

January 2011 Report on the State of the Tufts Community Union Treasury Spring 2011

TCU Treasurer Katharina de Klerk
January 23rd 2011

Honorable senators, community representatives, trustee representatives, members of the press and guests, I deliver this mid-year State of the Treasury address with a light heart. The Treasury has faced many challenges this year, but I am proud to report that the Treasury is in a strong and stable position and stands poised for the challenges that lie ahead.

The fall semester was a productive one for the Treasury. With the guidance of the Allocations Board, the Senate allocated \$40,243.30 to student groups from the Buffer Fund. This money was used to fund a diverse range of exciting new initiatives such as: the establishment of the Jumbo Jugglers club, the recording of a CD by the a capella group Anchord, the purchase of new kilns by the crafts center and the hosting of a speaker by the HIV/AIDS initiative for world AIDS day. We have succeeded in allocating funds to these valuable clubs and events by using sound judgment and standing by our principles; we have given away money generously, but never foolishly. The Allocations Board and the Senate should be proud of the decisions that they made in the fall semester and the difference that these have made to the Tufts Community. With \$35,000 remaining in the Buffer Fund I am confident that we will be able to fund many more interesting initiatives that will no doubt enhance the Tufts experience for our constituents.

The fall semester also only saw two appeals to the recommendations of the Allocations Board and both appeals ran smoothly: the Asian American Alliance was granted additional funding so as to be able to fully fund a performer for their annual Voices concert and the Japanese Culture Club was granted additional funding in order to fund a retreat to the loj after a miscommunication with the Allocations Board. These appeals do not reflect a failure of ALBO, but rather show the effectiveness of our system. It is easy to get caught up in fine details and moral arguments when discussing ALBO requests, which from time to time makes it possible to lose perspective of what is best for the Tufts Community. However, the ease with which recommendations can be overturned when there is sound reason to do so, demonstrates our responsiveness and commitment to the student body.

Another accomplishment that we should be proud of is the introduction of the new TCU website. The site is visually appealing and easy to use and it is my hope that the introduction of this new site will substantially improve the operations of the Treasury, by increasing people's access to and knowledge of Treasury procedures and paperwork. We hope to add additional features over the course of the spring semester, which will further increase transparency and allow signatories to have more immediate access to more accurate information.

The greatest accomplishment of the fall semester though, was the allocation of \$200,000 through the newly created Surplus Grants. Faced with the challenge of spending down the surplus, the Treasury was forced to come up with a creative solution for the disbursement of the surplus funds, and so the Surplus Grants were born. These grants were intended to fund large, one-time capital expenditures that would benefit the greater Tufts community. During the fall

semester the Allocations Board spent many weeks carefully sifting through applications and weighing the arguments presented by each of the applicants. This was a time consuming process and one that certainly challenged ALBO chairs to think about the impact that these projects could have on their constituents. However, despite the lengthy and often uncertain process, the operation ran smoothly and in the end we succeeded in funding sustainable projects that will have a measurable impact on this campus. The Surplus Grants were awarded to: Tufts Bikes, Tufts Mountain Club, Leonard Carmichael Society, Tier II Club Sports, a joint WMFO/TUTV/MAB venture, the Robotics Club and the Crafts Center.

There is much to be learned from this process for future Treasuries, ALBOs and Senates, but there are three lessons in particular that I would like to highlight here tonight. The first is a lesson about time management. When taking on as large an endeavor as giving out \$200,000 it is imperative to leave enough time both for planning out the process and for reaching out to all the parties involved. As we saw with the Recovered Funds process two years ago, rushing into such a large endeavor without a clear plan of action will inevitably lead to great difficulties, which I'm proud we avoided this year. The second lesson is about transparency. People must know and understand the timeline and procedure that is going to be followed and they must understand why these are the procedures that are being followed. When communication breaks down between the student body and the Senate, we inevitably fail to uphold our duty to our constituents. The last lesson is about flexibility. When introducing a new initiative, whatever it may be, it is important to have a contingency plan. It is easy to develop tunnel vision when implementing a new policy and also easy to back yourself into a corner with no graceful way out. It is therefore prudent to allow room for problems and for change. It is my hope that you all remember these lessons when, inevitably, you face similar challenges in future years. But I am enormously proud of the Senate for the work put into the Surplus Grants and I am confident that the work we've accomplished will be visible for years to come.

However, no semester is without its troubles. The Treasury unfortunately faced a number of difficulties with student groups in the fall and was forced to impose sanctions on one group in particular. While we in the Treasury try to be flexible to allow students to optimize their resources and facilitate programming for Tufts students, we cannot allow student groups to violate the policies and procedures that we have in place. We are the overseers of the student activities fee and it is our duty to ensure that we hold all groups to the same standard, to ensure the most fair allocation and use of those funds.

The Treasury and ALBO are far from done though. While the Spring semester is a short one for Senate, we have many challenges ahead, the most notable one of course being budgeting. This year the budgeting process will be a particularly interesting one because of the modified structure of Programming Board and the changes that are occurring within the Judiciary pertaining to sub-grouping. This will also be the first year that we will be having council-wide budgeting sessions. It is my hope that this will lead to an increase in joint programming and more creative, new initiatives. It is my hope that this year's budgeting cycle will also correct many of the inefficiencies and inconsistencies of budgeting that have existed in the past. This will be a year to streamline budgeting, so that future Treasury's have a clear model to follow. However, budgeting will inevitably be a very time consuming and tiring process, so have patience and empathy with our ALBO chairs over the coming weeks.

The spring will also be a time for tackling new issues. One of these will be the question of funding club sports, a problem that has been rearing its head with increasing frequency and it is time that we address it.

I am confident that there is still much that will come out of the Treasury this year, that we will finish the year the way we started: full of enthusiasm and creativity. We have accomplished a lot, but now is not the time to be complacent, now is the time to capitalize on our momentum and the goodwill that our successes have generated and continue to make a difference on this campus.

Respectfully submitted, January 23rd 2011, by Katharina de Klerk, TCU Treasurer 2010--2011