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Programming and Audits Committee Meeting Minutes 06/06/ 2011

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University of South Florida
Student Government Fifty-Second Student Senate

SUMMER SESSION
June 6th 2011

Meeting called to order by Chairman Ayaz Hemani at 11:01AM.

Hemani- First thing on the agenda is roll call. I am present. Naseem is present. Sarah is present. Gao is present. Ms. Hughes is no longer in committee due to work commitments. Sham is not here. So, now we do not have forum, right?

Gao- No.

Hemani- Because we have seven.

Gao- The excused ones don't count against forum, so you're fine.

Hemani- They don't?

Gao- It doesn't count against forum.

Hemani- Okay, alright, so, the next thing is additions/deletions to the agenda. Do we have any motions? Yes?

Motion to approve the agenda by senator Gao.

Hemani- There are no objections, so the agenda is approved. Next thing is the approval of the minutes. Are there any motions?

Gao- Motion to postpone the minutes until next meeting.

Hemani- Are there any objections? Minutes have been postponed. Next thing is open forum. Would anyone like to say anything?

Open Forum:

Morgan- I'll just introduce myself. I'm Jessica Morgan. I'm the new assistant director for SG and I'll be working with you guys in an advising capacity, so.

Hemani- I would just like to let everyone know that SG is having a tent day today. So, we have some senators downstairs getting students to sign petitions and getting them to fill out some surveys. If you have any friends that are going to be around the Marshall Center today, please let them know to stop by the tent and participate. Also, a lot of other committees have been doing office tours after committees. So, I think I'll do that as well and show you guys around the office, so you know it better. The next thing on the agenda is new business.

New Business:

Hemani- The first thing is event audits. Right here, I have the list of events that are going on this week. The ones in bold looked more to be like events and the ones that aren't looked more like meetings. So, look at the ones that are in bold and we will be auditing those.

Sham entered the room at 11:05AM.

Hemani- The next thing on the agenda is, actually I do have some audit sheets at my office if you would like to have some. I also have it in the email I sent out if you guys would like to print that out. Otherwise, I have copies at my desk when I give you guys the office tour, you'll be able to see that. For you, you just came in late, these are the events that we will be auditing this week. The ones that are in bold are the events, the rest are meetings that don't necessarily have to be audited but those are the ANS funding organizations that are having events this week. This next thing on the agenda is the viewpoint neutrality discussion. The whole point of having this is that we are having signature events coming up. We will be the committee looking at the applications and determining whether or not they will be getting the grant for up to \$2000 for their event. So, in looking at that, we have to make sure we are not biased in our judgment and I have some paperwork for you as well. If you could pass this around. And also for those of you that actually want to see more about these supreme court decisions that are mentioned on the previous page, I thought it was interesting, you don't necessarily have to take it. If you'd like to read it, please go ahead. So, viewpoint neutrality what does it mean? Do we have any takers? Would anyone like to share their viewpoint neutrality?

Senator- I mean it makes sense according to this involving the chess club example.

Hemani- Okay, so, just a few quick things about viewpoint neutrality. It basically means that no organization can be denied funding for something that another organization can do freely and the whole thing basically came about because students were debating whether or not it was just to pay the student fees that were required. So, viewpoint neutrality does not mean that you would have to fund one organization the same amount of another organization, but it means that you need to go through the same process to determine whether the organization can get funded and the amount that it can be funded. Alright, so having said that, I just wanted to make sure everyone had a written log of their involvement in different student organizations, so that each member is not biased when making their decision. If you could please fill that out real quick. The first three questions are on blackboard and it is the involvement that is recorded on blackboard. The fourth question is your involvement in student organizations and if you feel that blackboard reflects which student organizations you're really involved with, because I know when you go around in bulls market, there's some student organizations that log

you into their blackboard organization and it makes them look like they're a bigger organization by doing that. So when that happens and you aren't really involved in the student organization so blackboard may reflect something that you're not really involved with. If you guys don't really know what organizations you have on blackboard, you can also turn this into me later if you like or after the committee meeting you could drop by the office and just hand it to me then. Alright, the next thing on the agenda is signature event form changes. I am going to be passing around the signature event application for fall. We will be taking a quick look at this. There are some questions that I think need to be addressed, so we'll be looking at those. Next week we will actually be looking at the scoring criteria of the signature event application and we would actually be going through the process of what we will be looking at when student organizations terminates them.

