

FINANCE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 16, 2025, | Time: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Location: RR112/hybrid | Recorder: Jessi

Members in Attendance	Council Co-Chairs: <input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Shaffer <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Yannotta	Members: <input type="checkbox"/> Amy Cannata <input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Cole <input type="checkbox"/> Beverly Forney <input type="checkbox"/> Tami Harper <input type="checkbox"/> Julie Hugo	<input type="checkbox"/> Christy Owen <input type="checkbox"/> Gabby Sloss <input type="checkbox"/> Adam Wickert <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Recorder: <input type="checkbox"/> Jessi Alley-Snell		

Topic/Items

- Council meetings over the Summer Term
- Fee Fun Discussion (Strategies for collaboration and expectations around remaining fund statements)
- Review Facilities Rental Contract
- Prioritization of financial operating policies- interim & others
- Update on roll-out of Amazon Business
- Open time for reflection

Meeting Summary for Finance Council Meeting

Quick recap

The meeting focused on reviewing and updating interim policies for food and travel expenses at the community college, with discussions on budget processes, departmental spending, and retirement celebrations. The group explored ways to balance fiscal responsibility with flexibility, addressing pain points in current policies while emphasizing transparency and ethical use of taxpayer dollars. They also discussed summer meeting plans, policy work priorities, and the need for clearer communication of policy changes to the broader college community.

Budget Reduction and Public Review

The meeting focused on the budget process, with Jeff providing an overview of the recent Budget Committee meeting where a \$2.3 million reduction proposal was presented along with a glide path to achieve \$650,000 in savings. The committee will review public comments at a meeting next Wednesday from 6-7 PM, after which they will decide to approve a version of the budget before sending it to the Board for adoption in June. Christy noted that there has been community concern, particularly about automotive and non-degree courses at TAPS, which may result in public testimony during the upcoming budget hearing.

Community College Food Policy Update

The meeting focused on reviewing and updating interim policies for food and travel expenses at the community college. Christy presented options for addressing pain points in the current food policy, including providing flexible price ranges, clarifying guidelines for hybrid and remote meetings, defining advisory bodies,

and establishing a clear exception process. The group discussed the need to update the policy to reflect current costs and practices, with Julie suggesting that clearer guidelines at lower levels could reduce the burden on senior leadership to approve exceptions. The conversation ended with a brief discussion of the overall food spend and the need to clarify policies for Door dash and other food delivery services.

Department Meal Policy Clarification

The meeting focused on clarifying policies regarding departmental meal expenses and student activities. Christy emphasized the need for a clear policy and suggested involving deans or associate deans in decisions, while Beverly raised questions about exceptions and student capstone events. Elizabeth explained that student activities are typically allowable, but staff meals might not be covered. Tami highlighted the importance of clear guidelines and mentioned specific campus activities she would defend, while also expressing concerns about inappropriate spending. Jessi agreed that it is hard to get a one size fits all policy.

Retirement Celebration Budget Policies

The group discussed policies around retirement celebrations and departmental spending. They clarified that the \$50 limit applies to individual retirement dinners, while larger college-wide events are excluded. Tami and others expressed concerns about the current \$50 limit being insufficient for meaningful retirement celebrations. The group agreed that deans or associate deans should have more autonomy to make decisions on reasonable budgets for such events. They also discussed the use of DoorDash for meetings, with opposition for its use for 4-hour meetings, preferring in-person attendance. The conversation concluded with a brief discussion about food trucks and the practice of donating leftover food to students.

College Food and Travel Policy Updates

The group discussed updates to the college's food and travel policies. For the food policy, they agreed to add a preamble emphasizing transparency and ethical use of taxpayer dollars, while maintaining flexibility for exceptions. For travel, they considered removing agenda requirements but kept them for per diem verification. Christy will revise both policies to be clearer and less burdensome, incorporating feedback about professional judgment and reasonable documentation. The group also discussed allowing ride shares and rental cars for travel, with Elizabeth noting that staff typically don't question these expenses unless they seem unreasonable.

College Travel and Budget Policies

The group discussed college policies regarding travel expenses and budget requests, with Christy proposing interim policies to address pain points while balancing autonomy with fiscal responsibility. They explored the role of finance council in reviewing student technology and equipment replacement funds, with Christy presenting workflow examples and questioning whether their involvement was appropriate for certain types of requests. Tami and Mark raised questions about budget thresholds and the need to review arbitrary spending limits, while Elizabeth clarified that equipment replacement fund was for replacing existing items rather than purchasing new ones, with a \$5,000 capital equipment threshold for depreciation purposes.

Summer Policy Planning Meeting

The group discussed summer meeting plans, deciding to cancel the June 20th meeting due to scheduling conflicts and instead hold their final meeting before graduation. They agreed to focus on policy work over the summer, with Tami suggesting they tackle the travel and food policies to present at the start of fall term. The group discussed implementing an interim food policy while working towards a more permanent solution, with Christy noting that even interim changes would feel like a cultural shift. Adam proposed working on student-focused policies, including fee analysis and true cost of attendance calculations. The group also discussed tuition waivers, with Christy noting they need to clarify the process for 65+ waivers and gold card waivers, while Elizabeth suggested focusing on defining different types of tuition waivers rather than the amount given away.

They agreed to consider moving meetings away from Fridays, with Elizabeth and Jessi supporting quarterly in-person meetings while the others can remain hybrid. Mark raised questions about whether the current council membership of 11 people adequately represents all perspectives, suggesting they might need additional members like an academic dean. The group also discussed challenges with communicating policy changes to the broader college community, with Mark acknowledging difficulties in disseminating information.