CFACT

Adam Motzko
Adam.motzko@gmail.com

General Comments/Arguments:

$1 Million Cut

- Right before the Committee deliberated CFACT's budget, The Committee instructed itself that –
- “We have to find $1 million of things to take out”
- You then proceeded to cut CFACT’s budget in half.
- Our budget cut us by $100k
- With one group out of nearly 100, the Committee achieved 10% of its million dollar cut goal.
- CFACT's request was one of the larger requests, but the Committee didn't remind itself of its $1 million dollar cut goal before deliberating the other top 5 budget groups. Just CFACT.
- This may not have been done on purpose, but a tone was set for CFACT that wasn’t applied to other groups.

Being Cooperative

- We were asked several questions about our budget via email after our budget presentation.
  - We provided answers within hours or a few days
  - Yet we were cut in half.
  - Another group had a much larger budget and request – and you had questions.
  - That group refused to answer those questions.
  - They were cut in half. However, half of that cut is being directed to a student group that has spun off of the old group, so really they got cut 25%.
  - Why is it that the Committee punished a group that was responsive and cooperative by twice as much as a group that was belligerent and un-cooperative?
  - Is that a standard you want to set for future relationships between the Committee and Student groups?
Does a Majority survey legitimize only funding one side?

- The Committee justified funding the staff of another student group by saying that a survey suggested majority support for their positions or group.
- The Committee discussed whether this was viewpoint neutral, but the majority support clearly helped this other group get its staff funded.
- The Committee needs to consider the inverse of this proposition, and the impact on minority religions, cultures, lifestyles and points of view.
- If survey majorities are consulted to make decision, the majority group or ideas have a monopoly over significant resources, and they also have the power to deny those resources to minority groups or ideas.
- Using survey majorities to provide resources to some groups in the majority and deny resources to groups in the minority is a clear violation of viewpoint neutrality.

Outside Funding

- The committee’s treatment of outside funding was inconsistent.
- At one point, the Fees Advisor suggested that treatment of outside funding doesn’t need to be viewpoint neutral.
- The Committee’s treatment of outside funding for the first two groups reviewed was completely at odds.
- CFACT proposed to raise nearly half of its program budget from outside funding.
- The Committee used the rationale of a lack of alternative funding 14 times to penalize CFACT. The committee ultimately cut CFACT’s budget in half.
- The very next group had less than 10% of their budget come from outside funding
- The committee levied one punishment that amounted to 1% of their total budget.
- The Committee discussed how CFACT and this other group were political or partisan and the different rules and restrictions that applied.
- The Committee came to the same conclusion that both groups were political but not partisan.
- However, the other group was excused from getting outside funds because it was difficult for a ‘political’ group to get funds. CFACT was penalized 14 times for failing to get outside funds.

- As part of the justification for the other group’s staffer being unique, was that their staff developed relationships with dozens of outside groups.

- CFACT’s staff has also developed relationships with dozens of outside groups that CFACT partners with on a regular basis.

- In fact, it is these partnerships that allow CFACT to find outside funding for their programs.

- However, this other group stated that their staff tries really hard, but is completely unsuccessful at getting outside funding.

- Yet CFACT is told that difficulty doesn’t matter to them.

- The Committee says, “oh, you can sell some tickets” Then, “you can sell 4-times as many at twice the price - and we are cutting your staff 100%, even though they are the reason there is any outside funding at all.”

- So CFACT has staff that successfully creates relationships that could provide half of the program budget from outside funding – and the Committee cuts CFACT 14 times (for 50% of the entire budget) for not getting enough outside funding and then completely cuts the staff.

- The very next group has staff that claims getting outside funding is too hard.

- The Committee says “at least you tried, so we will cut your funding by 1% and fully fund your staff”

- The Committee is setting the following standard for student groups – say you are trying, but fail at getting funding – otherwise you’ll be cut much more.

- The Committee also implemented a fund raising standard that was only applied to the conservative groups.

