

# Georgia State University Student Activity Fee Committee (SAFC)

## PROTOCOL MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to incorporate relevant policies, procedures and philosophies that guide the work of the Student Activity Fee Committee (SAFC). This manual is intended to assist SAFC members in their initial orientation and ongoing work on the Committee as well as to serve as a reference for student organizations and advisors, and others who may seek or manage student activity fee funds, to understanding the operations of SAFC and the ways in which SAFC complies with the requirements of the Board of Regents (BOR) and University System of Georgia (USG). Additional student organization materials created by Student Life may provide additional guidance and details, as well as information available online through [pin.gsu.edu](http://pin.gsu.edu).

**Note that the latest version of any USG or institutional policies or laws, including but not limited to RSO Policy and/or any RSO Manual, will apply wherever there may be any contradictions between this SAFC Protocol Manual and those documents.**

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## **SECTION 1. PURPOSE**

The Student Activity Fee Committee (SAFC) will serve as an advisory group to the university administration concerning the allocation of student activities fees. The committee is advisory to the Vice President for Student Engagement (VPSE) and works collaboratively with the Office of the Dean of Students and others designated by the VPSE.

### **1.1 BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY (7.3.2.1 Mandatory Student Fees)**

“Mandatory student fees” are defined as fees that are assessed to all students, all undergraduate students, or all full-time undergraduate students on one or more campuses of a USG (University System of Georgia) institution, including those fees due prior to registration that may be refunded later in the semester and fees for which the student receives a cash equivalent in the amount of the fee. Mandatory student fees may be required by the Board of Regents or by the institution subject to approval by the Board of Regents.

Mandatory student fees shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Intercollegiate athletic fees;
2. Student health service fees;
3. Transportation or parking fees (if the latter are charged to all students);
- 4. Student activity fees;**
5. Technology fees;
6. Facility fees; and
7. Mandatory food service fees.

Purposes and rates for all mandatory fees shall be approved by the Board of Regents to become effective the following fall semester. All mandatory fees assessed to students enrolled in 12 credit hours or more shall be assessed at the Board-approved rate. Institutions may reduce mandatory fees on a per-credit-hour basis or on a tiered structure for students taking fewer than 12 credit hours or for students enrolled in summer courses.

All mandatory student fees collected by an institution, as well as any proposals to increase or create a mandatory student fee or to change the purpose of an existing mandatory student fee, shall be proposed and administered by the President of the institution and presented to an advisory committee composed of at least 50 percent students for advice, counsel, and a vote prior to the institution submitting the request to the Board of Regents. The advisory committee must include at least four students and institutions and Student Government Associations should make a concerted effort to include broad representation among the students appointed to the advisory committee. These procedures do not apply to special circumstances in which a general purpose fee is instituted system-wide by the Board of Regents.

Mandatory student fees shall be used exclusively to support the institution’s mission to enrich the educational, institutional, and cultural experience of students. All payments from funds supported by student mandatory fees shall be made according to approved business procedures and the appropriate business practices of the institution.

\*\* NOTE: the SAFC only has an advisory role related to the usage of Student Activity Fees, not any other mandatory or institutional fees. There is a separate Mandatory Student Fee committee that serves in the capacity specifically described in BOR Policy 7.3.2.1, and the institution may establish other committees or protocols for the oversight of other mandatory fees.

## **1.2 SAFC GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Student activities fees are collected for the primary purpose of supporting programs and services engaging various extra-curricular aspects of student life
- Expenditure of these fees should be student centered with students being primary participants and beneficiaries
- These fees may be used to support a broad spectrum of student related services, most commonly in the areas of social and entertainment activities, student organizational activities, student leadership, and student governance
- These fees support many activities that cannot be funded through other sources, but are still considered state funds and are generally subject to the same restrictions with some specific exceptions (such as permissible food expenses at programs)
- Organizations and affiliated departments/offices that offer programs and services typically available to the entire student body will be eligible to request financial support from student activity fees, understanding full funding is not guaranteed and alternative funding sources may be needed to supplement activities
- The allocation process allows organizations and affiliated departments/offices to engage in advance planning for events that promote extra-curricular activities for specific purposes, or university-wide events surrounding specific themes
- These fees can also support the affiliated departments/offices that directly provide and/or guide these activities and services in collaboration with students
- SAFC will use a data-driven approach to assess how the services and programs offered by organizations and/or affiliated departments/offices are meeting established purposes and goals, and the diverse needs and interests of the student body
- SAFC will comply with all policies and procedures established by the BOR and GSU, along with all appropriate federal, state, and local laws and guidelines, which include relevant business practices of the Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS)
- SAFC members will be good stewards of the resources entrusted to them by the student body of GSU, maximizing access and opportunity within existing fiscal parameters
- SAFC members will execute their duties in a viewpoint neutral manner, without prejudice, and according to these guiding principles

## **SECTION 2. MEMBERSHIP & GENERAL OPERATIONS**

### **2.1 COMPOSITION**

To fully represent the total community it is to serve, SAFC shall be composed of the following 18 voting members:

- Chair: The Dean of Students or designee (votes only in the event of a tie)
- Vice Chair: A student appointed by the Student Government Association (SGA) President
- All (6) SGA Finance Directors representing each campus (or if unavailable a representative student leader appointed from each campus)
- One Graduate Student representative appointed by the Dean of Students in consultation with the Dean of the Graduate School
- Five Additional Students appointed by the Dean of Students that reflect diverse representation from across the student body\*
- Two Staff Representatives (one from Atlanta campus and one from a PC campus) appointed by the Dean of Students in consultation with the VPSE or designee
- Two Faculty Representatives (one from Atlanta campus and one from a PC campus) appointed by the Dean of Students in consultation with the University Senate Student Life Committee (the committee elects a non-student member of the committee to serve on SAFC and whomever is elected whether faculty or staff will be one of the 4 faculty/staff representatives noted in these two final bullets)

The following may serve SAFC in a non-voting advisory capacity:

- Vice President for Student Engagement (VPSE) or designee
- At least one designated Business Manager from Student Engagement
- At least one designated representative from Student Life
- SAFC Secretary (designated by the Dean of Students)

\* The totality of the 13 voting student members should reflect the diversity of the student body in the broadest sense. The five additional student appointees help ensure representation that may not be reflected among the other 8 designated student representatives. This can include but is not limited to students who represent non-traditional aged students, online and/or part-time learners, military and veteran students, international students, various cultural and demographic populations, students representing different types of student organizations or competition teams, students from different academic colleges and majors, and students representing diverse affiliations and perspectives. The voting student members cannot all represent any one common organizational affiliation or demographic commonality. All students who meet the eligibility requirements are invited to seek appointment to SAFC through the Office of the Dean of Students.

