



# Graduate Student Senate

## *University of Connecticut*

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Finance Policies and Procedures  
Ratified by the Graduate Student Senate on March 27, 2013

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## Section 1. General Philosophy and Guidelines

- 1.1. Mission Statement.** The Graduate Student Senate is the primary source of funding for University of Connecticut graduate student organizations and clubs that have limited opportunities to receive funds from the University of Connecticut.
- 1.2. Purpose of Events.** Events funded by the Graduate Student Senate should contribute to the intellectual, cultural, and/or professional capital of the graduate student body. Preference will be given to events that have an appeal which extends beyond the members of one academic discipline.
- 1.3. Graduate Student Activity Fee.** The Graduate Student Senate is funded by the Graduate Student Activity Fee, which is paid by University of Connecticut graduate students. The Graduate Student Senate will not fund organizations whose members are not predominantly University of Connecticut graduate students, or events whose primary benefices are not graduate students paying the Graduate Student Activity Fee.
- 1.4. Accessibility.** Events funded by the Graduate Student Senate will be open and accessible to all graduate students. The Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and the Senate will give priority, with regard to funding decisions, to the number of graduate students that will be served by the use of Senate funds.
- 1.5. Non-Discrimination Policy.** Organizations, groups, or individuals using University of Connecticut funds or facilities cannot intimidate, interfere, or discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, physical handicap, or political activity.
- 1.6. Content Neutrality.** In accordance with the University of Connecticut's Division of Student Affairs Student Activities guidelines, the Graduate Student Senate shall adhere, at all times and in all circumstances regarding funding, to the principle of content neutrality. Funding decisions will not be based on the content of the ideas being expressed by an organization, only the degree to which an event or activity will benefit the graduate student community.
- 1.7. Outside Funding.** Organizations are encouraged to obtain outside sources of funding for events, and those organizations that do will be given preference during the budgeting process.
- 1.8. Fiscal Year.** The Graduate Student Senate's fiscal year shall adhere to that of the University of Connecticut, beginning on the July 1 prior to the school year start and concluding on the June 30 after the school year end. This definition shall hold for any mention of "fiscal year" for the remainder of this document.

## **Section 2. Budget of the Graduate Student Senate**

### **2.1. Adopting the Budget**

**2.1.1.** The budget for the following fiscal year will be presented by the Treasurer to the Senate and voted on at the last meeting of the academic year.

**2.1.2.** A two-thirds majority vote of the Senate is required to adopt the proposed budget.

**2.1.3.** If the Senate does not approve a proposed budget, it must amend the budget and vote again.

### **2.2. Organization of the Budget.** The budget will include:

#### **2.2.1.** Allocations for:

**2.2.1.1.** General operations of the Graduate Student Senate and its office.

**2.2.1.2.** Stipends for members of the Executive Committee.

**2.2.1.3.** Salary and benefits of the Administrative Assistant.

**2.2.1.4.** Events organized by the Activities Director or the Executive Committee in collaboration with the Activities Director (hereafter, the Activities Budget).

**2.2.1.5.** Funds for Special Allocations.

**2.2.1.6.** Budgets of Tier II Graduate Organizations.

**2.2.2.** Unappropriated funds. This account will be used to hold the funds of the Graduate Student Senate that have not been appropriated by the Senate.

**2.2.3.** A summary of income received to date, as well as a forecast for the next fiscal year.

**2.2.4.** A report on the financial status of the Short-Term Emergency Loan Fund.

### **2.3. Changing the Budget**

#### **2.3.1. Executive Privilege**

**2.3.1.1.** The Executive Committee has the right to reappropriate money within and across the budget allocations for general operations and the salary and benefits of the Administrative Assistant by a majority vote. Notification of changes made must be announced by the Treasurer at the next Senate meeting.

**2.3.1.2.** The Activities Director has the discretion to reallocate amounts within the Activities Budget to different expense codes within the existing allocation, provided that, in doing so, the total percentage of money per each expense code is approximately the same as that which was approved by the Senate. Within the Activities Budget, the Activities Director may reallocate a maximum of 20% of his or her

total allocation among expense codes. Any reallocation beyond this amount must be approved by the Executive Committee and be announced by the Treasurer at the next Senate meeting.

