Western Washington University Associated Students
Sustainable Action Fund
Thursday, January 7, 2016 VU 567

Present: Emma Palumbo (ASVP for Student Life), Hannah Brock, Anna Kemper, Brian Rusk, Ed Simpson, Ryan Peterson, and Nate White
Absent: Seth Vidaña
Advisor: Greg McBride, Eric Alexander
Secretary: Bryce Hammer
Guest: Tyler Cohen, Arthur Preston, Shirley Osterhaus, Katie Thompson, Collen Sengstock, Leah Olver

MOTIONS
SAF-16-W-2 Motion to approve the conceptual application for the Project Refill outdoor water stations. Passed.
SAF-16-W-3 Motion to approve $23,125 for RECyling Your Power. Passed.

Emma Palumbo, Chair of Sustainable Action Fund, called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
A. Emma asked if everyone had the chance to look over the minutes of the last three meetings. Ed said the minutes that included the Lyn Oske project were missing part of the presentation. Emma said she would go back and make the changes to those minutes.

MOTION SAF-16-W-1 by Palumbo

Second: Kemper Vote: 5-0-0 Action: Motion Passed, minutes approved.

IV. ACTION ITEMS
A. RECyling Your Power—Katie Thompson and Colleen Sengstock
Katie Thompson introduced herself. She said her group came to the meeting to finalize their funding for their project, RECyling Your Power. She said the purpose of the project is to install four self-generating electric bicycles in the gym, educate students about their electric power usage, encourage them to make a
difference, and to promote sustainable practices. By installing the bicycles at the gym she hopes to encourage students to pursue healthy lifestyles and, as these bikes are self-generating their electricity, reaffirm Western’s commitment to clean energy. They did multiple case studies for which type of bike they wanted to look at which bikes worked the best, which ones lasted the longest, and which producers were most likely to stay in business. She said Rob Arnold was their contact at the REC Center and they took a tour of the bicycles together. They decided they would have two of one style and two of another style, one of which would be more freestanding. They come with an interface that would allow the user to track their fitness and their electrical generation on their phone. She thinks this is a benefit because it connects to the life of the user and, as a bonus, they’re very easy to use. She said the goals and outcomes of the program would be to normalize electricity usage, instill sustainable practices at Western, improve the SAF’s reach (by putting them in the REC Center), and supporting broader campus sustainability efforts. She said this project got a lot of support, especially from the stakeholders. They conducted a preliminary survey in the winter of 2014. They received 166 responses total which was representative of Western’s gender make up. 83% said they would prioritize using these Eco-Bikes over normal stationary bikes at the gym. 67% of those were students who use the gym frequently. 69% of those students believe that renewable energy should be an important goal of Westerns. 40% of the students surveyed were concerned about the equipment performance, which was the project leader’s ultimate goal. They made sure to pay close attention during the case study to see which bikes had the best product reviews. She said based on the study these bikes run smoother, or as smooth, as the bikes they currently have in the gym. 78% of the survey respondents said this project would be a good use of SAF grant money. 28% of them didn’t know what the SAF was so they shared information about that to increase outreach. They created a system of metrics for their short term and long term success. They have created a preliminary survey to give students, they plan on measuring the amount of student usage and seeing if the students request similar technology after using the bikes. In other college case studies, they saw an increase in requests for similar technology (in particular elliptical machines and treadmills). They’d also like to put a pedometer on the bikes. Furthermore, they want students to be excited about the gym replacing old machine with self-generating energy machines. She said they’re planning an event once all four machines get installed where the cycling team would come in to do a biking marathon. They also want to plan a marathon day larger than the cycling team to see who can do the highest resistance for a five-minute time period. She’s also planning an event called Cycle Outside wherein they would move the bikes outside, because they’re so portable, and have people cycle outside while educating them about the bikes. She also wants to put up posters to get the word out to the larger student population. She said they also did an event a while ago where they brought one of the bikes in. They had 56 people use the bikes in a short time period and they biked just over 53 miles. They got feedback from those students about what they liked in the bike, what they wanted to see more of on campus, and their general attitudes towards having bikes like this in the REC Center. Most of the response was positive. She was hoping to get the funding by January 7th so they could finalize the contract and begin the next steps. Implementing the equipment takes 6-8 weeks. They’ll start marketing immediately and events will begin on the
