
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 3- YEAR BUDGET AND FINANCES OF STUDENT LEAF

TO: AVP OF FINANCE, MICHELLE QUINN AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNVIERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
FROM: CYRUS FERNANDEZ, TREASURER
SUBJECT: 3- YEAR BUDGET AND FINANCES OF STUDENT LEAF
DATE: APRIL 24, 2015
CC: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO STUDENT, FACULTY, STAFF AND COMMUNITY

Introduction

I am pleased to present to you an executive summary of the 2012-2015 3-Year Student LEAF budget and finances. I hope you find it clear, concise, and easy-to-read, as one of my primary goals is to provide a high level of transparency during the budget process.

Before you read my summary, I want to point out characteristics of the 2012-2015 budget:

- Our inception year (Year 1), involved a “tabulation” of expenses rather than true budgeting. There was a significant amount of freedom for piloting a new program such as Student LEAF
- Since our inception year, a natural breakdown of expenses was indicated and formalized into the five functional budgetary areas of Student LEAF (Grant Funded Projects, Education, Travel, Administrative, Marketing, Salaries) which was adopted and accepted as our budgetary structure of the organization.
- We have established a budgetary spending of 97% of our total allocation of each year. 3% is generally accepted as an appropriate roll-over for an incoming year’s operations to operate during the summer months.
- At the beginning of each fall semester and subsequent spring semester, any Student LEAF fees accumulated during such academic year was considered the purview of each year’s current board.
- Year 2 and Year 3 have worked with the same budgetary structure created by Treasurer, Cyrus Fernandez.

How Has Student LEAF Budgeted?

The figures below are the 3- Year summary values of budgets and expenses as of May 1st, 2015.

| Functional Area | % of Budget | Budget | Expenses | % of Budget Spent |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Grant Funded Projects | 85% | \$ 641,051.89 | \$ 611,520 | 95.39% |
| Education | 1% | \$ 5452.06 | \$ 3,638.28 | 66.73% |
| Travel | .10% | \$ 545.21 | \$ 261.65 | 47.99% |
| Administrative | 1% | \$ 5,452.06 | \$ 3,865.60 | 70.90% |
| Marketing | 3.50% | \$ 19,082.21 | \$ 12,961.66 | 67.93% |
| Salaries | 2.75% | \$ 17,300 | \$ 16,690.00 | 96.47% |
| Total | 99.99% | \$ 688,883.43 | \$ 648,937.19 | 94.20% |

Figure 1. 3-Year Summary Values of Budget

How Has Student LEAF Spent Their Money?

During the 3 years Student LEAF has existed at the University of Northern Colorado, we have prioritized *Grant Funded Projects* at the heart of our operations. The remaining four functional areas were secondary and supplementary to our Grant Funded Projects. The *Education* functional area was geared towards educating the campus population around issues of sustainability meant to generate grant proposals. *Travel & Related* were expenses incurred by Student LEAF board members who have used their vehicles to perform duties on behalf of Student LEAF such as attending leadership conferences, professional development activities and duties associated with the procurement of products for the organization. *Administrative* are expenses related to the day-to-day functions and operations of the organization. *Marketing* were expenses related to engaging the university community. Lastly, *Salaries* were expenses related to the compensation

of two board members- the President and Public Relations Officer- pre-approved by the AVP of Finance, Michelle Quinn. All other board positions remained on a volunteer basis.

What can we expect from Student LEAF in Year 3?

As we round out our third year of Student LEAF, we have a number of projects in our proposal pipeline set for implementation. Additionally, we have a series of educational and student engagement efforts as we close our final semester.

Current Projects:

- Powersol umbrellas (~19 on campus) to generate additional solar energy in outdoor spaces for students and the campus community
- Additional recycling receptacles around campus to increase our recycling efforts
- Campus Recreation Center Big Ass Fans to cool buildings without AC while contributing to HVAC efficiency and reduced energy costs during high volume events
- Water bottle filling stations/ drinking fountains throughout various campus buildings
- Wise Acre Farm to demonstrate sustainable concepts in real-life situations

Educational Efforts:

- In partnership with Dining Services, a vigorous educational campaign around recycling/composting around campus with additional recycling receptacles
- Earth Week Educational Series on environmental racism with Diversity Mentors in residence halls

Research Efforts:

- Conducted a successful and completed case study by Treasurer (Cyrus Fernandez) around Student “Perceptions of Sustainability and University Responsiveness” for program assessment and evaluation with the intent to publish
- Generated a cross-sectional survey around student perceptions of sustainability and recycling/composting by Treasurer (Cyrus Fernandez) and delivered the UNCO student body with a 53% response Rate
- Currently working with Dining Services to create a complimentary survey around sustainability to be sent to faculty and staff

Student Engagements:

- Our biggest event, Earth Week, contains a whole week of engagement efforts geared towards raising awareness of sustainability and an opportunity to field interest on possible student-initiated proposals

Recommendation

Taking all of what Student LEAF has accomplished within our three year existence, I believe Student LEAF is right on track with building a campus community around sustainability. Our 3-year finance report reflects our deep interest and investment in students at the University of Northern Colorado. The resiliency of our student board during these 3 years is only a taste of what sustained, long-term student engagement can be around issues of sustainability. Hence, it is my recommendation to renew Student LEAF for another 3-years to effectively assess what an organization such as Student LEAF can accomplish. In doing so, a 6-year evaluation can accurately capture and assess the organization’s effectiveness.

In addition, in order to make Student LEAF more successful during the 3 year renewal period, I highly recommend compensating all student board members adequate compensation to that of the President and Public Relations Officer. During my 2 ½ years working within the Treasurer position, each position has progressively taken on more duties than originally created in 2012. The work has gotten increasingly more complex, plentiful and intense. Many students, groups, departments, colleges and offices are recognizing what Student LEAF can offer to the University. All of our volunteer positions are dedicating more time than expected 3 years ago. This is exciting news because the work has increased and the Student Board continues to meet these demands set by the university community. Yet, I have also observed the immense difficulty in finding students to serve on the Student LEAF Board Committee. Students are weary to committing a large sum of their time for volunteer experiences. As a result, incentivizing the process for ALL Student LEAF Board Members on equal compensation of \$3,200/ year per position will keep a competitive pool of applicants for future job searches as well as helping our student board remain sustainable throughout an academic year.

I also recommend a 20 hour Graduate Assistantship (GA) or a .5 FTE para- professional employee to solidify Student LEAF as a credible and professional organization on campus. The work done by our board was immense and the work continues to grow every year. The question of our own student board's ability to remain as self-sustaining students at the University of Northern Colorado has grown significantly over the years and the work necessitates need. In order to fully integrate Student LEAF with the university, a GA or para professional whose sole duty is to meet with other departments, attend meetings with senior level administration, serve on councils with university fixtures, identify and seek grants, engage students, provide leadership opportunities for the Student LEAF board, advise and mentor the Student LEAF Board, work during the summers as well as conduct programmatic assessment and evaluation is what is needed. The GA or para-professional will NOT absorb any current duties the Student LEAF Board currently maintains. With these two additional recommendations, this will help fully integrate Student LEAF with the University of Northern Colorado and set us up for success for the next 3 years.

Thank you for your kind consideration in reading this document. I hope this summary has provided insight and perspective on Student LEAF. Should you have any questions, I am available for contact.

Cyrus Fernandez

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