Western Washington University
Services and Activities Fee Committee Meeting: Orientation Session
Wednesday, January 25, 2017
Miller Hall 113


Guests: Rob Olson, Assistant Attorney General, Western Washington University

Absent: Bethany Drake, Nanette Jackson, Ichi Kwon, Rebecca McLean, Marya Rybalka, Steve Vanderstaay, Raquel Wilson

Members Not Yet Appointed: Faculty representative (voting member)

The meeting was called to order at 4:07pm by Tina Loudon and began with introductions of committee members and guest present.

Orientation Item: Open Public Meetings Act
Olson provided an overview of the Open Public Meetings Act and general rules pertaining to the act that committee members should be aware of in service on this committee.

Olson noted that the Open Public Meetings Act originally passed in 1971 and is an example of a “sunshine law”. “Sunshine laws” are those created with the purpose of ensuring that processes are open to the public with no secret decision making. The Public Records Act is another example of a “sunshine law”.

The Open Public Meetings Act applies to any governing board of an agency (e.g. Board of Trustees) and any organization or committee that makes decisions on behalf of that board. The S&A Fees Committee is considered applicable under this act per RCW 28B.15.045.

RCW 28B.15.041-045 covers information regarding S&A fees. These RCWs will be reviewed at a future orientation session with committee members.

GENERAL RULES

1. Open and Public: Meetings must be open and public, except for certain exceptions outlined in the Act.
2. Decision Making: Anytime the committee has a quorum making decisions or discussing a matter this constitutes a meeting which needs to be publicized and made available to the public. Emails could constitute a meeting if decisions such as approval of minutes or discussion is taking place and therefore must be avoided. Emails should be limited to one directional information sharing. Questions should be handled singly back to the chair, not as a group reply.

Olson indicated this is best handled by having the Chair send communications out to each individual rather than a group to avoid a committee member inadvertently or unknowingly hitting “reply all” and violating this act.
Advisors providing information to the board is considered information sharing, not decision making. It is the actions of the committee after the information is shared that is considered decision making.

3. **Executive Sessions:** Executive sessions are quite particularized under the statute. Consult with the Attorney General’s office to determine if something is considered a topic for executive session. In the case of executive session, the discussion is private and minutes are not kept but the decision/vote is publicly documented for the record.

4. **Meeting Schedule:** The meeting schedule must be publicized with the Washington State Code Revisor’s office. Meeting place and time have been provided to Jennifer Sloan for filing. All meeting locations must be posted for the year. Changes can be made as new schedules arise. Olson noted that a minimum of 20 days’ notice is required for notice of a change. Discussion ensued as to how to handle the notice schedule given the committee meets weekly.

5. **Special Meeting:** The Chair can call a special meeting or it can be called by the majority of committee members. All committee members must have notice in writing 24 hours in advance and the special meeting must also be publicized with local newspaper, TV or radio stations in the community. The topic(s) of the meeting must be stated and only those items may be addressed in the meeting.

6. **Emergency Meetings:** Emergency meetings may be held in the instance of major events (e.g. facilities are shut down due to weather). The Chair should contact the Attorney General’s office if needed to facilitate that type of meeting.

7. **Meeting Cancellation:** Olson recommended that decisions about the cancellation of future meetings be made at the close of a meeting so that the decision is made public and in the record. If topics need to be changed, those topics should be moved to a meeting date 20 days later and publicized.

8. **Orientation Sessions:** The question was raised as to whether orientation sessions are considered public meetings. Olson replied that they would be considered a public meeting if any type of decision making (approval of minutes, elections, etc) is taking place. Following the meeting, Olson redacted his comments at the meeting and offered the following advice: Anytime a quorum (4+) of members is present, and ANY business of the committee is being discussed, it must be noticed and minutes must be generated. This should not unduly burden meetings that are training sessions. The chair should gavel the meeting, announce for the record that the members will now engage in training, and then conduct the training. At the conclusion of training, the chair should ask if there is any further business of the committee, announce the next scheduled meeting date/time/location and gavel the meeting closed.

9. **Budget Presentations:** If asked to act on information in budget information being presented this needs to be part of the record and therefore is considered a public meeting.

10. **Change in Meeting Location:** A sign should be posted on the door with the new location.

11. **Attendees:** Any member of the public can attend these meetings. Committee can set reasonable rules about how the meeting is conducted and guests conduct themselves but cannot place conditions on people attending.

12. **Disruptions:** If a person becomes disruptive, the chair may ask them to leave, they may be removed by police, or the committee can relocate to another location and prohibit the individual from entering. The chair may also adjourn the meeting and set another date for the meeting.

13. **Proxies:** A question was raised as to whether or not a proxy is permitted if a committee member cannot be present and a quorum is required. Post meeting information from Olson indicates that proxies are not permitted. However, committee members may appear by phone or Skype.

14. **Actions Take:** Minutes need to be kept and made available to the public with a record of actions taken during the meeting. Documents must be kept as part of the record. Minutes will be posted to the S&A fee committee website.
15. **Approval of the Minutes:** Typically, meeting minutes are approved at the opening of each meeting. Olson recommended that for the concluding meeting for the year that minutes are generated and approved within the meeting.

16. **Voting:** All votes are conducted and noted on the record. No secret ballots are permitted.

17. **Rules Violations:** A committee member found in violation of the rules may be fined $100/rules violation. This fee is paid directly by the individual and actions are deemed null and void.

18. **Unfilled Appointments:** Olson advised to acknowledge unfilled positions in the minutes along with those not present.

A handout on general guidance pertaining to this act was distributed.

Next meeting: Selection of committee chair; review of timeline. A quorum will be critical at this meeting so that action items may be introduced and voted on.

Meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.