University of Alberta Students' Union

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, June 26, 2017
6:00 PM
SUB 6-06

MINUTES (FC 2017-02)

2017-02/1	**INTRODUCTION**
2017-02/1a	**Call to Order**
2017-02/1b	**Approval of Agenda**
2017-02/1c	**Approval of Minutes**
2017-02/1d	**Chair's Business**
2017-02/2	**QUESTION/DISCUSSION PERIOD**
2017-02/3	**COMMITTEE BUSINESS**
2017-02/3a	PACHES moves to appoint two members of Finance Committee to the Golden Bear & Panda Legacy Fund Committee.
2017-02/4	**INFORMATION ITEMS**
2017-02/4a	FC 2017-01 Meeting Minutes See FC 2017-02.01
2017-02/5	**ADJOURNMENT**
2017-02/5a	**Next Meeting**: Monday, July 10, 2017 @ 6:00PM in SUB 6-06

University of Alberta Students' Union

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, May 29, 2017
6:00 PM
SUB 6-06

ATTENDANCE

NAME	PROXY	PRESENT
Robyn Paches (Chair)		Y
Connor Palindat		Y
James Thibaudeau		Y
Emily Howell		Y
Srosh Hassan		Y
Abigail Bridarolli		N
Habba Mahal		N
Monica Lillo		Y
Ilya Ushokov		Y
Kyle Monda		Y

MINUTES (FC 2017-00)

2017-00/1 INTRODUCTION

2017-00/1a Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM.

2017-00/1b Approval of Agenda

Hassan: I would like to add my resignation to the agenda.

Paches: We don't have to do that as a motion but just send me an email and CC Saadiq, and we'll put it as an information item on the late ads in the agenda.

Hassan: I already sent it. I feel like I should give a justification. I feel like finance unfortunately demands too much time and I know it sounds pretty wild but i'm currently re-evaluating some stuff that I did last year and some stuff that I'm looking to do this year.

Paches: From 2 years on SC, I'd never had someone come forward and say why they're leaving.

PALINDAT/LILLO MOVE to approve the agenda.
7/0/0
CARRIED

2017-00/1c **Approval of Minutes**

Paches: We'll do the minutes from the last meeting and from this meeting at the next meeting.

2017-00/1d **Chair's Business**

Paches: We're getting settled over the exec committee. Agenda items talking about awards, creation of a award, appoint people to the adjudication committee for awards, and the access fund.

2017-00/2 **QUESTION/DISCUSSION PERIOD**

2017-00/3 **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

2017-00/3a PACHES moves to appoint three members of Finance Committee to the Awards Adjudication Committee.

Paches: Every year, there's some ads around the SU. The SU gives approx 100-110K in awards to students with varying types of criteria. Some funding provided by donors, some by the SU, eg. Gateway gives awards based on journalism. As a member of finance committee and this adjudication, you're unable to apply for them due to conflict of interest. However, in the future, you'd be able to draft a top-notch application and it's also a good way to get involved on a school bases. There's a $200 honorarium, there's food at the meeting, 2-3 meetings in the fall, and most work is done on your own time. You'd do your adjudication, submit to team, and meet on contentious ones, also invitation to the awards night gala at Dinwoodie and full course meal. It's a cool experience.

?: This would start in fall?

Paches: Early in fall and wrap up in november for the awards gala. Applications are open right now so we can have as many applicants then adjudicates start.

?: So we're not eligible for the awards.

Paches: Correct, as finance committee, you're privy to info the committee has access to so it would be a conflict.

PACHES/THIBAUDEAU MOVES TO APPOINT Councillor Howell, Palindat, Lillo to the Awards Adjudication Committee.
8/0/0/ CARRIED