### **2.2 ELIGIBILITY**

All students serving on SAFC must:

- Maintain good academic standing as defined by the appropriate university catalog throughout their term of service
- Be enrolled fee-paying students at GSU (exceptions for summer term)
- Be in good conduct standing (not on disciplinary probation)
- Be familiar with all SAFC Protocols and Student Organization Rules and Regulations
- Pledge to execute their duties in a viewpoint neutral manner, without prejudice, and according to the guiding principles of SAFC

All faculty and staff members serving on SAFC must:

- Be full-time employees of Georgia State University in good standing (the term ‘faculty’ is used inclusively to equally apply to instructors and others with current/past teaching roles who may also serve in administrative capacities)
- Serve or previously served as a Registered Student Organization (RSO) advisor or in some advisory capacity to a student organization or University Senate
- Be familiar with all SAFC Protocols and Student Organization Rules and Regulations
- Pledge to execute their duties in a viewpoint neutral manner, without prejudice, and according to the guiding principles of SAFC

### **2.3 REPLACING VACANCIES**

Should a position become vacant on SAFC, that position will be replaced through the same appointment process as the original position was appointed, with appropriate due diligence to honor the representative diversity of the total body. Replacement members who are appointed during the year must complete an orientation or training session prior to beginning service. During the period of vacancy quorum will be adjusted accordingly, and there may be times of year when it is not practical to pursue a replacement but wait until the beginning of the next appointment cycle.

### **2.4 DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

SAFC members must:

- Attend all required orientation and/or training sessions, or complete an acceptable alternative
- Thoroughly review all agenda materials prior to each meeting
- Attend all SAFC meetings, or notify the SAFC Chair as far in advance as possible should a conflict arise
- Abide by the protocols established in this manual and any additional guidelines established by the committee
- Demonstrate civility and respect toward all members and guests of SAFC, while engaging in meaningful discussion and expressing differing elements for consideration
- Represent respective constituencies and actively engage and educate peers about SAFC
- Execute duties in a viewpoint neutral manner, without prejudice
- Check GSU email and Panther Involvement Network (PIN) regularly for SAFC related communication and submissions

## **2.5 TERMS OF SERVICE**

All voting members of SAFC serve one-year terms and may be appointed for one additional term of service as long as the member remains eligible for service for the entirety of the second term. Special circumstances may be submitted to the VPSE for consideration. The Chair is a permanent position based on terms of employment. Each term corresponds to the fiscal year, beginning on July 1 (or upon appointment) and ending on June 30 (or may be extended until the appointment of a replacement). Students who graduate at the end of Spring semester as well as continuing students who choose not to enroll in Summer classes may still fulfill the remainder of their term. Terms may overlap for training purposes with outgoing members retaining voting privileges until the end of their term upon which their incoming replacement will acquire voting privileges. If the employment of a faculty or staff representative ceases, the term will end immediately. Terms of service may be adjusted by the VPSE for a specific fiscal year based on administrative necessity to ensure the purposes and processes of this committee can be appropriately executed in service to the student body and/or in compliance with USG/BOR or institutional guidance.

## **2.6 REMOVAL OF MEMBERS**

If a member is unable to attend meetings or is otherwise unable to satisfactorily fulfill the duties and expectations of SAFC, the Chair shall initiate the process of removing the member. The Chair shall notify the member via official GSU email at least three business days prior to the meeting where the chair intends to recommend removal. The Chair will present relevant evidence to support the recommendation and then afford the member an opportunity to respond in person or submit a statement for consideration. Quorum must be established and a majority vote of the members present will determine the outcome. If removed, the member has the right to appeal the decision in writing within three business days to the Vice President for Student Engagement. There is no further appeal beyond the VPSE. If the Chair is believed to be unsatisfactorily fulfilling duties and expectations, the Vice Chair shall notify the VPSE.

## **2.7 DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **SAFC CHAIR**

- Presides at all meetings
- Sets the agenda for all meetings
- Votes only in the event of a tie
- Creates ad-hoc committees as deemed necessary
- Calls special meetings as deemed necessary, with notice to SAFC of at least three business days
- Serves as official spokesperson for SAFC
- Ensures all members are completing their duties and responsibilities to SAFC
- Works with the SAFC Secretary to ensure timely completion of minutes
- Keeps the VPSE informed of relevant SAFC matters

### **SAFC VICE CHAIR**

- Performs all duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair

- Assists the Chair during meetings as needed, such as maintaining a speakers list or monitoring any established time limits, and assists with enforcement of meeting protocols
- Assists the Chair with other duties as assigned

#### **SAFC SECRETARY**

- Prepares and distributes agendas and minutes for all SAFC meetings
- Maintains all official SAFC records and communication, and distributes/archives in accordance with established university procedures
- Coordinates the logistics for SAFC meetings, schedules, orientations, and trainings, and assists Vice Chair with enforcement of protocols
- Serves as liaison for Chair regarding budget matters, assisting as needed in maintaining expenditure and allocation balance updates

