

Operations and Instruction Manual
(Unofficial Document)

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History: a time of change

WESEF was established in the Fall of 1997 to raise money to improve the quality of undergraduate and graduate education in the Faculty of Environmental Studies. It's initiation and operation is student based, which enables the students to have a direct influence over their academic environment. Although still in its infancy, at the time of this document, WESEF has proven to be a valuable asset to the Faculty of Environmental Studies, having funded a wide variety of student proposals. However, the impacts of time and inevitable change create both opportunity and potential difficulties for WESEF. In particular, almost all of the original board members of WESEF have now moved on, taking with them their experience and knowledge. In addition, a number of growing pains have been overcome and need not be repeated. Such is the motivation of this document.

This WESEF operations and instruction manual, as not only a testament to the previous members experience, is the first attempt to record all of the details or "tricks of the trade" learned from these early years in order to guide future boards. As a document it will be composed of information already presented in the WESEF Constitution and Bylaws, but need reiteration, as well as more detailed forms of information about each aspect of WESEF. Regardless of how much effort has gone into this document, WESEF has not experienced all of its growing pains and it is possible that we, as authors and past members, could have overlooked some useful information. This document is unofficial, containing many positions that have developed over the previous years of operation thus it remains subject to review. So we encourage future boards to improve or contribute to this working document.

Sincerely,

Jim Porter

Dulce Da Silva

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Board Membership and their Responsibilities

Although a student run organization, WESEF is responsible and has control over significant sums of money (i.e. tens of thousands of dollars). Consequently, any board member should assume their position with the utmost of respect and diligence - WESEF and each board members position should not be taken lightly. Generally, participation on the board does not require much time or effort on the part of its members. At the very least *all* board members must gain a cursory familiarity with the constitution, bylaws, as well as relevant parts of this document. The membership breakdown and terms of office are outlined in the constitution and the bylaws.

Executive Committee

The WESEF Constitution outlines a general description and the responsibilities of four distinct positions within the board, which will form the executive committee: the chair, the vice chair, the treasurer, and the past chair. Previous to this document, the treasurer assumed responsibility over the finances as well as other secretarial duties. It has been found that these two tasks were too much for any single individual, thus have been split into two positions: the treasurer and the secretary. All five of these positions will now be reviewed.

Chair

- i) calling meetings of the Board Members each term (Fall, Winter, Spring)
 - It is the responsibility of the chair for the current term, as determined by the previous term's board, or the past chair, or an appointed board member to call the first meeting of each term. Subsequent to this first meeting, all meetings will be called by the current term's chair and announced at least 10 working days prior to the next meeting. An exception to this is if the next meeting date was established at the end of the previous meeting.
- ii) being the Chairperson at meetings
 - The chair either facilitates each meeting, or assigns meeting facilitation to other members of the group. Meetings must be conducted with efficiency and respect, where every member has an opportunity to voice their position. In addition, the chair has to ensure that the meeting is not moving too fast for the secretary to record accurate minutes. (see also Board Meetings)
- iii) ensuring all other board member roles are being fulfilled.
 - In particular, the chair assists and is responsible for all of the duties outlined for the treasurer and the secretary.
- iv) acting as an ex officio member of all of the committees (see section 6.0 of bylaws)
 - Six separate committees have been outline in the Bylaws: executive, grants, finance and investment, recognition and reports, fundraising, and the nominating committees. As not only a member, the chair must coordinate and ensure the operation of each of these committees.

- Although an intention of the nominating committee, the chair has responsibility for the establishment of next terms committee, or at least the appointment of a couple of individuals to initiate WESEF in the next term.
 - The chair is responsible for outreach into the faculty. This would mean establishing a familiarity, or encouraging each board representative to establish a familiarity, with each department's students, faculty, chair and the dean of environmental studies. This is to ensure that each department recognizes that WESEF is available for students, and to encourage everyone to become active in using WESEF. (see also recognition and reports committee in Working Committees)
 - Communicating with the university Secretariat, that they are the new WESEF President and should be reached for university wide Endowment Fund meetings
- v) ensuring that the foundation is functioning in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.
- Uphold the bylaws and constitution during WESEF operations
 - Ensure that all board members are familiar with appropriate documents including this document, the constitution, and the bylaws.
- vi) Finances
- Obtain refund form as a copy from this document (see appendix), or from the Cashiers office in Needles Hall. Provides the ESS Office in the ES Coffee Shop with a refund form, and when completed, photocopy the form and send the original to the Cashiers office in Needles Hall. (see refunds in Finances)
 - Signing authority: The chair shares signing authority with the treasurer. To switch signing authority from term to term, a form needs to be obtained either from this document (see appendix) or from the dean's office and signed by the new chair (see signing authority in Finances)
- vii) WESEF Audit and Review
- WESEF is subject to an audit and review from the university board of governors, as outlined in the constitution. The chair is responsible for coordinating and providing the appropriate materials subject to this review.

Vice Chair

- i) Acting as Chairperson at meetings when the Chair is absent,
- ii) Assisting the Chair in all their duties, as needed.
- iii) Ensuring that WESEF is functioning in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Treasurer

- i) Responsible for all financial information
 - Update financial statement and WESEF finance spreadsheets, along with chair (see financial spreadsheet in Finances)
 - Become familiar with relevant university contacts and procedures appropriate for finances.
 - Obtain list of students who have received their refund from the ESS office in ES Coffee Shop to determine how many students asked for refunds and also to

determine if present chair members have asked for refunds and if so, they are unsuitable to be a WESEF Committee member.

