



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION COMMITTEE (GFAC)

FUNDING POLICIES AND APPLICATION

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I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As a standing committee of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC), the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee (GFAC) is charged with the responsibility of reviewing proposals for funding submitted by Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and making recommendations to the GSAC as to whether or not these proposals should be funded. As the source of this funding comes solely from graduate student's assessment fee, all proposals are evaluated to ensure that they meet the two primary goals of the GSAC: increasing graduate student participation in the University community, and ensuring that graduate student needs and concerns are being represented.

II. GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. In accordance with the University Policy on Discrimination, funding shall not be determined on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, protected disability, veteran status, height, weight, or marital status.
2. The receipt of Student Assessment Fee (SAF) funds should not be misinterpreted as meaning that funded organizations are part of or controlled by Western Michigan University, that the University is responsible for the organizations' contracts, acts, or omissions, or that the University approves or disapproves of the organizations' goals and activities.
3. Requests for funding of events/projects or operational budget, which do not benefit the graduate student community, or which benefit only a few individuals in the graduate student community, will be denied funding. Mixed Registered Student Organizations may apply to the GFAC for funding if graduate students are members of the organization or if the funded event or project will benefit a substantial number of graduate students. We reserve the right to cap the funding of non-Graduate RSOs up to \$2,000.00 for events and \$400.00 for operational expenses per academic year.
4. Event funding should be sought in advance of the proposed event or program. Requests for reimbursement of an event or program that has already taken place will be denied.
5. All University and legal requirements regarding the disbursement and use of SAF funds will be enforced. All approved funding requests are subject to review by University Risk Management to determine GSAC/SAF/WMU liability. If the funding requests are found to have significant risk, the sponsoring group will be required to take additional steps necessary to absolve GSAC/SAF/WMU of any liability. Failure to comply with this request will result in the denial of funds. The RSO Financial Advisor through the Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) office will make the actual transfers and will work with the Chairperson of the GFAC to ensure compliance.
6. Any student organization wholly or partially funded by the GFAC/SAF must include on all publications and promotional material (radio, television, newspapers, flyers, etc.), other than classified advertisements, the words: "Student Assessment Fee Funded" or "SAF Funded". The absence of this message will be considered a misuse of funds and will be dealt with through the suspension of future SAF funding. The GSAC logo must also appear on all aforementioned materials for any event for which

the GSAC has provided funding. Logos can be found on the GSAC website at:
<http://www.wmich.edu/gsac/gfac.html>.

7. All organizations must submit electronic copies of the aforementioned materials to the GFAC Chair at gfac-info@wmich.edu, and copy the RSO Financial Advisor at salp-rsofinances@wmich.edu, clearly demonstrating that the SAF phrase and GSAC logo are present. Failure to do so may result in the denial of future funding.

8. All RSOs requesting funding from the GSAC are required to attend a Financial Managers Workshop offered by the RSO Financial Advisor in the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Programs. Further information about these workshops can be found at:
http://www.rso.wmich.edu/financial_resources.htm or through contacting the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP). SALP's website is <http://www.wmich.edu/activities/>

9. Annual caps on each Graduate Student RSO's funding will be \$600 for operational expenses and \$3,000 for events. Organizations may seek funding for multiple proposals, as long as they do not exceed these annual caps. The award year runs from Summer II through Summer I of the following year.

10. Under no circumstances will GSAC funds be transferred to a student account at a bank outside of the University. GSAC funds will only be transferred to an existing University account.

11. Organizations should not rely on the GSAC as the sole source of funding. Other alternatives are encouraged to assure adequate program funding (e.g. dues, fundraising activities).

12. An organization that has project or program costs that exceed \$1,000.00 should show some generation of income to offset the cost of the project or program.