#### **VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (or designee)**

- May attend meetings and act as a resource to the Committee
- Reviews all meeting minutes and SAFC recommendations and acts as budgetary designee for all Student Activity Fee administration (may delegate/seek assistance as needed)
- Oversees Mandatory Student Fee Committee (which includes review of all mandatory student fees of which the Student Activity Fee is one among others) and administers process that advances all recommendations ultimately to the University President for submission to the BOR

## **2.8 MEETINGS**

Each year an initial orientation/training meeting will be held for all SAFC members. Once trained, the body will begin meeting to conduct the business of SAFC, which is primarily focused on reviewing budget submissions and making allocation recommendations. The committee will conduct at least three phases of budget reviews annually:

- An initial annual budget review process in April/May for the upcoming fiscal year. This process is ideal for departments/programs/student organizations seeking an annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year, but all submissions will be considered including for partial year funding.
- An early Fall semester review process which can focus on funding specifically for Fall semester needs or for funding needs throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. SAFC may also choose to consider reallocation requests from the previous phase.
- An early Spring semester review process which will focus on funding needs specifically for the remainder of the current fiscal year and can also include reallocation requests of previously awarded funds. This phase can be conducted in conjunction with a midyear budget review to assess how previously allocated funds were used in the Fall and to redirect those funds as needed.
- SAFC may consider additional funding review options or meeting more frequently but must minimally afford these three funding request options annually unless there are

circumstances where all funds are already allocated or deficits exist that will not allow for additional funding phases beyond initial funding.

All submission review will occur through online submissions in the Panther Involvement Network (PIN) and there will be no in person presentations, but anyone desiring assistance or feedback in advance of submission is encouraged to meet with Student Life staff or a budget manager. As an advisory review committee, SAFC meetings will not be open to the public, but minutes of all meetings will be made publicly available.

Quorum is required to conduct official business and is defined as a simple majority of 50% plus one of the voting members (vacant seats excluded). The chair counts toward quorum though only votes in the case of a tie. Voting members are encouraged to actively engage in review and discussion and avoid abstaining except in cases of direct conflict of interest.

Voting members may submit absentee votes that will count as long as the motion remains unchanged, though absentee submissions do not count toward quorum. Unless otherwise noted herein, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order will govern all SAFC business and operations. Voting may occur in person or electronically, which can include remote or hybrid meetings or votes conducted through email or similar electronic means.

## **SECTION 3. ALLOCATION PROTOCOLS FOR STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES**

### **3.1 FUNDING PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The anticipated enrollment and fee income for the upcoming fiscal year will be shared with SAFC at the beginning of the allocation process. This data will also include anticipated fixed costs for salaries and benefits that are funded from Student Activity Fees, and the resulting balance that is available for allocation to select departments and programs, and student organizations and activities. The University is required to allocate a percentage of the fund balance to be held in contingency in the event that actual fee revenue does not meet projections, though special exceptions can be requested in cases where there are specific needs for allocating all available anticipated funds and sufficient reserves exist to provide contingency in addition to other planned purposes. The annual budget allocation process typically allocates up to the remaining balance minus fixed costs and contingency. Any remaining balance after the annual budget allocations are completed along with designated contingency funds (once revenue generation is confirmed) can be made available for SAFC to allocate through this established funding process.

Any funds not expended by the established deadline at the end of the fiscal year (ending June 30) are transferred into a prior year surplus fund to be allocated for specific approved uses by the VPSE. SAFC allocations and outstanding balances do not roll over from year to year to the individual organizations, programs, or departments but the funds remain available from year to year to support the intended purposes of this fee type. The university reserves the right to review the use of allocated funds at any time and to make adjustments to allocations if funds are not being used for the purposes stated in the original request.

SAFC provides funding for student activities, programs, projects, travel, equipment, and other related items that support and enhance the students' extra-curricular experience. Organizations and departments are encouraged to work collaboratively and combine resources to enhance their ability to serve students. When departments and organizations seek to co-sponsor signature activities or theme programming they should submit a single request to SAFC with a clear itemization of all financial needs and contributions from each individual organization and/or department/office/external agency that is involved.

The Student Activity Fees are allocated in the following manner:

- The totality of anticipated Student Activity fees from across all campuses and fee-paying students are combined into one SAF accounting summary document from which fixed costs and salaries from across the university will be allocated first.
- From that remaining balance a contingency reserve will be established and not included in the balance remaining for further allocation at that time. Once enrollments and SAF income are confirmed, contingency reserve funds can be released as needed for future funding phases throughout the remainder of the fiscal year, held for potential year-end funding needs, or held in reserve to become part of the prior year surplus balance for future needs.

- University-wide eligible departmental and program allocation requests will be reviewed next. SAFC may choose to designate an RSO pool to hold aside in advance of this allocation stage. Likewise, SAFC may choose to hold aside specific funds for later allocation phases for university-wide purposes or allow those funds to be further delineated from within the RSO pool of funds.
- University-wide eligible RSO requests will be reviewed next based on either the outstanding unallocated funds from the previous stage, the designated RSO pool held aside in advance of the previous stage, or some combination thereof.
- Once all university-wide eligible submissions have been reviewed, the remaining funds and/or the balance of the designated pool held aside in advance for RSO funding will be appropriately subdivided between Atlanta and Perimeter College (PC) based on the proportion of fees charged and anticipated corresponding enrollment.
- The remaining fund balances will be used to establish the allocation pools for the Atlanta campus SAFC and PC SAFC for campus/college specific requests. The PC SAFC subcommittee may request to further subdivide funds to campus specific SAFC subgroups if demand warrants.
- The Dean of Students or campus-based designee will chair each respective SAFC subcommittee, and the Vice Chair will remain in that role on the respective SAFC subcommittee where the student is enrolled, and the other subcommittee will elect a Vice Chair from among its remaining campus/college-based student representatives. All remaining SAFC members will serve on the corresponding subcommittee based on the campus/college they represent.
- After the initial annual allocation process is completed, typically finalized by May of each year, there will be minimally two additional allocation rounds made available in early Fall semester and early Spring semester. The Spring process will be completed in conjunction with a midyear review that could include SAFC reclaiming unused funds from Fall term allocations for redirection to support other purposes within the same fiscal year.

