SUFAC Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2021 5:15pm

1965 Room, UWGB

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Recognition of Guests
4. Approval of Agenda
   1. Motion to approve
   2. So moved: Aidan
   3. Seconded: Brendan
   4. Motion passes
5. Approval of Minutes
   1. Motion to approve the minutes
   2. So moved: Brendan
   3. Seconded: Aidan
   4. Motion passes
6. Officer Reports
   1. Vice Chair: I have sent more emails in the past week than I ever have chasing down orgs to fix their budgets.
   2. Chair: I have been emailing people more in my life than I ever have. Budgets were due this past Sunday and we had many emails with questions. We received 72ish budgets, 28 of them will be put in front of the committee. We are trying to get everything in order to present at out next meeting. We had a reallocation request for $100 to move money from a speaking event to a food event. I am trying recruiting senators by talking in all of my classes and I started a competition with the speaker, and I am winning.
7. New Business
   1. New MESA appointee
      1. My name is Mack Gore, I am a freshman, and I am very eager to be here. MESA had an event yesterday but right now we don’t have any soon.
   2. At-Large Applicant Interviews
      1. Intro:
         1. My name is JD I use he/him pronouns. I am a junior majoring in public admin with an emphasis in public and nonprofit management. I was a senator for a year/year and a half, I worked on the environmental and sustainability and the resource and outreach committees. I was the campus cupboard president. I did a lot of hands-on work with ordering and facilitating organization. I worked on 3 budgets for SUFAC. I enjoy volunteering in my community. I work with Chartwell’s in the retail zones.
      2. Q&A
         1. Tristan: Are you able to regularly commit to meetings every Thursday.
            1. Yes I just worked out with my boss, and I have Thursdays open after 5, so I will be able to make these meetings.
         2. What’s your favorite color?
            1. Blue, but a deep blue. Microsoft word blue, maybe darker. Between johns’ jacket and Microsoft blue.
      3. Closed Discussion
         1. Brendan: He seems perfectly qualified
         2. Aidan: I’m always glad when someone shows interest in SUFAC as Riley would say
         3. Motion to approve JD as an at large member.
            1. So moved: Aidan
            2. Seconded: Brenden
            3. Motion passes: 6-0-0
   3. Viewpoint neutrality training – John
      1. This presentation is going to be a brief overview of viewpoint neutrality and a supreme court practical application and scenarios.
      2. Disclaimer: These are just general tips and information, and this is not legal advice. Contact student affairs if issues arise.
      3. Southworth v. Board
         1. The first amendment creates a right to freedom of speech. A public institution must remain viewpoint neutral when making decisions regarding fee allocation. You are not supposed to pay attention to who the group is or what they do when making decisions on budgets.
         2. Southworth staring when law students at UW Madison wanted to sue the Madison SUFAC and SGA over decisions that were made. They didn’t want their money to go to groups that they did not agree with their ideas. The first court ruled that the system was unconstitutional on the grounds that the process was not operated in a viewpoint neutral manor. Viewpoint means you never take into account the viewpoint of the group and you get that out of your mind. The court ruled that segregated fee system is constitution as long as students do not have unbridled discretion in the allocation of student funds.
            1. Unbridled discretion basically means you can do what you want.
            2. The court said as long as SUFAC has rules and follows them, then there is not unbridled discretion.
         3. Another part to the court ruling was that you have to get viewpoint neutrality training, and this allows us to continue to operate. We don’t care what kind of club it is that wants money, they are all equal in our eyes in our room. You will apply your rules exactly the same. Abstain from voting on things if you can’t keep a clear mind. Don’t abstain a lot because then we won’t hear your views are, but we do count on you to abstain when you absolutely need. You should abstain on votes or discussion you can’t keep yourself neutral on.