**2.3.1.3.** In the event that funds for a Special Allocation must be allocated before the next meeting of the Senate, the Executive Committee has the right to allocate the funds itself by a two-thirds vote. Notification of the changes made must be announced by the Treasurer at the next Senate meeting.

**2.3.2.** The Executive Committee, the Activities Director, and any Tier II Graduate Organization may request additional funds from the Graduate Student Senate via Special Allocation by following the procedure outlined in Section 6 of the Finance Policies and Procedures.

**2.3.3.** Organizations receiving a budget allocation (or Special Allocation) have the discretion to reallocate amounts to different expense codes within the group's existing fiscal year allocation (or Special Allocation), provided that, in doing so, the total percentage of money per each expense code is approximately the same as that which was approved by the Senate. Within a fiscal year budget allocation or Special Allocation, an organization may reallocate a maximum of 10% of its total allocation among expense codes. Any reallocation beyond this amount must be approved by the Finance Committee.

## **Section 3. Finance Committee**

### **3.1. Purpose**

- 3.1.1.** The primary function of the Finance Committee is to act as the primary decision-making body with regards to the recommendation to the Senate for approval of a budget of Senate monies. The Finance Committee therefore has the authority to alter any and all requests, subject to the guidelines in Section 5.3. Creation of Senate Budget. All Finance Committee decisions are subject to confirmation of the Senate.
- 3.1.2.** The Senate or the Executive Committee may assign the Finance Committee other responsibilities as needed.

### **3.2. Membership and Organization**

- 3.2.1.** The Finance Committee will consist of the Treasurer, the Parliamentarian, and five elected members.
- 3.2.2.** One of the elected members must not represent a specific constituency, and therefore must be either an at-large Senator or a non-Senator. There cannot be more than one elected non-Senator on the Finance Committee, but there is no restriction on the number of at-large Senators.
- 3.2.3.** The Treasurer will serve as the non-voting chair of the Finance Committee. The Treasurer may elect to vote to break a tie.
- 3.2.4.** The Parliamentarian will serve as chair if the Treasurer is unavailable to meet.
- 3.2.5.** Each fiscal year, the Finance Committee shall include at least two elected members who did not serve on the Finance Committee for more than a semester during the previous fiscal year.
- 3.2.6.** There may not be more than one voting member from the same constituency.
- 3.2.7.** The Treasurer may remove any member of the committee (except the Parliamentarian) for failure to fulfill duties and obligations, subject to a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee. If the Parliamentarian is unable to fulfill his/her duties, either the President or the Secretary shall serve in his/her stead, subject to a two thirds vote by the Senate.

### **3.3. Elections**

- 3.3.1.** Finance Committee elections will be held at the second Senate meeting of the academic year.
- 3.3.2.** Nominations will open immediately before the election. Any Senator or Officer may submit a nomination. Self-nominations are permissible. Seconds are not required.

**3.3.3.** Elections will be conducted by closed ballot. Each Senator will have a number of votes equal to the number of open seats. The top nominees with a plurality will be elected.

**3.3.4.** If a vacancy opens in the Finance Committee, an election to fill that vacancy will be held at the next Senate meeting.

**3.3.5.** Terms of members of the Finance Committee expire on the last day of the Spring Semester.

### **3.4. Operations**

**3.4.1.** Members of the Finance Committee must attend all meetings if due notice has been provided by the Treasurer and provide timely feedback when solicited. All members are required to attend the Budget Hearing.

**3.4.2.** The chair of the Finance Committee may call for a vote via e-mail if a meeting of the committee is deemed impractical or unnecessary.

**3.4.3.** During the Summer, if action is required from the Finance Committee, the Executive Committee may act in its stead, with the Treasurer still serving as non-voting chair.

## **Section 4. Funding of Tier II Graduate Organizations**

### **4.1. Requirements for Funding**

**4.1.1. University Registration.** An organization requesting a fiscal year budget allocation (or Special Allocation) must be fully registered as an “active” Tier II Student Organization and be in good standing with the Department of Student Activities by the last day of the Fall Semester (or at the time of request, for a Special Allocation). An organization must be fully registered, “active”, and in good standing with the Department of Student Activities in order to access funds from its fiscal year budget allocation or Special Allocation.