### **3.2 FUNDING REQUEST PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES**

Everyone seeking to request financial support from SAF funds is required to complete and submit a request form to SAFC online through PIN. All decisions made by SAFC are advisory recommendations to the VPSE (or designee). SAFC and the VPSE are both bound by the funding decision-making criteria set forth below. Student organizations must complete the necessary registration process through PIN, including the annual renewal process, to remain active and be eligible to request funding. RSOs must have a designated fulltime institutional employee serving as primary advisor, but all funding requests must be submitted by a recognized student leader within the RSO. Official RSO Advisors will receive acknowledgement of submissions but cannot themselves submit requests on behalf of RSOs. Off-Campus/Non-GSU employee advisors are welcome to assist the student leaders in budget preparation however the students may desire, but can serve in no official capacity with SAFC or SAF financial management.

For Registered Student Organizations:

Any RSO that seeks SAF funds from SAFC must provide the following information to SAFC incorporated into its budget request by the established deadline:

- a detailed written description or descriptions of the specific programs, activities, or events the RSO intends to sponsor;
- accurate written cost estimates of any required supplies or services that correlate to the programmatic needs (or logistical requirements) of the programs, activities, or events;
- a written estimate of the revenue expected to be generated in the coming year through dues, ticket sales, fundraisers, donations, or other means; and,
- a written account of revenue received during the prior year through dues, ticket sales, fundraisers, donations, or other means.
- Additionally, any RSO that received prior SAFC funds must submit a written statement demonstrating that the RSO effectively utilized the funds that were previously allocated to it to accomplish the goals for which those funds were awarded.

### Funding Decision-Making Criteria

The amount of funding an RSO may receive is determined by the RSO's stated programmatic needs and is dependent upon submission of accurate documentation supporting the request. New RSOs are eligible for a pre-established one-time starter kit that can only be used during the fiscal year in which the new RSO is formed. All new RSOs will be eligible for a consistent starter kit that must remain the same for the entire fiscal year. Any adjustments approved for future fiscal years would begin July 1 and then be consistently applied to all new RSOs formed from July 1 forward.

SAFC's funding allocation recommendations and the VPSE's funding allocation decisions will be based solely on whether the requesting RSO has met the following viewpoint-neutral requirements, unless the RSO requests funding for the prohibited items listed later in this policy:

- The officers and members of the RSO must be currently enrolled students of GSU.
- The RSO's funding application must be submitted by the applicable application deadline.
- The RSO's funding application must be complete.
- If an RSO has undertaken events and activities in the prior year, it must demonstrate that the events or activities met the objectives and budget that the RSO presented in the prior year's budget request.
- Events and activities funded through student activity fees must be open to all currently enrolled SAF-paying GSU students.
- The RSO's request must accurately estimate the likely cost of the event, including consideration of the number of students likely to attend; however, this criterion shall not be used to consider the content or viewpoint of an RSO's speech, including the presumed popularity or controversial nature of an RSO's speech.
- If an RSO requests funding for one or more events, it must demonstrate a direct connection between the amount of funds requested for the event and the proposed event.
- If an RSO requests funding for one or more events, it must demonstrate that students will be involved in the planning and implementation of the event.

- The proposed facility must be suitable for the proposed events and activities based on the estimated size of attendance, technical and logistical requirements for the event or activity, and accommodation of expected security needs.
- Any honoraria requested must be in the range of honoraria for similar speakers or performers; however, this criterion shall not be used to consider the content or viewpoint of an RSO's speech, including the presumed popularity or controversial nature of an RSO's speech.
- Any travel expense estimates must be objectively reasonable for the type of event or activity proposed and must comply with USG and institutional travel guidelines.
- Any other viewpoint-neutral criteria that are determined by university legal counsel's written opinion. Any written opinion that contains additional viewpoint-neutral criteria will be published on SAFC's website.

SAFC will not use the following criteria when making funding decisions for RSOs:

- The presumed popularity of an RSO's viewpoint, including the existence among the student body of opposition to, or support for, the group. However, SAFC may consider the number of students expected to be involved in specific activities or events as necessary to estimate variable expenses of the activity or event.
- The length of time the RSO has been in existence.
- The amount of SAFC funding the RSO has received in the past.

### **3.3. APPEALS PROCESS**

All decisions made by SAFC are advisory recommendations to the Vice President for Student Engagement (VPSE) or designee. If an RSO has questions about the budget allocation, the RSO is encouraged to discuss with the SAFC Chair. Should the RSO wish to request a formal written rationale or reconsideration from the SAFC Chair or designee in cases where the RSO did not receive the amount requested, a request must be submitted in writing to the SAFC Chair (emailed to [safc@gsu.edu](mailto:safc@gsu.edu)) within ten business days from the date that the budget request outcome was sent to the RSO.

The SAFC Chair or designee will respond within twenty business days setting forth the basis for the award outcome. An RSO may appeal the SAFC Chair's determination to the Vice President for Student Engagement or designee. Appeals must be in writing (emailed to [safc@gsu.edu](mailto:safc@gsu.edu)) and submitted within ten business days from when the SAFC Chair responded to the RSO. If the SAFC Chair or designee fails to issue a timely written response after the RSO properly requested one, the RSO may appeal to the VPSE within ten business days from the Chair's response deadline.

An RSO's appeal must be based on one of the following grounds:

- SAFC's recommended disapproval of the budget request, or its determination of any allocation for an item therein was arbitrary or capricious and such recommendation was not remedied by the Chair's actions;
- The disapproval of the budget request, or determination of any allocation for an item therein was arbitrary or capricious;

- SAFC engaged in viewpoint discrimination or another legal violation, which was not remedied by the Chair's actions;
- The SAFC Chair engaged in viewpoint discrimination or another legal violation; or,
- The SAFC failed to follow the Funding Request Processes and Procedures outlined in this manual.

