



Page 6



Page 3



Page 11

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ASWC EXPLAINS IT ALL

Budget crisis questions answered

Kaylene Moulton
Katherin Nelson
 Staff Reporters

Megan Mann, ASWC's director of budget and finance, took control of the Student Activities Committee's (SAC) account on Sept. 28. SAC has spent \$7,000 over its \$89,950 budget for the academic year. In a letter to the senate, Mann cited the power given to her by the Financial Code to "re-allocate budgets in the case of extreme loss of revenue, which is exactly the case we are in today."

Currently SAC has an unpaid Lagoon invoice of \$23,000 that it cannot pay until ASWC funds are reallocated. Mann plans on keeping all SAC and ASWC internal funds under her control until a new internal budget is approved in two to three weeks.

According to several executive cabinet members and senators, the student body government performed a series of missteps that led to the current state of the budget. The brusque budget approval process, the budget committee's misunderstanding between revenue and net income and two instances of large-scale overspending contributed to the depletion of the SAC budget. Dozens of spread sheets, hours of interviews and lots of patience took The Forum step by step through how it happened.

Who passed the budget?

Something was not right with the 2011-2012 ASWC budget. Everyone who was interviewed about this year's budget said the budget process did not allow for enough time to examine it. The most peculiar



Photo Illustration by The Forum

item in the budget was a 359% increase in SAC revenue from last year to this year.

Angela Lan, a finance and budget analyst for federal government contracts, said "I've never seen a year over year increase like that." Mann attributed the massive increase to the projected revenue of \$80,000 for the Jason Derulo concert and the \$23,000 projected revenue for Lagoon day.

Though the increase was atypical, Mann did not express reservations because it was SAC's projection, and SAC was responsible for making up lost revenue through sponsorships.

"I was a little concerned about it [revenue projection], but I honestly didn't know because I didn't have the experience of putting on a big concert," said Trisha Teig, director of student involvement and leadership. "I certainly was supportive."

Jonathan Pierce, the president of ASWC and a finance and economics major, did ex-

press concern about the SAC budget. In a letter to the senate before the budget approval he said, "The SAC budget was proposed with problems in the math of what was being requested and a misunderstanding between net-income and revenue."

Revenue is the money collected. Net income is the amount of money left over after cost is subtracted from the revenue. "My biggest concern with the evaluation of this budget is that it was not evaluated detail

See ASWC BUDGET on Page 8



ASWC Director of Budget and Finance
 Megan Mann

Drive Now, Text Later.

Over 400 students pledge in anti-texting campaign

Jessica Walker
 Staff Reporter

The Public Health Activities Team (P^HAT) challenged students to pledge to not text and drive in an anti-texting campaign "Drive Now, Text Later" in the Richer Commons on Sept. 21, 2011.

Five bands, food and friends completed the atmosphere Wednesday night from 6-10 p.m. as 448 students took the pledge to not text and drive.

Vice President of P^HAT Hillary Makris said Oprah's No Text Zone inspired her to create the "Drive Now, Text



570,000

accidents resulting in minor to serious injuries are caused by drivers using cell phones annually.

See TEXT on Page 10

ASWC Budget

Continued from Page 1

by detail,” said Pierce.

The senate passed the requested SAC budget with a two-thirds veto-proof vote despite Pierce’s concerns and recommendations. Pierce said there was an institutionalized pressure to pass the budget. It was the last senate meeting before May term and the budget had to be passed that night.

Laura Wolf, senator of pure and applied sciences, said the senators were given the budget only a few hours before the meeting, and were expected to review and make decisions about it in a manner of hours.

Why didn’t the projected revenue work out?

In Mann’s letter to the senate she wrote this of the Lagoon revenue projection, “that revenue number doesn’t make sense - at all.” “Unfortunately no one really looked at that number until after the Lagoon cost was incurred.”

