General Assembly Meeting: October 21, 2012

I. Agenda:

II. Opening of the Meeting: Meeting called to order at 07:06pm

III. Fight song and role call

IV. Open Forum

a. Chloe Murtagh: Last week we talked for more than the hour allotted because we had guests (which is great) but there was a lot of repetition and people need to respect the time limit and other people’s feelings.

V. Nicole Brenner presents the Argus Staff Budget

a. Overview: Argus funded from Student Activity Fee (SAF). It is $270 (set by students to support student activities). SBC works to fairly allocate the SAF to student groups that benefit the campus community and culture. More than 300 student groups.

b. Student workers on Argus: money allocated is $12,870 (they are NON-work study workers)

   i. Argus would prefer to hire work-study students, many job (such as layout positions) require honed skills and sufficient familiarity with certain computer programs.

   c. Concerns:

   i. Where should the money come from? There are a lot of student groups that work a lot of hours, argus is the only publication that gets paid.

   ii. What is the justification for funding just argus workers

   iii. Are the salaries reasonable?

   iv. Can we (WSA) find a compromise that both preserves Student Jobs on campus and doesn’t conflict with the goal of the Student Activities Fund?

   d. Abby Francis and Max Brivic = editor in chiefs (they are explaining who works for Argus)

   i. Approximately 8-9 Argus members present

   ii. Argus members explain what different jobs do (copy editor, layout editor)

   e. What does a typical production night look like?

   i. One of the editors: Figure out which articles go in paper, which photos go in, each page takes about 1-1.5 hours to layout (most members are working on paper layout for 3-4 hours) then give it to copy editors (they meticulously go through paper for errors). People cannot leave until their section is done. After layout done, layout staff inputs changes and puts everything together. The next morning, at 5pm a distribution person drops all the papers off everywhere and drive themselves, dropping off papers at
all locations.

f. Why people started getting paid: it started off with one copy editor getting paid because one person was doing all of the work and being overworked. The pay for editor-in-chief job was cut because the job of editor-in-chief is a nice resume builder, versus the job of copy editor or layout editor.

g. Abby Francis: we give about $10,000 back every year from our budget, so although it seems like a lot, it’s not as much as it seems. Additionally, we are not the only people who get paid. WSA office workers get paid as well.

h. iv. Zachary Malter: He’s talking to office staff next week.

i. Open stack

   i. Mari Jarris: would you be able to distribute jobs amongst people who do the jobs and can we give more recognition to people who do the job?

   ii. Abby Francis: It’s conflicts with “standard paper issue format” and the work is very complicated for people who don’t know how the newspaper layout programs work. This is a very specialized line of work. Everyone is there for so many hours because they are working so hard.

   iii. Lydia Rex: I think it’s important that the Argus is edited well and done well and I support what you guys are doing.

   iv. Jesse Ross-Silverman: I agree with Lydia. Is there any connection to how SALD pays for their staff? It is another paid position. Second thing, could anyone in the Argus speak about moving to once-per-week issue?

      1. Argus staff member: Biweekly format is continued because it is the oldest biweekly college newspaper in the country. It’s a tradition. We’ve been doing it since 1910. It also helps us stay more up to date with our peer publications (like Wesleying).

   v. Abby Francis: We really try to stay in-the-moment and keep our news as current as possible. The paper itself (if it was once a week) would be bigger and would not produce a smaller budget.

   vi. Alton Wang: Do other peer institutions pay? No they do not, and they put in the same hours. My initiative for working on the paper is not to get paid. Why is it such an important issue to you guys at Wesleyan?

      1. Argus staff member: Other staffs like Yale have more prestigious papers and have more things involved. Those schools also usually give credit as compensation for working at the paper.

   vii. ix. Nicole Brenner: if you got credit, would you stop getting paid?

      1. Argus workers (alternating between a couple of people): No. We’re over-stretched in our schedules as is and we wouldn’t do the paper if we weren’t paid. We need the incentive.

   viii. Sam Usdan: Has streamlining the production been brought onto the table?
1. Argus workers: there isn’t any program that makes it easy to use. There isn’t a simple program to deal with complexities of paper. We do as much as we can to shorten layout time. Also, every issue is different and needs a different template, so making a generic template is impossible. Our articles also range in length. Also, our layout now “In Design” is a generally well-known layout program, so it’s easier for people to adjust to the program when they join the staff.

ix. Lily: Members of EC do a lot of work and don’t get paid.
   1. Abbey Francis: This is about the prestige issue again, I and the other editor in chief don’t get paid.
   2. Nicole Brenner: Let’s stay on task of including Argus staff salaries in Student Activities Fee.