- CFACT, YAL and SCV, each had two events where the Committee said – students can just pay for tickets.

- How many other groups or events did the Committee say students could “just pay tickets for an on campus activity”?

- None
- Only conservative students are expected to pay a ticket price to attend something they might enjoy.

Point-by-point response to rationales

1) Deduction of $49,000 for salaries Wages and stipends

**Nature of CFACT**

- The Committee denied CFACT funding for professional staff, and provided it for the very next group.

- The justification was that CFACT was composed of top down ideas imposed on the University, while this other group was purely a survey-based organization that only did what they were told by the students.

- The Committee's understanding of CFACT is off. Our issues are not imposed by the national chapter.
- The local chapter was formed and populated by local students interested in these environmental and consumer issues.
- The local chapter organized as a CFACT chapter because CFACT had a number of resources – original research, speakers, scientific advisory board, and more – that the local chapter could use.
- For instance, our local chapter is heavily involved in the Mining issue, as it is a specific concern in Minnesota.
- My friends at the Syracuse Chapter in NY are heavily involved in the fracking issue – that's a huge NY issue. They spend little or no time on mining.
- The point is that the local chapter gets to decide which issues to pursue – thus our local MN chapter is focused on things like mining and lake health, while other chapter emphasize issues that are important to them.
- Our issues are not imposed by a national group, they are picked and pursued by local students. The national group helps us pursue the issues we students here at the university of Minnesota choose.

**Nature of MPIRG**

- MPIRG is not a purely survey based organization that is open to all points of view and issues.
- MPIRG has a point of view and a set of issues which they pursue, and they enforce their point of view.

- Their actions prove it.
- In 2010, 3 conservative students were interested in joining MPIRG and having them focus on different issues. They were elected to the MPIRG board. The other members of the MPIRG board refused to include these 3 on their email list or inform them of the time and place of executive meetings.

- In 1999, 11 conservatives won 25 of the MPIRG Board seats through an ACEC monitored election with turn out of over 600 voters. The MPIRG board nullified the ACEC election, and held a private meeting where only 35 people voted, and was not overseen by ACEC. None of the 11 conservatives held their seats in the new election.

- In 1984, a group of 20 conservatives won a majority of the seats on the MPIRG board. One of them was a young law student named Tim Pawlenty.

- MPIRG took Pawlenty and the other 20 conservatives to court and had a judge remove all of the conservatives from the MPIRG board.

- MPIRG has made it clear through their actions– Students who don’t agree with them are not welcome.

- MPIRG goes to great lengths to ostracize members, invalidate elections, and even lawsuits to keep conservatives out of their group.

- But you know what, that’s ok for MPIRG to do.

- MPIRG takes positions on issues consistent with their ideology.

- That’s fine. If the chess club is funded to play chess, they shouldn’t be expected to play checkers or Monopoly.

- The Fees Committee is funding groups for what they are, not for what they could be.

- The Fees Committee is no more interested in forcing MPIRG to seat conservatives or entertain conservative ideas than they are interested in having a group of Christians take over the QSCC to change their position on gay marriage.

- It is ok if the QSCC is for gay marriage, ok if the Chess club prefers to play chess, and ok if MPIRG has progressive ideas.

- What’s not ok is for MPIRG or the Fees Committee to pretend that they don’t have a ‘side’.

- For instance, MPIRG doesn’t support new mines in MN.
- CFACt supports new mines in MN.
- We inadvertently ended up protesting MPIRG Members at a recent DNR hearing.
- It should also be noted that MPIRG employs a registered lobbyist.
- If these lobbyists are lawyers, it would be an ethical violation for them to change sides.
So if all of a sudden their survey told them to support mining, their lobbyist couldn’t do it without an ethics violation.

**Unique Staff benefits to students**

- When evaluating professional staff, the Committee openly agreed that the CFACT positions were very similar to MPIRG’s professional staff.

- However, CFACT’s staff was not funded, while the other group was.

