.

Roll Call

Samantha Spehr

Mani Gupta

Chuka Agbaraji

Sara Kim

Gabriella Kuffour

Morgan Mayer

Dawit Yonass

Michelle Kuah

Craig Berger

Sam: Chisom and I went to the Senate meeting last night. Here are copies of the minutes and the Senate and the Finance Board have to come to a conclusion about the budget

The board went through the minutes, budget and the Constitution briefly.

Kian: I am here today because we need to put the Constitution on the ballot, which needs to be passed by majority of the students. Senate passed it last night so now I am here to talk to you guys. This amendment in effect removes the Supreme Court and all powers associated with it, and relocates it to places where it can be; there are also some housekeeping amendments. There are three primary powers of the Supreme Court, two of which were striken because they can be done by either the Finance Board or the Senate, or the Student Orgs Committee. The other gave the Election Board the power to invoke campaign restrictions and disqualifications and that is something the Election Board has been doing, but the Constitution did not reflect that. At first the Election Board Chair was to be Chair until graduation. Now that has been removed and the Election Board Chair is treated as any other officer where he can only serve for one year. The only other language change is in section 6.4, which enables students to approach Finance Board members, Senators etc., directly and question them about reconsideration and the problems they may have. The judge advocate has also been stricken.

QUESTIONS:

Craig: Can you explain reconsideration?

Kian: With the way the Supreme Court was set up was such that it compels the transfer of funds between student organisations. As of right now the policy is that the Finance Board can reopen an allocation request if it sees that it needs to. This right to reconsideration means that the SGA is always going to be responsive of their concerns.

Kian: The judicial branch of the SGA is comprised of the Supreme Court and the election board. The powers of the Supreme Court are to enable student organisations to transfer funds between each other, it could affirm or reverse the decision of the election board, impose campaign restrictions or disqualify any SGA candidate, and render any part of the bye laws and constitution invalid. The first power, any disputes between student orgs are handled by the student org committee. The Supreme Court has never had anything to do with that. The second power which was to render any part of the constitution or bye laws invalid s being stricken, because bylaws can be amended any time within the Finance Board and Senate and we didn’t want to give too much power to just one body. Constitution can only be amended by the student body after it has been placed on the ballot. The election board is staying under the judicial branch but no longer is the Supreme Court able to affirm or reverse the decisions of the election board. All election board decisions are final and they now have the power to impose campaign restrictions and disqualify candidates. The main justification for that is because the election board exists as an unbiased body. The election board consists of non SGA affiliated members and they are appointed by the president and approved by the Senate and Finance Board. The power to impeach and officer can happen by students bringing up 5% petition vote of the student body, and that will go under the Finance Board and Senate and then that can process on to remove members. Procedurally, there aren’t going to be any changes.

DISCUSSION:

Michelle: I feel like nothing will really change outside of how the SGA has been operating

Mani moved to approve, Chuka seconded

Members for-7

Opposed-0

Abstaining-0

Not present-0

The Finance Board approved the amendments of the SGA constitution to be placed on the ballot

Kian: Thank you guys. The process is not complete, now the focus is trying to get the student body to vote for and approve it. We plan to advertise and campaign a lot

The Budget

Sam: First, there have been some changes to the budget. The line item for Finance Board’s allocation pot is $230 000 instead of $210 000

Mani: Let us talk about the recruitment fund

Craig: I think it is important that you express whether or not you are for or not implementing it, as well as your critique because there are a lot of questions about it in the Senate. There are a lot of communication issues about this within SGA so it is important for you to get that cleared out.

Chisom: So yesterday Sam and I went to the Senate to talk about the food fund in the budget. I believe there was already a preconceived judgement even before we got there about it. I am very open to the way this is handled but at the end of the day it is all in the interest of the student orgs and I feel we are the ones who know because we are the ones who have been faced with allocation requests. Just because the Senate is uncomfortable with it doesn’t mean we should be uncomfortable about it. Again, I am trying not to be biased about this but at the end of the day, we should pay attention to whether this benefits the student body.

