

SC Fall Meeting Agenda
noon-2pm ET
March 25th, 2023

Note taker: Jeayoon Lee

Introductions

Name, Location, Class year, Good part of the week

- Phillip Singerman is joining EnviroAlums for the first time

Vote to Approve Meeting Agenda

- Approved without objection

Annual Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

- Abe Kruger (Chair) and Michael J Lythcott (Vice-Chair) approved without objection

Subcommittee Reports

- Membership and Nominations Subcommittee (Abe Kruger)
 - Phillip Singerman has joined the Committee
- Finance Subcommittee (Abe Kruger)
 - Last fiscal year, we discovered we had overcommitted \$3,500. In conversations with the college they shared some of the responsibility with us, and were going to provide \$3,500 so that our new FY would not start in debt, but that money did not show up on the books. Distributions to 2 past fellows also took a long time to show up on our books and Terry Kurtz assured Abe that we can proceed as if we have \$12,500 plus or minus a few hundred, and he will help balance the books. \$10,500 of that can continue to be budgeted for Fellows.
 - The endowment does not go directly into this committee's operations funds, which contributes to the confusion around how much money we can spend at any given moment.
 - Funding for Sunniva and the London project was covered previously to \$12,500 budget.
 - How is our endowment performing? According to Terry, around \$200,000 performing at 4%
 - **Action:** criamadigankay@gmail.com will communicate to the finance department a deadline for when we need to make the payments for the Fellows. Kim is the person who would be in charge of the disbursement, but she's on leave right now, and Tina Roberts is the current stand-in.
 - Terry sent Abe an email confirming that we would have "\$12,500 plus or minus a few hundred" to move forward with our operations.
 - There's a lot of turnover at Oberlin College right now which has contributed to the confusion around communication and operations, and we can expect this for a while until personnel stabilize.

- whgalloway@verizon.net will support anyone who needs help navigating the situation.
- Our Fiscal Year ends June 30.
- Phillip is involved in the 1965 Martin Luther King Jr. Internship program and they raise the money on an ongoing basis, used to fund a dozen students at \$5,500 per student. This is a model we could follow if we want, as it has been successful.
- Fellowship Subcommittee (kristajegger@gmail.com)
 - Shoutout to Walt, Michael, Elise, Jeayoon, Cria, Sadie and Krista for facilitating the process.
 - This year we had 7 applications, and we disqualified 1. Most of the applicants were freshmen or sophomores, and had higher quality applications than previously. The final 3 selections are listed below.
 - Zoe Goldstein (approved)
 - Class of 2025. Would be working with Zumwalt Acres, focusing on farmwork, climate change mitigation research, marketing/food distribution, and community building.
 - Requested budget: \$3,500
 - Two people (Eliana and Zoe) applied for this position, and the fellowship committee agreed that as part of the goal of the fellowship is to benefit environmental organizations, we felt it would be best to spread out the funding request amongst as many organizations as possible. Zoe is graduating earlier than Eliana (and thus has less of an opportunity to pursue this fellowship in the future) and they made a stronger argument for why the fellowship would be beneficial. Eliana noted that they are overqualified for the position at Zumwalt Acres and have done lots of this type of work in the past, so we felt that the internship might not provide an opportunity to grow like it would for Zoe.
 - Emma Grant-Beir (approved)
 - Class of 2026. Would be working with Wholly H2O to refine and compile information for their Glen Echo Creek walking watershed tour.
 - Requested budget: \$3,477.40
 - The committee felt this was a strong application. The connection to Oberlin (though hypothetical) was strong, and Emma tied it to their majors very directly. There was perhaps some disconnect between the support letter and application (the org mentioned that a lot of the data has been collected, so this internship will be focused more on refining the information gathered). Budget was well thought out.
 - Noah Hamaoui (approved)
 - Class of 2025. Would be working with RWTH Aachen University's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program International on a research project titled "Climate risk scenarios for agriculture in the Rhenish mining area."
 - Requested budget: \$3,500