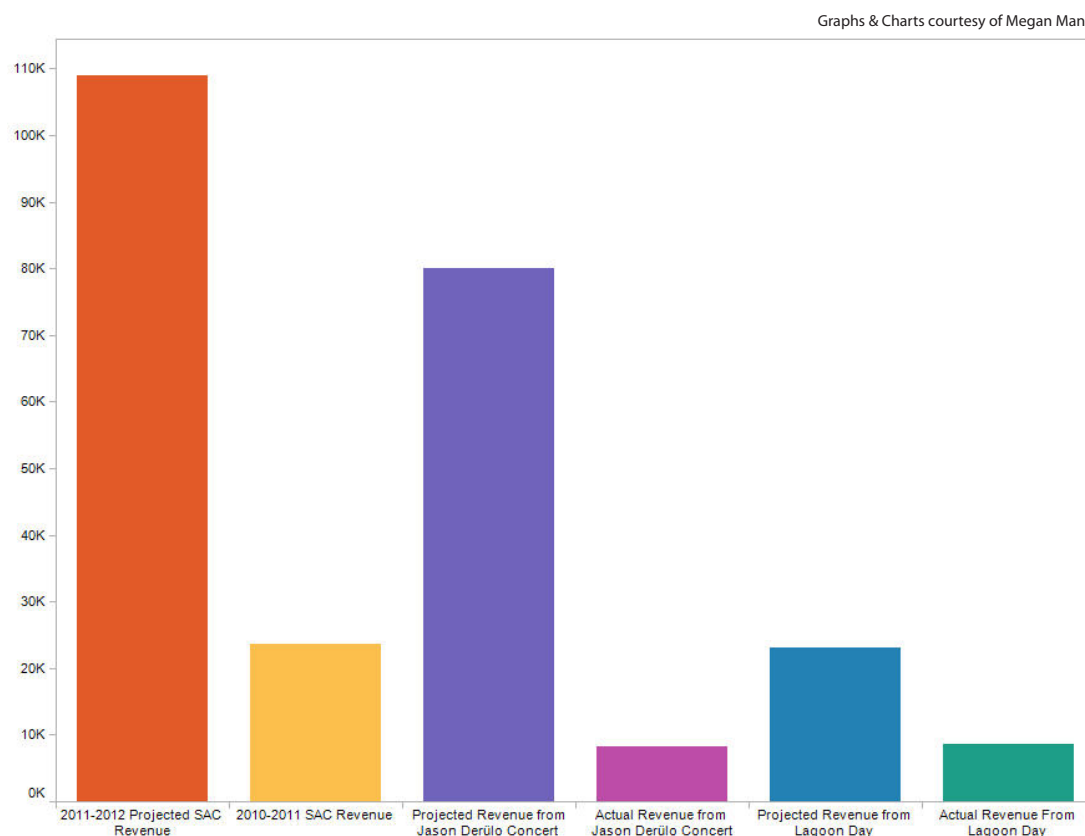
Mann said that SAC projected making a net income of \$10,000 from the Lagoon day event before they looked at the actual cost of the tickets. After receiving the invoice Mann discovered they were losing \$19 per student. 800 students attended the event which adds up to a loss of about \$15,000.

The overspending of Lagoon day pushed the SAC account into the negative because SAC had already spent a substantial amount of its budget on the Jason Derülo concert. Prior to the concert, Mann told The Forum that ASWC loses money on concerts every year.

However, Mann said she still approved the budget request with the projected \$80,000 in revenue because “I was like, you want to do a big concert, you go ahead, and if you don’t make that money, it’s up to you to reallocate those funds or to get sponsorship for things.”

SAC did not make the expected revenue, and it may have been difficult to make the numbers even if they sold out the concert. The concert venue, the Rail Event Center, holds 3,510 people. If SAC sold all of the tickets at \$24.50 (the advance ticket price for non-Westminster students), 3,200 tickets would have to be sold in order to make a revenue of \$80,000.

Even after all of the excessive spending and revenue loss, ASWC hosted a retreat for the student body government that cost them over \$8,000. Instead of cutting costs, they rented a house from Sept. 15 to 18 that



This graph displays the vast difference between SAC’s projected revenue amounts and actual revenue amounts.

cost them \$8,166.75. The house rental was \$7,603 and \$563.75 was billed for food and supplies.