x. Jason Shatz: Let us not put down the significance of the Argus. Has the SBC previously funded the Argus to this extent? Is this the only group it employs to this extent? What type of precedence does this sent?
   1. Nicole Brenner: When SBC funds student workers, it funds things like ushers in the chapel or sound co-op workers, generally things people don’t do “for fun.” It’s a job; it’s not a resume builder. SBC funds WSA office staff that mostly helps the SBC because it’s so much work and processing. We have our own problems with our systems and require certain skills.
   2. Andrew Trexler: SBC has funded the Argus staffers for years. We’re deciding whether to continue this tradition.

xi. Adam ?: Do we have the budget of the Argus? Do you think about doing time sheets? Have you considered adding prestige to jobs that are for hard grunt work jobs?
   1. Argus staff: We do not have the budget currently. It’s sort of hard to keep track of. We’re trying to make everything more effective and spending our money more efficiently, but we do give A LOT back every year.
   2. Nicole Brenner: point of information, Argus workers are paid half by the university if they are work study.
   3. Argus staffer: I don’t know how to add prestige to a position. I don’t know how to add prestige to my job in the real world.
   4. Argus staff on “time sheets:” we keep time sheets for people who get paid. We get paid for a specific amount of work but don’t get paid for “per hour” but get paid “per page.”

xii. l. Lily Donahue: I originally thought Argus workers should not be paid but after hearing what they had to say, I think they should be paid. I’m
confused about the $40,000 budget and you often give back quite a bit at
the end of the year, how does that work? If you are giving back money,
what is the reason for an additional weekly budget?

1. i. Nicole Brenner: It includes everything they need to help run their
   operation (supplies, archives, etc.).
2. ii. Max Brivic: It’s hard to know what we will/won’t use when we
   first get the money.
3. iii. Abby Francis: There’s also the issue of advertising properly in
   the paper.

m. Christian Hosam: Here are some critiques of the Argus. There
   is no journalism sect here at Wesleyan. We don’t know the quality of
   our peer institutions’ other papers. The Argus is also still registered as
   a student group. There’s probably internal discussion about how to pay
different staff members. How should you pay these members and how do
you decide?

1. i. Argus staff member: We pay around $9 per page in general to
   our editing members (copy editor, layout editor, etc.). We base it
   on what different people do and their time frame.

n. Andrew Trexler: The Argus is independent. I like that it is
   dependent on the SAF and not the administration because it keeps the
   administration out of it. Either we’re going to fund them or no one else
   will.

o. Sam Ebb: Is the time spent now consistent throughout the years?
   1. i. Argus staffer: It really depends from year to year, and every
   issue of the paper is different. Time frames change from year to
   year and from issue to issue. We also don’t recruit work-study
   students. We look for specialized students.

p. Syed Ali: I’ve been on several student groups (Argus,
Wesleying, WSA), everyone puts in hours of work, regardless of
specialized skills. There are many other issues from publications who
don’t get funding because of the money for the Argus. And those
publications have to use these same skills but don’t get paid. Why do you
think the Argus is different from other publications like Wesleying? Those
people need to do specialized computer work and don’t get paid. How do
we defend the Argus salaries to other student groups?

1. i. Abby Francis: As far of other student publications, we publish
   more than they do with so many issues a year.

q. Nicole Updegrove: I understand that seeing something move
from paid to unpaid is really difficult, but I was an unpaid editor for a lit
mag in high school. It was thankless so I sympathize, but I urge everything
to think about the other student groups who don’t get funding because of the Argus funding workers.

1. i. Argus staffer: If we want to make this constructive, what other alternatives do you guys see? Could we see some other alternatives that won’t make this so black and white?

2. ii. Nicole Brenner: In thinking of possible solutions, could your salaries be from advertising money from the prior year? There would be a year-to-year shift about money, but this would allow for more accurate budgeting on the part of the SBC. The money would go into the endowment or the next Student Activities Fee budget for the next year.

xviii. r. Mari Jarris: Assuming that we need to keep this money to attract students, could you advertise these jobs as all-campus jobs or work-study jobs? Could you reach out to Argus alumni to sponsor these positions?

1. i. Argus staffer: We want people dedicated to the paper and not the paycheck. We feel uncomfortable giving out jobs to people just because of work study restrictions.

xix. s. Alton Wang: Do people coming into these jobs knowing about the amount of time that go in? The Argus staff is here by choice. They know they’re putting in this amount of time. I personally knew how much time I was putting into the Argus. That enough should be some sort of incentive.

1. i. Argus staffer: People would just not want to deal with inconveniences that come with being a higher staffer.

2. ii. Abby Francis: The Argus is different from every literary publication.

xx. t. Andrew Trexler: motion to extend discussion for another 30 minutes.

1. i. Sustained.

xxi. Nicole Brenner: Straw Poll: Should Argus workers be paid, not necessarily by the SBC?