The VPSE or designee will provide the RSO with a written decision within twenty business days granting or denying the appeal and detailing the reasons for that determination. If the VPSE or designee grants the appeal and approves a new final budget, the new budget will be included in the written decision.

### **3.4 INAPPROPRIATE EXPENDITURES**

SAFC must comply with all rules and regulations of the institution, the BOR, and any additional requirements imposed by local, state, or federal agencies. Student Activity Fees were created to serve a specific and unique purpose in support of extra-curricular activities for students that cannot be financial supported through other institutional funding sources and provide direct benefit to students. These fees were not intended to subsidize or supplement other university functions that are more appropriately funded through other sources (such as academic/curricular activities already funded through state appropriations and tuition, or other programs/services/activities already funded through another mandatory fee or auxiliary funding source). While student programming may align with the interests of other university entities, such as academic departments or auxiliary enterprises, student activity fees are not intended to fund those entities or provide benefit to individuals who are not currently enrolled fee-paying students.

The items below cannot be funded by SAFC per BOR guidelines:

- 3.4.1 Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or any other related illegal or restricted items
- 3.4.2 Political parties, candidates, or events; political candidates seeking public office cannot receive an honorarium
- 3.4.3 Off-campus organizations or agencies and their related activities, including churches or related religious organizations, non-profit organizations, and any membership fees for civic organizations
- 3.4.4 Fundraisers, donations, or gratuities (certain programmatic expenses excluded providing that no entry fee is required to gain access to the fundraising event, and no SAFC funds are used to purchase items sold to raise funds)
- 3.4.5 Scholarships or individual membership fees
- 3.4.6 Prizes or promotional items exceeding state value limits
- 3.4.7 Gifts and other items intended primarily for personal use (including but not limited to personal living expenses, personal calls from state phones or similar personal use of state resources, clothing, jewelry, textbooks, academic materials, subscriptions, personal travel, etc.)
- 3.4.8 Services for individual benefit or of a personal, individual nature
- 3.4.9 Items of direct benefit to non-student (including employees)
- 3.4.10 Salaries or instructional costs for faculty, including payments for advising

- 3.4.11 Employee recognition and meals (including student employees)
- 3.4.12 Sales tax or other fees or fines (such as late or cancellation fees, fines for late payments, etc.)
- 3.4.13 Events that are not open to all GSU students
- 3.4.14 Expenditures that violate applicable law, Board of Regents policies, and GSU policies and procedures

This list is not exhaustive and may be altered as necessary to ensure compliance with GSU and other required policies and procedures. In addition, even in cases where it may be appropriate for SAFC to provide funds for a certain purpose, but the requested item is inconsistent with the purpose, mission, or goals of an organization, SAFC may deem the request inappropriate. The use of all SAFC funds once allocated will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance, and organizations that use allocated funds inappropriately may become ineligible for future funding, subject to disciplinary action, and/or required to reimburse SAFC for the inappropriate expenses.

In situations where students and/or advisors have paid expenses from their own personal funds for previously approved allocations and are seeking reimbursement, if the request is deemed inappropriate because the actual expenditures did not comply with the approved allocations, no reimbursement will be issued. It is imperative that organization leaders and/or advisors receive advance approval to be reimbursed before spending any of their own money to ensure those expenses are eligible for reimbursement. Also note this applies to petty cash reimbursement (where applicable). The university also reserves the right to establish minimum and maximum reimbursement limits. Established limits may delay the timeframe in which a reimbursement is eligible for processing. Advance planning and communication are critical.

### **3.5 FUNDING GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES**

Items typically funded through SAFC based on BOR guidelines include:

- 3.5.1 Independent contractor fees for outside speakers and entertainers (which can include travel related expense, but flat-rate contracted fees are preferred)
- 3.5.2 Required licensing and leasing fees and/or related support expenses for risk management related to events and programming
- 3.5.3 Event production and promotion expenses (including equipment rental, printing, etc.)
- 3.5.4 Prizes or awards only when equally available to all students, within individual value limits (excluding cash), including awards for contests and competitions
- 3.5.5 Food and refreshments for student activities when open to all students (closed meetings, club member specific meetings/socials/banquets, or officer meetings are excluded)
- 3.5.6 Promotional items directly associated with student events, within individual value limits (note: limited quantity t-shirts for event promotion are permissible, but t-shirts specifically for organization members are not)

- 3.5.7 Salaries and benefits for staff members (when role/function directly and specifically relates to serving students engaged in extra-curricular activities, excluding voluntary RSO faculty/staff advisors)
- 3.5.8 Stipends and/or student salaries for departments/offices that provide designated services and/or activities to students (but not compensation for voluntary student leadership issued through RSOs)
- 3.5.9 Related operating expenses for units that directly and specifically relate to serving students engaged in extra-curricular activities (excluding expenses allocated through institutional or auxiliary budgets)
- 3.5.10 Furniture, fixtures, or equipment directly and specifically used related to serving students engaged in extra-curricular activities (with appropriate inventory control – all equipment and materials purchase with fee funds are the property of the university and must be maintained on campus by authorized staff unless the approved manner/usage of an item is permissible for off campus use)
- 3.5.11 Travel that is directly related to a student organization’s purpose and through which the members traveling will represent GSU (see TRAVEL for more details)

This list is not exhaustive but is meant to establish baseline parameters within which SAFC will evaluate requests for funding. Some expenditure types are only appropriate for certain organizations based on the purpose, mission, or goals of the organization. Inclusion on this list does not mean that every organization is guaranteed financial support for those items. All funded programs, events, and activities must be directly aligned with the primary RSO mission and purpose. Even when SAFC allocates funds to an organization for certain intended purposes, the actual expenditure of the funds is still governed by the policies and protocols established by the BOR and GSU. Organizations may be required to comply with specific restrictions related to which vendors may be used, how expenses may be processed, and specific amounts of funds that may be allocated for specific purposes.