**4.1.2. Regulations.** Organizations must comply with the State of Connecticut Comptroller’s Office’s guidelines, as described in the Accounting Procedures Manual for Trustee Accounts, Graduate Student Senate Finance Policies and Procedures, and the policies of the University of Connecticut’s Division of Student Affairs Department of Student Activities.

### **4.1.3. Academic and Non-Academic Organizations**

**4.1.3.1.** The Graduate Student Senate will fund both organizations whose members correspond to the members of a graduate degree program (“academic” organizations) and those whose members transcend multiple degree programs (“non-academic” organizations).

**4.1.3.2.** Academic organizations seeking funding shall correspond to or be a subset of constituencies of the Graduate Student Senate.

### **4.1.4. Attendance of Senate Meetings**

**4.1.4.1.** A constituency organization receiving a budget must send at least one representative (either a Senator or a member of that organization’s Executive Committee) to all meetings of the Senate. A constituency may not miss more than two meetings per semester.

**4.1.4.2.** Non-constituency organizations receiving a budget must send a representative to two meetings per semester.

**4.1.4.3.** At the end of each semester, the Parliamentarian will review the Senate attendance of all funded organizations to verify that they have met the requirements in Sections 4.1.4.1 or 4.1.4.2. If an organization fails to meet said requirements in the Spring semester, its budget for the upcoming fiscal year will be cancelled. If an organization fails to meet said requirements in the Fall semester, it will not be eligible for reimbursement for events held in the Spring semester. These organizations shall still be eligible for Special Allocations.

**4.1.5. Advertisement.** Events funded by the Graduate Student Senate must be advertised to the entire graduate student population and to relevant subsections thereof. This includes using the graduate student listserv, but

additional advertising should also be undertaken if applicable. Advertisements must provide all pertinent information regarding the event, and be sent in advance of the event by enough time such that anyone wishing to attend could, if desired, make arrangements to do so.

**4.2. Inappropriate Uses of GSS Funds.** In accordance with the State of Connecticut Comptroller's Office, as described in the Accounting Procedures Manual for Trustee Accounts, and the University of Connecticut's Division of Student Affairs Department of Student Activities, the Graduate Student Senate will not fund:

- 4.2.1.** Any activity or event that is not open and accessible to all current graduate students. The organization(s) responsible for the event must not only take all reasonable steps to physically accommodate guests, but also ensure, in so far as is practically possible, that the event be conducted in such a manner so that every graduate student who wishes to attend feels comfortable doing so.
- 4.2.2.** Any activity or event where the primary purpose is social interaction within an academic organization, program, or department; that is, events or activities which are department-centric, or should, in the judgment of a reasonable person, be supported by a specific department or other University group that has independent access to an alternative source of funds. Similarly, the Graduate Student Senate will pay for food at events that "contribute to the intellectual, cultural, and/or professional capital of the University's graduate student body" (see Section 1.2), but not events whose sole purpose is the consumption of food, or the facilitation of interaction primarily amongst individuals from within a specific department or academic discipline.
- 4.2.3.** Travel for individual graduate students, conference registrations, donations to clubs or other groups, or other requests that benefit only the individual receiving funds, except in so far as the Graduate Student Senate acts as the mechanism by which donations are collected for a specific group or cause and then distributed accordingly.
- 4.2.4.** Capital equipment purchases for Tier II Graduate Organizations.
- 4.2.5.** The purchase of alcohol.
- 4.2.6.** Budgets for organizations whose members are entirely a subset of an existing funded organization of the Graduate Student Senate. These groups remain eligible for Special Allocations. Separate academic organizations comprising one constituency may apply for separate budgets.

**4.3. Special Consideration.** Organizations whose membership consists primarily of graduate students not based on the Storrs campus who pay the Graduate Student Activity Fee will be exempt from sending representatives to meetings of the Senate. When considering social events in the budgets of these organizations during the Budget Hearing, the Finance Committee will take into consideration the relative accessibility of Storrs-campus social events. All events must be open to all graduate students and advertised to graduate students on the Storrs campus.