1. Yes: 12
2. No: 3
3. Abstain: 15

xxii. Nicole Brenner: Straw poll: If Argus workers continued to be paid, should it come from the current model of funding (funding for the current year versus using last year’s revenue)?

1. a. Argus funded by SBC in entirety including salaries: 6
2. b. Argus uses revenue from last year to fund workers’ salaries: 19
3. c. Abstain: 5
xxiii. Alex Rachlin: People who work as hard as Argus workers do should get paid, but other people work just as hard and are not paid. It is the Argus’ staff who should want to work for Argus. The prestige argument is not enough; there are other people who go and work hard and get zero prestige for it. People are getting paid A LOT of money regardless of the hours spent. Would we be able to lower the amount of money allocated?

xxiv. Olivia Horton: The Argus is different from all other publications because it tells them about everything going on. “WSA office workers make it possible for you to do what you do.” (?)

xxv. Abby Francis: Argus does what others can’t.

xxvi. Syed Ali: What WSA office staff does is important to discuss. They help process SBC documents and documents for other student groups. ALMOST NO ONE ON THE WSA USES THEM.

xxvii. Jake Blumenthal: Argus has constantly made the argument that their publication has a more special status than other student publications. The Argus is more special because it has been given preferential treatment. Other students might not have funding because of Argus. My problem with the Argus being “independent” of the university is that they take strong editorial views. Why shouldn’t the students have a right to hold them accountable if we are funding them?

xxviii. Andrew Trexler: I just don’t want the Argus to be a machine of the administration. I don’t like the instability of the advertisement revenue proposal. It’s a lot hanging on one person’s work. Even then, the inconsistency from year to year is unsettling. We will not be losing money due to a particular year. I prefer the current model because of its method of stability.

xxix. Ellen Paik: By funding the student workers, we’re taking away money for the rest of the student body and the rest of the activities they participate in. We need another source for the salary of the Argus workers.

xxx. Sam Usdan: Are there any other student groups who have paid positions?

1. Nicole Brenner: Sound co-op, WSA office workers (not really a student group),
2. Adam Brunick: Green Fund (funds internships during summer sometimes but you can opt out of Green Fund fee).

xxxi. Zachary Malter: How would the new model affect your operations? How much ad revenue has been acquired each year? I would like more information. For people on SBC, what could’ve been funded had you not funded the workers’ salaries? I think there are plenty of things
that the SBC funds that are not “valuable.” Personally, I think having a robust student paper is much more important to our school than a lot of other things we fund.

xxxii. Christian Hosam: To Jake, the paper is based on opinions that people send in to the paper. What is the opportunity cost of funding the Argus? The Argus is all-encompassing and is different from other student groups. One more thing, the WSA-Argus correlation is false. We need to take this off the table.

xxxiii. Rebecca ?: The $12,000 that pays student workers goes towards the greater good of the student body, the campus, and the community. I don’t understand the function of the new revenue proposal because I don’t get how it would function now.

xxxiv. Nicole Brenner: The money other groups raise money as income for other things (tournaments, lodging, etc.). It would work the same for you and would give you more autonomy. I don’t know right now how the system would work for this particular year.

xxxv. Alton Wang: We should stay with the current model for funding the Argus. Pushing the new model onto the Argus so quickly is overwhelming and we must let the Argus consider how they want to use that money.

xxxvi. Arya Alizadeh: Why should a student activity get way more funding from everyone else? The Argus is one other thing that happens on campus; why should we not be paying other activities? We put in effort; why shouldn’t we all get paid? It’s just a lot of money for the Argus.

xxxvii. Syed Ali: One of my issues is that just because something is tradition doesn’t mean it has to continue. Every industry progresses and innovates. Everyone is changing their models. Can we look at something like a primarily online format? One of my other concerns is the autonomy from the Argus. We were funded by the WSA on the Argus and yet taking very critical views on them. What about something more like the Green Fund that has a low cost opt in-opt out option?

xxxviii. Kara Lin: There’s been a lot sacrificed by the SBC in past years. Things like the Sailing Team have almost no money. We need to be giving opportunities to all. There are a lot of things sacrificed in order to give the Argus the money. The SBC takes the brunt of the criticism and hate from the Argus when things go sour.

xxxix. Andrew Trexler: How much do we care about the quality of the Argus? Do we consider that more valuable than other student activities? I agree with Zach’s point about looking at this from a more holistic approach and Ellen’s point about money not coming from administration.
We need to look into alumni’s desire to donate to the Argus. We need to think creatively about what money we could put in this direction.

xl. Jason Shatz: We need to look at the idea of alumni subscriptions and other ideas that involve alumni and other community members. We should seek funds from within, not from the administration.

xli. Abby Francis: There’s not a market for subscriptions.