If GSU partners with specific vendors for promotional items, food, or other services, then organizations may be required to use those approved vendors when using SAFC funds. If there are established discounts or pre-negotiated rates with select vendors, budgets may be established based on those rates even if permission is granted to use other vendors. If other vendors will not match the rates, alternative funding sources may be required to make up the difference.

SAFC may also establish guidelines related to specific types of expenditures and those guidelines may vary based on circumstances and the remaining amount of resources available for allocation in any given fiscal year. For example, to maximize access to student activity funds to the greatest number of organizations, SAFC may establish caps on the amount of funds that any organization may receive for an individual speaker, event, or promotional item.

The University requires the following for processing and administration of SAF fees:

- Only authorized Georgia State University employees may obligate the university financially. Students and unauthorized employees may not authorize purchases, enter

into contracts, bid for services, hire student employees, or conduct any financial transactions involving student activity fee funds

- All financial transactions must be approved in advance (typically 30 days or more) and signed by a designated university official following university policies and procedures
- No SAF funds may be expended until after the Budget Award notification is completed, signed, and submitted. RSOs receiving funding for the first time, and new designated student representatives and advisors for RSOs, must complete a budget orientation before funding will be released for expenditure
- A funding expenditure pre-approval form must be completed in PIN (typically 30 days in advance of when the funds will be needed) after receiving an allocation when the organization is ready to expend the funds, and any funds committed or expended in advance of approval will be the responsibility of the individual(s) who committed or expended those funds
- After events/activities are completed all necessary post-event forms and financial related documentation must be submitted along with attendance tracking in PIN by the established submission deadline (it is best to immediately submit everything the day after an event/program occurs)
- University cannot pay for goods and services until they are received, and university must issue vendor payment within thirty days (verbal promises to pay, or third-party reimbursements are not permissible)
- When permitted, reimbursement of purchases made through personal funds will require budget manager approval
- Any direct charges made through the bookstore require advance approval from the SAFC Budget Manager
- PantherDining catering orders require advance approval through PIN and must comply with state per diem limits, as is true for all food expenses funded through SAF funds (and based on event/food type/vendor budget limits may be lower than per diem limits)

### **3.6 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FUNDS**

Organizations may request SAFC assistance to support student travel when that travel is specifically and directly relevant and related to the primary mission, purpose and/or functions of that organization, and the participants are directly representing the RSO and university. Travel assistance for students typically includes presenting at conferences, participating in competitions, or related activities where there is some direct benefit not only to the individual student traveling but also a greater benefit to the broader student body and the university.

Anyone receiving travel assistance from SAFC will be required to complete a post-travel form demonstrating how the travel funds were used and how participation in the travel contributed to the RSO and GSU, including required participation in any knowledge sharing activities that the university may sponsor (poster presentations, student travel symposium, online blog, etc.).

Students may only receive travel assistance funds from one SAFC supported source for each specific travel experience (i.e., students attending a conference cannot receive funding from two or more different RSOs or departments/program to enhance the amount of funding for

attending that same conference). Likewise, all requests for travel assistance must include full disclosure of any other financial support related to that travel (such as financial support from an academic department, travel grant from an external organization, discounts or fee waivers from the sponsoring organization, shared expenses with other attendees, etc.).

To ensure opportunity for the maximum benefit across the student body, SAFC has established the following travel assistance limits for RSOs (inclusive of all eligible related travel expenses, which include registration fees, hotel, and transportation, but will not include food/per diem):

- 3.6.1 \$750 maximum funding for any individual student per trip (with potential exception for international travel outside North America for up to \$2000 per student per trip)
- 3.6.2 \$10,000 maximum funding per fiscal year for any individual organization (unless special circumstances exist, with special approval of the VPSE)
- 3.6.3 \$10,000 maximum funding for the group of individuals attending the same conference or travel activity even if representatives from multiple organizations are attending
- 3.6.4 A maximum of 10 representatives from any single organization attending any single conference or travel activity (unless a higher number is required to enable eligibility such as to register a student competition team)
- 3.6.5 A maximum of three conferences/competitions per fiscal year (unless there is some form of progressive accomplishment for which additional eligibility is earned or other unique circumstances, with special approval of the VPSE)
- 3.6.6 No organization may request funds for flights to travel locations less than or equal to 400 miles away from the respective Georgia State University campus, unless the total cost of flight expenses is less than the total cost of the gas and car rental expenses. Organizations can still opt to drive to conference locations more than 400 miles away but the lesser cost travel option will be the amount considered
- 3.6.7 Maximum possible occupancy must be used for lodging; for example, a double occupancy room should be shared by four people. Special lodging circumstances should be requested in advance to the SAFC Chair or Secretary.
- 3.6.8 For travel funding purposes the same equivalent value for student travel will apply to any advisor/non-student travel when those individuals are necessary to support the student's ability to travel/participate.
- 3.6.9 All international travel must comply with GSU policy including registration with the Office of International Initiatives and may require the purchase of international travel insurance

Organizations are not guaranteed to receive travel assistance funds or the full permissible amount. SAFC will carefully assess all requests based on relevance and potential return on investment, within the parameters of the funds remaining to support other student activity fee needs. If travel assistance funds are provided, those funds may be assigned to pay for specific uses and/or prohibited from being assigned to pay for other uses based on how certain expenses must be processed. For example, if the Budget Manager processing the travel can directly pay registration costs, the allocated funds will be used to support that purpose first. Certain travel-related expenses are not covered by SAFC, including food and per diems.

Typically, SAFC travel assistance funds are solely used for registration, airfare, van rental, gas reimbursements, or lodging.

Depending on timing and/or the nature of the travel expense, students may be expected to self-fund after receiving approval and be reimbursed. SAFC also reserves the right to issue travel assistance funds in the form of a grant to be issued in one lump sum upon completion of travel.

Anyone receiving travel assistance funds who fails to attend the designated travel or fails to satisfactorily complete the established expectations for participating may be required to reimburse SAFC for any travel funds expended, and/or may become ineligible for reimbursement of personal funds expended. In such cases SAFC may also restrict individuals and/or organizations from being eligible to request future travel funds for a designated period of time.

