

# Report on the Emergency Usage of the Senate Project Fund

## *Context, Remedies, and Moving Forward*

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My name is Helen Hitz, and I am the Auditor of the Associated Students of Lewis & Clark (ASLC). The Auditory is an independent branch of the ASLC that is responsible for ensuring that the ASLC and the students-at-large can be accurately and thoroughly informed on matters pertaining to the institution of Lewis & Clark and issues in higher education more generally.

**Purpose of this report:** During the student organizations allocation process for the 2018-2019 school year, two things happened that resulted in the emergency usage of the Senate Project Fund. First, a bylaw breach occurred in the allocation process of the College Outdoors (CO) Roundtable. Second, what appears to be an email malfunction resulted in the ASLC Elections Committee not receiving a budget allocation. The following report summarizes the steps that led to these errors and the actions that were taken by the ASLC to correct them.

**Allocations process:** In the spring semester of each academic year, all clubs and organizations that wish to be allocated money by the Student Organizations Committee (SOC) for the following school year must submit a budget application. All money that is allocated by the SOC comes from the student fee that is paid by each student attending the College of Arts & Sciences.

**College Outdoors error:** The SOC has bylaws to ensure a fair allocations process. One section of these bylaws requires that all organizations requesting a budget greater than \$20,000 meet with the SOC Coordinator. Logistically, this part of the process is complicated, as all of these meetings must be held in a single week. Consequently, the Coordinator for the 2017-2018 academic year decided to continue the allocations process without the requirement of holding these meetings. The SOC Coordinator informed student organizations of this change and cancelled a meeting he had scheduled with the CO Roundtable. However, in order to alter the meeting requirement, the ASLC Constitution required that the change in the SOC Bylaws be approved by the ASLC Senate. Following the allocations process, the CO Roundtable reached out to ASLC Cabinet members to discuss the bylaw breach and the effects it had on CO scholarships.

**College Outdoors remedy:** ASLC Cabinet members have been working closely with CO to remedy the situation that was caused by the breach in bylaws. The ASLC Cabinet decided that the best source of money to access in this situation was the Senate Project Fund. This fund is comprised of Student Fee money that is left unused by student organizations at the end of each academic year. The Senate Project Fund is intended to be allocated by the ASLC Senate. However, according to the ASLC Constitution, the ASLC Cabinet can make executive decisions on behalf of the Senate when the Senate is not in session. Ideally, the Cabinet would have waited to vote on the emergency usage of the Senate Project Fund until the reconvening of the ASLC Senate on September 27th. However, the Cabinet was informed that CO would run out of funds for scholarships before the Senate elections occurred. As a result, the ASLC Cabinet voted unanimously to access \$4900 from the Senate Project Fund in order to provide CO with the

amount of money they needed for scholarships before the reconvening of the Senate. The Senate is now discussing how to further remedy this situation.

**Elections Committee error:** The ASLC Elections Committee submitted a budget request during the allocations process for the 2018-2019 academic year. There is a record of the email being sent by the ASLC Elections Committee, but there is no record of the email being received by the SOC Coordinator. As a result of this malfunction, the ASLC Elections Committee did not receive a budget allocation for the 2018-2019 academic year.

**Elections Committee remedy:** The ASLC Senate election was projected to cost \$320. The ASLC Cabinet decided to vote on the acquisition of \$320 from the Senate Project Fund (described above) in order to hold a senate election. This was deemed an emergency as the ASLC Senate is vital to the functioning of the ASLC and Lewis and Clark College as a whole. The vote was unanimous in favor of accessing the \$320 from the Senate Project Fund.

**The ASLC is committed to doing better.** The ASLC is committed to preventing similar mistakes from happening in the future. This year, the ASLC is focusing on staying true to its bylaws and constitutionally amending them when change is desired. The ASLC has learned from these mistakes and is eager to improve in order to better service the students of Lewis & Clark College.