- Reviews monthly financial statements from the University finances and accounting office. Ensures that statements are received in appropriate time and establish open communication with relevant individuals (Corporate Financial Analyst – East Campus Hall). Provide financial information to Board Members within forty-eight hours upon receiving a written request from the board of governors.
 - Provide financial information to Board Members within forty-eight hours upon receiving a written request
- ii) signing authority
- Shares signing authority with the chair (see Finances)

Secretary

- i) Minutes
- Recording minutes for all board meetings (see meeting minutes)
 - Should interrupt or slow the meeting if the meeting is moving too fast for accurate recording, or if clarification is needed.
 - Distributing minutes to all of those who are required to receive a copy as outlined in the constitution. This would include distribution of draft minutes to the board members prior to the next meeting (at least 3 days to allow for review of the minutes, and often at the same time as an email reminding members of the upcoming meeting).
 - Ensure at the beginning of the next meeting the ratification of the minutes (i.e. make any necessary corrections, additions, or deletions) through consensus of the board (i.e. vote).
 - Should work with the chair, and treasurer to provide an executive summary of that term's major achievements and tasks for the next term's board.
- ii) Announcements
- The secretary is responsible for the design, printing, and distribution of appropriate posters or email notices. These will include "a call for board members" and "a call for proposals." (see appendix)
- iii) Letters to Students
- The secretary is responsible for sending communications to proposal presenters regarding acceptance or non-acceptance of proposals. All letters, including announcements mentioned above, must be reviewed by the WESEF Chair prior to being sent out.

Past Chair

- i) Acting as an advisor to the Chair,
- ii) Assisting the Chair and Vice-Chair in ensuring that the foundation is functioning according to the provisions of the Constitution.
- iii) Acting as Chair of the Nominating Committee

WESEF positions are selected among the current term's board members. Generally, individuals volunteer or are nominated for a position. This nomination then requires

someone to “second” it, followed by a majority vote from all voting members of the Board (see Voting Procedure in bylaws).

Working Committees

Six committees have been outlined in the WESEF bylaws, which include the executive, grants, finance and investment, fundraising, recognition and reports, and nominating committees. Each of these committees have a very important function; however, in practice they have not all been formed with any consistency. This section will elaborate only those committees that should be developed further with respect to their responsibilities, as well as a discussion about the role of student volunteers.

- Both the executive committee (i.e. the WESEF including chair, vice chair etc) and the grants committee (i.e. initial proposal reviewing committee) are necessary for minimal operation of WESEF. (see also bylaws and the Proposals). The grants committee is comprised of at least two undergraduate representatives, 1 graduate representative and 1 alumni, faculty or staff representative. The executive committee is comprised of the chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, and past chair.
- Although never specifically identified as such, the finance and investment committee has traditionally been comprised of the chair and the treasurer, which has proven to be effective and consistent with their respective responsibilities.
- The fundraising committee is left to the discretion of the current WESEF board. To date, it has not proven necessary, and is anticipated to continue that way, since WESEF gains more than enough financial support from tuition fees, carry over and principal to fund an adequate number of proposals each term.
- The recognition and reports committee has been formed infrequently, in spite of being an increasingly crucial component of WESEF. This committee’s role is to ensure that all past proposals can be appropriately identified as being funded by WESEF. This is important as to increase the recognition of WESEF as a valuable resource for the students of ES. On one occasion the costing of plaques and alternate means of identification was performed; however this search should be replicated given changes in product availability and costing. In addition, two of the five departments in ES, to their credit, have consistently and professionally capitalized on the funds available in WESEF. In part, this is due to the nature of each department (i.e. greater presence and use of discrete, tangible technologies that are easier to fund); however, it has also been a result of a deficiency in student outreach and image on the part of WESEF. Each member of board, as a representative of their department, should spend time advertising WESEF as a resource, whether this includes classroom visits, posters, discussions with department chairs and faculty, or similar initiatives. Since all students of ES contribute to WESEF, it is the board’s responsibility to ensure that every student and department has an equal opportunity to participate. As for the report component of this committee, the board secretary in association with the chair should assume this responsibility.
- The nominating committee, as lead by past chair, is responsible for the selection of new board members for the current term. To date, this has not really been performed for a variety of reasons, such as board turnover between terms. In order to alleviate this problem, it is recommended that the selection for the subsequent term’s board begin at the end of the previous term, even if it’s only the identification of potential

members. If board positions are not formally filled during this initial selection process, another round should be initiated at the beginning of the next term to be fair to students not present in the previous term. Most importantly, the early identification of potential board members ensures that there are already members willing and capable of initiating WESEF for the new term, if the past chair or past vice chair are unable to do so. In addition, these names are then made available to the Dean's office for them to initiate WESEF, if all else fails. This is to address a major concern regarding who and how WESEF is initiated for each term, and its ability to adjust through changes in board membership. Subsequent years are encouraged and likely to provide an improved procedure for countering this concern, than the one provided here.

- As the student body becomes increasingly aware of WESEF, by virtue of the recognition and outreach efforts, which is already apparent in the continual rise of submitted proposals from previous terms, then more interest for participation in WESEF is likely. This interest should be encouraged and fostered, where opportunities are made available even if all board positions have been filled. This may include assisting any of the board members with their duties, as appropriate. It may also include developing initiatives for the benefit of WESEF and its membership not previously identified by the board representatives, but remaining under the guidance of a WESEF board member. In addition, these individuals may become valuable members of the board in subsequent terms, which will alleviate concerns about board turnover and re-education of board members for each term. Consequently, a new working committee may become necessary to coordinate volunteer efforts. Volunteers are not voting members of the board.

Board Meetings

WESEF is a legitimate committee, responsible for our fellow student's money, which demands a sense of professionalism among its board members and in the operation of each meeting. WESEF is also subject to review and must be capable of demonstrating proper composure and operations. In addition, the reality is that board members are busy and an efficient use of their time is necessary. With that said, WESEF should remain enjoyable for all of its board members, in spite of all this regimentation (not a large concern given the dynamic nature of this faculty). The most effective way to ensure efficiency and effectiveness is to conduct well-designed and well-facilitated meetings.