Senator-I printed it out, thank you though.

Hemani- So, in semesters passed, what has occurred is that when student organizations were allocated funds for signature events, some student organizations did not utilize the funds for the event and the event was cancelled. So, in order to maximize the funds for all of our student organizations, what can we do to help make sure that the funds weren't wasted? Because, if we go through a whole process and figure out which events we think should be funded and we are not necessarily looking at other organizations, because we are funding other organization, other organizations aren't being funded that money, so if that event gets cancelled, then those funds are not being utilized where they could have been utilized with another organizations' event.

Gao- You have to look at reoccurring events that happen annually. Where they happened before, so you know they're going to happen. All we have to do is help make it bigger, so that money makes it bigger and bigger and bigger. So, you know what will happen. It will get bigger and bigger. So, that's one way you can look at it. So, with the events, it's harder to gain them if they're not at the beginning of the semester of course, when we want them to happen in November and December. What you can do is always stay in contact with student organization constantly throughout the semester so we can have communication back and forth, see how they're doing. Maybe we can help out with certain things. Maybe they need help with marketing, stuff like that.

Hemani- Okay, those are some ways to actually make sure that different student organizations stay on track with their events. What if the events are cancelled completely and those funds are not utilized for events? How can we...

Senator- Redistribute?

Hemani. Yeah. So, how would we be going about doing that though? Because now how the signature application forms are set up is that there is one application for fall and one application for summer, or for spring, excuse me. If the funds aren't utilized for fall, I believe it goes back into the same grant pool and those funds are used again for spring. But the problem arises when student organizations have their events in spring and they cancel their events and the money doesn't get redistributed.

Senator- So, question, does everyone have a certain deadline to propose their event and basically if you have the application for it and everything is done in a certain time line, you can't just bring up another event and give them funds? Does everything have to happen at the beginning of the semester at the same time, so that funds can be distributed?

Hemani- Well, right now how it's set up is that there's an application deadline, there's one in fall and one in spring, and the events can happen within any time between fall and spring. So, I see where you're going with this and how we can't really go back to the applications after an event is cancelled, because other organizations might want to get in on the opportunity. So, that is a possibility, but...

Senator- So, basically we would have to redistribute when an organization has already applied and been accepted for a grant?

Gao- You can't do that, because the decision made is at the beginning of the semester, it can't be changed and it can't be altered. If you say the event is cancelled, and you want to redistribute the funds for that event you have to advertise a minimum of two weeks before everything is made. Then, you have a meeting to decide and you have to tell them, so there will probably be a 3 week period before whatever they choose. So, the timeline wouldn't be great either. So, you're looking at what's against this redistribution thing is the timeline and the fact that you might get totally different events that you weren't expecting. We're working against a lot.

Senator- What are the options then?

Hemani-That's why I brought it up for discussion.

Senator- Not many? Okay.

Hemani- One option that I saw was, that we currently have two application processes , where funds get rolled over into the next semester, but if we split it up further into quarterly applications, where we have four application processes, we would have less funds being wasted because the funds would roll over into the next quarter.

Gao- Where does it say it rolls over? I remember specifically saying it's \$10,000 per semester and that's it; it doesn't roll over. Remember in PAC last year, in the spring we can only allocate \$10,000 and in the fall we can only allocate \$10,000. That's the number we went off, but we can't go any more above that. So, it doesn't actually roll over. I think that, in the fall it gets \$10,000. After the events been cancelled, that money goes straight to the unallocated cash account, where it stays there until it rolls over to the next school year.

Hemani- Do you think that it should be changed?

That money is pretty much there at that point for emergency purposes. I mean it probably should be changed for all that money to be used up, the \$20,000, but then you have to implement your four quarter idea, but they can't figure out what the top points are, because for the applications in the spring

have to be out in October. That means you have to put applications out for the second quarter, probably in August. You're going to have a lot of emails and a lot of paperwork to deal with.

Senator- There's going to be a lot of confusion, because they're already used to this way and they're probably going to miss the deadline if they want to do something later.

