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 Association (GSA), the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee (GFAC) is charged with the responsibility of reviewing and making decisions regarding funding of proposals submitted by Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and all other funding opportunities provided by the GSA. As the source of this funding comes solely from the Student Assessment Fee paid by graduate students on main campus. All proposals are evaluated to ensure that they meet the two primary goals of the GSA: increasing graduate student participation in the University community, and guaranteeing 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. In order to apply for and receive funding from the GFAC, each graduate registered student organization and Mixed RSO must have at least one designated member who serves as a representative on the GSA Senate. Designated members must attend all monthly GSA general body meetings as scheduled.

3. Being a recipient of Student Assessment Fee (SAF) funds should not be interpreted as meaning that funded organizations are associated with or controlled by Western Michigan University; the University is not responsible for the organizations’ contracts, acts, or omissions.

4. Requests for funding of events or operational budgets will be denied if they do not benefit the graduate student community or benefit only a few individuals in the graduate student community. Mixed Registered Student Organizations that apply to the GFAC for funding must follow the guidelines defined in 4b. In cases of Mixed RSOs, at least one (1) graduate student member must be present at the GFAC meeting to present their proposal(s).

   a. Registered Student Organizations will be considered graduate organizations when their membership is comprised of at least 50% by graduate students.

   b. Registered Student Organizations will be considered mixed organizations when their membership is comprised by less than 50% of graduate students.

5. Annual caps on each Graduate Student RSO’s funding will be $1,000.00 for operational expenses and $6,000.00 for events. Annual caps for Mixed RSOs will be up to $700.00 for operational expenses and up to $4,000.00 for events. RSOs may seek funding twice (2) per academic year, as long as they do not exceed these annual caps. The academic year runs from Summer II through Summer I of the following year.

6. All funding applications must be submitted by the first (1st) of the month so they can be considered for that month’s meeting. In the case of applications for events; the event in question cannot take place between the application deadline and the GFAC meeting of that month.
7. Requests for reimbursement of an event will be denied.

8. All University and legal requirements regarding the disbursement and use of SAF will be enforced. The Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) office will manage the transfers and will work with the sponsoring group and the GFAC Chairperson to ensure compliance.

9. Any RSO wholly or partially funded by the GSA must include the words: “Student Assessment Fee Funded” or “SAF Funded” on all publications and promotional material (radio, television, newspapers, flyers, social media, etc.), other than classified advertisements. The absence of this message will be considered a misuse of funds and will be penalized with a written warning. Warnings will be kept for two academic years. If the Organization commits the violation above mentioned after a written warning, they might not be allowed to apply for funding for the rest of the academic and the one that follows. The GSA logo must also appear on all aforementioned materials for any event for which the GSA has provided funding. Logos can be found on the GSA website at: [http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/funding](http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/funding).

10. When applying, all sponsoring groups must submit electronic draft copies of the aforementioned materials to the GFAC Chairperson at [gfac-info@wmich.edu](mailto:gfac-info@wmich.edu), clearly demonstrating that the SAF phrase and GSA logo are present. Failure to do so may result in the denial of future funding.

11. All RSOs requesting funding from the GSA are required to attend a Financial Managers Workshop every academic year. This workshop is 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](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/](http://www.wmich.edu/activities/)

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

III. **USE OF FUNDS, RULES AND GUIDELINES**

1. Funds may be used for operations, events, or other purposes already approved by the GSA. Funds are expected to be spent only for items budgeted for and approved by the GFAC. Misuse of GFAC allocated funds may result in the suspension of future SAF funding.

2. Funds must not 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. Proposal for fundraising purposes will be denied.

3. Any awarded SAF funds not used by the RSO for the purposes they indicated in their application will be funded back to the GSA at the end of the fiscal year (or sixty days
after the end of the event). If your event date changes after initial funding by the GSA, you are required to notify the GFAC of that change.

