The following questions should be submitted to the Services and Activities Fee Committee 48 hours prior to your budget meeting. EMAIL them to asewufinancevp@ewu.edu or deliver them in hard copy to the Dean of Students Office in PUB 320.

These questions provide the basic information for the Committee to evaluate the request. All questions should be answered to the best of your ability and as completely as possible. Please answer each question individually. Programs may also submit an additional narrative outlining their proposal as well as any materials which will assist the Committee in its deliberations.

**Budget Questions**

1. Please provide an explanation of how the program plans to spend the budget in each line item of the SAF Allocation Budget Request Form, including an explanation of increases or decreases from the previous year’s request. Items that are vague, such as “contact services” should be clearly explained.

We will spend SAF funds in three main areas: payroll, printing and general expenses. Increased payroll is a result of minimum wage increases and the addition of a few more students to the staff. We are looking to hire three to four new personnel, whose wages would contribute to the increased wage amount.

A new position for next year includes a Business Manager. This person would be signing timesheets, keeping watch over the budget and serve as budget authority regarding any issue. More information on the position will be presented during our budget hearing, as the next Board of Student Publications will detail the position’s job responsibilities.

Our printing contract is also likely to increase. Over the past few years, our contract has increased by nearly $8,000 each year. This was held in check by reducing the size of the...
newspaper. However, the newspaper is hoping to retain its size into next year, resulting in a slightly higher contract than usual.

Every year, the newspaper has attended two conferences: one to the SPJ Student Journalism Conference in Seattle, and the ACP National College Journalism Convention. The amount for both of these trips hasn’t varied much in the past few years, and is likely to continue at the current expense rate. They provide invaluable experience for staff members, and allow for potential career opportunities to open up.

Equipment purchases have been focused on upgrading computers in the office. Last year, we purchased new camera equipment, and were given a Tech Fee award to renew nearly all of our computers in the office.

Office supplies for the newspaper are typically found at the University Bookstore. Notebooks, pens and other general supplies are purchased there. We turn to Office Depot for any major purchases, such as large batches of paper.

2. How many students utilize the services and activities provided by your program? Describe how statistics are obtained and provide demographics on graduate, undergraduate, male, female or other categories you believe important and relevant to your unit.

We aim to print enough newspapers to reach the entire campus through our distribution points and promotion of the articles via social media networks. Currently, 3,000 copies are distributed, throughout the Cheney campus, Riverpoint campus and businesses in Cheney and Spokane. Past surveys showed that two to three people read copy, equaling nearly the entire campus. We do not charge for a copy of the newspaper, as a result of funding from the SAF.

Our website is also free so that the public can register and participate in an open discussion, as well as read the newspaper. We will have a smart phone app for Android phones by the end of this year, also free, for students to read articles on a digital platform.

3. Does your program provide employment opportunities for students? Please explain the nature of student employment within your unit, including total FTE and number of students employed.

The Easterner is geared for any student wishing to be published, to contribute, or to get involved with the university. We look for talented students to bring on staff. Throughout the year, we speak to classes and gauge employment interest from the entire campus. The Journalism 100 class is also an entry point for students to see if the newspaper would be right for their interests. It’s open to any student, and many of our staff members have come from the class.

There are no FTEs under The Easterner’s budget. There are 24 students currently employed at The Easterner; nine are in an editorial position, eight are writers and two are in the advertising department.

4. How do you gauge the effectiveness of the services and activities you provide to students? Is student input collected and used in this process? If your unit has an advisory committee, in what capacity is it involved in your budgeting process?
We are able to measure the effectiveness of our service through several methods. Each week, our distributor finds the readership rates of our printed product. It’s an indication of what grabs student attention. We also have a constant reader survey where readers mark off what catches their eye and how much they read in each article. Our website is open for comments to registered users, and we also frequently ask those following us on social media networks about certain events. The Journalism 100 class also contributes to the input we receive. Our faculty adviser, who gives a weekly critique of the newspaper, teaches the class. In terms of creating a budget, that falls under the job responsibilities of the Editor-in-chief, in consultation with the adviser. It is then passed on to the Board of Student Publications for input and suggestions, and then is finalized for submission.