2017-00/3b Access Fund Fee Discussion

Paches: At the end of last year, we decided to go w/ the status quo but i didn't have any backup documentation but i'd like to float this to the committee, you guys can sit on it, process it, and then we can discuss. The access fund is part of supplementary bursary program, it's an emergency fund that's available to students who have maxed out their student loans. It's for an emergency fund, they're in a dire state, it's free money to help fund their degrees. A portion of that fund is the access fund, it's $14/term that every student pays in their tuition so it's students helping students model and you also are eligible for it. in the structure, if you opt-out, we give you a lot of warnings, if you don't pay into it then it doesn't make sense for you to benefit from that if you aren't contributing. We make it very clear to the student if they opt-out like are you sure? Currently, the fund is about 850-900K from students and then we disburse 100% of that out and collect again next year. The unfortunate thing is the way the fee is currently calculated is on a rolling 3 year avg, you take last year's fee, avg it. Back in the day, we saw it increasing exponentially then we'd over-collect then it went into reserves which are funding awards. Now we have demand increasing but our fee is staying flat. There's 4 disbursements in oct, dec, jan, and march. Last year, we had the norm for access fund which is 3K of supplementary bursary of 8K is access fund but because the demand was so high, that 3K was not sustainable. We did it for sept, dec but by jan, we brought it down to 1K, then mar was 500 so we need to think, is it important that a large important of that funds comes from students. Do we need to look at funding model by maybe indexing CPI? I'm not proposing a solution but it's an important issue to tackle. There's been studies done for financial aid and the cutoff has been proven to be 1K. When you're in post-secondary, your mind doesn't really register it at anything because 500 is barely a course but when you see under 1K, why would I apply for that award so there needs to be thought about how important is that coming from students. We did a calculation last year, the total amt of access fund collection, currently 850K but to have 3K contribution would be 1.2M collection so it'd be an increase of 4-5% on what we're currently sitting at. We're currently at $14.80 ish but we need to increase to $16-17. We can up it, this committee has the authority to up it by a max of 10%, anything more than 15 has to go to referendum or we can index it to CPI, increase it to 10% on year, there's a lot of solution to this. I didn't want to bring too much today, I wanted this to be, this is something we have to think about.

?: So if we're only offering the 500 at the end, are we still offering the same amount of money coming from different places?

Paches: yes so the 8K stays the same but portion of that fund coming from the office. How access works is it's part of the supplementary bursary program and the access fund is a quasi donation from students to supplementary bursary program facilitated by the office of registrar. The 8K stays the same across the board but proportion from the uni increases and a portion from donors too. The risk is how sustainable is that 8K is if we're not making the same contribution because I hate to see it go down and students aren't getting that much assistance.

?: Has there been any pressure from the uni to keep the 3K?

Paches: The main pressure is to keep a consistent amount so they can accurately plan.

Hassan: How much success have we had getting money from donors in the past?

Paches: The donor money isn't from our efforts of collection but from the university's side. We don't approach donors for this, we are treated like a donor. We don't get a tax receipt for this but we're like a working partner in this. We used to facilitate the entire thing called SFAC, that was this entire program facilitated and ran by the SU but that wasn't working so well and the uni took it on and we turned into more of a donor.

?: If we increase the amount of money that we're asking for, would there be more people opting out?

Paches: Yes, that's a great point. In addition to that increase in demand, there's been an increase in opt-outs, 20K in people opting out. 3-4% which has affected how much we're able to give. If we start getting up into the higher interval range then it could be a concern. It's very checkpoint based. $10-12 is the same, 13-15 is the same, once it gets to 19 - it's 20. Ppl round up.

?: That would be an interesting thing to look into. If you go over 15, you go where you stated before. If we raise it too high, people may round up.

Hassan: How exactly the process works in whether or not we consult any other body? Maybe we're indecisive about making it 17 or closer to 15.5, is there some way we can survey some students? We can go out and try to get some students that would opt out or not. I'd feel like that would be worthy to get a better idea.

Paches: Although, our authority is to increase. Our responsibility to students, you can argue that we should do more consultation, there's all kinds of options in that regard.

?: is it possible to get data from whose opting out to see why?

Paches: I don't know if we can get names, might be just student IDs, I'll look into that.

?: Maybe send an email so students know they're helping other students.

Paches: communication is a big part of it so we lean more towards the uni to advertise the supplementary bursary program but we should advertise this more. It's an important fund and we also have a lot of ppl that opt-out and they confuse it with the health and dental plan. We tried our best to be as clear as possible but we still get a small % of ppl that confuse. I'll see what I can do as far as data, what kind of info we're legally able to see. We can send a survey to send an email to ask why did you opt-out, did you know what it was.