SAFC will not fund travel for activities that are solely of specific benefit to an individual organization and/or the individual members within an organization. For example, student organizations seeking off-campus retreat, Spring Break trips, etc. Organizations are still encouraged to seek the experiences they believe will be beneficial and may pass the cost along to those who participate or raise funds to support those activities. Organizations wishing to engage in certain types of off-campus service activities are encouraged to coordinate with existing university-wide programs such as Alternative Breaks or opportunities offered through university departments.

Everyone traveling through SAFC funded means must be eligible to receive SAFC funding at the time of travel (students must be currently fee-paying enrolled students at time of travel). Summer conference travel is permissible for students not enrolled in summer classes providing the students were enrolled in the prior Spring term and are registered for the subsequent Fall term. Students may not receive travel assistance after they have graduated, with the exception of students continuing involvement in specific activities that began while a student, such as post-season competitions (with advance approval from SAFC Chair).

Travel and related funding will not be allocated for duplicative purposes when the university already offers an equivalent developmental/educational experience. For example, general leadership or diversity conferences that are not specifically or directly related to and/or hosted by an organization for which some other legitimate purpose in RSO attendance is necessary.

### **3.7 ADDITIONAL ESTABLISHED GUIDELINES FOR CONSISTENT REVIEW OF ALL RSO REQUESTS**

SAFC utilizes consistent guidelines and may establish specific parameters that deviate from these standards during the budget allocation process that then apply from that point forward in

assessing all submissions equally, as available funds permit. The following guidelines apply, in addition to all other criteria established herein.

- 3.7.1 All entities (RSOs, departments, programs, etc.) that receive SAF funds MUST have an established presence in PIN and must use PIN for promotion of all activities and reporting attendance.
- 3.7.2 Maximum funding allowed for any single RSO event, program, or activity is \$10,000, with a max honorarium/speaker's fee contribution from SAF funds of \$5,000 regardless of how many students or organizations are involved.
- 3.7.3 The total funding any single RSO may receive for hosted programming in a single fiscal year is \$25,000, of which no more than \$10,000 annually can be used for honoraria/speaker's fees; however, there is no pre-established limit on the number of events, programs, or activities any organization may host.
- 3.7.4 To maximize the number of students served through SAF funds, the total per person cost for all expenses related to any single sponsored event, program or activity should remain below \$25 per anticipated student participant.
- 3.7.5 All RSO sponsored events, programs, or activities must be held on a GSU campus, which includes property owned or controlled by the University, to be eligible for SAF funding support. This includes funding for food. Special permission for off campus space utilization for university sponsored activities (non-RSO activities) can be requested when the university does not have a suitable available space.
- 3.7.6 All events, programs, and activities receiving financial support must be open to all GSU currently enrolled Student Activity Fee-paying students. Expenses related to non-fee paying students/guests, if eligible to participate, should be funded through an alternative/non-SAF funding source (such as ticket sales, or higher rate tickets if an event involves a subsidized student ticket rate).
- 3.7.7 No funding may be provided for member-only events, programs, or activities, or those primarily focused on the business of the RSO and/or its members (e.g., general body meetings, membership recognition events, club socials, planning meetings/retreats)
- 3.7.8 RSOs do not need to be allocated specific funds for EMT/Police/Public Safety services as those expenses will be paid directly by the university.
- 3.7.9 Giveaways/prizes involved in pre-approved equal opportunity drawings cannot exceed a single value limit of \$75 and cannot include the purchase of gift cards.
- 3.7.10 No personal use items may be purchased by RSOs using student activity funds (e.g., stoles/cords, awards/certificates, personalized items like business cards, nametags, etc.).
- 3.7.11 No funds may be allocated for stipends for RSOs as all students and advisors involved in RSOs do so voluntarily.
- 3.7.12 RSOs may receive up to a maximum of \$750 per fiscal year for approved promotional purposes such as giveaways and print materials, within these specific guidelines:
  - 3.7.12.1 Promotions must be consumable in nature (i.e., a giveaway, printed materials) and not "permanent" items or items for which inventory control might be required (including no permanent display boards, banners, tablecloths, etc.).

- 3.7.12.2 No advertising costs associated with non-GSU supported platforms (social media, web, etc.) since the university provides an electronic promotional platform through PIN.
- 3.7.12.3 Promotional items and giveaways (including t-shirts) must be a reasonable per item cost and cannot exceed \$10 each (items such as hoodies, sweatshirts, Greek paraphernalia, etc. are not permissible giveaways)
- 3.7.13 Printing of serial publications central to the mission/purpose of the RSO is allowed and is not considered promotions or programs for purposes of these established funding limits.
- 3.7.14 SAF funds cannot be used for academic departmental costs, such as office supplies, equipment, etc. or for items typically considered office supplies for RSOs since basic RSO support items are centrally provided through Student Life
- 3.7.15 SAF funds cannot pay for privately used RSO spaces but can be used for rental fees related to activities open to all students if no cost spaces are not available.
- 3.7.16 Sport club student organizational activities and supplies (uniforms, equipment, travel) are not eligible for SAF funds because those activities are supported by another student fee source.
- 3.7.17 RSOs that are restrictive in their membership (exclusive to limited population or involve a vetting process that could result in membership denial) are ineligible for SAF funding, but may consult with a Student Life advisor for guidance in seeking support for activities that are open to all students or for collaborative activities that might be sponsored through a collective of organizations (like a council).

### **3.8 ADDITIONAL ESTABLISHED GUIDELINES FOR CONSISTENT REVIEW OF NON-RSO REQUESTS**

In addition to RSOs, qualifying non-RSO's like administrative departments, services, and programs (typically within Student Success and Student Engagement) may request financial support from SAFC following the guidelines within this manual. Since the purpose, scale and scope of departments that provide services and programs directly to students are distinctly different from RSOs, some of the RSO-specific restrictions will not apply.