Sam: I want this to be a productive conversation not a conversation focused on Senate against Finance Board, because at the end of the day it is all in the interest of the student body.

Morgan: Did the Senate bring up their reasons for why this will restrict the next Finance Board?

Sam: There were a lot of concerns brought up in Senate, the main point was that they thought they were imposing decisions on the Finance Board next year.

Kian: Another big one is why it has to be a line item in the budget. What will be the difference between just adding another $10000 to the Finance Board pot, and putting it as a separate line item in the budget

Sara: It looks like from the minutes of the Senate they were reiterating what I said last week about defining what a recruitment event is. I think as a board, we should think about what our definition of what a recruitment event is

Sam: I am going to list out the concerns of the Senate and we can discuss them one by one.

The first one is the definition of a recruitment event and why it is a separate line item in the budget.

Mani: I am kind of not for it being a separate line item, so I would be for it being under the Finance Board pot maybe as a sub-line item

Michelle: I really don’t see us creating a message to organizations that this is your only opportunity to recruit if this is set as a separate line item. I think it is the Finance Board prioritizing, and letting organisations know that they understand their concerns and know it is difficult to recruit without food. Organisations need some form of assistance to maintain general body members. For me this is necessary to have just from the feedback we have had this year. 100 of organisations go through similar problems of recruiting and retaining members. Yes we can define recruitment in different ways, but at the end of the day, recruitment is recruitment. To me this money is a way of telling organisations that this is a way to help you and I don’t think it is imposing any thing on next year’s Finance Board. I think we should be taking our experiences from serving on the board this year to shape answers to the problems that orgs face. Unless someone can find a better solution, I don’t see this as any different as our attempt from two years ago for funding one pizza recruitment event. The only difference is that we are more careful about the way we are spending the money

Kian: So playing devils advocate, what happens if next years Finance Board decides that they don’t think food is essential in recruitment and that the tshirt fund, and the 1000 free copies are enough SGA support

Chisom: From that point, we should first look at the reason why we first implemented the food fund. It is because we will love to see recruitment but don’t want to tap into the general pot. We made it a separate line item because of that. I don’t think a rational human being will refuse to allocate this money to the student organization if there is money available and your priority is to help student organization. As a specific example, when I came in as treasurer, there was a precedent that the treasurer has to allocate the tshirt fund, I could have said I don’t want to do it because I don’t believe in it, but because I believe it is necessary to help orgs grow and develop, I did it . The money was available to me, and set aside for the t shirt fund, so I had no reason to say I wouldn’t allocate it because I don’t believe in it, and that is the same way I see this fund working.

I really don’t see them not going through with this

Sam: The Finance Board has agreed to make it a sub line item of the allocation pot so that if they chose not to use it for recruitment, they could still spend it at their own discretion

Mani: They can still make their decision whether they are for funding recruitment so nothing is imposed on them

Sara: What my main confusion is the difference between a regular allocation request and a recruitment request because I see recruitment elements in all allocation requests. And are student orgs guaranteed funding for recruitments.

Sam: It will be handled like the green fund, so if they come to the Finance Board and the Finance Board chooses to approve it, that money will come out of this pot

Sara: With that being said, if they are all guaranteed funding I would see this being better under the treasurer because I don’t see the role of the Finance Board in this process

Morgan: I don’t see this restricting next year’s Finance Board but if it that much of a concern can we make it some sort of stipulation so if next year’s board choses not to fund it then it roll back at the end of the year

Sam: That is why we are making it a sub division of the general pot so that wont be necessary

Sara: For my understanding this year’s Finance Board can suggest precedents to next years board but they don’t have to implement it. There are going to be new sets of representative, new fyas,

Michelle: The way I see it, if next year’s board wants to add something to the budget when they come in, they cant because the budget has already been approved. Ultimately they dictate where that money goes, but we are presenting it as an option because this year it wasn’t an option. Last year not all recruitment events were passed we did deny some recruitment events after they went through discussion and questions. That is why I feel like it should stay under the Finance Board because it has to go through that process