- The discussion identified 4 possible differences between CFACT staff requirements and the other group:

  - 1 – the MPIRG staff represented students to local coalitions and made sure student voices are heard in coalitions since students won’t have the connections or expertise to do that themselves.
  - CFACT’s staff represents students to several coalitions and organizations as well – you can see which ones in our request narrative.
  - 2 – That MPIRG’s staff develops faculty relationships.
  - CFACT’s staff develops faculty relationships on campus, locally and nationally.
  - 3 – That MPIRG runs statewide campaigns.
  - CFACT runs what we call “Programs”. But to give you some idea of their similarity, CFACT’s Mining Program inadvertently ended up protesting one of MPIRG’s campaigns. CFACT’s Programs and MPIRG’s Campaigns are synonyms for the same activities. CFACT chose the word “Program” to be consistent with the SSFC’s budget sheets that are split between Operations and “Programming”.
  - CFACT’s Programs are also statewide, as our Lakes and Mining program have included students from Winona, Duluth, St. Thomas and St. Olaf. We didn’t emphasize that in the request since the focus is on service to U of M students, but we do work with our other statewide chapters.
  - 4 – That MPIRG’s staff develops relationships with outside groups.
  - CFACT’s staff has developed relationships with dozens of outside groups that CFACT partners with on a regular basis.
  - The primary difference is that CFACT’s staff has successfully arranged for outside funding through these relationships.
Does precedent mean anything?

- The SSFC has funded CFACT staff and stipends continuously for the last 12 years.
- This year we used the same justification for staff that we have in the past.
- The rules regarding staff and stipends have not changed.
- But all of a sudden, the Committee found our salaries and stipends “to not be fully justified”.
- And that’s it. A dozen years of precedence and justification eliminated with a 5 word phrase.
- No explanation, no analysis, no instruction of what would be considered ‘fully justified’.
- If the Committee is going to eliminate a dozen years of precedence, can it at least tell us what is replacing it?
- And more than that, could you tell us before we have to submit our budgets?
- And if there are groups that did ‘justify’ their salaries and stipends, can you be specific about what they did and others didn’t?
- Otherwise, this seems arbitrary.

Successful appeal to vice provost

- Last year’s SSFC cut some group stipends, but not others.
- The SSFC made distinctions saying only certain types of groups need to be funded, but not others.
- CFACT, YAL, AISCC and BSU submitted a joint appeal to the vice provost.
- The Vice-provost agreed and allowed all four groups to allocate funds to stipends and staff if they deemed it necessary.
- The committee needs to consistently apply staff/stipend rules to all groups, not arbitrarily pick winners and losers.

CFACT’s staff are absolutely necessary to the organization

Students’ ability to hire professional staff to work with them on the issues they care about has been the core of CFACT’s program for 12 years. CFACT’s staff gives students the training and expertise they need to be effective on the issues they care about. In addition, CFACT staff represent students in professional settings that students either do not have the professional experience to participate in or just do not have the necessary time to dedicate. CFACT’s ability to team passionate students with professional staff has been the cornerstone of the organization’s success. It should be clearly stated that
CFACT, as do other nonprofits, considers staff time the major part of their program.

The Campus Organizer is responsible for facilitating the greatest level of student involvement in conducting the organizational functions of the chapter and is responsible for the activities and health of the chapter. The Campus Organizer position is a full-time salaried position with a salary commensurate with experience. The Campus Organizer acts as the primary link between the campuses and the national office. His primary goal is to help further CFACT's agenda and development on his campus.