25th of January. She explained their budget which was broken up into sections. The first was the cost of the bikes, the second was the cost of quarterly maintenance, and $100 for the marketing and posters. The total cost of the project was $23,120.91, which is what they requested. She asked for questions. Emma said under metrics and measurability they plan on measuring how often the bikes are used and comparing them to other bikes in the gym. Emma wanted to know if they plan on doing that for the first year only or if they would continue the process. Katie said it would be for the first year only to get a sense for how much the students are using them. If they get similar readings on both odometers they plan on working with the REC Center to develop more interest in the bikes and gauging student usage. Emma asked if there is a plan for buying more bikes if they get requests. Katie said yes, the REC Center would be willing to pay for it if the students want it. It would be a $100,000 a year budget to buy more bikes and maintain them. Brian asked if there were going to be phone charging stations on the bikes. Katie said they were hoping the electricians would let them plug the bikes into the grid but unfortunately they don’t believe it would be worth the reconfiguration. The bikes themselves come with the outlet but she would have to check, she also said they’re essentially self-sustaining. Brian said if that was the case then the bikes are only creating theoretical wattage and what goes into the screen. Katie said yes, the bikes would power the screens. Emma asked if there were other questions. There were none. She thanked Katie for her presentation. The council moved on to the Project Refill presentation and then came back to discuss this proposal after. Emma asked for initial thought. Hannah said she liked the idea and likes that the REC Center would continue the project in the future. Eric asked how long they hold onto bikes. Brian said it’s usually 4-5 years. Eric said it would be good to look into the charging piece so the energy isn’t being wasted. Brian said it would make sense for it to have a USB port on the machines. Greg said maybe once the project gets up and running they can come back and request more to put the infrastructure in that would allow the energy to go somewhere. Brian said if there’s a small price difference between the ones with USB ports vs. the ones without USB ports the council should encourage the team to buy the ones with the USB ports. Eric said when he goes to the gym the most popular machines are the ones that have built in screens, he wonders if these bikes not having those would affect their usage. Hannah said there are machines in the REC Center that have screens attached. Ryan said there are two bikes that have screens and they’re right against the window but the majority of them don’t because they can see the row of TVs. Eric said most people probably listen to their iPods anyways. Brian said these bikes have screens on them and he’d be interested in knowing what they’re capable of. Greg said there are probably good spec sheets online to look into. Eric said in the end this is a pilot for the REC Center and they can make that decision. Greg said he wants to know if it would affect the REC Center’s decision. Emma asked if they could pass it and also encourage the team to look into the screens. Greg said the barrier to the bikes is the campus grid that they would sit on. Ed said that only applies if they want to put electricity into the grid, if it’s self-contained it probably wouldn’t be a problem. He also said the machines must be sending off some type of signal because they communicate with phones through the app. Greg said if it’s a big enough consideration it would be beneficial to look the bikes up online and see what the options are. They looked
up the bike and found out they come with USB ports and an interactive screen. Emma asked if people were comfortable moving the number up to $23,125 to make it even. People said yes.

*MOTION SAF-16-W-3* by Palumbo

Motion to approve $23,125 for RECy cling Your Power.

Second: Brock  Vote: 5-0-0  Action: Motion Passed.