5. How do you ensure that student fees do not subsidize non-student uses? If previous requests have included statistical analysis on this point, please provide similar analysis using this year’s demographics.

We take great care to make the printed product the most prominent part of our operation. Students have the ability to pick up a copy of the newspaper for free, a service in which we pride ourselves.

6. Have alternative (non-S&A Fee) funding sources been pursued to the fullest possible extent? If yes, please elaborate. To what extent does your unit rely on earned income? How much of that revenue is obtained directly from students?

The Easterner runs a very successful advertising department, which collects nearly $40,000 in revenue. Other universities have departments that collect around $15,000 with six people. We manage ours with one to two. The funds earned by the advertising department offset payroll costs. This revenue stream fluctuates from year to year, depending on personnel and the economy. In particular, the last year has been a difficult time compared to other years, to sell ads. The department, however, has maintained strong sales through this difficult economy. However, sales are down considerably this winter. Advertising revenues come from businesses, agencies and institutions, not from students.

7. Are there any long term obligations associated with this funding request?

In terms of budget obligations, The Easterner sets a printing contract each year, and has had one-year contracts for the past two years with Target Media Northwest, a printing company in Airway Heights. Given the nature of fluctuating printing prices, it would be in our best interest to pursue a multi-year contract with them. The next year will also likely see the newspaper purchase a yearly contract with a website publisher outside of our current provider. This would be a $1,800 cost each year, or $150 a month. In addition, we use several phones in the office, which ends up being a $3,000 yearly expense.
8. Was your 2010-2011 S&A Fee allotment increased, decreased or unchanged from the 2009-10 budget? What was the overall impact on your organization and its ability to serve students? How closely did your actual expenditures align with the budget presented to last year’s Committee?

In terms of percentage increase, The Easterner remained at its previous level of 3.3 percent. As the student population increased, we received more money from the S&A Fee. This has helped to bolster our operation, and has allowed us to print larger papers this year, often including more color pages per issue. If an increase is large enough, then we will have the ability to print more copies of the newspaper, to reach more students, and to employ more students in our newsroom.

9. What is the impact to service to students if your request is not funded or lowered?

Should the amount of funding for The Easterner be lowered, it would affect the student population’s access to information related to university news and events. We would likely be first cutting the number of student jobs available, then the size of the printed product. Coupled with an uneasy economy for advertising, even a small cut would endanger the amount of pages and color that are printed with each issue.

10. What are three new initiatives for future years?

The Easterner is pushing forward with its multimedia growth. We will be implementing our smart phone app and it will be in place by the end of this year. This is a huge step forward for our online operation.

We are also planning to expand our reporting operation by hiring a dedicated online reporter. While we have regular web exclusives, our goal is to restore the daily online version of the newspaper. Once successful, this will open the door for future online growth. Our priority must be equal for both our print and online versions of the newspaper.

Another goal for us in the next few years is to replace outdated equipment. Given that technology is rapidly changing, we are forced to keep up with software updates and replacing aging equipment. Specifically, cameras and an additional set of computers are needed to finish the copy editing system upgrade that we are implementing. This would lessen the need for paper editing, give the students a professional experience and cut down on some office expenses in the long run.

11. Do you plan to buy apparel, which includes but is not limited to t-shirts, uniforms and jerseys, if you are awarded a S&A budget for fiscal year 2011-2012? If yes, please briefly describe the purpose of those expenditures.

We do not plan to buy apparel for the newspaper at this time. However, if those items were purchased, it would be for marketing purposes. We would be purchasing items such as T-shirts, and then giving them out to students via open houses, sessions at the PUB or through contests in the newspaper.