## **Section 5. Budgeting Process Procedure**

**5.1. Information Sessions.** The Treasurer and the Finance Committee will hold multiple information sessions during the fiscal year to keep Tier II Graduate Organizations informed on the budgeting and reimbursement processes, and provide general information regarding the Finance Policies and Procedures. At least one session will be held each semester. The GSS Office will announce the time, date, and location of the information session to the graduate population at least one calendar week in advance.

### **5.2. Tier II Graduate Organization Budget Submission**

**5.2.1.** An organization must register two financial points-of-contact (the organization Treasurer and one other member of the organization's Executive Committee) with the Senate by the end of September. If the organization becomes active in the Senate after this time, it must register the points-of-contact immediately. The Senate Treasurer will disseminate all budgeting process information to these points-of-contact. The organization is responsible for keeping the GSS Office apprised of any changes to this information.

**5.2.2.** Organizations must submit their proposed budgets for the following fiscal year to the Treasurer by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on January 31. Budgets will be submitted in a standard format, as determined by the Treasurer and freely available on the Graduate Student Senate website, organized by event/activity and University of Connecticut expense codes.

**5.2.3.** Any organization that submits its budget late shall not be eligible for the budget process. Such an organization is still eligible to apply for Special Allocations.

### **5.3. Creation of Senate Budget**

**5.3.1.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for determining, subject to Senate approval, the total Senate budget amount. This will include a maximum allocation for the Activities Budget and the total budgets of Tier II Graduate Organizations. The Treasurer will inform the Activities Director and the Finance Committee of the maximum allowable expenses for each of the six items described in Section 2.2.1.

**5.3.2.** The Finance Committee does not have the authority to exceed the budget limits provided by the Treasurer. The limits may only be altered by a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate.

**5.3.3.** The Activities Director will submit the Activities Budget for the following fiscal year by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on the last day of February.

**5.3.4.** The Treasurer will examine all submitted budgets for compliance with the Finance Policies and Procedures and any pertinent State or University guidelines, rules, statutes, or laws.

**5.3.5.** The Treasurer will compile all budget information into a uniformly-formatted packet for the Finance Committee and distribute said packet to all Committee members in a timely manner.

#### **5.4. Finance Committee Review**

**5.4.1.** The Finance Committee will review all information submitted by the Treasurer, verifying that requests comply with the Finance Policies and Procedures.

**5.4.2.** The Finance Committee may request further information from requesting organizations at its discretion.

**5.4.3.** If needed, the Finance Committee may develop additional guidelines for funding for the duration of a fiscal year by a two-thirds vote, provided such guidelines comply with the Finance Policies and Procedures and any pertinent State or University guidelines, rules, statutes, or laws.

#### **5.5. Budget Hearing**

**5.5.1.** The Budget Hearing is to be held during the month of March. The Budget Hearing may be split into multiple events if necessary.

**5.5.2.** All requesting organizations will send 1-2 representatives to the Budget Hearing to explain the merits of their request. Each organization will be allotted ten minutes for presentation, with an additional ten minutes for questions. The Activities Director will also present the Activities Budget to the Finance Committee.

**5.5.3.** The Budget Hearing will be open to the public. The GSS Office will advertise the general dates and times of the Hearing by the end of January.

**5.5.4.** Any organization that does not send a representative to the Budget Hearing will have its request for an allocation for the next fiscal year removed from consideration.

**5.5.5.** If no member of the requesting organization is able to make the Budget Hearing as scheduled without undue inconvenience, the Treasurer may alter the previously announced schedule after consultation with all other parties potentially affected by the change.

#### **5.6. Creation of Final Budgets**

**5.6.1.** Using information from the Budget Hearing and obtaining additional input if needed, the Finance Committee will recommend changes to the organization budgets to ensure that they fit within the amount allotted to Tier II Graduate Organizations by the Treasurer.

**5.6.2.** Requesting organizations will be informed of modifications to their submitted budgets by the end of March.

**5.6.3.** The Senate will vote on the Finance Committee's recommended budget as per Section 2.2.1.

**5.6.4.** All Senate-approved budgets for requesting organizations shall be valid for the fiscal year in which the budgets were allocated. Any unused funds remaining in an organization's budget at the conclusion of a fiscal year will be considered unappropriated funds for the following fiscal year.