xlii. Nicole Updegrove: We are spending about $15,000 this year to offer the New York Times to the campus..Andrew, how much of that money goes to you for delivery? A substantial amount. And if that funding didn’t happen, the New York Times would sit in the Exley holding dock and no one would read it. I think this pays testament to the fact that the Student Activities Fee pays to bring information to students, and that does include workers. Also, the money the Argus fundraises can contribute substantially to pay for their own expenses - cycling the money from year-to-year would decrease the net sum that Argus has to request from the SBC, which would look a lot better to the rest of the campus.

xliii. Andrew Trexler: I do get paid quite a bit, but it’s federally mandated.

xliv. Benny Doctor: The SBC’s policy about the Argus should be clarified. The money raised by the Argus should not be significant to Wesleyan students.

xlv. Jake Blumenthal: I don’t understand why we’re not looking at more fundraising issue. I think we need to look at different ways of fundraising. Argus should receive funding for now, but we need to take an in depth and holistic look at what they deserve for the future. Perhaps a task force?

xlvi. Arya Alizadeh: The Argus members should get on SBC and vote for themselves (hardy har har). We need to look at shrinking the $12,000 first and then figure out what to do. I do agree with Jake on that. Lastly, the WSA office staff serves every single student group that has any monetary transaction. They are an integral part of the community.

xlvii. Christian Hosam: The people who are being paid are so much more skilled than most of the other staff. They wouldn’t have gotten this information had they not been there before, unpaid. Pay should not be dependent on a variable level from yourself. Would you consider looking at some of your pay coming from within?

xlviii. Abby Francis: Nope. It’s not much different.

xlix. Dana ?: We are treating the newspaper as a job BECAUSE we are paid. It takes up a lot of precious time. It’s not just an incentive. It’s quality control for the Argus. Someone brought up streamlining the Argus
by bringing it online, but it would decrease the quality.

1. Syed Ali: You don’t have to become Wesleying to be successful online. We don’t need to continue on the old path. Every student group is a different animal. Everyone thinks of themselves as one thing, they’re the only think. The SBC has difficult decisions to make. If in fact the Argus is a different animal, I encourage us to take up a Green Fund approach.

2. Argus Staffer: That won’t work.

3. Nicole Brenner: Thanks everyone for coming in. This wasn’t a personal attack; we just wanted to make sure we had enough information to make an informed decision. We have a lot of things to consider. It’s a lot of work, especially with two members down. We want everyone to do good jobs. We’re glad you’ve come in to give us clarification and insight. Thanks for coming in to speak with us.

VI. Meeting closed by Andrew Trexler

VII. Meeting moved to SAC/CoCO by G. Tanenbaum ’15
   a. Bruno Machiavelo moved to SAC
   b. Ellen Paik moved to CoCO
      i. SBC voted sad muffin of the year.

VIII. Meeting re-opened

IX. Minutes
   a. All who approved the minutes from two meetings ago (9/30): Approved.
   b. All who approved the minutes from last week (10/7): Approved.

X. Committee Reports
   a. Zachary Malter (Executive Committee): I have provided some insight into what I do and what the Student Sustainability Task Force does. We want to provide some recommendations about what the university should do in terms of finances. The President’s Challenge is going to open up again and allow people to submit ideas to me and would allow the community to be brought together.

   b. Syed Ali (and CoCo): The WSA Tools & Apps replacement project is moving forward. Spirit and Events Committee is planning Bandfire for Friday, October 26, 2012. The Committee for Inclusion and Diversity is also accepting applications. Student group recognition is now by appointment only.

   c. Sam Ebb (AAC): We approved a French studies and a film studies minor. The Advising Task Force made several changes to advising. We sent out emails to minors this week. Also, the new five-year calendar is trying to get rid of the Spring Fling day. Talk to us about that.

   d. Nicole Updegrove (SAC): We funded Glow in the Dark Capture the Flag (it was awesome). Also, if you have thoughts about the health side of the Spring Fling issue, talk to me.
e. Andrew Trexler (FiFaC): Shuttles went off smoothly during Fall Break. Sustainability is working on paper saving. We have two new members for the Financial Aid Committee.

f. Mari Jarris (OEAC): Member of the Week is ALTON WANG (woot woot!). He is super snazzy. Meet the office members at our Meet and Greet! Admissions Committee is meeting soon.

g. Grant Tanenbaum (ITC): We are discussing ways to improve GRS. We are working on WesMaps upgrades.

h. Nicole Brenner (SBC): We didn’t have a meeting last week because of Fall Break. We’ve allocated $15,422 this week for large scale allocations. Appointments are happening. Tell all your friends!

XI. New Business and Announcements

Meeting Adjourned: 09:29pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Lily Herman ‘16 & Grant Tanenbaum ‘15