13. All requested funds must be broken down in the form of a line item budget, as provided in the GFAC Funding Application. If an approved line item comes in under budget and another approved line item goes over budget, then the remaining funds may be shifted to cover the shortfall. No left-over funds may be used for an unapproved item or service. Where possible, you must provide proof of the cost such as (but not limited to) estimates from vendors, an honorarium statement from speakers, etc. GFAC will not fund any line items that are unjustified, "miscellaneous" or "cushion money".

14. Requests for funding of capital equipment will be examined against the criteria that the equipment is central to the RSO's overall mission and that the equipment needs are beyond those normally supplied by the University. In addition, the GFAC will weigh the past and future stability of the RSO in the decision to allocate such funds.

III. FUND USE RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. Funds may be used for activities, programs, and expenses incurred in the planning, organizing, and implementation of activities or programs such as (but not limited to): speaker fees, room and equipment rentals, food and beverages for the meetings, office supplies, promotional products.
2. Operational Expenses should be used to offset the expense of running the organization, such as activities that occur on a regular basis (i.e. monthly meetings) or general office supplies.
3. No funds may be awarded for the personal benefit of individuals or private corporations, charitable organizations or programs, financing political candidates and/or campaigns, religious purposes (i.e. worship, devotional exercises, proselytizing), or to finance any activity contrary to the laws of the State of Michigan and/or the Federal Government.
4. Funds are expected to be expended only for items budgeted for and approved by the GFAC. Misuse of GSAC allocated funds may result in the suspension of future SAF funding.
5. Operational expense funding for food and beverages will not exceed 50% of the total amount requested and awarded, AND not more than \$200 for Mixed RSOs or \$300 for Graduate RSOs per academic year. As the GFAC strives not to be the organization that “pays for the food”, the GFAC reserves the right to approve or deny funding for this expense and encourages RSOs to request funding for things that are either more tangible, permanent, or necessary for the occasion.
6. Event expense funding for food and beverages will not exceed 50% of the total amount of funds requested and awarded AND not more than \$1,500.00 for Graduate RSOs or \$1,000.00 for Mixed RSOs per academic year. As the GFAC strives not to be the organization that “pays for the food”, the GFAC reserves the right to approve or deny funding for this expense and encourages RSOs to request funding for things that are either more tangible, permanent, or necessary for the occasion.
7. Funding for promotional apparel may not exceed \$500 per academic year for Graduate RSOs or \$250.00 for Mixed RSOs per academic year.
8. Any awarded SAF money not used by the organization for operational or event, purposes will be funded back to the GSAC at the end of the fiscal year (or sixty days after the end of the event).
9. All RSOs that were awarded funding for an event from GSAC must submit a self-evaluation report and final summary of actual expenses to GSAC no later than the end of the semester within which it took place. An exception to this rule would be if the event took place after the last GSAC meeting of the semester, in which case the report will be due by the end of the next semester. Included in your evaluation report, please indicate which upcoming GSAC monthly meeting at which your RSO would prefer to present this report in person. A self-evaluation form can be found at <http://www.wmich.edu/gsac/gfac.html>. Failure to submit this report will jeopardize future GSAC funding to the RSO.

10. All forms (Funding Application, Self-Evaluation, GSAC logo) can be downloaded from the GSAC website under the GFAC section, at <http://www.wmich.edu/gsac/gfac.html> , and must be used for GFAC consideration.

IV. REVIEW CRITERIA

The source of this funding comes solely from graduate student's assessment fee. The following eight questions will be the primary points of consideration for the GFAC when reviewing proposals submitted by RSOs. While proposals do not necessarily need to meet all of the following criteria, those that do so will be given more favorable consideration by the GFAC. For those proposals that do not meet a substantial proportion of these criteria, those preparing the proposal should be prepared to justify why their proposal should be funded despite failing to meet these criteria.