General Meetings

The constitution states that, at minimum, one meeting will be held each term. Generally, five or more meetings have proven necessary during the course of each term including introduction/board selection, proposal review, proposal presentations, and proposal selection. Additional meetings may become necessary depending on the initiatives undertaken by the particular board, or if a larger number of proposals are received than the board is willing to review in one meeting. Through the initial years, a consistency in the operation of each WESEF meeting has become apparent and will be reviewed here. As mentioned earlier, the chair is responsible to coordinate and run each meeting, or assign the facilitation role to other members of the board as appropriate (e.g. presentation of the proposals by the grants committee).

- First and foremost, a meeting agenda must be established, which is the responsibility of primarily the chair. The components of the agenda tend to develop as a consequence of the particular stage that WESEF is in (e.g. proposal review). Introductions and the selection of executive committee should be conducted in the first meeting. However, each subsequent meeting agenda should be formed, or suggestions provided, at the end of the previous meeting, so as to include the agenda in the meeting minutes in order to remind WESEF board members of the intended goals prior to the meeting. The current meeting's agenda should be displayed to the board members at the onset of each meeting.
- Each agenda item should be briefly reviewed, and then the board is allowed an opportunity to add new items, or suggest other alterations such as changing agenda order.
- Proceed through each agenda item, ensuring that enough time is spent on each item as to allow all items to be completed to the satisfaction of all board members and within the allotted time. Or, make the committee aware that not all the items will be completed in the available time and confirm whether they want to move an agenda item to a subsequent meeting or change the pace of discussion. The Chair must make sure that meetings do not run over the time allotted. This is done through an informed understanding of the time required to go through each agenda item, and include an appropriate number of items within the agenda. Any major motions (e.g. selection of board positions, evaluation of proposals) must first be motioned by a board member, seconded by another member, and then voted on by the entire board, using a majority vote (see Voting Procedures in bylaws).
- Minutes are recorded throughout the meeting, and when necessary the meeting is stopped to allow the secretary to catch-up or establish a point of clarification.
- At the end of the meeting, a time and date for the next meeting should be confirmed, as well as dealing with any outstanding issues. Room locations are booked through the Dean's office, or they can be confirmed at a later date.

Text box 1. Five sample agendas

First Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and Board Member Introductions
2. Review of Meeting Agenda
3. Overview of Purpose of WESEF
4. Review Members Expectations and their Role in WESEF
5. Selection of Board Member Positions (Chair, vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary)
6. Establish Schedule for Proposals (including time for advertising and acceptance, review and presentations)
7. Set up Working Committees
8. Schedule Next Meeting

Second Meeting Agenda

1. Review Meeting Agenda
2. Ratify Previous Meeting Minutes
3. Presentation of Proposals by Grants Committee (incl. Description and costs)
4. Presentation by Treasurer on Finances
5. Discussion of Proposals and Selection of Proposals for Presentation
6. Schedule Next Meeting
7. Miscellaneous

Third Meeting Agenda

1. Review Meeting Agenda
2. Ratify Previous Meeting Minutes
3. Formal Proposal Presentations and Questions from the Board
4. Schedule Next Meeting
5. Miscellaneous

Fourth Meeting Agenda

1. Review Meeting Agenda
2. Ratify Previous Meeting Minutes
3. Discussions and Selection of Funded Proposals
4. Schedule Next Meeting
5. Miscellaneous

Fifth Meeting Agenda

1. Review Meeting Agenda
2. Ratify Previous Meeting Minutes
3. Review of Working Committee Results
4. Identification of Individuals to Initiate Next Term's WESEF Committee
5. Thanks and Congratulations

In previous terms, the miscellaneous category in the agenda has included discussions on proposal selection criteria, policy development, potential bylaws, among many other items.

Annual General Meeting

As outlined in the bylaws, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled annually for the Fall term. It is only during an AGM that bylaws can be added, deleted or refined. The executive summary of meeting minutes will be the source of information for any necessary bylaw changes. However, WESEF has struggled in its attempts to hold an

AGM meeting. This is primarily due to the quorum requirement of twenty-five voting members of the ES faculty as defined in the Bylaws under Section (i.e. have paid and not refunded their fees for ES) has been difficult to achieve. Strategies to achieve quorum have been to announce an AGM for the same time at which proposals are being presented as to include a group of individuals already interested in the operations of WESEF. In addition, potential bylaws may be put on display after being presented at the AGM for a period of a week allowing quorum to be reached that way, as opposed to attendance of a single meeting (see minutes summary in Appendix).

Meeting Minutes

Perhaps the most under-rated task of each meeting is the meeting minutes. Minutes document relevant points, issues, scheduling, and tasks to be completed or considered. They are critical to have (especially if the University reviews WESEF), points need to be clarified or reviewed, as well as to guide future meetings and terms of office. Consequently, excellent minutes have to be taken during each meeting. A variety of styles have arisen in the previous years, depending on the individual recording the minutes. However, in order to ensure a standard level of quality and form is maintained, a suggested minutes design will be provided. They should include: 1) date and time of meeting, 2) agenda for current meeting, 3) documentation of attendance and non-attendance, 4) a summary of the discussion surrounding each agenda item, 5) and a preliminary agenda and confirmed date for the next meeting. The summary of each agenda item should have two elements, a general discussion (and if pertinent to the point, include names), and action items including who, what and when an item will be performed. All of this information is critical for accurate minute taking.

All minutes should be archived either on the WESEF web site, in the WESEF file in the ESS Coffee Shop, or in the back of this document. Access to the ESS Coffee shop can be obtained from contacting the Deans office staff. As a service to the next term, the secretary and the chair should provide an executive summary of the terms operations including: proposals funded and costs, potential amendments to the bylaws, suggestions for improvement and any other outstanding issues.

