

New allocation plan adopted by ASUO

Budget process begins today

By LOIS LINDSAY
Of the Emerald

The annual hustle for incidental fee support has begun in earnest, this time with a new twist: budget-counter budgeting.

The process, a paperwork approach to fee allocations, is intended to streamline the ASUO budgetary sessions, ending the traditional marathon squabbles over scarce dollars. But ASUO Pres. Jim Bernau says it is much more.

According to Bernau, the new concept is the executive's answer to bureaucratic inefficiency and procrastination which snarled up last year's budgeting process, resulting in an embarrassing delay in completion of the budget document, which reached the University president's office 16 days late.

"Our credibility's at stake," says Bernau. "If we expect the administration to take student government seriously, we're going to have to do our job more efficiently."

The ASUO controls the allocation and distribution of \$1.2 million in incidental fees. Money from this pool goes to fund 54 student programs and agencies, the lion's share going to the EMU.

Replacing the extensive individual program hearings of the past, the new budgeting process involves a three-way flow of written budget and counter budget requests and documents between the executive, the Incidental Fee Committee (IFC), and the requesting program. The program desiring funding will be required to submit a detailed budget request to the executive which will counter-budget and forward recommendations to the IFC. The committee will then

review both budget and executive recommendations, provide additional input, and return the material to the program.

times at which point the executive will make its final budget recommendations to the IFC. Executive public hearings to inform the general student body about the allocation of the incidental fees will be interspersed throughout the process.

The success of the budget-counter budget system rests largely on meeting the detailed deadline schedule drawn up by the executive. The process moves into full swing today—the date set for submission of initial budget requests to the executive. The executive will draw up its first counter budgets and forward them to the IFC by Wednesday. If all goes according to schedule, the formal 1976-77 budget document will cross the University president's desk by May 14.

According to Jim Davis, ASUO vice-president for program administration and finance, the renovated system also entails a new philosophy concerning relations between the budgeting bodies and the programs.

"We're trying to change to a more objective way of budgeting," explains Davis. "We're trying to change from an attitude of 'where can we cut you' to 'where can we help you.' We want to do all we can to be totally fair in allocating funds to these programs."

Bernau agrees. "In the past we've treated programs and contractors as lesser beings. We've tried to sit down with a program for 20 minutes and be able to decide how much to fund them and it's just not



possible. It's arrogant to assume we could."

In line with their "helping" approach, the executive has provided programs with explicit budget criteria and a sample budgeting outline to aid them in drawing up their requests. The criteria, delivered to the programs in November, offers detailed explanation of the basis for executive approval of budgets.

According to the criteria document, funding of a particular agency will depend largely on that body's relevance to the general student population and its value as an educational tool.

"The executive will not recommend funding for any program that does not serve students directly," the document says. "Incidental fees are to complement and enhance the educational, physical and cultural experience of the student when enrolled. Incidental fees are not to be used as grants for tuition, books, or any other support that one would need to maintain student status."

The document also offers detailed explanations of more specific criteria for receiving executive approval for funding. Contained are stipulations for funding first-time programs, use of work-study monies, limit

for travel expense line items, and reserve accounts.

Under the criteria outline, programs are required to provide a brief description of the program, explanation of goals and objectives for the upcoming year, and a review of the past year's performance.

"It is important for a program to have plans for the upcoming year but when it comes to funding, we have to base our decisions on something more substantial than that," explains Bernau. "Promises for the future are significant only if the program also shows a good past performance record."

Program directors contacted by the Emerald say the new process looks good so far.

"It's a bit early in the year to predict whether or not it's really going to be effective, but it looks good so far," says Jeri Mack, for the International Education Center.

Dave Brown, assistant director of the Survival Center agrees. "It certainly looks more effective than last year. But, it's all keyed to whether the guidelines are actually met and the programs really judged according to the stated criteria."

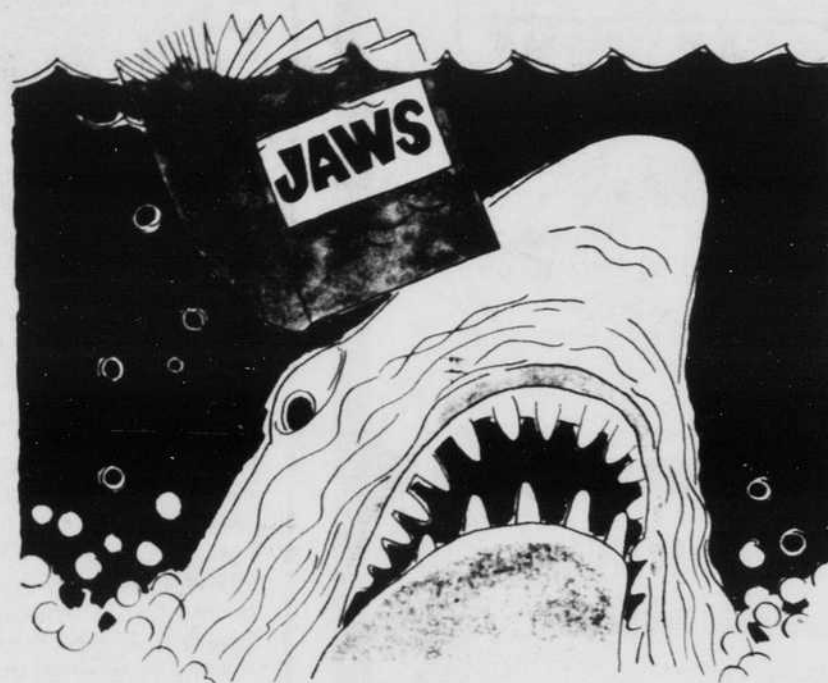


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