1. Does the proposal enrich the academic, cultural, social, and/or professional experiences of the graduate student community?
2. Does the proposal increase graduate student participation in the University community?
3. Does the proposal ensure that graduate student needs and concerns are being represented?
4. Does the organization submitting the proposal have a large number of graduate student members?
5. Does the activity promote interaction between graduate students, graduate faculty, and University administrators?
6. How many graduate students are involved in the proposal?
7. How many graduate students are benefitting from the project?
8. Does the group submitting the proposal have additional sources of funding to offset project costs or can the organization demonstrate a compelling rationale for lacking additional sources of funding?

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. All organizations seeking funding from the GSAC must become RSOs through the Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) office and establish a University account. Accounts may be established by contacting the SALP RSO Financial Advisor. Further contact information can be found at <http://www.wmich.edu/activities/> and http://www.rso.wmich.edu/financial_resources.htm respectively. Organizations must be at least eight weeks old before they can apply for funding. As mentioned previously, RSO Financial Managers must attend a Financial Workshop sponsored by SALP before money is dispersed. Further RSO guidance can be found in the RSO Handbook, which can be found on SALP's website.

2. Once the group seeking funding has been an active RSO for at least eight weeks, they may complete and submit a cover letter and GFAC Funding Application. The Chairperson of the GFAC may be

contacted with questions or for assistance in preparing the proposal. Proposals must be submitted at least one week prior to the next scheduled GFAC meeting in order to receive consideration. Those proposals submitted less than one week before the next scheduled GFAC meeting will be tabled until the following month's meeting.

3. After the proposal has been submitted, RSOs applying for funding are required to send a representative to attend the GFAC meeting the month that their application is being considered in order to explain the purpose of their organization and in order to provide a detailed description of their budget request. The Chairperson of the GFAC will inform the organization's contact person that their application has been received, whether it is accepted as following the guidelines, and that they are on the agenda for the next GFAC meeting for funding consideration. If the GFAC chairperson does not contact the RSO within a few business days, the RSO should contact the GFAC chairperson to ensure that their application was received. Failure to attend the meeting and present the proposal will result in the tabling of the RSO's application until the following month's GFAC meeting.

4. If an application is found to have not followed the funding guidelines, the application will be denied and returned to the RSO. Therefore, it is recommended that RSOs submit their applications as far in advance as possible. The GFAC Chairperson is available to work with RSOs to improve their application. However, this advisement is not meant to take the place of an RSO reading and following these guidelines. If it is found that an application does not meet the funding guidelines, the application will be returned to the RSO indicating that the application has been denied for that reason.

5. The GFAC will review all proposals received at the monthly GFAC meeting and make recommendations to the GSAC about whether these proposals should be approved or denied. If the GFAC's recommendations are approved by the GSAC, any approved funds will be transferred to the appropriate University Fund and Cost Center. Although approvals and denials of requests will be determined and announced at the meeting of the GSAC immediately following the meeting of the GFAC, the GFAC Chairperson will also notify all RSOs in writing of the final decision of the GSAC within five (5) business days of the GFAC monthly meeting. If a request is denied, the Chairperson of the GFAC will provide the organization with the reasons why the request was denied and assist them in the preparation of a new request for consideration, if applicable.

6. In cases where time is of the essence or where the GFAC cannot meet, a review committee with the power of approval or denial can review the proposed budget and/or funding request. This committee will be comprised of the Chairperson of the GSAC, the Chairperson of the GFAC, the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee), and any other available GSAC representatives. A representative for the RSO will also be required to attend in order to explain the purpose of the organization and in order to provide a detailed description of their budget request. Please note that any RSO requesting a special meeting of the GFAC or the review committee must have extenuating circumstances justifying their request. Lack of awareness of deadlines or tardiness in submitting proposals are not considered to be extenuating circumstances.

7. If a decision is made to deny a funding request, organizations can appeal any GFAC or GSAC decision directly to the GSAC Chairperson. If the GSAC Chairperson feels that the appeal is warranted, the appeal will be brought up for discussion at the following monthly GSAC meeting. A representative from the RSO appealing the decision of the GSAC must be present at this monthly GSAC meeting to

present the reasons for his or her appeal. Any appeal must be approved by a majority vote of members of the GSAC.