Who makes the projections?

In the current budget process the ASWC budget is broken into three main parts: SAC, Clubs, and Internal Funds. The ASWC president submits a request for internal funds. Club presidents submit requests for club budgets, and the ASWC vice president and activities coordinator submit the request for SAC funds.

The party responsible for making projections is the party submitting the budget request. In the case of the \$109,000 SAC revenue projection, former vice president Mason West and activities coordinator Ross McIlwaine were responsible for submitting the projections.

After the budget requests are made, they are evaluated by the senate budget committee. The committee is made up of one senator from each school in the college and is chaired by ASWC’s director of budgets and finance (Mann).

Mann said the budget committee had about twelve hours of meetings to go through all budget requests line by line. During these twelve hours, the budget committee had the attention to detail to cut \$50 requests for refreshments in half and added explanations like, “light refreshments shouldn’t be that expensive,” but they did not notice the nonsensical \$23,000 Lagoon day revenue projection.

When asked why no one paid attention to the Lagoon day revenue amount, Mann said, “A lot of the budget committee still didn’t get the dif-

ference between the two [net income and revenue], or why it was an issue. Mason [West] and Ross [McIlwaine] definitely didn’t get the difference between the two.”

Who is accountable?

Several Executive Cabinet members and senators were asked about the accountability process for overspending. Pierce said, “It is a big deal, but it’s something that hasn’t been addressed yet. Overspending of that magnitude happens all the time in SAC. For a line item that is something that is relatively common, this [concert] was just a big one.”

According to Teig, all overspending went through the proper channels of approval. Teig has to approve spending over \$100. Requests of over \$1,000 are approved by Westminster’s Vice President, and expenses of \$5,000 are approved by the Dean of Students. “The thing that is challenging is that

upper administration doesn’t have ASWC’s budget, and so the assumption is that ASWC is managing its own budget,” said Teig.

However, Mann says these approvals only pertain to approving the check being written. “At that point, the expense has already been incurred and those approvals just verify that these are non-fraudulent expenses,” said Mann.

“I think what they are facing is a consequence,” said Teig when asked about accountability. “As far as accountability it does fall back on me, not officially though.”

What is going to happen now?

Mann plans on requesting that the senate allocate funds from other areas of the budget to cover SAC’s debt and to continue student activities. Her preliminary plan includes cutting budget from internal cost including the president’s special

projects, stipends, advertising, training and the graduate program’s graduation ceremonies. She does not plan on making any changes until she meets with the new ASWC vice president and gets the new budget approved by the senate.

“Going forward, SAC is planning each of their events with me for budget and cash flow management,” said Mann. “Internally, no one has any open funds and so all expenses will be processed and approved through the entire ECAB [executive cabinet].”

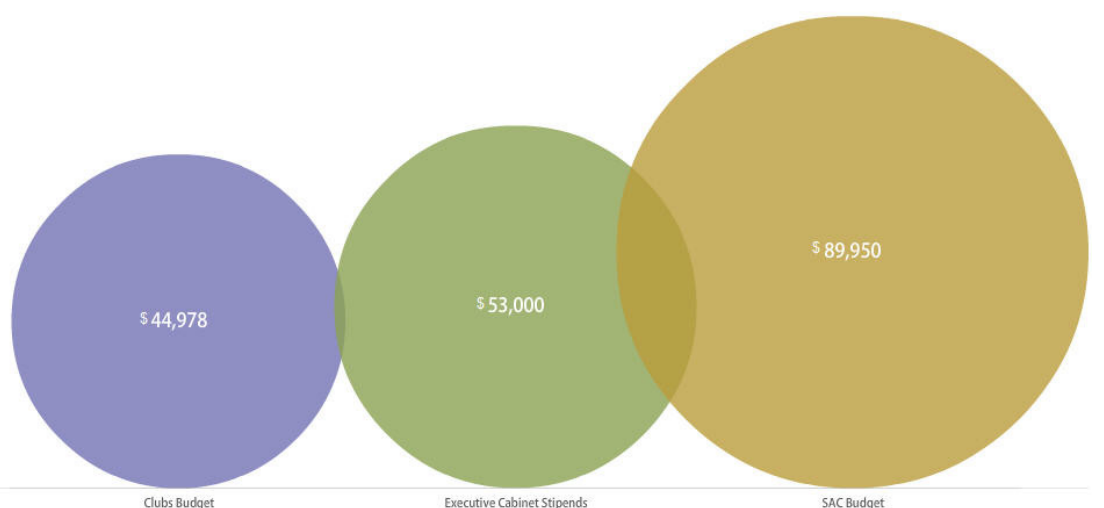
An Ad Hoc committee, chaired by Natalie Batty, is working on budget reform. Students can give their input on the budget situation by speaking to their senators. Psychology major Parker Higgings says he would like to have a personal vote on what the budget goes to. “It’s really simple,” said Higgings. “All we need to do is have an online vote asking students what is your activity you like to do the most, then break that into percentages of the total population. And that’s how you distribute the budget.”