Proposals

The receipt and funding of proposals for the students of ES is the main role of WESEF. Advertising, or a “call for proposals”, using posters and a broad email announcement, is usually done as an action item arising from the second WESEF meeting by the grants committee. A sample of both a poster and email announcement is provided in the appendix. The greatest difficulty for using email announcements is finding an appropriate list to reach the greatest number of individuals of the faculty. A variety of options are available. First, the MAD computer desk has a listserv that it uses to reach the general ES populous. Unfortunately, students have to sign up for this server during the term, which is an often-overlooked task during the hectic beginnings of each term. Another alternative is to send notices to graduate and undergraduate secretaries for each department so that they can forward messages to the students. Care and respect must be taken not to burden these valuable members of the faculty and staff with any more tasks. In addition, the use of multiple email methods will likely result in double-sending to many individuals, which is

undesirable if it disturbs anyone. So, careful consideration of the approach to emailing is necessary. Overall, a campaign of one email method and posters, in addition to any outreach initiatives (see also recognition and reports committee in Working Committees), will yield sufficient advertising for proposals. Students are instructed to complete the proposal form located on the WESEF homepage. Proposals completed on the webpage will be sent to one board member. It is recommended that one member of the grants committee be designated to be the recipient of proposals (see web board).

Evaluation Criteria

Last term and a previous term, an extra initiative was undertaken to develop a list of “evaluation criteria” to be applied to the proposals. Products from that discussion are as follows (note: none of the following is in any particular hierarchical order and the criteria are merely a tool for assessing the validity of a project as appropriate to receive WESEF funds). These criteria have since been voted into Bylaw (November, 2000) and include:

VALUE:

- benefit a large number of students in ES
- apply to range of departments
- applies exclusively to ES students
- quality of enhancement of educational or student life in ES

BUDGET:

- cost of proposal

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY:

- number of proposals recently funded from that department (reflecting the makeup of the contributors to WESEF)
- number of other proposals recently funded for similar items

URGENCY:

- funding required in current term
-

EXPOSURE:

- product provides good exposure for WESEF

QUALITY:

- quality of proposal: cost accuracy, logistics clear, nothing left uncertain

OTHER:

- Completed Proposal in its entirety
- approved by appropriate person/group (e.g. MAD rep for computer equipment)
- proponent is current WESEF member (i.e. Has not refunded their money)
- no other appropriate sources of funding
- not ongoing funding for the same products

Each of these criteria was to be employed as things to consider, and not within a formal rating system. This was because a rating system would prove too difficult to establish (i.e. to weigh each factor appropriately) and an unnecessary complication. Using these criteria as things to consider, in conjunction with a healthy discourse among WESEF board members provided the necessary tools to evaluate proposals. Remember all students pay into this, so fairness needs to be considered. Overall, the criterion that has emerged as very important is whether the majority of ES students benefit from funding a particular proposal. *An important point to consider is that not all proposals should be funded even if money is available to do so (see policy in appendix).* It is the responsibility

of the WESEF board to represent the ES student body effectively, by allocating funds to quality proposals – not just any proposal that meets minimal requirements. Money not spent in a term is carried over to the next term, term or put back into capital (i.e. cannot be spent) at the discretion of the current committee (see Finances). This is important when amounting funds for when “big ticket” items are being considered (e.g. van).

The grants committee has the responsibility to initially review all proposals, in accordance to the above criteria. Proposals that do not meet minimum requirements (i.e. the proposal form has not been completely filled out) are removed immediately from the list, or if time permitted when it was first sent in, to be redirected to its proponent for resubmission before the deadline. This is the only time that proposals are removed prior to being presented to the WESEF board. This concern should be alleviated with the creation of mandatory fields to fill out on the proposal form on the internet. This committee then prioritizes the remaining proposals, in order to improve the efficiency of the proposal evaluation meeting, and presents their summary to executive committee at the same meeting. It should be understood that the prioritization produced by the grants committee is a recommendation, where the board can adjust the list accordingly.

Presentations provide the proposal originators (i.e. students) an opportunity to discuss and illustrate the value of their application. It also provides the board an opportunity for clarification and to ask questions that may influence how they evaluate each proposal. All proposals that satisfy minimum requirements will be given an opportunity to participate in presentations. When developing the proposal presentation and review schedule, pay careful consideration to the student exam and assignment schedule, as to avoid grievances with presenters and board members. If the person who submitted is unable to attend the scheduled meeting, the proposal shall be considered void unless they have someone present on their behalf. If unusual circumstances arise (i.e. sickness), the committee may decide to have this person present at a later date. Depending on the number of proposals to be presented, time limits for each presentation and questions may need to be enforced in order to allow for all the proposals to be presented; or the scheduling of an additional meeting may be required.

Once a proposal presentation are completed, and the committee has determined what will, and will not be funded, it is the responsibility of the secretary to contact the individuals who submitted the proposal and inform them as to whether their proposal was accepted. This will be done by sending them a double reviewed email detailing the steps required in order to receive funding for an accepted proposal or a discussion on why the proposal was not approved.

Finances

The last, but definitely not the least important aspect of WESEF operations is finances. This has proven to be the most difficult and onerous part of WESEF, but hopefully this document will alleviate many of these difficulties. The current WESEF account number is available to current WESEF board members in the WESEF binder located in the ESS coffee shop. Be careful to confirm this number at the beginning of each term with

Financial Services (East Campus Hall). Care must be given not to divulge this account number to the general public, as it gives as access to all of the WESEF funds.