As defined herein, the non-RSO entities are units within the university or specific functions, programs, or services provided by the university, and must comply with additional policies and procedures that may not apply to RSOs (since RSOs are independently recognized entities from the university). Likewise, since these non-RSO entities are fully managed by university employees, there are expenses that may be permissible using SAF funds that are not available to RSOs. The following are expense categories that are permissible for non-RSOs for SAFC funding requests:

- Programs and Initiatives: expenses related to events and programs hosted by university units that serve students as the primary beneficiaries and align with the mission and purpose of that unit. This can include on campus events for students, ongoing initiatives for students, off-campus events for students, developmental and student leadership activities, etc. Allowable expenses include production and material costs, speaker/artist

fees, event/program marketing materials (following university guidelines), food for student participants, subsidized costs for student participants in events that may involve discounted rates, etc.

- Promotional Items: expenses related to giveaways, items and marketing materials that promote the programs and services of the host unit. Per item limits for promotional items may be established, as well as maximum funding caps per unit.
- Operational: expenses related to the general office functions, supplies, equipment, and staffing of a qualifying unit, but only for units that are not eligible for or are currently not receiving institutional funds for the required operational expenses or services provided to students.
- Travel: expenses related to programmatic travel of students and the staff who support those activities, staff and faculty travel expenses related to required attendance in direct support of students, and travel assistance funds for professional development of staff within qualifying units without institutional budgets that support travel expenses.
- Student Pay: expenses related to paying student workers, graduate assistants, and stipends for qualified student leaders.

### **3.9 CHANGE REQUESTS AFTER FUNDING APPROVAL**

After being allocated funding, sometimes the needs of the department/program or RSO may change. While accurate advance planning is critical, when circumstances warrant, those receiving SAF funds may request reconsideration for the usage of previously approved funding within specific guidelines.

For non-substantive changes in funding usage, requests can be submitted to the SAFC Budget Manager providing all relevant details and supporting documentation regarding the need for the change. Non-substantive means the core purpose and usage has not changed, but there were circumstances that made the originally proposed details no longer feasible, so the funds are still fundamentally being used in a similar manner as was approved but with minor alterations in details. Some examples include:

- A change in travel details, such as the number of people attending, itinerary change impacting the dates of travel, location, venue, conference registration, etc. where the new details still meet the original intent and remain within the original budget.
- A change in activity, event, or program date, time, location, menu, speaker, theme, etc. within the same original general purpose, intent, and budget.
- A change in vendor/service provider or similar logistical changes that may be necessary to ensure the feasibility of the previously approved activity, event, or program.

All requests for non-substantive changes will be reviewed by the SAFC Chair and Budget Manager, and with consensus, will be approved. If there is not consensus or the input from all voting members is desired, the request will be forwarded to the full SAFC for input.

Any substantive change in purpose or funding usage will be submitted to the SAFC Chair, who will determine if there are sufficiently special circumstances to request a special exception of the VPSE or if the request should be submitted to the SAFC for reallocation review.

### **3.10 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES**

Expenses that solely or primarily serve only the members of an individual organization cannot be funded through SAFC. SAFC funds cannot be used for donations or seed money for fundraisers or to purchase items being sold or used for fundraisers. Organizations are highly encouraged to be creative and maximize opportunities for additional support, both financial and gifts in kind, which can include member dues. For more information about additional funding sources and fundraising ideas and guidance please consult with Student Life.

Regardless of the nature of additional funding sources, all organizations are obligated to utilize appropriate fiscal management practices to ensure accountability and minimize risk of violations. Advance communication with Student Life is essential to ensure compliance and maximize organizational success.

Any organization collecting monies through dues, sale of goods, donations, etc., other than through the student activity fee allocation process or broader university-assisted advancement activities, must open and maintain an off-campus bank account in the name of the RSO and run all of the non-fee money through the account. All student fees must be managed through a university student activity account.

- 3.10.1 For purposes of the legal name of the organization on the off-campus bank account, registered student organizations cannot use the name of the university or any reference to the university, such as GSU, as part of the organization name without express written permission by the University.
- 3.10.2 Organizational funds cannot be co-mingled with the private funds of any officer or member, or other unique funding sources unrelated to the RSO.
- 3.10.3 Prior to opening any bank account, banking regulations require that the organization apply for and maintain a Federal Employers Identification Number (FEIN), similar to a Social Security Number for an individual. RSOs should never use an individual's SSN and cannot use the university's FEIN.
- 3.10.4 When establishing an account, it is recommended that two signatures be required.
- 3.10.5 RSOs are encouraged to use a campus mailing address through Student Life for bank statements for consistency as officers change from year to year. All bank statements should be opened and reviewed thoroughly each month by at least two officers of the RSO (typically treasurer and president) and the treasurer should submit regular reports to the RSO's executive officers, advisor(s) and membership.
- 3.10.6 Financial obligations should be paid promptly. Failure to do so could result in bad credit. Deposits should be made promptly, and appropriate security should be maintained.
- 3.10.7 Receipts should be issued for all funds collected by the RSO, with regular reconciliation of all fundings, especially those associated with fundraisers.
- 3.10.8 If fundraising is associated with philanthropic activities, it is best whenever possible to have donations made directly to the entity the organization is supporting (most major non-profits have online donation sites to support these activities to minimize cash-handling and ensure proper tax donation statements are issued in compliance with federal law).

- 3.10.9 Only currently recognized RSO leaders should be managing off campus accounts and performing transactions and ensure a smooth transition annually to “close out” the current leaders and add the incoming officers.
- 3.10.10 RSOs must cooperate with all reasonable requests for information by the university, including requests to review financial information and records.
- 3.10.11 If SAF funds are ever involved in an activity that includes any financial transactions (like ticket sales for events that are generating additional revenue to offset costs not covered by the SAFC allocation), those revenues must be deposited into the designated institutional account or processed through the designated university financial process. Generated and expended revenue in these situations is subject to university rules and regulations.

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