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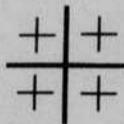


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Pay: PFC to determine future stipends issued

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positions, came under scrutiny last summer after University President Dave Frohnmayer raised questions about the use of stipends. In his annual letter to the ASUO about the upcoming year's budget, Frohnmayer noted stipends made up as much as 70 percent of some groups' budgets, leaving less money for programs.

In response, PFC Chairwoman Persis Pohowalla and a panel of other ASUO officials reviewed the model over winter break and drafted a new version, which the Senate ratified in a 13-2 vote.

The model features scaled-back pay for top stipend positions and more detailed instructions about under what circumstances stipends should be awarded, replacing an old version from 2003.

The new model lowers the monthly pay for all group presidents and co-directors by \$25 to be consistent with the rest of the pay scale, which awards \$25 increases for each higher level of responsibility. It also includes more specific ranges of hours students must work per week to qualify for certain stipends.

Pohowalla said it is unclear whether the new model will decrease the number of stipends issued, noting that is up to the PFC.

She said other key changes to the document include updates to the general information section emphasizing that the stipend is meant to compensate students for the expenses they incur while on the job, not as a wage for time they spend working, as some students view it.

Pohowalla also said the new model will help ASUO advisers better determine what pay category a position falls under. Advisers must now look at how much training is involved in the position, whether the role is elected or appointed, what group by-laws state about the position and what makes the position different from others.

The old model was developed "after severe inequities in stipends became apparent to members of the PFC and Senate," according to the



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Programs Finance Committee Chairwoman Persis Pohowalla and Senator Kevin Day explain changes to the stipend model at Wednesday's senate meeting.

ASUO Stipend Model manual.

Senator Kevin Day, who helped make the changes, said the stipend model is an ongoing process. He said he was confident the PFC could use the revised model for at least this year.

"This is the best one we have so far," he said.

He said it is hard for the PFC, which has only two returning members, to predict potential problems with the stipend model before they go through the process. Any new problems that arise can be addressed in the future, he said.

"This is something to get them through the year," he said.

Pohowalla agreed.

"There's tons of problems with the model," she said. "We won't know if it works until we use it. Once we use it, we'll see what's most effective."

During the Senate meeting, Senator Sol Hart questioned whether the panel had done research into the expenses stipend holders incur to see whether stipends could be reduced across the board.

"I'm torn about this, but if it's only for expenses occurred, it seems high to me," Hart said.

ASUO Vice President Mena Ravassipour said although Pohowalla and the panel hadn't done specific research, panel members have experience with stipends from past involvement in student groups.

"I think that her experience is research," Ravassipour said.

Hart said even those who receive the lowest possible pay of \$50-\$75 may not use all of that money.

Pohowalla said \$50 is the lowest amount a person can receive because the Senate approved a \$25 increase per stipend position two years ago.

"If I could start at \$25, I probably would have," she said.

Day said the Senate could vote for a \$25 decrease for all positions.

Hart also suggested that the PFC require students who receive stipends to record their expenses to gain a better idea of how much money is required.

"By your own admission, you don't have any idea what people are spending," he said.

Senator Toby Hill-Meyer opposes keeping records of expenses, saying "documenting every sandwich you buy and coin you put into a parking meter would double the amount of time" stipend holders spend fulfilling the duties of their positions.

Hill-Meyer added that calling stipend positions a "job" is misleading because a job involves receiving at least minimum-wage pay. Many stipend holders view their positions as poorly paying jobs, suggesting that current pay levels are already sometimes too low, Hill-Meyer said.

Hill-Meyer said it is "almost impossible" for some students to be leaders in student groups without some compensation for their time.

"In reality, there are people who can't take stipend positions because they can't pay money for rent or to have food to eat," Hill-Meyer said. "This is an institutional bias we need to be aware of when discussing this kind of stuff."

Pohowalla said some groups without stipends still put on programs.

Senator Stephanie Stoll said she was concerned that reducing the hours needed for the smallest stipends to three to six hours per week would cause more groups to seek stipends, compounding the problem Frohnmayer identified.

Pohowalla said it shouldn't matter.

"You're going to have groups come in and tell you what you want to hear no matter what your model is," she said.

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