Kian: Back to the main question of why it is a line item, what do you anticipate the Finance Board doing when they have to chose between the recruitment event, and a conference. Would you anticipate the Finance Board going into the $10000 recruitment fund

Michelle: We see a lot of requests that have the same dollar amount but not necessarily the have the same components. I think that when you weigh the benefits of on campus vs off campus events, then the Finance Board have been inclined to fund on campus event because the overall impact is not that huge. When we talk about recruitment, we talk about building organization. I have been a part of orgs where literally the whole general member body, was the whole e board because you only need five members to have an org and that isn’t hard to attain. What is hard to attain, is getting and retaining members. To me this is our way of supporting orgs in member retention. It is a very small way, but we will be able to see the impact almost immediately

Kian: Doesn’t that bring up the assumption that the next year’s Finance Board values recruitment events over off campus conferences or events. Just because it is a priority of this years board does not mean it will be for the next board

Michelle: They will need justification before making any decision

Morgan: This year we were for taking events case by case and the last meeting when we had the last pot of money left, was the only time we had to prioritize and pick events.

Sara: I personally don’t take recruitment events as priority. Perfect example is our last meeting when we had rockets and more but then we had a tabled org and the board had come to a consensus that they liked their event. We really saw their event could improve campus life and even though it wasn’t a recruitment event like rockets a more, we funded it

Mani: I don’t see the next board being restricted at all is because they can decide what they want to use the money for if they decide not to use it for recruitment

Kian: I just wanted to know how can you guys assure that the next Finance Board will prioritize recruitment events, and if they chose not to , and can spend that money at their own discretion, what is the benefit of putting it there in the first place

Michelle: I recently was asked what role SGA plays in supporting organization. Other than my role in sitting on CIC and talking to new organisations, I cant think of anything else that SGA does. With this fund, this is a way of SGA telling organisations that we support them as a whole and we are not waiting for them to reach out. This is a way to help them get started and sustain members. This is not just us advising the new board from previous year’s experience, this is us as an organization, contributing our culture and continuing the way that things play out in the Finance Board over the years. This is a message to the student body, and is long overdue.

Dawit: I think the best way is to put it as line item and let the new board members know that it is meant for recruitment, and that we hope they spend it that way, but it is to their own discretion. There will always be some sort of uncertainty and there is no way to be sure

Morgan: I think we as a board saw a problem that it was an issue for orgs to recruit and retain members and this is our way of saying that we support them . If it were put into the general pot, its almost like throwing money at a problem. I understand the point concern about the point of it being a separate line item if it can roll back anyway and I agree, but I think it is important that we address to them that it is necessary and this is our way of helping orgs

Craig: I think there are complications in making it a separate line item and my concern is it’s a careful discussion that you have to have. The complication is before you had this as a separate line item, your definition of what a recruitment event mattered, but only mattered for you precedent. Now, it being a separate line item, you have to come to a determination that it is a recruitment event. My concern is what is on your plate

Kian: When I was on the Finance Board, we had $190 000. This years board has $10000 more. Next year’s board is going to have $40000 more. The thing that I struggle with, is I don’t think this $10000 is going to enable the Finance Board to fund recruitment events. Philosophically, we want to show the orgs that we support them, but if for some reason next years board decided not to fund recruitment events, it looks a lot worse to have made such a huge gesture and put $10000 in the budget and the next Finance Board decides its not important. Every organization can be a recruitment event and I don’t think a specific recruitment event is more important than any other event. We need to have a very good explanation for the great increase in the Finance Board pot, and a very good method of ensuring that next years Finance Board will follow through. While I am not sure that it being on the budget will do any good, I don’t believe it will do any harm.