         4. Those guidelines we have talked about are our rules and we need to make sure we are following the rules. There may be a really good reason to break the rules, but you can’t break the rules every time. This comes up because that would be unbridled discretion.
            1. Your rules also get reviewed every year. Rules are there for a reason and you will have an opportunity to want to change some of them.
         5. Maintain checks and balances.
            1. There has to be a stated appeal process.
            2. I saw a budget get turned in late and our chair said sorry it is too late those are our rules and then showed them how to appeal if they wanted to do so.
            3. Orgs have the opportunity to appeal to the chancellor if it gets to that level.
         6. Another we should do is compare amounts to determine whether or not similar orgs are treated equally and fairly. That doesn’t mean they have the same purpose but if their requests were similar. There are little grey areas. Are people treated equally and fairly is what it will always come down to.
         7. Eligibility criteria
            1. Must be unrelated to viewpoint of group speech. You can not discriminate or base your rulings based on what the group is about.
            2. You cannot have the effect of excluding unpopular minority viewpoints.
            3. You must apply common sense and fairness when working on budgets.
      4. Scenarios
         1. Is previous budget information appropriate for the committee to discuss during the funding reviews?
            1. Harrison: The only thing that is appropriate to look at is the application and what they are currently asking and the rules.
         2. Can a committee member share their thoughts about a group’s prior activities?
            1. That has nothing to do with what they are asking for this year. Part of what Tristan says a lot is no outside information is allowed. That is one of the key things. If Aiden knows outside information and doesn’t bring it up during the discussion or application you should not bring it up because that information is not technically there. So, if you know outside information bring it up in discussion as long as it doesn’t go against viewpoint neutrality. You can ask clarifying questions. Like what is your group really about what is it that you want to do or what is the point of this fundraiser.
         3. Should Susie do anything because there is an org that goes against Joes religious beliefs. Joe always seems to vote against this group.
            1. Harrison: Isn’t that between Joe and the organization.
            2. Eliza: She should bring it up in discussion and he should abstain.
            3. John: This is outside of SUFAC, and Susie should say something to Joe about how that isn’t very viewpoint neutral, and he should abstain from voting. This is really going on outside of the meeting, so Susie should bring it up before the meeting. If Joe says no to that, Susie should go to the chair or the vice chair. The point here is that viewpoint neutrality is critical, and we need to hold ourselves to it and others as well. Having to bring it up in the meeting contaminates the discussion so we would rather have it brought up out of the meeting.
         4. An org presents a budget that has 10 events and trips. The org justifies the events are necessary. SUFAC disagrees with the number of events.
            1. Harrison: Isn’t it in the guidelines how many trips they can take.
            2. John: Yes all the guidelines have a limit on the number of events. There are rules that way you are not in a constant discussion of how many trips each group gets to go on.
         5. A jazz club is playing more often, and additional maintenance is required. They are now asking for 3 times the amount of maintenance from last year. If a fee SUFAC members disagree with the increase on the basis that they believe it is unnecessary does this create a VPN issue?
            1. John: You have no basis to judge or no way of knowing how much this is actually going to cost. If you ask the questions about how much it costs and if that number makes sense. If something doesn’t make sense about a cost of something, then you can go check with them and see if you can get more clarifying information.
         6. What if there are more funds being requested then we have to give out?
            1. We won’t ever run into that problem on that campus because we decide how much we need and then we collect that money. The seg fee could balloon to 10,000 and we would just have to get that money from students