4. Operational funding must be used to offset the expenses of running the organization, such as, but not limited to, activities that occur on a regular basis, general office supplies, advertising, or food and beverages.

5. Operational funding for food and beverages will not exceed 50% of the total amount requested and awarded, and not more than $350 for Mixed RSOs or $500 for Graduate RSOs per academic year.

6. Event funding must be used in the planning, organizing, and implementation of the events, such as but not limited to, speaker fees, room and equipment rentals, food and beverages for the event, or promotional products.

7. Event funding for food and beverages will not exceed 50% of the total amount of funds requested and awarded, and not more than $2,000.00 for Mixed RSOs or $3,000.00 for Graduate RSOs per academic year.

8. All RSOs that are awarded event funding from the GSA must submit a self-evaluation report and final summary of actual expenses to the GFAC no later than 30 days from the date the event took place. Failure to submit this report will jeopardize future GSA funding to the RSO. A self-evaluation form can be found at http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/funding

9. All forms (Funding Application, Self-Evaluation, GSA logo) can be downloaded from the GSA website under the funding tab, at http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/funding, and must be used for GFAC consideration.

IV. REVIEW CRITERIA

The funds managed by GSA come solely from the Student Assessment Fee (SAF) paid by main campus graduate students. The following eight questions will be the primary points of consideration for the GFAC, when reviewing proposals submitted by RSOs for funding purposes. 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. If the proposal does not meet a substantial proportion of the criteria, please be prepared to justify why the proposal should be funded.

1. Does the proposal enrich the academic, cultural, social, and professional experiences of the graduate students 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 RSO?
7. How many graduate students would benefit from the proposed funding request?

8. Does the group submitting the proposal have additional sources of funding to offset project’s costs and could the organization demonstrate a compelling rationale for lacking additional sources of funding?

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. All organizations seeking funding from the GSA must become Registered Student Organizations through the Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) office. More information can be found at http://www.wmich.edu/activities/ and http://www.rso.wmich.edu/financial_resources.htm respectively. Organizations must be an active RSO for at least eight weeks before they can apply for funding. An RSO representative must attend a Financial Workshop sponsored by SALP before they apply for funding. Further RSO guidance can be found in the RSO Handbook, which can be found on SALP’s website (first link provided in this paragraph).

2. Any Graduate or Mixed RSO that has been active for at least eight weeks must complete and submit a proposal comprised of a cover letter and the GFAC Funding Application. The GFAC Chairperson may be contacted with questions or for assistance in preparing the proposal at gfac-info@wmich.edu

3. For event funding requests, RSOs are required to send at least one representative to defend their application at the GFAC meeting; the time, location and date of that meeting would be communicated in advance by the GFAC Chairperson. The GFAC Chairperson will inform the RSO’s representative that their proposal 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 three (3) business days, the RSO should contact the GFAC Chairperson via email and copy the GSA president (gsa@wmich.edu) to ensure that their application was received. Failure to attend the meeting and present the proposal will result in the denial of the proposal.

4. Graduate student RSOs and Mixed RSOs are not required to defend their operational funding request, unless otherwise indicated by the GFAC, or if the organization opts to do so.

5. If a proposal does not follow the funding guidelines, the proposal will be denied and returned to the RSO. Therefore, it is recommended that RSOs submit their proposal as far in advance as possible. The GFAC Chairperson may be available to work with RSOs to improve their proposal. However, this advisement is not meant to take the place of an RSO reading and following these guidelines.

6. The GFAC will review all proposals received at the monthly GFAC meeting and make decisions regarding RSO funding proposals. The Committee’s Chairperson must report the their decisions to the GSA at the general body meeting. All approved funds will be transferred to the appropriate University Fund and Cost Center. The Committee’s Chairperson will notify all RSOs via email the final decision within five (5) business days of the Committee’s monthly meeting. If a request is denied or partially funded, the GFAC Chairperson will provide the RSO with the reasons why the request was denied.
7. The Committee must be comprised of at least Six (6) members; the Chairperson, and five graduate students who volunteer to serve as members. Moreover, any graduate student can be part of the Committee at any given time prior notification via email to the Chairperson. In addition, the Vice-president for Student Affairs or designee would function as the Committee’s advisor.