General Breakdown

A necessary review of how the finances are obtained and then broken down will now be provided. General financial inquiries should be directed to the Dean's office

- Income comes from three sources: \$30 endowment tuition fee from each student at the beginning of each term; interest (5%) accumulated annually from capital (or principal)¹, and other miscellaneous sources. At this point in time, most of the funds are generated from the tuition fees. (note: students are able to refund this endowment fee with the first three weeks of each term; see also refunds)
- 40% of the tuition fees is dedicated to capital, and the other 60% is dedicated to expendable in order to fund proposals for that term. This 60/40 split will be continued until the interest generated from capital is approximately equal to or greater than the income generated from the 60% of tuition fees. For instance, in the 1999/2000 fiscal year there were approximately 1,335 full time students for the entire year, including undergraduate and graduate students (total of the enrollment for each term). Multiply this value by \$30 per student, leaves a total of \$40,050. Where 40% of that was dedicated to capital (\$16,020), leaving \$24,030 available to spend on proposals for the entire year. Remember that the receipt of these funds during the year is not equal, where more money is received in the Fall and Winter terms because of higher enrollment at that time. Using an interest rate of 5%, it would mean that this 60/40 split will be maintained until capital exceeds \$480,600. Currently, capital (or principal) exists at \$78,000, which would mean approximately another 17 years before this split is removed. However, once this split is removed, all incoming money will be directed into capital, leaving only interest to be spent, where it is up to the discretion of the board to how much of the interest is available to fund proposals. Also important to remember is that the receipt of this interest will only occur once a year, which requires it to be distributed appropriately within each of the three terms. Suggested division of funds (40% of interest for Fall and Winter terms, 20% of interest for Summer term).
- 5% of the expendable funds are available each term for the discretionary use by the WESEF board to cover the costs of printing, food for meetings, web board manager, or hiring a financial advisor and other like items.

Although the aforementioned explanation appears to be very complicated, a spreadsheet with formulas has been created to facilitate the process determining WESEF Finances. These spreadsheets are simple to use as long as the provided instructions are followed carefully. Care must be taken after every term to update the spreadsheets. These updates will provide the financial foundation for subsequent WESEF Committees. It is important that *all records must be checked with the financial statements given to you by financial*

¹ Money governed by WESEF is stored in two forms: capital (or principal) and expendable. Capital is the main body of funds being built so that proposals can be funded purely on the interest. Capital cannot, or should not, be drawn upon to fund proposals. Expendable is the active account from which proposals are funded.

services to ensure that all purchases are accounted for and that there are no major discrepancies.

Refunds

The chair or the treasurer must obtain an endowment fund refund form from the cashier's office in Needles Hall, which is then placed in the ESS coffee shop for the first three weeks of every term, after which the endowment fee is not refundable. There may be some forms currently available in the ESS coffee shop. Either the chair or treasurer photocopies this form, and the original is sent to the Cashier's office with a note stating that the intent is for reimbursement and the photocopy is kept on file in the ESS coffee shop. The number of students that had requested refunds is then entered in the appropriate cell on the financial spreadsheet. Students that have requested refunds are ineligible to sit on the WESEF board, vote, or submit proposals. They are also theoretically ineligible to benefit from WESEF proposals for that term; however, this is logistically too difficult to enforce.

How Proposals are Funded

Since the WESEF committee does not have direct access to our financial accounts, the manner in which the proponents of proposals obtain funds can be quite cumbersome due to the amount of paperwork required. The following list outlines several scenarios in regards to distributing funding for proposals. Only those individuals with signing authority are capable of releasing funds from the WESEF account (see signing authority).

Purchase Requisitions

If a proposal entails purchasing a piece of equipment, journals, or furniture it is necessary to obtain a purchase requisition from the dean's office (see appendix) which will allow the purchase of equipment from an outside buyer. This form is to be provided and completed by the faculty or staff member who authorized the proposal. However, since money is to be taken out of the WESEF account, it is necessary that the form also be signed by those board members with signing authority (i.e. chair and treasurer). It must only be signed once the amount designated for the proposal has been filled in; ***never sign a blank form***. In addition, confirm that the amount on the form is appropriate to that accepted for the proposal and confirm that the correct account number is written in the "accounting flexfield" (see miscellaneous problems: mix up with account numbers). The individual completing the form (i.e. staff or faculty) is then responsible for this form.

Cheque Request

If the purchase is to go to a student or organization, it is necessary to obtain a cheque request form (see appendix), which is then sent to Accounts Payable in Financial Services (East Campus Hall). This is similar to a purchase requisition form, except that a separate cheque will be issued and mailed to the student organization on behalf of the university, and the university will then debit the WESEF account. Confirm that the amount on the form is appropriate to that accepted for the proposal and confirm that the correct account number is written in the "accounting flexfield." This form can be obtained from the Dean's office.

JV Transfer

Sometimes the university will purchase an item that has been approved by WESEF, prior to receiving a purchase requisition. To reimburse the university, it is necessary to write a memorandum for a JV transfer (see appendix). It involves the secretary composing a letter to Accounts Payable in Financial Services (East Campus Hall), instructing them to debit the WESEF account for the amount approved and to transfer that same amount into the account that the project was funded (note: confirm that proper account numbers are being used).

All financial documents, such as requisition forms, cheque request forms, memorandums, and any other accompanying paper work, must be photocopied, dated and placed with the other WESEF material in the ESS Coffee Shop. Appropriate updates must be made immediately to the financial spreadsheets, which are available on the course disk located on the MAD computer server. Access to this course disk can be obtained from the MAD office. Updating the financial statements is crucial for a number of reasons including, university auditing purposes, so that WESEF to keep track of its purchases (including outstanding ones), and to verify our records with those that appear on the financial statements.

Financial Spreadsheet

The WESEF board cannot depend solely on the statements and accounting system provided by Accounting Services in the estimation of funds available for spending, or in the maintenance of specific account concerns. As a result, the financial spreadsheets were created to improve the process and accuracy in which WESEF finances were being documented for the use of WESEF board members (see appendix). They provide an estimate of money available to allocate to proposals, as well as keep track of any outstanding issues. Funds available are calculated from the current term's student enrollment, in addition to money that was carried over from the previous term.