Gao- There's not really a problem with that because it is only two years-old. So, I mean just readvertise the way you wanted it. Explain to each organization at orientation or at some of the showcases, just say this is a new way of doing it, and please apply for this time period and it wouldn't be a problem for advertising, because you can just say it's a new way of doing it since it's so young. But you can change it up.

Hemani- Any other ideas?

Senator- Maybe if you ease into it, it will be a lot easier, so they'll have four different deadlines instead of two and see how that works. If it works out well, you can go from there, because as of right now, you only have one deadline...

Hemani- We have two deadlines for each semester.

Senator- Well, okay never mind, I thought you only had one.

Gao- With it being so young and it's only its second year; you might want to wait another semester or another year, because the first year, everything was spent, all \$20,000 was gone. This year was the first year, the spring was the first time I dealt with signature events not happening. So, you might want to rethink, not necessarily the deadline, but the allocation process. Maybe the interview process, maybe harder questions, maybe more in depth questions, maybe a more one on one meetings to figure out if the events will actually happen or how the committee feels. Most of the time, if you hear about an event and it's too big and they're in the small process of planning it and it's only a few months away, you might think eh, it's not going to happen. If it's the right size event and you know what happened before, it's probably going to happen. So, that's...it's like that feeling that you get.

Hemani- What if instead of having four application deadlines, we still have two application deadlines, but then we evaluate it every quarter, so that the process is more transparent to everyone else, but at the same time, it's more efficient?

Gao- Evaluate how?

Hemani- We would have the presentations for the student organizations and their different events quarterly, but the applications will be due during fall and spring.

Senator- They would have to present their goals to you and how far along they've come and what their plans are?

Hemani- Yes, and the funding process would actually be quarterly and we would evaluate it quarterly.

Senator- That makes sense.

Hemani- So the only difference we would be doing would be the different applications every semester.

Gao- So, you would choose the events you guys want to fund, tell them they're going to get the funding if say that happens for the first few months like September and early October. So, from that point; from late October to the end of the school semester, you'll have present again to show them where they are in order to keep that money. Is that what you're trying to say?

I was thinking more along the lines of splitting up the different presentations into quarters and seeing which dates the events lie on and having the ones in the first quarter present right after the application process and then having the events in the second quarter present before, or right after the first quarter.

Gao- Okay.

Senator- How exactly would that eliminate waste?

Hemani- Because, we could technically, you know how we can allocate up to \$10,000 per semester?

Senator- Right.

Hemani- Then, in the first quarter of each semester, someone cancels, then during the second quarter, those funds could be allocated to a different events.

Senator- So, you'd pretty much be telling two organizations that they can have the same funding?

Gao- No, it's more like the application process is done, and then you have to split the events into first quarter, second quarter. Then you have to allocate \$6,000 maximum. Then, you wait till the second quarter comes around, you have them present again in case there's any roll over from the first quarter, you allocate whatever is left from the \$10,000 to that...that is going to get really complicated.

Senator- I think it all depends on the dates of the events. I think people that are doing their events further on in the semester, they would present later, so that if funding is left over they could potentially get that funding, instead of it going to waste.

Senator- Oh, from the first semester?

Senator- Yeah, instead of distributing it all in the first go, you'd have it being split up into when the event is actually being held.

Senator- Wasn't there like a \$2,000 limit for each?

Hemani- Per organization.

Senator- Yeah.

Senator- Like I'm saying if an event only had \$600 and they need some more...

Gao- That is going to be pretty complicated actual with all of the events. Some might get confused with that one. Because they're like why am I planning my event now? They plan on the money and they don't get it so their event might not happen because of this. So yeah, you've got a lot of kinks to work out of this one.

Senator- I was just going to ask, was there any communication with the organizations that had to cancel the events last year, so maybe we could assess.

Gao-Yes, I was the one that when the event is cancelled, I sent an audit to see if they want to do it or not. Some of them don't send it back. Most of them, there were three events that were cancelled, no make that four out of the nine that we allocated. Only five happened and I didn't get a reply back after they told me that the event had been cancelled. I was like I'm sorry to hear that. That's all I would actually write. I tried to get more feedback from them, but they kind of just silenced.

Senator-Shouldn't there be some type of requirement, that if you are funding, they have to let you know why they are cancelling, what's going on, there has to be a valid reason?

