

# **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. 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, sex, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, marital status, handicap, age, height, weight, or veteran status, or medical conditions.

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. Undergraduate Registered Student Organizations may apply to the GFAC for funding if graduate students participate in 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 budget 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 Graduate Assistant for RSO Finance 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 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. Student Assessment Fee Funded or SAF Funded must appear with/on any item funded by the GSAC. The GSAC logo must also appear on all promotional 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 or paper copies of any promotional materials to the GSAC, 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/resources/financial> or through contacting the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Programs.
9. Annual caps on funding will be \$500 for operational expenses and \$2,500 for events per RSO. Organizations may seek funding for multiple proposals, as long as they do not exceed these annual caps.
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. 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.
14. Requests for funding of capital equipment will be examined against the criteria that the equipment is central to the RSOs 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; food and beverages for the meetings, office supplies, and promotional products.
2. Operational Expenses should be used to offset the expenses of activities that occur on a regular or continuous basis (i.e. monthly meetings) or general office supply expenses.
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. Funding for food and beverage for the operational budgets will not exceed 50% of the total amount of the request and not more than \$200 for non-Graduate RSOs or \$250 for Graduate RSOs per academic year .
6. Funding for food and beverage for special event, meeting, speaker, presentation, banquet, or function will not exceed 50% of the total amount of funds requested of the GSAC and not more than \$1,250.00 for Graduate RSO or \$1,000.00 for non-Graduate RSO per academic year.
7. Funding for promotional apparel may not exceed \$500 per academic year for Graduate RSO or \$250.00 for non-Graduate RSO per academic year.
8. Any awarded SAF money not used by the organization for operational, event, or program 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 written report to GSAC no later than a month after the date of the event. The report must include a summary of the actual expenses and an evaluation of the event. Following your evaluation report, each RSOs must send a representative to present the report during the monthly GSAC meeting. The RSOs will be informed about the date to present.
10. All forms (RSO Funding Application, Summary of Actual Expenses, and Event Evaluation) can be downloaded from the GSAC website under the GFAC section and must be used for GFAC consideration. In addition to the policies indicated above, all funding request will be based on the criteria indicated in the funding application information form.

#### **IV. REVIEW CRITERIA**

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

All organizations seeking funding from the GSAC must become RSOs through the Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) and establish a University account. Accounts may be established by contacting the Student Activities and Leadership Programs RSO Financial Advisor at (269) 387-2565. As mentioned previously, RSO Financial Managers must attend a Financial Workshop sponsored by SALP before money is dispersed.

Once the group seeking funding has become an active RSO, they may complete the budget narrative statement an Operational Funds and/or Event/Project Funds Request Form. 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 within one week of the next scheduled GFAC meeting will be tabled until the following month's meeting.

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 when their proposal is on the agenda for consideration. Failure to attend the meeting will result in the tabling of the organization's proposal until the following month's GFAC meeting.

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.

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.

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.

End of event budgets are required for any event or program funded by the GSAF. These budgets are to be submitted to the GSAC no later than one month after the date of the funded event/program. In addition, 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 contractor, will be required to sign all Independent Contract forms. The signature of the Director of SALP verifies the release of funds.

Operational funds will be returned to the GSAC as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 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. Also, 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. More information about WSA's Allocations Committee can be found at <http://westernstudentassociation.org>. Information about CAB can be accessed at <http://www.cab.wmich.edu/collaboration/>. 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/funding/>). 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. BUDGET NARRATIVE STATEMENT**

Please construct a narrative statement answering the following questions in relation to your organization's activities. This 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 or project expenses. In your statement, 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.

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, please describe the past success of event, including the turnout and impact upon the graduate student community.

If you are sponsoring a speaker, please provide his or her curriculum vitae or resume as well as your organization's reason for bring this speaker to Western Michigan University.

#### **VIII. OPERATIONAL FUNDS AND/OR EVENT/PROJECT FUNDS REQUEST FORM**

Please complete the Operational Funds and/or Event Project Funds Request Form, found on the GFAC portion of the GSAC website. Please submit this form and your Budget Narrative Statement to the GFAC Chairperson at 260 West Walwood Hall.