

PFC: Resurfacing stipend discussion causes controversy among members

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group's current service level when making the executive recommendation, but that calculation included room for growth for fiscally responsible groups as well as mandated increases to account for necessary growth in the coming year. Pohowalla said implementing the current service level to solve the funding problem would entail subtracting the extra growth.

Diss and Sweetman suggested that because the amount of time it would take for controllers to calculate the necessary funding levels for each group totals more than 100 hours in a period of less than a week, using the current service-level approach may be the most feasible option.

"I think you should decrease the groups who the controllers recommended decreases to and give current service levels to other groups," Diss said.

PFC member Mike Sherman questioned Diss and Sweetman's suggestion to use the current service level without growth recommendations as defined by the controllers.

"What we're really talking about is passing something that would implement the exec recommendations minus growth," Sherman said.

But Creighton-Neiwert said the executive recommendations were not purely current service levels and the growth calculations differed from group to group.

"Not every exec recommendation is going to be consistent," Creighton-Neiwert said. "I don't think every contract was looked at the same; I don't think every department was looked at the same."

PFC member Khanh Le made it clear in the beginning of the two-hour meeting that he would not

make a decision until he knew the fiscal impact of each option, and he said reducing budgets that have already been approved is "awkward" and goes against the purpose of the PFC.

"I don't want a program to come and say 'Hey, what are you doing?'" Le said.

Creighton-Neiwert said it was necessary to decide on a method as soon as possible in order for the controllers to have enough time to make the calculations before the March 7 submission date.

"You've got to take a little faith and a little leap and run with the numbers," Creighton-Neiwert said.

Newly appointed PFC member Jared Axelrod expressed concern that agreeing to go by the current service level would not give the PFC a concrete idea of what the fiscal impact would be on the groups and could inhibit the growth of commendable groups.

"It seems like we're basically just taking a shot in the dark," Axelrod said.

Sweetman said the timeliness of the situation mandates a decision be made immediately and said the current service-level approach is likely to be the best option.

"It may be kind of a shot in the dark, but I think it's fair," Sweetman said.

Ravassipour said the approach has both pros and cons but is the best method to use without picking and choosing which budgets to re-examine.

"I think it'd make it easier on the committee to do the current service level," Ravassipour said.

PFC Vice Chair Mason Quiroz agreed the current service level approach may be the best one to take, given the time frame in which all

budget proposals must be finalized.

Quiroz said there is a number of things to consider when finalizing the current service-level approach, such as the fact that newly formed groups have a current service level of zero.

Quiroz said defining what a current service level is may be the best thing to do before making a decision.

"We've given it a title, which is great, but we haven't defined it yet," Quiroz said.

If everyone has a clear definition of what that level is, "instead of a shot in the dark, it would be more like an educated guess," Quiroz said. "I think that's the only way it's going to be truly fair and equal to everyone."

Creighton-Neiwert also emphasized the importance of having a clear definition of what calculating a current service level entails.

"You can end up penalizing a good group if you define current service level incorrectly," Creighton-Neiwert said.

Diss said the controllers "spent hours upon hours" defining the current service level for each group, and redoing it may prove to be impossible given the time constraints.

Diss said it is crucial the PFC decide on its definition of current service level as soon as possible so the controllers can begin making the necessary calculations.

"Until you define it, we can't do anything," Diss said. "We've given you all we can with the current service level."

PFC members questioned whether implementing the current service level based on the executive recommendation would actually put the committee under the 7 percent

benchmark, something Creighton-Neiwert said could take some calculations to discover.

"I don't want to tell you guys you'd be under 7 percent and then have you not be," Creighton-Neiwert said. "I'd feel horrible."

Le said the time it takes to calculate the financial impacts of the various definitions of current service levels may mean the committee will have to make a decision and deal with the consequences as they arise.

"My suggestion is not voting on it, just doing it first," Le said. "I just want to do it then figure it out later."

Quiroz said trusting the controllers' calculations may be the best thing to do, given the amount of time the PFC has to make a decision and finalize budget recommendations.

"If anybody's going to make an educated guess, I think the controllers should make an educated guess," Quiroz said. "I just think we should listen to the controllers."

Other plans discussed for decreasing the spending benchmark included re-examining group stipend models, which Pohowalla suggested when it was first announced the PFC had overspent its benchmark at the Jan. 31 PFC hearing.

Creighton-Neiwert said examining groups' stipends is a viable option because approximately \$289,000 of the PFC budget goes toward stipends.

But the stipend suggestion proved controversial, and members seemed wary to address a topic they said has already been discussed in depth.

"I don't want anything to happen to the stipends, and everyone knows why," Quiroz said, adding that decreasing stipends could

"have a tremendous effect on (group) leadership."

Le suggested contacting groups to get insight into the situation. Quiroz also suggested working with groups with larger budgets to find areas where funding can be reduced.

"We're going to need a lot of help from everybody to really solve this issue," Quiroz said.

Pohowalla questioned the fairness of approving funding benchmarks for groups and then picking and choosing which budgets to reallocate.

Sherman suggested applying the same mandated decrease to every group, an idea Creighton-Neiwert said the PFC has done in the past and did not produce desirable results.

"I think it was the worst thing I've ever seen the PFC do," Creighton-Neiwert said.

A 2 percent decrease means different things to different groups depending on the size of their budgets and has the possibility to "completely hinder them," Creighton-Neiwert said.

Quiroz suggested crafting a way to discuss the funding reallocation with groups beforehand and making sure everyone knows how the current service level is being defined "to at least soften the blows" that may come if groups react negatively to the decreases.

Pohowalla said she is hopeful groups will be understanding of the PFC's situation and realize the reallocations must be done if the incidental fee is to remain at the same level and not increase next year.

"They have to understand where we're coming from," Pohowalla said.

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IS IT COLD OR FLU?



CHARACTERISTICS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Low grade (<101°)	Characteristic, high (102°-104°)
Body & Headache	Rare	Prominent and abrupt
Fatigue, Weakness	Mild	Moderate
Sore Throat, Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes
Chest Discomfort, Cough	Mild to moderate, hacking cough	Common
Complications	Sinus infection or earache	Can become severe bronchitis, pneumonia
Prevention	Wash hands frequently & keep away from face, Keep immune system strong	Annual flu vaccinations, Wash hands frequently & keep away from face, Keep immune system strong
Treatment	OTCs (over the counter medication) for temporary relief of symptoms	Anti-viral medicines speed up your recovery

FLU TESTING AND TREATMENT: Health Center now offers testing for influenza. Flu treatment (antiviral medication) can significantly speed up recovery. Flu treatment is more effective when taken with early onset of symptoms. The UHC Pharmacy is well stocked with inexpensive OTC medicine for cold and flu symptoms.



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