Sara: I don’t think adding the $10000 to the Finance Board pot will be throwing money at the problem, because the money can be used to allocate other events that could potentially improve life on campus. I want to ask the previous members of the board what differentiates recruitment from other events

Sam: It was differentiated based on how the organization presented it and its purpose was specifically for recruitment and retention

Kaylesh: I do see this different from the green pot fund. This is something that we can use to offset the cost of using compostable utensils.

Chisom: If we support sustainability and green events why cant we put that money in the general pot

Kian: To have an event be sustainable is a luxury. If it was to be left in the pot, the Finance Board will have to spend extra money to fund that compostable items. The green fund is to fund that difference.

Michelle: I think in a way, this is telling orgs that we support you in having environmental friendly products at your event, but we wont support you in membership recruitment and retainment. Orgs are dying. I understand sustainability should be our priority and our goal, but I cant say I am for one thing that is compostable and at the same time not balance it with the bulk and benefit of our student body.

Chisom: The population of students are growing, things are getting more expensive, prices are going up and there is a great need for the pot of money to increase to meet the organisations need. When you give organisations recruitment events, you are giving them the opportunity to grow. How can you give organisations a green event when there are no organisations and org members to give those green event to

Kian: The difference is between the two is that if the green fund is not used, it will not go into the Finance Board’s pot

Chuka: I share a lot of sentiments with Michelle. From what I experienced this year the demand has always been there for these event and the demand is going to grow.

Morgan: What I meant by my previous statement by throwing money at the problem is that recruitment events will have a hard time getting funded and the problems that some of us recognize will not be addressed.

Sam: So I am going to go round, and everyone will say whether or not for it being a separate line item, and the reasoning behind it

Mani: I am for it, because I will like to encourage recruitment events and the student orgs

Chuka: I am for it also. There is a symmetry for the demand and the demand will always be there. This is a way of supporting the demand and the student orgs

Morgan: I am for it being a separate line item because I have seen the same problems as Chisom has said. I think making it a separate line item will be more effective in addressing the problem.

Chisom: I support it, and my reasoning is to encourage student organisations to help them start from nothing. I see this as the same way the green fund and t shirt works. If it is in the pot, there will be less incentive to carry through with it and use it as the food support for recruitment

Michelle: I am for it being a separate line item as well because at this time, because in the course of six months this year, we have approved 30 new organization. There is no clear message to send out to student orgs that we are taking visible steps to address their concern and demand for recruitment. I don’t think at this point, we are doing enough to support student organisations. I don’t see the justification of prioritizing green fund for supporting large events when many organisations will not survive long enough, to have those events. I think it is necessary to have a cap also because it maintains consistency at least in regards to food. I strongly feel we should make it a separate line item to strongly emphasis how we feel and during our transition meeting with next year’s board, we can let them know the strong reasoning behind us putting it as a separate line item on the budget.

Dawit: I am for it being a separate line item. I understand the concern for them not following through it but I don’t think they will flat out ignore our precedent. I think the pros out weigh the cons

Sara: I still think this should be under the treasurer, because I don’t think there is a reason to deny other orgs for their recruitment event, that is why it makes more sense to be under one body. I think it should be under the pot because I don’t really see fruitfulness in putting it as a line item knowing we have to go into the pot anyway to full the entirety of their recruitment event.

Sam: I am for it being a separate line item for a lot of reasons that Michelle mentioned. I have seen a demand for this in the past two years and that demand is going to increase each year. I think it being a separate line item and a cap is to tell organisations that this is how much money we are willing to commit. If it is under the pot, and the board decides they want to fund recruitment events, imagine what will have if all 250 orgs came asking for money to fund recruitment events, that is our entire pot. To me there is a flood get issue. Last year after we had our reflection meeting, we realized that funding recruitment got out of hand.

Morgan: I think the way to avoid the restriction that the Senate is talking about is to leave the logistics and how the money is split to next years board.

Michelle: I think the presence of the advisor is also relevant because they had sat on the board for multiple years and they can advice the new members the reasoning behind everything

Sam: The Senate also feels that we will be boxing in the next years board by making the limit $10,000.00

Craig: For me, that is what I am struggling with. I don’t understand how hard it will be hard to put it under the pot, and have the Finance Board separate the amount for recruitment fund aside and set the rest for allocating student organisations, without putting it as a separate line item on the budget.

