Western Washington University
Services and Activities Fee Committee Meeting: Orientation Session
Wednesday, January 12, 2018
Viking Union 462A

Present: Eric Alexander, Christopher Bianco, Brette Boesel, Steve Card, Keith Harmon, Alex LaVallee, Adam Leonard, Rebecca McLean, Jaden Moon, José Rios-Sanchez, Sara Wilson, Debbie Curry (recorder)

Guests: Rob Olson, Assistant Attorney General, Western Washington University; Casey Hayden, Assistant Director, Viking Union

Absent: Kaylie Gladwell, Ichi Kwon, Caitlin Sommers, Steve VanderStaay, Raquel Vigil

Members Not Yet Appointed: Faculty representative (voting member)

The meeting was called to order at 1:02pm by Sara Wilson, followed by introductions of committee members and guests present.

Sara thanked the committee members for volunteering and asked them to feel free to share their opinions and welcomed them to connect with her with questions or concerns at any time.

Orientation Item: Open Public Meetings Act
Rob 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.

Rob noted that the Open Public Meetings Act originally passed in 1971 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. Individuals may personally be fined $500 for not following guidelines.

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.
Rob indicated this is best handled by having the Chair send communications out to each committee member 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, and place and time have been provided to Jennifer Sloan for filing. All meeting dates, times, and locations must be posted for the year. Changes can be made as new schedules arise.

Rob noted that a minimum of 20 days’ notice is required for notice of a change. Adjustments to the originally published schedule must be made with as much notification as possible, working within the 20 days’ limitation.

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 an Emergency Meeting.

7. Meeting Cancellation: Rob recommends 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: Anytime a quorum 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 budget information being presented, the information presented 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. The committee can set reasonable rules about how the meeting is conducted and guests conduct themselves, but cannot place conditions on people attending. Sign-in sheets may be provided, however guests cannot be required to sign in.

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: Proxies are not permitted. However, committee members may appear by phone or Skype.

14. Actions Taken: Minutes must be kept and made available to the public with a record of actions taken during the meeting. Documents must be kept as part of historical record. Minutes will be posted to the S&A fee committee website. Meeting Agenda’s must be published 24 hours prior to a meeting taking place.
15. **Approval of the Minutes:** Typically, meeting minutes are approved at the opening of each meeting. It has been recommended for the final meeting of the year, 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 $500/rules violation. This fee is paid directly by the individual and actions are deemed null and void.

18. **Unfilled Appointments:** Acknowledgement of unfilled positions should be mentioned in the minutes along with those not present.

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

Sara reviewed the timeline (meeting schedule and agenda topics) noting the March 30 meeting has been scheduled during Spring break and will need to be rescheduled. More to follow on this action at the January 19 meeting.

Sara briefly discussed the budget presentations for the various areas (beginning with meeting #9). A break in the meeting schedule from February 23 to March 30 had been planned expressly to allow time for the budget presentations. Sara stated that 15 minutes would be allowed for each presentation and requested everyone be fully prepared to present by the 9th meeting.

Sara also shared that a bill to permanently decouple services and activities fees from tuition has been reintroduced in this current legislative session. We hope to know more about this bill prior to budget discussions beginning in April.

Next meeting: January 19, 2018 - Additional Orientation: Timeline for committee work; RCS’s; and committee guidelines

Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm.