

12-19-2025 Meeting Summary for Finance Council Shared Governance Meeting

The Finance Council meeting focused on reviewing and updating the allowable cost policy, with Lisa presenting an orientation training on current policies and procedures. The group discussed challenges with gift card usage, particularly for grant-funded expenses, and agreed to develop a structured policy framework. Several subgroups provided updates on their ongoing work, including fee analysis, travel policy review, and food spending policies. The council also addressed concerns about communication and customer service in the business office, emphasizing the need for clear policies and consistent enforcement. The conversation ended with a discussion of upcoming budget processes and potential topics for the January public share-out meeting.

Orientation to current Allowable Cost Policy

Lisa presented an orientation on the allowable cost policy, focusing on business expenses and the criteria they must meet. She explained the four criteria for allowable expenses and provided examples to illustrate the concepts. Lisa also covered internal and external policies related to spending, including the travel policy, food spending policy, and P-card policy. Christy pointed out that some policies, such as the definition of student activities, need clarification. The orientation is not yet complete, but Lisa sought feedback from the group to further develop it.

Lisa presented on allowable cost policy, explaining that the business office reviews purchases against external regulations and restrictions, including state and local budget laws, board policies, and IRS guidelines. She discussed criteria for allowable expenses, including documentation requirements and the concept of "reasonable" spending, which she defined as what a prudent person would consider appropriate. The presentation is approximately 80% complete, with Lisa still working on examples of adequate and inadequate documentation, as well as examples of travel vouchers and other purchases.

The meeting focused on reviewing and updating the allowable cost policy, with Lisa explaining that the current policy needs significant changes to improve clarity and decision-making. Beverly raised concerns about potential confusion from immediate policy changes, but Lisa emphasized the importance of orienting staff to current policies while acknowledging that further updates will follow. The group discussed specific issues, including the prohibition of using p-cards for meals outside a 60-mile radius during travel, and agreed to create separate orientations for p-card procedures and to develop wallet-sized cheat sheets as resources. Adam suggested framing the business office as a

technical assistance entity and proposed including a scenario about misusing public funds to highlight the importance of policy adherence.

The meeting focused on improving communication and processes within the business office to encourage staff to seek guidance rather than handling financial matters independently. Tami emphasized the need for a supportive approach to ensure staff feel comfortable reaching out, while Lisa highlighted the importance of clear documentation to meet IRS regulations and withstand audits. The need for a structured approach to policy updates, while also addressing inefficiencies and the administrative burden of current processes was acknowledged.

Sponsored projects (grants) gift card guidance

The group discussed the need for a standardized gift card policy for grant-backed expenses, acknowledging the complexity of different federal regulations and grant-specific requirements. Christy emphasized the importance of clear documentation and consistent standards, while Amy noted that grant managers should consult with funding agencies when unsure about allowable expenses. The team considered adopting existing policies from other institutions and discussed the distinction between gift cards and gas cards for transportation. They also touched on the OEA grants, which Jeff described as a separate, irregular process. The group agreed to review a gift card policy guide sheet and explore options for a college-wide structure, with Christy suggesting that establishing a baseline would help address one-off questions in the future.

Sub-group status

The group reported on any initial findings and asked questions to receive feedback from the finance group.

Discussed gift card policies and the need to involve Coordinated Student Resource Team members in decision-making. They reviewed existing guidelines from the Department of Justice, emphasizing that gift cards should only be used when other options are exhausted. Highlighting the importance of clear documentation and accountability for gift card usage.

Lisa reported that a fee policy analysis group had been formed, with a focus on defining fees and researching how other organizations handle them. T

The Finance Council discussed ongoing work on travel policy research and data gathering. Julie reported on a feedback form and shared documents in Teams.

Christy mentioned upcoming process improvement reports on travel and procurement, while Amy requested input on the food policy before their January meeting. The group

discussed the January 9th share-out meeting, where Christy and Mark invited others to participate in presenting topics.

They also addressed upcoming budget process considerations and financial policy questions for the executive team.