The seg fee is $1,275 and the ends of being $7-7 and a half million. The orgs get $320,00 of that. For the orgs to expand and blow that money out of the water would be almost impossible.

* + - 1. A member is frustrated with the funding approval process policy restrictions and the ongoing concern about violating VPN. She talks with other members about quitting. What should the member do?
         1. JD: If she doesn’t see that she is a good fit then she should leave. Bring it up in a meeting when the time is right.
         2. Tristan: Bring this up when reviewing guidelines if there are problems.
         3. John: We take care of each other, and she is frustrated and maybe she is right and maybe that needs to be addressed. If there is time during announcements we can bring it up to talk about how she feels. We can somehow find a way to let her know her opinions matter.
      2. Susie is highly ethical and fair and has never made unfair decisions. She is an officer in an org requesting a budget. Does Susie’s involvement in the deliberations for funding create an issue?
         1. Yes, she probably had a hand in creating the budget and she probably won’t be able to remain unbiased. Susie should draw the line if she can’t remain viewpoint neutral. If you are an officer but you didn’t submit the budget it might be a different story. You can abstain from the vote.

In previous years they had SUFAC members from the org leave the room, should we do that as well or should we just abstain. Logistically then how would we excuse ourselves if we were virtual.

You can shut off the audio or something. Excuse yourself if you don’t thing you can be neutral.

* + - 1. A new club only has 15 members not fully established. The committee denies request because club isn’t ready or established.
         1. This is not allowed.
      2. An org wants money to go to a new tournament in New York. A group said 14 members were going to go but only 7 ends up going. You don’t get to spend all the money if not everyone you said was going is now going. If there is not as many people going to the tournament then you can not get all the money. We have someone watching the money and manages it.
      3. What if the group only spent half the budget last year but want the full amount again this year?
         1. As long as it fits the bylaws then they should get what they are asking for because last year doesn’t matter.
         2. You have to act on what is put on in front of you,
      4. 6 orgs submit late budgets and SUFAC extends it for two groups.
         1. No, not allowed there is a deadline for a reason, and we can’t break it for certain people.
      5. A funding request wants $5,000 for food but SUFAC wants to give it to them because they support the views and beliefs of this org
         1. This violates VPN because you are ignoring food cost based on the beliefs.
    1. We start off with full time equivalence. This number is the best guess with what we can come up for. We are talking about next year and who do we think is going to be here next year. You may know athletics got 1.6 million. You will hear the justifications for next year and all of this adds up to the segregated fees. There are special projects and childcare. They have $10,000 of the $16,000 that was allocated from SUFAC for childcare. Although we didn’t put money it this fund for this year. What you will vote is to release the money they already have. Same for the sustainability fund, they have the money, but they just have to ask to use it. These groups are auxiliary accounts.
    2. These budgets are really complicated. We will look at auxiliary budgets and we will hand out literature, so you know what certain phrases mean and what thing please ask questions
  1. Schedule looking forward – Tristan
     1. You are seeing a ton of budgets here but the number we are looking at $360,281.99. We are meeting with orgs to make sure what they are asking is good or that they are aware they are asking for things that violate the guidelines.
     2. We are looking at 6 orgs presenting per meeting the rest of this semester. You can see we have been debating hard with these orgs. They need to know what they are exactly presenting. No two weeks will be the same here. Hopefully by Monday we will have 6 orgs ready to preset to us. There is so much changing and coming out of covid, so a lot of these org leaders are experiencing new stuff. We won’t categorize org presentations this year for those reasons. We will send org budgets in the email before every meeting. If you can find a question for the orgs before that meeting that would be great. We will be doing this up until December 2nd. After that we will be looking at auxiliary budgets which take a little bit longer. It is Riley and I’s job to inform you of things that go against our guidelines. On D-Day we have money allocated for 2 meals and snacks.

1. Liaison and Student Government Reports
   1. Senate: We are working recruitment and manning a booth to get more people to join our organization. We have a meeting Monday with a number of guest speakers. Those would be the student government president of UWSP, Wendy Woodward, and a member of student athlete advisory council. We are talking about our legislative agenda as well.
   2. SGA Exec: We will talk about snow removal policy in two weeks at the senate meeting.
   3. Liaison: The Abilities exhibit is tonight and there is interesting information there right now, so stop by there and receive information on how people are different. This weekend we have outdoor UREC rock climbing at Devil’s Lake. Next week bingo on Tuesday night, the Phoenix Take a Break series is Wednesday. This is aimed at getting you to destress. Next Friday is the grave dancer’s ball and that is one of those long running programs and it is the campus Halloween program.
2. Announcements
   1. Tanisha: The bake sale is the 28th not the 27th if anyone wants to come get cookies
   2. Eliza: Our pumpkin carving event was Tuesday and Tristan came. We were able to recruit a lot of members. We are doing our first fellowship event and we are going to a haunted house
3. Adjournment
   1. Motion to adjourn the meeting
      1. Harrison
      2. Aidan
      3. Motion passes.