- The committee debated on whether the fellowship should cover a solely academic/research fellowship, as grants for academic work are easier to come by compared to funding for working for a non-profit or community organization. That said, Noah's application was very strong and well thought out, and they explicitly noted that their future plans include pursuing a masters degree after Oberlin, which tied an academic/ research internship into their career path.
- John Petersen had advised Noah on her application, and to respond to our notes that were emailed out to the group in advance, freshman and sophomore students are not far enough along to easily come by funding, so he's glad we were able to fund her. Also, not being a U.S. citizen can disqualify some students from getting this kind of funding.
- The Subcommittee has an ongoing discussion point around how to handle labor cost in the budget and award.
 - The MLK group has a flat stipend they offer for any expense, so they don't look at the budgets to determine how they award the money.
 - **Action:** The Fellowship Subcommittee to discuss and present a proposed guideline to the rest of the Committee.
- Funding academic research
 - Michael Rossotto: applied research would be good to support.
 - John Petersen: we're giving students an opportunity to apply for grants and win money, which helps them successfully secure more funds in their future. So whether students are pursuing academic research shouldn't be a deterrent to their selection. Providing more guidance on the budget could also help.
 - **Action:** SC can include more budget guidelines next year, as a way of leveling the playing field but also as an education tool
- Voted without objection to approve all three selected fellows
- Communications Subcommittee (safyone@gmail.com)
 - Paul has been trying to get an interview with Heather Adelman, Director of Sustainability at Oberlin College, to learn the goals of this position and her experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of environmental sustainability. This keeps getting delayed and hasn't occurred yet.
 - **Action:** Walt or Abe will notify Molly when the annual report needs to be done, and she will help provide it.
- Ad hoc subcommittees
 - N/A

Establishing EnviroAlums Funding Priorities & Process for Evaluating Funding Requests (Abe Kruger

- We've recently received 3 ad hoc funding requests: Sunniva, carbon credits for the London program, two alumni to participate in a trip to Africatown with an Oberlin professor. Two issues came up with this: we don't have a formal list of priorities of what we want to fund.

- The Finance Subcommittee was created a year ago to handle budgets, but coming up with a criteria to triage requests was not in scope.
- Discussion points raised by Abe:
 - Should triaging requests be in scope for the Finance SC?
 - Requests for \$500 or less can be granted at the discretion of the SC Chair
 - Should we be open to rolling funding requests?
 - There's an argument for this Committee to be nimble, and we would not set expectations for a quick turnaround
 - It would be helpful to have eligibility guidelines: one proposal is current and immediately graduated alumni only. This would've cut out months-long discussions around Africatown which involved students who had graduated two years before.
 - Proposal to have a formal application process for all requests: who is allowed to apply, what kind of response time could be expected, a template for submitting an application.
- Concerns raised:
 - Ad hoc triaging requires a lot of coordination between Committee members.
 - There are still the challenges around getting a handle on the budget which can make this difficult.
 - Michael Rossotto would not feel comfortable with charging the Finance Subcommittee with being responsible for deciding on rolling funding requests.
 - The Finance Subcommittee is not the most representative group, and Michael and Abe raise burnout as a potential issue.
- **Action:** abe.j.kruger@gmail.com will write the Finance Subcommittee to follow up on putting forth a proposal to the rest of the Committee on guidelines for how to vet rolling funding requests.

Oberlin in London Climate Resilient & C-Neutral Grant Update (

John.Petersen@oberlin.edu)

- Harriet McSurdy had participated in the program and shared an update. Students left feeling optimistic and excited to take more action after graduating. Confronting their own pessimism was important.
- John Petersen's update: focus was on climate resilience and was very experiential for the students.

Sunniva Sheffield Funding Request Update (

John.Petersen@oberlin.edu)

- John Petersen's update: Sunniva has cleaned up a lot of mess that would help new incoming interns make better use of the living machine. There's a new vegetable garden that Sunniva is working on. Redoing their wetlands that had gotten overgrown, and she's helping to maintain it.

EnviroAlums + ALC Career Committee Joint Event Update

- Walt's update: starting next year there will be something called Internships Plus that will be open to all Oberlin students. As we learn more about this program, we can refer students who we are not able to fund to this program.

Careers and the Environment Series

- Walt and Phillip's update: Sadie ended up with 18 volunteers, and they're aiming to put together an event in April. The D.C. alumni group is also active and has frequent webinars; some people from this group have volunteered to participate, particularly around environmental justice.

Adjourn