**B.** Project Refill—Arthur Preston, Tyler Cohen, Shirley Osterhaus, and Leah Olver

Arthur introduced himself as the project lead. He let the rest of the team introduce themselves as well. Arthur said the goal of the program is to put six water refill stations outside and to make them “freeze-proof.” This would continue to reduce the amount of plastic water bottles used on campus and would encourage students to bring their own reusable water bottles to school which would increase sustainability and public health. This would also encourage community engagement. Tyler Cohen said part of their goal is to reduce the campus’s environmental impact. She said even though the campus already has water refill stations they’re all inside and most campus visitors and new time students don’t know where they are. She said it take three times the amount of volume in a water bottle to create the bottle itself and it takes a quarter of the volume in oil to produce and transport the bottle. Arthur said the benefit of putting the refill stations out in the open is creating a spot for people to be in that would encourage healthy habits. He said it will also increase awareness of the SAF. They would be getting the water from Lake Whatcom so it’ll be local and it’ll increase the user’s awareness of the wasteful culture in America. He said the possibility for signs on the machines themselves have flexibility. Tyler said the six locations they chose, because of their high traffic and visibility, were (1) outside the VU, (2) Red Square, (3) between Arntzen Hall and the Biology Building, (4) somewhere by Academic West/the sports field outside the REC Center, (5) Fairhaven courtyard, and (6) the new soccer field on South Campus. Arthur said it would reduce waste on campus and would tie into the Water-Bottle Free initiative. Tyler said they found four schools online that had the exact same water refill stations. Arthur said for six of the units the cost of the physical units would be around $40,000. They didn’t have an estimate for the installation cost but he said they would be fully operational year round. They could install them and they would be around for decades. He also said he’s talked to the people that would be involved with installing the re-fill stations on campus. Tyler said they want to make sure people have an appreciation for water as a resource and increase the awareness on campus of the importance of local water. They asked for questions. Anna said she thought it was a neat project and since it hinges on whether or not the students are using it she wanted to know if the water would be cool during the summer months. Arthur said the units would be placed deep underground and they would maintain a fairly even temperature year-round. The insulation would prevent the water from freezing
during the winter months and in the summer it might be slightly warmer but after running for a second or two the temperature should cool down. Tyler said since the container is buried it would be a good barrier. Anna asked if they knew what the installation price would be. Arthur said no but the project just started and their looking into it and they would welcome feedback from the council. Ed said they could work with the plumbing specialist on campus to pick locations that allow easy access to water. Tyler said they were looking into that. Ed said down by the soccer field they already had a water fill station but it’s not very visible. Brian asked if the water was regular tap water or if it was filtered. Arthur said it would just be tap water but the City of Bellingham has high quality tap water. Tyler said the other water fill stations don’t use filters. Arthur said these units can’t be outfitted with the filter and in any case, they would have to be maintained and replaced if they were. He also said if it becomes an issue they can outfit the existing refill station with water filters. Nate said the indoor ones already have filters but whether or not they get changed is up to the people telling them if they need to be updated or not. Eric asked if the other campuses had advice on durability and vandalism. Arthur said these machines were vandal resistant. Tyler said the other schools didn’t mention any problems. Eric said ever campus will be different. Arthur said these machines in particular are pretty solid. Greg said they need to think about the placement of the stations in terms of accessibility. Emma asked for other thoughts. There were none. She thanked them for the presentation and said the council would let them know the decision after the meeting.

RECyling Your Power and Project Refill Discussion—Emma Palumbo

Eric asked what the estimate on the price for the Project Refill would be. Ed said it would be more than the $40,000 they have listed because they’ve also got to think about the insulation and the implementation. Hannah asked how much the fund has left in it. Nate said he would have to check but probably around $500,000. Eric said at his old university people would vandalize things like this but it might be different at Western. Hannah asked if it has happened with the indoor ones. Ed said not besides coffee. Eric said the indoor ones are also regularly cleaned by custodians. Ryan said he’s seen these types of machines in down town San Francisco and he didn’t see and vandalism. Greg said the schools they looked at are all warm weather schools and he’d like to see when and how they use them and if they’re affected by the cold. Nate said they have a lot of these machines in Victoria and BC which have similar climates to Western’s and he’s recommended they talk to the municipalities there. Hannah asked if they’re approving the full cost of the project, without knowing what it is. Emma said it was a conceptual application, they’re basically giving them the go ahead to continue the project. They’ll give feedback and questions to them. Hannah said she liked this project, especially because the indoor ones are sometimes inaccessible. Emma said she likes that it’s moving towards the larger idea of sustainability. Hannah said they should put a sign on the machines advertising the SAF. Anna said they had talked about signs but agreed that they should be permanent. Eric said he wants to know if they could do that. Greg said they’re metal so probably. He also asked if there’s a way to measure the use. Ed said maybe but random sampling would also work.
Eric asked how much more difficult it would be to add a meter if they already have to create new plumbing. Ed said he could probably find a way. He also mentioned his main worry about this project is most of the times the students are here and it's cold in Washington so the holes would have to be deeper which is more expensive. Emma asked for more questions. Eric said the color of the machines would be a good conversation to have. Should the machines be aiming for visibility or to blend in? Hannah said she liked the blue ones. Eric said if they blend in they’ll look better but people visiting campus might not notice them. Anna said they’re in highly visible areas so either option would probably work. Greg said it can be added on the campus visitor map. Ed said the campus map is based on the map produced by Google and if someone were to search it then one of the most prominent things on the map would be these stations. Emma asked for a motion.