Signing Authority

Only board members with signing authority, such as the chair and treasurer, are able to access the WESEF account. The signature from both of these individuals is necessary to release funds for a project. Individuals obtain signing authority from the ES Financial Assistant in the Dean's Office. This needs to be accomplished at the onset of each term, and new WESEF board.

Precedents and Miscellaneous Issues

As was implied by the necessity for WESEF to create their own accounting system, a number of problems or concerns can arise that can have a significant impact on the funds available for proposals. For instance, interest derived from principal gets added to the WESEF account only once at the end of the fiscal year in April. Consequently, income generated from this interest should not be considered available for funding proposals until it shows up in the financial statements. Confirm account number on all documentation relevant to WESEF as to avoid any incorrect entries. An error in the account number will result in a non-WESEF account being debited, followed by a number of administrative loops and transfers leading to unnecessary difficulties in accurate financial accounting.

Although not stated in the Constitution or Bylaws, WESEF has not funded ongoing projects, such as courses etc. However there are two major exceptions to this rule. The first is the purchase of "big ticket" items, such as the van, where the cost has to be spread out over a number of terms as to still allow a variety of proposals to be funded in each term (also see summary of meeting minutes in appendix for proposals). Importantly, with effective WESEF exposure, more and more proposals are expected each term, where the number of proposals being funded should reflect the number presented, as balanced with the importance of more expensive items. The other exception of appropriate ongoing projects is providing funding for the maintenance and repairs of past WESEF purchases. This is particularly important since many of the proposals funded are for various technologies or equipment (e.g. computers) that need servicing. This point needs to be discussed more and placed into bylaw (see Operational Policies and Potential Bylaw Amendments in appendix). The final miscellaneous item is that the exact amount of expendable money should be readjusted according to the financial statements.


Web Board and Poster Board

Information pertinent to WESEF is located on its bulletin board at the bottom of the main staircase in ES1 or on the webboard (<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/studentlife/WESEF>). The relevant working committee should keep both of these information sources up-to-date. Access to the webboard can be gained from getting the password from the previous webmanager. It is strongly recommended that some of the discretionary funds available to the board be spent on contracting an individual from the MAD office to update and maintain the webboard. Since this will likely only consist of posting new documents, such as meeting minutes, the cost of contracting is expected to be minimal. Two advantages for using the MAD staff are their faculty longevity, which alleviates problems with turnover and too many people knowing the password, as well as their in-house computer expertise (this still needs to be confirmed with MAD staff).

Appendices

WESEF Call For Board Members

Sample Poster:



W.E.S.E.F.
WATERLOO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION
<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/Studentlife/WESEF/>
Established in 1997 by the students of Environmental Studies

CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE FALL 2000 TERM

WESEF is now recruiting students, staff, and faculty to sit on its board for the Fall 2000 term. The purpose of this board is to allocate necessary financial support for the improvement of student life in Environmental Studies.

DUTIES:
attend approximately 4 one-hour meetings throughout the term for the review and selection of proposals to fund, as well as plan for the upcoming term.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

- Alumni representative
- Faculty representative
- ESS representative
- Geography undergraduate representative
- Planning undergraduate representative
- 2 Graduate Students from any department in ES

If you are interested, please contact either **Dulce Da Silva** <dcdasilv@yahoo.com>, or **Jim Porter** <je2porte@fes.uwaterloo.ca> for more information. Also see the WESEF website in the "student life" section of the ES homepage. **Deadline: October 16, 2000**

Sample Email:

Hello everyone,

The Waterloo Environmental Studies Endowment Fund (WESEF) board is once again organizing itself for the fall 2000 term, and is in need of a few individuals to fill some positions. The following positions are currently waiting to be filled and are for 1 term only, commencing this fall:

- an Alumni representative
- a Faculty representative
- an ESS (Environmental Studies Society) representative
- a Geography undergraduate representative
- a Planning undergraduate representative
- One Graduate Students from any department in ES

Being part of the WESEF board is an excellent opportunity to become directly involved in a very valuable initiative aimed to improve student life within Environmental Studies. Responsibilities as a board member are not demanding. For instance, participation will consist of attending approximately 4 one-hour meetings throughout the term, where we review and select proposals to fund, as well as plan for the upcoming term. Beyond this board members must bring with them an open mind and a keen sense of what the students of ES need in order to improve their time here at Waterloo. We encourage first or second year students not to hesitate since they can continue their participation throughout their scholastic career, becoming seasoned veterans that will guide WESEF into the years to come. Although participation is not demanding, it is never-the-less incredibly important to the students of ES.

So if you are interested in one of the above positions , or if you have any questions, please contact either Dulce Da Silva <dcdasilv@yahoo.com>, or Jim Porter <je2porte@fes.uwaterloo.ca>. More information is also available on the WESEF homepage at <http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/studentlife/wesef/>.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we hope that you all have an excellent fall term :O)

Note: All emails can be sent through the Helpdesk@fes.uwaterloo.ca and you must inform the helpdesk that you wish all undergraduate and graduate students receive the email.

WESEF Call for Proposals

Sample Poster:



***WESEF is making a difference
in your education***

Did you know:

- Computers and 'comfy' chairs
- All the new furnishings in the coffee shop
- WESEF helped pay for a new van for ES field trips

... all payed for with the assistance from WESEF

Projects totalling \$92,910 have been funded by WESEF as of December 1999. These projects originate with students, are selected by students and funded by students to improve your education in the Faculty of Environmental Studies.