Gao- We have no set parameter for that, because nothing was written down and we can't really say you can't cancel the event, because...

Senator- Yeah, but shouldn't there be like a process that they have to like give like a written statement of why things happen, so that later on you guys can work out what... There should be something on file so that if an event gets cancelled. I think that's probably better for the...

Gao- I think that's a good idea that you guys should definitely pursue and put it in your SOP's or put it in your statutes.

Toro- Are we talking about having like two different dates to have the signature events. Is that what we were talking about when I walked in? I think that I agree with Mr. Gao on this one I think that it would be really confusing for student organizations. I agree with what Ms. Sara just said, if they want to cancel then there should definitely be a process to go through. We should have some form to fill out, something to keep on file. And there's really no reason why if a student org cancels their signature event, that we can then allocate and just have this committee reconvene and then give the money to another organization or...but there's no rule that says we can't do that.

Gao- Then you run into legitimate issues. Like you know how exec. has a higher and higher thing like if we don't get someone to get the application out. We have to do the same thing with this. There's nothing in the rules that says it, but if we don't do it, we might seem biased, because we are not giving other organizations advantages that have an event planned on that time period. So, that might seem biased, so we have to put an application out there. That would probably be the most unbiased thing to do at that point. Because it's not in the rules, but we're looking for biased and we don't want to seem like, oh, so this event isn't going to happen, so we're just going to go do this one. That's what my take is and when I talked to and last year we had four events cancelled I was like we could have allocated

something else. I was thinking everything possible, but then he told me I had to resend out the applications for next semester.

Senator- Why don't we just resend the applications out and if they cancel, we have other student organizations at the chance of just setting a later deadline? Can't we do that or is that like against the rules or something? That there has to be a certain deadline to have the applications in.

Hemani- There are dates in statutes right now but we can change that. Also, what I don't want to end up happening is to have an application process go out, just because an organization cancels. I think we should have a way to distribute money without having a reapplication process. Like, what, I know you weren't here previously but I will just restate very quickly. We were talking about having two different application processes, just as there are now and having it more transparent to the student organizations, but at the same time, we would redistribute funds quarterly and during the first quarter of each semester, if the event got cancelled, the funds would be rolled over to the next quarter of the semester. And we would have the student organizations present again during the second quarter.

Toro- I don't see... I understand where you are coming from, but I don't see why you can't just say, okay, we're going to fund these...you get let's say 20 applications, let's say we're going to fund these five events and then you have like a sixth place, a seventh place...I don't see why there's a reason you can't do that.

Patel- I mean, you can't promise somebody that you'll have money and then when they're planning the event they might be counting on the funds right? And they could be like, okay, well if we get the funds we'll have the event, if not we can't have the event. That would be like a big doubt in the plan.

Toro- Point of clarification, we wouldn't tell the sixth place that would be like we would allocate to the five top you know, events. And let's say that one of the top five cancels, we would reconvene and say, okay, this is the next best one, and we would only contact those organizations in the event that one of the top five cancels.

Hemani- I just have one slight issue with that. What if those organizations don't really need the money, because if they're already holding an event without the extra funds from student government, what if they don't really need the money and that money could be used towards a better organizations event?

Senator- So question, if like last semester some events were cancelled and if there's money left over, like you guys say, it can't be rolled over to the next semester. What happens to that money? Like it just sits around or like...

Hemani- Currently it goes into the unallocated cash.

Senator- And like you can't reuse it, it just stays there?

Hemani- It just stays there until next year, when it is reallocated. Is that something that we need to change?

Senator- I don't think you can.

Gao- This year it was a good thing that those events were cancelled, because we were actually in the red, so we kind of needed that extra unallocated cash. Usually you don't want any money left over in the signature event grant. You want to promote SG as well as help student organizations at the same time. You can't really write a clause in there saying that signature event money cannot be held back into unallocated cash. I mean the best solution is...Every solution seems to have a setback or like a negative to it. You have to figure out which is the most positive one versus the negative. I mean, you and I have been talking about this in the pass, since you got office and I still haven't figured out the solution to it yet. So, we can stick with what we have now and just hope that the events won't be cancelled or you can do what you guys want to do.