*MOTION SAF-16-W-2 by Brock*

Motion to approve the conceptual application for the Project Refill outdoor water stations.

Second: Kemper   Vote: 5-0-0   Action: Motion passed.

V. DISCUSSION ITEM
A. Overspending on Projects—Nate White

Nate said there are currently two teams that are in a bit of a limbo due to underestimating the cost of the projects. One team is the Aquaponics team, who are requesting an addition $300 because they didn’t account for the cost of the fish and fish food. He said this isn’t a rare occurrence because they’re asking students to plan projects that they have very little experience with. The other group is the Sorts Project, which installed the big bellies, who went over $3,000 because the installation fees ended up more expensive than they predicted. Nate said these situations arise because they’re costs that can’t be predicted until they happen. There are a few options for how to handle this. Nate said currently he and Seth are the ones that work with small grants and they could decide a way to go forward without involving the committee. He said there is a contingency fund that has been referenced in past meetings but has never been clearly defined. This contingency fund was for projects like these that go over costs. Nate is proposing that he and Seth have the ability to use up to 10% of the small grant award limit to finish these projects. This would be about $500 (10% of $5,000). It would allow the Aquaponics projects to go forward. Nate thinks this is a reasonable amount for projects like this. For over $500 the committee can decide what’s best. He thinks for Gary’s team it could either be a whole committee decision or an executive decision made by Nate, Seth, Eric, and Emma. This has the benefit of being a bit nimbler. Nate
said they could also decide case by case, set a fixed limit, etc. Also, they have to decide on what they’re going to do if teams go over the contingency amount. He suggested they might have to come back and ask for more or suggest the project manager pay for it, which he thinks is a little heavy handed. Ed said they used to move forward with the approved funds for the projects and add a contingency percentage teams were allowed to use. The team only knew they had the original amount they were awarded and the committee would decide on the percentage internally. Hannah said she liked that because preplanning would make projects run smoother and if it turns out to be unnecessary they can just put it back in the fund. Eric said there’s two problems, figuring out what to do with the current projects and then figuring out the standing policy. Hannah asked how soon the projects need the decision. Nate said as soon as possible. Hannah asked if they had an emergency meeting would that be enough time. Nate said since it’s not defined they might not need the full committee. Emma said she’d have to look into protocol. Brian said if they can set boundaries around those decisions then he’s fine with the decision being made by Emma, Eric, Seth, and Nate. Greg said in the absence of rules it would make sense for the committee to set guidelines. Eric wants to know about the precedence for email voting and emergency voting. Greg said it’s an open committee because it spends money. Eric said in every open meeting law there is a contingency for calling an executive meeting and an emergency meeting. Greg suggested leaving small grant decisions to Nate and Seth. Hannah said it sounds good for small grants but keeping the contingencies for large grants in control of the committee. Eric said if groups go over their budget than they may have to go to the other people that are supporting them. For example, in the case of the bikes the REC Center is sponsoring it and the committee might make it a requirement that they pay for any overages. He also asked if the projects can just be estimated high, particularly those on campus, because the committee often sees projects that are estimated at a “best guess” but he’d prefer to see them at a “worst case scenario” so the committee has a good idea of potential costs. Greg asked if the SORTS estimate in particular was formally from FM because if that was the case they would have had a formal agreement that FM take on the extra costs. Greg said the outdoor classroom at the outback would be a good example of that. Nate asked if this sort of thing would fit within the process of a consent item. Eric said yes. Brian asked what the percentage of the Aquaponics overdraft is. Nate said almost one third, the project has been difficult. Hannah asked where they’re getting the fish from. Nate said the mail.

*Emma adjourned the meeting at 10:02 am.*