TO APPLY FOR FUNDING - GOTO:
<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/Studentlife/WESEF/>

Applications Due - February 4, 2000



W.E.S.E.F.
Faculty of Environmental Studies - University of Waterloo
<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/Studentlife/WESEF/>

Waterloo Environmental Studies Endowment Foundation Established 1997

NOTE: It also works well if banner type posters, coloured with paints and markers are used to advertise a 'call for proposals'.

Sample Email:

Call for Funding Proposals

WESEF was established in the Fall of 1997 to raise money to improve the quality of undergraduate and graduate education in the Faculty of Environmental Studies. Since every student contributes to this fund, they should also be able to determine where this money is spent. As a result, WESEF is now accepting proposals for the winter term. This is your opportunity to submit project ideas that could benefit from additional funding.

Proposal forms are available on the internet at

<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/Studentlife/WESEF/appform.html>, or in the ESS office in the Coffee Shop (ES 5044), and are simple to complete. If a proposal has met all the necessary requirements, it will need to be presented to the WESEF committee at a later date. Preference will be given to those projects that benefit the majority of ES students.

Proposal Deadline: July 7/2000 at 4:30.

WESEF is making a difference in your education. So far, projects totaling over \$92,910 have been funded by WESEF as of December 1999, and includes such things as a new ES Van, computers, printers, chairs, and more.

Do not miss this opportunity to participate. We encourage you take a look at our home page at <http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/Studentlife/WESEF/> for more information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at dcdasilv@yahoo.com.

WESEF

Minutes Summary

NOTE: each term there should be submitted a summary of the significant minutes for that term. As a service to the next term, the secretary and the chair should provide an executive summary of the terms operations including: proposals funded and costs, potential amendments to the bylaws, suggestions for improvement and any other outstanding issues.

AGM

In the Spring of 2000, WESEF's first official AGM was held. Along with the foundation members receiving information regarding WESEF finances thus far, they were also able to vote on whether to include and/or amend new bylaws. The result of this is as follows:

1. Voting Procedures

Meetings of the WESEF Board

Regarding voting on proposals, the formation of committees, board membership, or other similar motions. Motions must be presented, seconded, and then put to a consensus vote (100%). Only active WESEF board members are eligible for initiating, seconding or voting procedures during meetings of the WESEF Board.

Annual General Meetings (AGM)

Regarding voting on bylaws or other similar motions. The WESEF board will compile and present motions for review by eligible foundation members. Once a satisfactory level of discussion has been attained, as per the discretion of the WESEF board members, voting may proceed in accordance to a 2/3 majority vote.

2. Proposals

Guiding Principles for Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance to the following listed principles at the discretion of the current WESEF board.

Value, Equity, Diversity

- benefits of proposal remains exclusive to ES students
- beneficial to large number of students in ES
- applicable to multiple departments
- contribution to the enhancement of educational or student life in ES

Budget

- cost of proposal relative to funds available and other proposals

Urgency

- funding is required as soon as possible
- lack of capacity to obtain other, or more appropriate funds

Presentation of Proposal

- Clarity of information, costing accuracy, response to questions

Proposals will not be considered unless they satisfy the following mandatory requirements: completed proposal form in its entirety, approved by appropriate

person/group, and the proponent is a current WESEF foundation member. (note: this should be ensured by a “mandatory field” web submission page design). All proposals that satisfy the aforementioned minimum requirements will have an opportunity to be presented in front of the WESEF board at the next appropriate meeting.

3. Funding

Ongoing Projects

In principle, WESEF will not fund ongoing projects except when proposals require funds that are beyond the capacity of the current term’s level of income (will be developed in the policies of appendix).

Proposals will be judged on their own merits in accordance to the listed guiding principles for evaluation. WESEF is not obligated to spend all the money in the current term for two reasons:

- 1) To ensure that money is allocated to only the best proposals, and
- 2) To allow the accumulation of expendable money in order to fund projects whose cost may exceed the income for a particular term.

Signing Authority

The chair and the treasurer will have account signing authority. Both signatures are necessary for the release of any funds from the WESEF account.

Proposal Review

WESEF will not initiate any further communication once the proponent of the proposal has been informed, and acknowledged this communication regarding funding approval.

4. Working committee roles and composition

Grants Committee

Grants committee will be composed of a: vice chair, two undergraduate representatives, one graduate representative, and one faculty/staff/alumni representative.

The Grants committee will review the proposals and provide recommendations, in accordance to the guiding principles for evaluation, which will then be presented to the rest of the WESEF board at the next meeting. The WESEF board is not required to adhere to the recommendations of the Grants Committee.

Although this committee already exists in the current WESEF Bylaw, its duties have now been extended to outreaching with the ES department.

Recognition and Outreach Committee

Has the following responsibilities: the maintenance of the WESEF bulletin board and web page, the provision of recognition plaques for funded proposals, and communication with the departments of ES or ensuring that board representatives report to their respective constituencies.

Nominating Committee

It is the responsibility of current Chair to initiate the establishment of the WESEF committee within the next term. If they are unable to perform this task, the responsibility is given to the vice chair. If the vice- chair is unable to perform this task, some other member of the current WESEF board must be nominated to perform this task. The individual responsible for initiating the committee in the following term and their contact information will be given to the Deans office as well as the university secretariat.

Operational Policies and Potential Bylaw Amendments

Issue: obtaining quorum in one meeting, such as the AGM, has proven to be very difficult, which influences the ability to formalize new bylaws. One alternative to get around this issue is to present proposed bylaws at the AGM, then allow a period of a week where eligible students are able to vote on whether they accept, reject the proposed bylaw. Particularly for those that reject the bylaw, they should be given an opportunity to inform the WESEF board to why they chose this option, such as suggested improvements on the bylaw. Extending this process over a period of a week would allow greater opportunity for the student body to participate in voting and increase the chances to achieve the necessary quorum of 25 individuals.