Michelle: I don’t see it as necessary and tangible guidance. I see it as a way of emphasizing the reason why we put it as a line item instead of just adding it to the pot

Sam: The term ‘boxing in’ has a negative connotation, but overall I think it is good to have a finite limit, because it gives them a budget to work with. I think we should have it as a sub-line.

Michelle: the sub line is what I see as meeting Senate halfway. There is flexibility with working with a sub line item than working with a separate line item

Chisom: I think we have to compromise, but we can only compromise so much. The Senate does have to meet us halfway

Sam: They also have an issue with it affecting projections under the treasurer

Chisom: I honestly don’t see this affecting the projections in any way

Craig: I think the problem with the Senate is they want to know the process of how this works and they are not comfortable funding something that has not been figured out especially if it is new

Michelle: I don’t think we can possibly predict every single outcome and what we are trying to put is a framework for the next Finance Board to work with.

Mani: If we dictate how the exact system will work, then we will be restricting the next Finance Board. That is why we leave it open, so they can talk about how they want to work with it

Sam: I think we could advise the Finance Board what we think should happen, and let them think about the structure and process, but at the same time hypothetically suggest what we would do

Craig: The Senate also does feel like if the pot is increasing by $50000, then why is it an issue to have another money set aside for recruitment

Michelle: I think we have to justify for the increase in population, and also, prices of everything has gone up. Each year orgs learn how to make their events better and all these increases costs.

Sam: I think expanding the pot is a way of supporting new events and not just fund the same events that we have been funding

Craig: The Senate also wanted to know how the $10000 came about

Chisom: I don’t think there is some sort of bias. Just as how new the green fund is, why aren’t they questioning how that $8000 came about.

Michelle: I feel the same way as to how the green fund isn’t being asked to same questions . I think there is some bias knowing that they are based on the same concepts

Sam: it is important to realise that the green fund is similar, but different; but it’s still important to know how those numbers came about

Mani: Kaylesh wants to support the green fund, that is just the same way we want to support the food fund

Craig: i feel like a lot of people don't have faith in talking and persuading your peers. I also think Kaylesh put it in a separate route because she felt it would not be welcomed by the Finance Board.

Michelle: Also for the green fund the criteria has not been established and we are still having meetings on how to establish it yet its been incorporated into the budget. It is similar to how the food fund works because we have given the outline, but we don't think we should impose anything on next year’s board

Chisom: I feel like the green fund is restricting the activities of the next Finance Board because they don't event have access to it. What if the next Finance Board does not support sustainability, or don't agree with the green fund, but these questions were never asked about the green fund. One can argue that the green fund is discriminatory because it is targeting larger events,

Craig; That is very true. It looks like if the green fund is going to be approved then it has to be brought down to the area where the Finance Board pot is

Sam: I think we should all talk to the senators out of this meeting so I am going to pair each of you with a senator and you should talk to them and hash out any questions and concerns they may have concerning the green fund. This meeting has to be done before the next Senate meeting.

Sara: I don't think I will be good at talking to a senator because I still hold my previous sentiment about it being under the treasurer and it being under the Finance Board

Max Barnhart & Rebecca Behnke: Morgan & **Michelle**

Ganesh Mysore & Trupti Sindhi: Morgan & **Chisom**

Valerie Parks: **Sam**

Hannah Khan & Jason Sumpter: **Gabby** & Chuka

Hamza Siddiqui & Ayshah Mahmud: **Mani** & Sam

Jack Neumeier & Hayden Marshall: **Dawit** & Sam

Meeting adjourned at 9:54pm

Roll call

Samantha Spehr

Mani Gupta

Chisom Ebinama

Michelle Kuah

Chuka Agbaraji

Sara Kim

Morgan Mayer

Dawit Yonass

Gabriella Kuffour

Craig Berger