8. Self-evaluations, as previously mentioned, with the summary budget, are required for any event or program funded by the GSAF. These reports are to be submitted as indicated in article III, section 9.

9. Prior to events, all Independent Contractors must have their signature notarized. Checks made payable to vendors or payees for advance payments should be mailed directly to the vendor or payee. If an RSO requests to pick up the check rather than have it mailed, they must provide a valid, written explanation. The director of SALP, or an RSO representative, and the contractor, will be required to sign all Independent Contract forms. The signature of the Director of SALP verifies the release of funds. Further guidance and clarification on these matters are discussed in the Financial Workshop provided by the RSO Financial Advisor through SALP. See http://www.rso.wmich.edu/financial_resources.htm for further information.

10. Operational funds will be returned to the GSAC as of June 30th, the end of the WMU fiscal year. Event funds will be returned to GSAC no sooner than two months after the date of the event submitted on the funding request form. If your event date changes after initial funding by GSAC, you are expected to notify GSAC of the change.

11. All invoices and payments must be made within 30 days. If funds are refunded to GSAC and there are still outstanding payments, the RSO will be responsible for those payments. Funds are available until exhausted, at which time a notice will be placed on the GSAC website.

VI. OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Organizations seeking funding from the GFAC are also encouraged to seek funding from other sources at the University and within the community. In addition to the GFAC, the Western Student Association (WSA) and Campus Activities Board (CAB) have an allocation committee to which RSOs can apply for funding. WSA's website is: <http://wsa.wmich.edu/>. CAB's website is: <http://www.wmich.edu/cab/>. Further funding information may be found in through SALP, the RSO Financial Advisor, or in the RSO Handbook.

Additionally, RSOs are encouraged to engage in fundraising activities or seek other sources of funding within the community to supplement funding that may be awarded by the GFAC.

Funding requests for research and travel proposals will be directed to the Graduate College's Research and Travel Grant program http://www.wmich.edu/grad/research_travel_awards.html. GSAC recognizes the importance of these endeavors to an individual graduate student's development and historically has provided support to both funds, but the GSAC encourages groups to use the SAF funds devoted to GFAC to strengthen their RSO, to enhance on-campus programs and events, and to create a vibrant and vital graduate student community at WMU.

VII. COVER LETTER/ BUDGET NARRATIVE STATEMENT

The current GFAC Funding Application includes much of what used to be in the Budget Narrative Statement required of the RSO applying for funding. However, in your application cover letter, you should consider the following questions, in addition to the Review Criteria stated previously.

Your cover letter and application will be used, in conjunction with a personal defense of your request at the GFAC's monthly meeting, to justify Graduate Student Assessment Fee funding of your organization's operational and/or event expenses. In your cover letter, please include the mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number of your organization or organization's contact person in case any questions should arise prior to the GFAC's monthly meeting. Questions to consider are:

1. How many graduate students belong to your organization?
2. What is the impact of your organization's activities on the graduate student community (within and outside of your specific department, if applicable)?
3. Is your organization charging fees to support your activities? If yes, describe them specifically and explain how they will be used to support your activities.
4. Does your organization have a fund or bank located off-campus? If yes, please provide account name, location, and balance.
5. Do you receive financial support from any other source?
6. How many people will attend your event or project?
7. Is this the first time that this event will be held? If not, and you have not already done so, you must submit a self-evaluation and budget summary from that event before repeat funding will be considered.
8. If you are sponsoring a speaker, please provide his or her curriculum vitae or resume, their honorarium cost statement, as well as your organization's reason for bringing this speaker to WMU.

VIII. GFAC FUNDING APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the GFAC Funding Application Form as found at <http://www.wmich.edu/gfac/gfac.html>, and submit this with your cover letter and other applicable documents electronically to gfac-info@wmich.edu.