Who should you talk to?

The senate, whose role is to be the voice of the students, is composed of 33 students. Senators are in clusters representing the different schools. The number of senators representing each department depends on the size.

“As a senate, we are responsible for getting to know our constituents and bringing their ideas to the senate meetings,” said Wolf.

Communication between the students and the senate is an issue. Five out of five students that were interviewed did not know who their senator was. When asked if he knew who his senator was, accounting senior Jeff Christensen said, “I have no idea.”



ASWC budget allocation among Clubs, Executive Cabinet Stipends and SAC.

Students not knowing who is representing them causes a lack of communication between the student body and ASWC. If the students are not speaking to their senators, how could the students be represented accurately?

The senate has been discussing ways to reach out to the students they represent. Senators are talking about building relationships with the dean of the department they represent as a way to inform the students.

Senators in the pure and applied sciences are using the white boards on each floor in Meldrum as a communication channel to and from the students. According to Wolf, white boards in Meldrum will be sectioned off to inform the students of new legislation. Students are encouraged to also give their opinions and concerns on the white boards.

Since it is the senators' job to pass legislation and to monitor the executive cabinet, it is important for the students to be able to easily communicate with the senators. Nick Kuzmack, senator of social sciences, said, "The student's concerns are our concerns and we must address them."

Only six senators out of the 33 have posted their information on ASWC's website. "For the students to know who their senators are, we need to get our bios out. We need to make ourselves publicly available," said Kuzmack.

Making their information available to the students via the website is a personal respon-

sibility. Senators have been encouraged to post their information on the website so it is readily available.

How are students being represented?

One way the senators voiced student opinions was by creating an ad hoc committee to investigate the Jason Derulo concert. The committee was constructed of eight appointed members of the senate. "We only had an hour to come up with the findings," said James Ham, senator of arts and humanities.

Jillian Edmonds, senator of arts and humanities, spoke at the Senate Meeting held on Monday, Sept. 26. According to Edmonds, having the Twilight Concert series ending the week before drew people away since the concert was not free. Also, since Westminster is such a small school, having a large concert may not be in its best interest.

Having the concert on campus was an option ASWC was looking into to cut costs, but it was not permitted. "Basically neighbors are a pain in the ass," said McIlwaine.

Pierce said that they will use the findings for recommendations in the future.

"The ad hoc committee was

created to serve a specific purpose," said Pierce. "Once it has fulfilled its purpose, it ceases to exist."

Is ASWC transparent?

A student government is there to inform the student body, however, students feel ASWC is doing the opposite.

Ham said, "They keep saying everything is open, but what we need is a transparent ASWC right now so that people understand as a full scope how horribly we are in the deficit and what we need to do so we can fix it and move on with it."

There are many rumors circulating campus about the concert. Even though the numbers are out, ASWC claims to still not have the total revenue numbers from Smithtix and Textix.

At the first senate meeting held on Aug. 29, a transparency bill was passed unanimously. The bill was composed by juniors Alex Siciliano and Nick Kuzmack.