## **5.7. Appeal of Tier II Graduate Organization Budgets**

**5.7.1.** At any point during the budgeting process, any requesting organization wishing to appeal a decision of the Treasurer or the Finance Committee must submit an appeal in writing (inclusive of e-mail) to the Vice President within five days of being informed of that decision. The appeal must state a dollar amount being requested for each specific activity or event. Additionally, the organization submitting the appeal must be able to demonstrate one of the following:

**5.7.1.1.** That an action or actions of the Treasurer or Finance Committee was not consistent with the Finance Policies and Procedures, which resulted in the organization's request not receiving due consideration based on the guidelines described herein.

**5.7.1.2.** That materially relevant information is available now that was not available at the time of the decision.

**5.7.2.** After verifying that the appeal is consistent with the Finance Policies and Procedures, the Vice President will present the appeal to the Executive Committee at its next meeting. The Executive Committee will vote as to the validity of the appeal. The Executive Committee may modify the amount of the appeal.

**5.7.3.** If two-thirds of the Executive Committee approves the appeal, it will be added to the agenda of the next meeting of the Senate. Appeals must be voted on prior to the voting on the budget as a whole. A member of the appealing organization will explain the validity of the appeal. The Treasurer will explain the ruling of the Finance Committee. The Senate may modify the amount of the appeal.

**5.7.4.** If two-thirds of the Senate approves the appeal, it will be added to the budget. The Senate's vote on the appeal shall be final.

## **Section 6. Special Allocations**

**6.1. Purpose.** The Graduate Student Senate will use Special Allocations to fill one-time requests from the Executive Committee or Tier II Graduate Organizations for events that will benefit the graduate student community, consistent with Sections 1 and 4. Organizations do not need to have a budget to be eligible for Special Allocations.

### **6.2. Procedure**

**6.2.1.** All required information for requests for Special Allocations from graduate organizations must be submitted to the Treasurer in writing (inclusive of e-mail) at least two weeks (fourteen days) prior to the meeting where the vote will take place.

**6.2.2.** After verifying that the request is consistent with the Finance Policies and Procedures, the Treasurer will present the request to the Executive Committee at its next meeting. A representative of the requesting organization may attend the relevant portion of the meeting to answer questions about the request. Following the presentation, the Executive Committee will vote on the request.

**6.2.3.** If the Executive Committee approves the request, it will be added to the agenda of the next meeting of the Senate. It is subject to approval by a majority vote of the Senate, which may opt to alter the amount of the request. The Senate's vote on the request shall be final.

**6.3. Past Events.** Special Allocations may not be used to fund events which have already transpired except in extraordinary circumstances. Organizations are responsible for submitting their requests with sufficient lead time to prevent this from happening.

## **Section 7. Paying of Bills**

**7.1. Maintenance of Guidelines.** The GSS Office will maintain, in a publicly accessible location, an up-to-date set of guidelines and information resources regarding the documentation required for reimbursement and direct payment requests.

**7.2. Submission of Information.** After an event has occurred, the organization responsible must submit all necessary and required information and documentation to the Treasurer.

**7.3. Payments in Cash.** The Graduate Student Senate will not process any reimbursement request for expenses incurred by Tier II Graduate Organizations in the amount of \$100 or greater if the expense was paid in cash. Exceptions to this policy will only be made should the Treasurer and the Student Activities Business Office approve the cash transaction prior to the expense being made.

**7.4. Summer Events.** The Graduate Student Senate will not process any reimbursement or direct payment request for expenses incurred by Tier II Graduate Organizations between May 15 and August 15 without prior authorization of the expenses by the Finance Committee. Should a Tier II Graduate Organization event fall within this time period and have been given in an approved fiscal year budget request or Special Allocation request, the expenses made for that event will be considered to have had such prior authorization.

**7.5. Disbursement of Funds.** Disbursement of Senate funds will occur in the form of checks. All disbursements of Senate funds will be made according to policies set forth by the Student Activities Business Office and any additional pertinent State or University guidelines, rules, statutes, or laws. This includes any limits on time between expense and submission of all necessary and required information and documentation.