8. The Committee’s Chairperson shall act as a moderator without voting rights. Moreover, although any graduate student can participate in discussions, only the five (5) volunteer and registered Committee’s members shall have voting rights.

9. The Committee’s quorum is achieved when 60% of the voting members are present. Final decisions cannot be made without meeting this quorum. In the event the Committee’s Chairperson is unable to attend, the Association’s President shall take chair the meeting; in the event that the GFAC Chairperson and the GSA President cannot be present, the Association’s parliamentarian shall chair the meeting.

10. In the event the Committee cannot meet, a review committee with the power of approval or denial can review the proposed budget and/or funding request. This committee shall be comprised of the GSA President, the GFAC Chairperson, the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee), the Parliamentarian, and at least two other graduate students. A representative for the RSO will also be required to attend in order to explain the purpose of the RSO and to provide a detailed description of their funding request.

11. If a decision is made to deny or partially approve an application, organizations can appeal the GFAC’s decision directly to the GSA President. If the GSA President feels that the appeal is warranted, the appeal will be brought up for discussion at the following monthly GSA Executive Board meeting. A representative from the RSO appealing the GFAC’s decision must be present at this monthly GSA Executive Board meeting to present the reasons for their appeal. Any appellation must be approved by absolute majority vote of the Executive Board members.

12. Prior to events, all Independent Contractors must have their signature notarized. The director of SALP, a 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 more information.

13. All invoices and payments must be submitted within thirty (30) days after the event took place. If funds are refunded to the GSA and there are still outstanding payments, the RSO will be responsible for those payments.

14. Funds are available until exhausted, at which time a notice will be placed on the GSA website.

VI. OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

1. RSOs seeking funding from the GFAC are also encouraged to seek funding from other
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sources at the University and within the community. In addition to the GFAC, the Western Student Association (WSA) have an allocation committee to which RSOs can apply for funding. WSA’s website is: http://www.westernstudentassociation.org/ Further funding information may be found through SALP, the RSO Financial Advisor, or in the RSO Handbook.

2. 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.

VII. COVER LETTER

Your cover letter and application will be used, in conjunction with a personal defense of your request at the Committee’s monthly meeting to justify Student Assessment Fee use to fund your RSO’s operational and event expenses. In your cover letter, please include the mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number of your RSO or RSO’s representative, in case any question should arise prior to the GFAC’s monthly meeting. In addition to the Review Criteria previously stated, questions to consider are:

1. What is the impact of your organization’s activities on the graduate student community (within and outside of your specific department, if applicable)?

2. Is your RSO charging a fee to support its activities? If yes, describe them and explain how they will be used.

3. Does your organization have a fund or bank located off-campus? If yes, please provide account name, location, and balance.

4. Do you receive financial support from any other source(s)?

5. How many people will attend your event?

6. Is this the first time that this event will be held?

7. If you are sponsoring a speaker, please provide his or her curriculum vitae or resume and their honorarium cost statement, as well as your RSO’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/gsa/funding and submit this with your cover letter and other applicable documents electronically to gfac-info@wmich.edu.

IX. AMENDMENTS TO GFAC FUNDING GUIDELINES

1. These Guidelines are subject to be amended under the discretion of the GSA Senate. In the event of changes to these guidelines, the interested party will be able to find them on the GSA website: http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/

2. The Parliamentarian of GSA shall form a committee consisted of GSA members to review and propose amendments to these guidelines.
3. Proposed amendments will be presented to the Constitutional Committee for approval through voting procedures.

4. Amendments will take full effect as soon as they are approved, unless otherwise indicated by the amendment itself or as a condition for its approval stipulated by the Association’s general body.