Responsibilities include: work closely with the campus officers; recruit, train, and develop chapter members, assist with issue selection and strategy planning; assist in carrying out campus programs; ensure that students have a good understanding of CFACT; maintain relations with organizations and media; develop faculty member support; recruit board members; coordinate programs and projects; monitor campus contract requirements; develop materials and trainings; personnel management; develop standardized reporting for the chapter; develop grassroots organizing strategies for issue campaigns; create and implement organizing plans for projects and events; coordinate campuses for statewide programs such as the Eco-Summit and Day at the Capitol; form and maintain coalitions and network with allied organizations; serve as primary staff support for task forces or coalitions formed around projects and events; develop strategies for CFACT programs to involve the surrounding community and non-member campuses; develop project budgets and conduct fundraising; develop publicity, outreach, and media contacts; encourage proposals from the campus; monitor campus contract requirements; develop materials and trainings for staff and students alike; ensure CFACT is operating effectively and within all local, state, and federal regulations for 501(c)(3) nonprofits; managing and making detailed reports on personnel, finances, administration, program, campus organizing, community organizing, public presentation, community relations, and other activities of CFACT; maintaining a close working relationship with the Board; running a well-managed, professional, and efficient office; conducting yearly final reports.

**Recommendations**

Fund CFACT’s staff at previous levels. CFACT’s staff is absolutely necessary. We can maintain our operations and achieve our outside funding goals if our Campus Organizer is fully funded. The additional position can be cut and will only impact new programs which were not funded.

Restore $30,000 for the Campus Organizer.

Restore $6,000 for Officer stipends.

These levels of funding would be consistent with previous funding levels.
2) Deduction of $9,360 from Insurance, Benefits and Taxes

**Recommendation**

If the Campus Organizer is restored, we ask the Committee to restore taxes and insurance in this amount:

Taxes - $2,295
Insurance - $4,800

3) Deduction of $2800 from Equipment

We can go another year with our 4-year-old computer, and if you don’t think we need an iPad, ok. But we really do need new office chairs.

Our current furniture for the office was acquired from the University’s second hand warehouse and they are in bad shape. So far three of the chairs have collapsed with people in them this year.

**Recommendation:**

Restore $800 for office furniture.

4) Deduction of $1,500 from Office Supplies

- When the Committee discussed CFACT’s office supplies, they set a new rule.
- Cut office supplies unless a group appeals.
- But then the Committee gave the very next group $500 for office supplies.
- We understand your concern about the amount of money needed for office supplies.
- However we found the questions about our need for any office supplies perplexing.
- The Committee simply had to look at the “Actual” column of the budget sheet to see that CFACT spent $801.54 on supplies in 2012-2013.
- We should also note that the amount was recently audited.
- We are on pace to spend $1,000 on office supplies this year.
- Office Supplies are consumables. We use them up every year. For paper, ink, pens, staples, notepads, folders – we do need this budget funded.

- We project $1500 for next year in order to supply the increased amount of programming we proposed.

**Recommendation**

Restore Office Supplies to previous levels of $1,000

5) Deduction of $2400 for Telephone and Fax

- When the Committee discussed CFACT's Phone/fax, they set a new rule.
  - Only provide $100/month.
  - But then the Committee gave the very next group $150/month for phone and fax.
  - CFACT provided actual and audited amounts showing the need for our phone/fax. It also provides our internet.
  - The Committee provided $150/month to the next group essentially funded the same amount that was used in the previous year.
  - CFACT would like the same consideration offered to other groups for phone/fax

**Recommendation**

Restore $600 to the Telephone and Fax line item to be in line with support for other groups.

6) Deduction of $13,100 from Ron Paul Speaking event.

**Nature of Speaking Contracts**

- Big name speakers don’t agree to come to your campus on a certain date without a signed contract.
Once the contract is signed, it is binding. In this case, once CFACCT signs a contract with Ron Paul, we owe him $50k in a legally binding contract.

The Committee wants to give us half of the needed funds, and have us sell tickets to make up the rest.

In order to sell tickets, we need a venue, date and time set in stone.

To get those things assured, we need to sign a contract, probably by September for the April event.

This means that we are on the hook for an additional $25k that we won’t have, but are legally obligated to pay.

So from the time we sign the contract, we have to hold an additional $25k of our budget back till we sell out the tickets.

This will cripple all of our other activities from September to date of sell out – which could be March.