This was a call to action for the senators to reach out to students and for the executive cabinet to make information readily available and easily accessible. A brief monthly publication was to be written to make the students aware of current issues. "I think it may have unfortunately taken the back seat," said Siciliano. "It is one of those bills that is common

sense that something needs to happen."

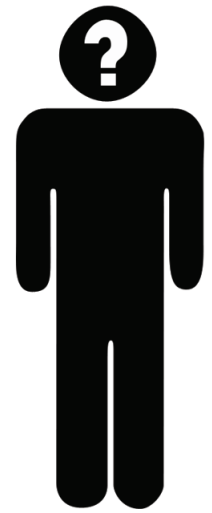
The bill was supposed to be enacted within 48 hours of it being passed. "I am appalled that the act has not been enforced," said Kuzmack. "The judicial counsel is supposed to enforce our rulings."

Jeff Zuckerman, ASWC attorney general, said he did not know any information about the transparency bill. "I just know that ASWC as a whole this year is trying to be as transparent as possible by posting things on the website and letting the student body know what is going on and what is being spent," said Zuckerman. "I'm guessing that's what the transparency act does."

With the attorney general unaware of the act, it shows that the bill is not in effect throughout ASWC. "There is a lack of implementation and communication between the different branches of the government here," said Siciliano.

With the concert crisis and the senators' lack of effort to get to know the students they represent, transparency is an issue on campus. Changes within the entire student government need to be made before ASWC can be completely transparent.

If you have any questions about the student body government, contact your senator or stop by the ASWC office located in Shaw.



WHO ARE YOUR SENATORS?

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Dorothann Dinas
Jillian Edmonds
Tory Hallenburg
James Ham
Tyson Olcott

BUSINESS

Brendan Davis
Tulip Fan
Sebastian Hooker
Johannes Jogi
Brandon Lloyd
O'Ryan Moore
Angelique Pappas

EDUCATION

Elizabeth Sauve

FRESHMEN

Jacqueline Alvidrez
Alexandra Grow
Pratik Raghu

GRADUATE

Christian Roberts

GRADUATE EDUCATION

Alexandra Cohn

NURSING

Amy Forker
Erica Maier
Elizabeth Nelson
Catherine Worman

PURE AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Natalie Batty
Heidi Saxton
Thomas Stevens
Laura Wolf

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dominique Kiahtipes
Nicholas Kuzmack
Katrina Maurer
Kira Wallace
Whitney Warnick

UNDECLARED

Arthur Eby

2011-2012 ASWC BUDGET

Line Item	Account	Requested	Approved	Spent	Remaining
Publications:					
Student Handbook	32707	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 10,728.00	\$ 272.00
Activities:					
SAC Activities	32814	\$ 89,950.00	\$ 89,950.00	\$ 97,642.70	\$ (7,692.70)
ASWC Special Projects	32820	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 14,700.00	\$ 800.34	\$ 13,899.66
Graduate Program	32805	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
Opportunity Fund	11-30179	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,374.00	\$ 5,626.00
Joint Fund	11-30115	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -
ASWC Office:					
Stipends (ECAB)	32903	\$ 54,650.00	\$ 53,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 41,000.00
Stipends (Other)	32904	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 1,631.94	\$ 5,868.06
Internal Costs	32905	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 1,238.50	\$ 21,261.50
Advertising/Office Supplies	32703	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 4,807.22	\$ 6,192.78
Training	32811	\$ 11,780.00	\$ 11,780.00	\$ 10,505.10	\$ 1,274.90
General Fund (Unallocated Funds)	32906	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 12,591.99	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 10,791.99
Total Budgeted		\$ 254,380.00	\$ 255,021.99	\$ 151,527.80	\$ 103,494.19
(Clubs)		\$ 87,735.76	\$ 44,978.01	\$ 3,929.25	\$ 41,048.76
ASWC Estimated Budget		\$ 342,115.76	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 155,457.05	\$ 144,542.95

Updated as of 9/27/2011 by Megan Mann