Issue: WESEF funds a lot of equipment which is often taken care of by various offices in the ES Faculty such as MAD. As a condition of funding any proposal, proposal proponents must obtain support (e.g. location, maintenance, etc) as indicated by the proposal signing authority. Offices that offer this form of support then assume sole responsibility for the maintenance and management of that equipment. However as more and more equipment is funded, these offices will not be able (or willing) to cope with these extra expenses or demands on their limited budget. WESEF should show its ongoing support for these projects by accepting proposals for maintenance costs. On the occasion that maintenance costs are necessary, the office and manager of the equipment can submit a proposal within the relevant term for maintenance. A maximum of 5% of that term's income can be made available, but is not dedicated, to fund all maintenance proposals submitted for that term. This ensures that the majority of funds are always available for new projects, but some ongoing support is offered. Maintenance proposals have to undergo the same evaluation process as all other proposals, but will only be considered in terms of the maximum stated funds. Submission of a maintenance proposal does not guarantee funding, which is an important consideration for proposals intended for reimbursement.

Action Items for Upcoming Term:

- 1) Amend the Bylaws on the webpage to account for the new ones that were just passed (include the bylaws)
- 2) ReVamp the proposal application form to include: an example of a good proposal and expectations, and a "do you understand" clause. In the proposal sheet, create mandatory fields that they must fill out.
- 3) Review Operations and Instruction Manual. (ie. Make sure that it is consistent with new bylaws, clear etc).
- 4) Upload the Operations and Instruction Manual onto the web page

- 5) Confirm permanent location for WESEF webboard.
- 6) Outline method for funding maintenance issues. An acceptable possibility includes: a maximum of a 5% of the incoming funds for that term can be allocated to funding maintenance proposals. Maintenance proposals are sent in like any other proposal and reviewed accordingly. The 5% does not have to be spent if no proposals have been documented

Key Individuals

Note: this needs to be updated or confirmed each term

In East Campus Hall:

Hennie Godin, Students Accounts Assistant
Wayne Gadsby, Senior Financial Assistant
David Peters, Manager, Investment and Insurance
Christine Ludbury, Secretariat

In ES:

Andrew Smith, Recruitment and Promotion Coordinator
Geoff McBoyle, Dean of Environmental Studies
JoAnne Holzinger, Executive Assistant to the Dean
Dolly Coehlo, ES Financial Assistant

Others:

Needles Hall Cashier

Summary Points on How to Run WESEF

Previously appointed member puts out WESEF reimbursement form in the coffee shop at the beginning of their term and begins to inform new committee through posters and emails.

Once a new committee has been formed, WESEF meetings can begin to occur. Follow the suggested meeting agenda's presented earlier with necessary changes made at the discretion of the new WESEF Committee.

Once the last meeting has been completed, care must be taken to ensure that all the proponents are aware that their proposal has been accepted or denied and allocation of funds may begin

It is also necessary to update the WESEF Spreadsheets available on the course disk, the WESEF Bulletin Board, and update the Web page.

Note: For details on how to do any of the above, see the appropriate section in the WESEF Operations Manual.

Financial Spreadsheets

Fill in greyed areas

| | Number of students | Total | Amount to be spent this term (60% of total) | Amount applied to principal (40% of total) |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Undergraduates | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| Graduates | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| Additional Contributions (Profs, Alumni, etc. Just add to total column) | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| Refunds (Determine from list) | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| Amount contributed to the fund this term | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| | | | | |
| | Previous terms total Principal | Amount added from this term | Total Principal | |
| Principal (Confirm these values with financial statement for possible discrepancies, and investigate further if necessary) | | | \$ - | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Money to spend this term | | | | |
| Amount contributed this term | | | | |
| Interest from Principal (5%, only to be calculated at spring term) | | | | |
| Amount carried over from previous term | | | | |
| Amount from proposals that have lapsed in past year (see "Accepted Proposals" spreadsheet) | | | | |
| Total Difference between Allocated and Actual Spent From Previous Term (see "Accepted Proposals" spreadsheet, column F) | | | | |
| Miscellaneous changes to fund | | (Write here the reason for the amount of any changes to the fund) | | |
| Amount of money available to be spent this term | | | | |
| Total allocated on proposals this term (see below) | | | | |
| (Difference between money available and money allocated) | \$ - | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Proposals Accepted for Current Term | | | | |
| Name | Description (include name of individual that requested and contact information) | Amount Allocated | Amount Signed For Including Tax | Amount Allocated minus Amount Signed for Including Tax |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Totals | | | | |

Amount of Money calculated from above section

Amount of Money to spend on Proposals for that term

Instruction Sheet

Instructions for filling out the spreadsheets are as follows:

Using a blank term template, begin gathering information and completing this sheet 3 weeks after the beginning of each term. Obtain the number of all Full time students from deans office, as well as any additional contributions. Obtain list of students requesting refunds from ESS office (in ES Coffee Shop) or contact Cashiers Office at Needles Hall. Enter values in greyed cells only. Ensure that all greyed cells are completed. Critical Value for amount available to spend in current term is C21 (notes: for Proposals Accepted section, extend cell formulas as needed, do not delete the previous terms spreadsheet as it has info that is required to fill out the most current worksheet, confirm calculated principle values with those from Financial Services)

Add all newly accepted proposals for the current term in the 'Accepted Proposals Worksheet'. If proposal has lapsed, (i.e. exceeds one year since approval) add proposal value to current term spreadsheet (C18) and delete from this list. Highlight proposals that are a term away from lapsing.

Other instructions are located on the spreadsheet itself.

Relevant Forms

Included:

- Reimbursement Form
- Purchase Requisition Form (used for purchasing through university account numbers)
- Cheque Request Form (used when one of the proponents does not have a university account number)
- JV Transfer Example (used to transfer funds from one university account to another)
- Signing Authority form