And you want us to sell tickets at twice the market rate… without any staff help.

Ticketing a Major Event

CFACCT is confident that we can sell 700 tickets to the general public at $10/each to complete the financial package for Ron Paul - $7000.

CFACCT has researched the $10/head price and found that to be the market price for other non-university based Ron Paul events.

All Ron Paul University events we researched, including the one that drew 10,000 people, students paid no ticket charge.

We found no instance where a University hosted Ron Paul and charged students to attend.

The Fees Committee thinks it is reasonable to charge students $20/ticket to see Ron Paul – this is double the non-student market rate.

Students tend to have fewer discretionary fund than the general public.

We do not believe thousands of students will be willing to pay $20 to see Ron Paul.

In Summary, The Fees Committee wants us to sell 4 times as many tickets at twice the market rate.
- Our staff might be able to sell 2700 tickets, but not at twice the market rate.

- But the Committee cut all our staff.

- The Committee is asking volunteers to sell 2700 tickets at double the market rate.

**The Ron Paul event should be a student event**

- Ideally we’ll attract 2000 students and 700 non-students to the event.

- We want this to be an event for students, but by setting a cost of $20, the Committee is pricing students out of the event.

- No other University that hosted Ron Paul charged students.

- Charging $20/head will price out most students, and only non-students will be able to afford to go.

- All of a sudden, our student event has turned into a non-student event that just happens to be on campus.

**Ron Paul Suggestions**

- We understand you want us to sell more tickets to help fund the Ron Paul Event

- Asking us to charge students $20/head is unprecedented, and his general public market rate is $10/head.

- It is important to us that this remains a student-based event, not a general public event.

- So instead of 700 general public tickets with 2000 free student attendees, we propose 1200 general public tickets – which would generate $12,000 instead of $7,000, and still be a majority student event with 1500 students and 1200 ticket buying general public attendees.

- This requires the Fees Committee to cut our initial request by 10%, instead of the current 50% cut.

**Recommendation**
7) Deduction of $1,100 for Minnesota Mining Month
   - The only justification for this cut was that CFACT did not find “Alternative sources of income”
   - We are perplexed since we found nearly half our programming budget from ‘alternative sources of income’.
   - This rationale was applied 14 times for CFACT, which is odd since CFACT has the largest percentage of their budget coming from alternative sources.
   - Please provide more guidance and when or if we should actually seek alternative sources of income.
   - It is our impression that the more alternative sources of income you try to get, the more the Committee will cut and punish you.
   - Yet we see in the directives of several groups, including CFACT’s, that we should seek more alternative sources of income.

**Recommendation**
- Please clarify what you really want groups to do regarding alternative sources of income.
- Consistently apply those standards to all groups
- Restore $1,100 to the Minnesota Mining Month Program

8) Deduction of $5,000 from CFL recycling program
   - The Committee asked if we have university permission to do this program.
   - This is backwards.
   - Before can/plastic/glass/paper recycling bins – student groups had to press the university to do the recycling.
   - CFACT will be doing that as part of the program.
   - In the mean time, CFACT will provide an alternative and well known option for CFL recycling.
- Our efforts and purchase of bins will make it easier for university to say yes to an expanded program.

**Recommendation**

Restore $5,000 to the CFL Recycling Program

9) Deduction of $2,000 from States Rights event

**Just ticket the event**

- The Committee used this rationale to justify cuts of $15k to CFACT, $6,288 from YAL and $10,000 from SCV.
- Has the Committee ever suggested tickets sales to students as an alternative to fees funding?
  - Never, not even once.
- Did the Committee ask any other group to charge their members tickets?
- There were a few directives that suggested ticket sales, but no group was cut for that reason.
- Apparently, only conservative students should have to buy tickets for events they would enjoy.

**Recommendation:**

Eliminate the “Conservatives Pay Ticket Prices for events they like” rule.

Restore $2,500 in funding to the State's Rights Event.