Hassan: About the health and dental plan, whose responsibility is that?

Paches: Health and dental plan administered by the health & dental plan committee, committee of SC, 3 SAL, VPSL, VPOF, and couple staff from studentcare which is the organization that administers it and staff members. Any increases to the plan has to go to council.

Hassan: opt-outs in general aren't addressed/looked at by a specific body but regarding a specific fee. I'm thinking about opt-outs in general and the fact that this confusion is happening regarding opt-out. Maybe there's a lot of students who aren't aware of everything. Even though, we have multiple are you sure? Maybe look at the way opt-outs work for different fees.

Paches: our authority to opt-out stops at access fund and health and dental plan. All the other funds that are opt-outable eg. the landing those ones fall under those orgs to be able to effectively advertise. That's a philosophical point do we want to push the opt-out option or have info available for someone that seeks it, but not push it. Our goal is to have the best program possible. Do we push the opt-out or have it available for ppl that want to seek it out?

Hassan: i was thinking of regarding confusion, with people opting-out? I'm also wondering if it happens with the access fund though they were opting out of the health and dental plan.

Paches: I'm not sure on that side, we don't get info on that side. The reason we get people contacting is bc there's quite a significant price difference between the two, that's why ppl reach out. It comes back to we do lack data in why opt-outs happen and why they happen. That might not be limited to our university, we can look at research from other universities - why opt-outs happen, what is the adequate amount to push them and having them available. In some of the board committees that I chair, i'd like to have action items on the agenda and get feedback, you guys are a resource and are representative students that could be used for advice.

Hassan: Going back to the way we did that proportion, I'm wondering you said it's 3K, how do we get that number and why don't we start with a smaller number and then average that out bc if we're dipping already, why don't we go

for 2K instead of 8K?

Paches: I can find that out and bring it back. Do we want to keep doing the 3K or dip it to the 2K and keep it more sustainable. I don't know how we got to that number but I can add that to the list. I'll take a look at the data on the checkpoints and opting out. In the SU, there's an internal research department that does a bunch of research projects, I might see if I can put that on their project list.

2017-00/3c PACHES/HASSAN moves to suspend standing orders to allow the creation of the Teapsy Empowerment Award as attached.
8/0/0 CARRIED

See FC 17-00.01

Paches: I'll just elaborate on section of standing orders that requires us to do a suspension. It outlines how awards adjudication committee and administration of awards can be done, what it says in operation of awards. See standing orders. We have all the awards on the website so everyone can apply but through our year end accounting process, as part of our lease agreement, they have to fund 1 award for student. They want to fund $1500 to FT/PT student that demonstrates a positive impact to campus community. All other vendors have an awards as well. We've discovered through year-end accounting that they haven't done it yet. But the public advertising hasn't started yet so the motion is to suspend standing orders to allow this award to be created. The plan from the awards coordinator is that they will contact everyone that applied about this new award and if they'd like to revise their essay for the award.

2017-00/4 **INFORMATION ITEMS**

2017-00/4a Teapsy Empowerment Award

See FC 17-00.01

2017-00/5 **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

2017-00/5a **Next Meeting**: June 12, 2017 @ 6:00PM in SUB 6-06

Teapsy Empowerment Award

As a component of its lease agreement with the Students' Union, each year

Teapsy will provide a one thousand five hundred dollar ($1500.00) award.

Number of Awards:

- 1 award each year

Value of Each Awards:

- $1500 and an engraved plaque

Conditions:

- Must be a full-time or part-time student at the University of Alberta.
- Must demonstrate a positive impact on the campus community or the community at large by inspiring and enabling others to take action.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

MOTION	VOTES
PALINDAT/LILLO MOVE to approve the agenda.	8/0/0 - CARRIED
PACHES/THIBAUDEAU MOVES TO APPOINT Councillor Howell, Palindat, Lillo to the Awards Adjudication Committee.	8/0/0 - CARRIED
PACHES/HASSAN moves to suspend standing orders to allow the creation of the Teapsy Empowerment Award as attached.	8/0/0 - CARRIED