Senator- Why don't we just have this application process but then we follow up with them with emails, phone calls and like other meetings to see where they're at with their planning process of the events, because that seems like the only possible thing that we can do so far. Because the whole like quarterly application thing...it's going to be like too many things going on at once and we're going to get confused with all like the application processes as well. So, I'm thinking we should just have a follow-up type of meeting, a presentation, where as the ones we decide to allocate, they come back in and they show us what they've done so far and like we can plan it like where the earlier ones obviously come to us before with what they're going to do. If they're not working on it we need to like set boundaries or rules that says we're going to allocate you this money and if now, these are the consequences. I don't know what the consequence could be, but...You can't just give someone money and tell them here spend it as you wish and we don't do anything if they cancel it because you don't get anything out of it if this gets allocated. Well, we do, but...

Toro- I completely agree, like you read my mind, that's exactly what I was going to say. Like, be, just be proactive. Like, last year I think one of the reasons it wasn't done last year, was because all of the grant programs: One senate allocated the money, then the responsibility went to the CFO to the executive branch to the CFO and then he delegated that to the deputy CFO. So, it was pretty much up to that individual to communicate with student organizations; it was taken out of our hands and it was up to that individual to deal with the follow-up and all that stuff and sometimes that office got bogged down and it didn't get done. So, that may have been a cause of you know, all that miscommunication of that event being cancelled. So, I think something's going to happen this year, like a trend that I see happening this year is that a lot of that responsibility is being taken out of the office of management and budget and being put back into senate. Like, we're going to have a lot more control over the grant programs and stuff like that. So, I think that the follow-up and that more involvement is ideal.

Gao- I think the follow-up is based upon PAC committee, but the spending of the grant PO purchases are going to be with SPO. The problem that we get sometimes, with keeping in contact is some of these organizations just fall off the map after they get the money. That's what happened to me with two organizations. I literally sent them at least four emails in a matter of three weeks and I got absolutely no reply. It was disappointing. When I heard from them, it was Adrianna told me, oh they put in a PO and I didn't hear anything about it. So, it was...I mean, you could put it into the application and tell them, you

have to have a weekly or bi-weekly progress report and tell this committee where they're at, how far they've come in the planning process. That probably would be a better way of communication, requiring them to give you guys a weekly or bi-weekly progress report, or whatever you guys want to do to be updated.

Hemani- What if there is a definite roadblock for one of the events and they definitely cannot have the event due to some unforeseen reason and then the allocation for that would go into unallocated cash, which in one aspect this is good and in one it is bad.

Senator-I think I agree with what Naseem said and what he said and basically what needs to be done different from last semester is they need bi-weekly progress reports and along with that, when they are applying, or in the application, or in the set of rules, you should let them know that you need and will have to have a bi-weekly progress report some and if you do for any reason have to cancel, this is the form you will have to fill out, you would have to give us your reasons, you know, all that kind of stuff and there should also be a penalty on that student organization and if you do pull out and if you do cancel, you won't be able to have a signature event for the next coming semester. You won't be legible for that, we're not going to accept your application. Cause they need some sort of penalty, if we do this we're going to be cramped for the next year in case we do want to. So they work harder to make sure their event happens. Cause basically what you have is student organizations taking your grants for granted, basically, so...

Hemani- I definitely agree with what you guys have said and we need to have reports where student organizations have to fill out and also a report whether like if an organization cancels their event. I believe Ms. Toro had something to say?

Toro- No.

Hemani- Alright, so if no one else has anything to say, we will move onto student organization communication letters. Alright, so now that we have filled out these snazzy sheets with our organizational involvement, we can actually start to draft different letters where we can get into contact with different student organizations and actually help with the programming aspect of their events. I am getting into contact with different venues on campus where different student organizations can hold events and so we can help different student organizations hold their events and find venues where they can hold their events and also help them out with whatever they need. So, what we should be working on is drafting different letters and once you have drafted the letter, send it to me, I will see if it's alright. By next meeting, if for those of you who haven't had a chance to draft the letter, I'll have a sample template and I'll be giving that to you and also a list of organizations where you can keep in contact with their presidents and their treasures. Any questions? Alright, the next thing on the agenda is announcements. Would anyone like to say anything? No? Okay. Do we have any motions at this time?

Motion to adjourn.

Hemani- Are there any objections?

Adjournment called by chairman Ayaz Hemani at 11:40AM.