

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 all requests for funding that the GSAC receives in order to ensure that they meet necessary criteria (listed below) and to make recommendations to the GSAC as to whether or not they should be funded. All proposals are evaluated to ensure that they meet the two main goals of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee: increasing graduate student participation in the University community and working to ensure that graduate student needs and concerns are being represented.

Recognizing the importance of having a graduate student support network within departments and throughout the University, the GSAC has placed high priority on funding the operational expenses of graduate student organizations, events or activities directly related to that objective. Additionally, the GSAC recognizes the importance of funding activities that promote interaction between graduate students, graduate faculty, and University administrators. When funding proposals, the GSAC takes into consideration the number of graduate students involved in the organization as well as the number of graduate students benefiting from the funded project. The GSAC places the highest priority on funding requests from groups that provide their own additional funding to offset project costs.

Because the GSAC is actively involved in encouraging graduate students to establish graduate student organizations within their respective departments, the GSAC is committed to funding the operational expenses of new graduate student organizations as well as those graduate student groups that have an established track record. The GSAC requires all graduate student organizations seeking funding from the GSAC to become Registered Student Organizations with Student Activities and Leadership Programs and to establish a University account. Accounts may be established by contacting the Financial Advisor for the Division of Student Affairs at 387-2124. Under no circumstances will any GSAC funds be transferred to a student account at a bank outside of the University. Furthermore, RSO financial managers will be required to attend a financial workshop sponsored by SALP before money will be dispersed. Finally, we presently cap annual funding at \$500 for operational expenses and \$2,500 for events per RSO. Funds are available until exhausted.

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.
2. GSAC funds will only be transferred to an existing University account.
3. Organizations should not rely on the GSAC as the only, or primary, source of funding. Other alternatives are required to assure adequate program funding (e.g., dues, fund raising activities, etc.).
4. An organization that has a special project or program whose costs exceed \$1,000.00 should show some generation of income to offset the cost of the project or program.
5. Requests for funding of events which do not benefit the graduate student community, or which benefit only a few individuals, will be denied funding.
6. Undergraduate Registered Student Organizations may apply to the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee for event funding if graduate students participate in the organization or if the funded project will benefit graduate students.
7. Event funding should be sought in advance of the proposed event or program. Requests will not be accepted for reimbursement if an event or activity has already taken place.
8. Funding for food and beverage will not exceed \$500 per academic year for operational budgets or 50% of the total amount of funds requested for a specific event, meeting, speaker, presentation, banquet, or function.

9. 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; however, no left over funds may be used for an unapproved item or service.
10. 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.

Fund Uses:

Funding requests for research and travel proposals will be directed to the Graduate College's Research & Travel Grant program. GSAC recognizes the importance of these endeavors to an individual graduate student's development, but GSAC encourages groups to use the SAF funds to strengthen their RSO, to enhance on-campus programs and events, and to create a vibrant and vital graduate student community at WMU.

Graduate College Research Awards:

<http://www.wmich.edu/grad/forms/gsrp-app.pdf>.

Graduate College Travel Awards:

<http://www.wmich.edu/grad/forms/gstf-app.pdf>.

End of event budgets are required for any event or program funded by the Graduate Student Assessment Fee. 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 Director of SALP signature verifies release of the funds.

Receiving student fees 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 or other acts or omissions, or that the University approves or disapproves of the organizations' goals and activities.

Funds may be used for activities, programs, and expenses incurred in the planning, organizing, and implementing of activities or programs.

Funds are expected to be expended only for items budgeted for and approved by the Financial Allocation Committee. Misuse of GSAC allocated funds may result in the suspension of future Student Assessment Fee funding.

No funds may be expended 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 or proselytizing); or to finance any activity contrary to the Laws of the State of Michigan and of the Federal Government.

Any GSAF money not used by the organization for operational, event, or program purposes, will be refunded back to the Graduate Student Advisory Committee at the end of the fiscal year.

Application Procedures:

Groups seeking funds should contact the Graduate Student Advisory Committee for an application.

The Chair of GSAC or GFAC may be contacted with questions or for assistance in preparing the application. All items on the application must be completed, including an itemized budget and a typewritten description of the proposed project, event, or activity.

Organizations applying for funding are required to send a representative to attend the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee meeting the month that their application is being considered in order to explain the purpose of the organization and describe, in detail, their budget request. This meeting takes place monthly. The Chairperson of the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee 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 Graduate Financial Allocation Committee will review all proposals received and make its recommendations to the Graduate Student Advisory Committee. If the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee's recommendations are approved by the GSAC, any approved funds will be transferred to the appropriate University fund and cost center. The GSAC will notify those who submitted requests of its decision within five (5) business days of the GSAC monthly meeting.

All University and legal requirements regarding the disbursement and use of Student Assessment Fee funds will be enforced. All approved funding requests are subject to review by University Risk Management to determine GSAC/SAF/WMU liability. If found to have significant risk, the sponsoring group will be required to take the additional steps necessary to absolve GSAC/SAF/WMU of any liability. Failure to comply will result in the denial of funds. The Business Manager for the Division of Student Affairs will make the actual transfers and will work with the Chairperson of the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee to ensure compliance.

In cases where time is of the essence or where the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee 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. An organizational representative will also be required to attend in order to explain the purpose of the organization and describe, in detail, their budget request.

If a request is denied, the Chairperson of the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee 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.

Note:

Any GSAC money not used by the organization for operational, event, or program purposes, will be refunded back to the Graduate Student Advisory Committee according to the following schedule:

Operating Funds will be returned to GSAC as of June 30, the end of the WMU fiscal year.

Event Funds will be returned to GSAC no sooner than two months after the date of 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.

Graduate Financial Allocation Committee Appeals:

The Chairperson of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee or any representative of GSAC may appeal any decision of the Graduate Financial Allocation Committee to the GSAC. Organizations can appeal any GFAC or GSAC decision directly to the GSAC Chairperson.

If the GSAC Chairperson feels that the appeal is warranted, it will be brought up for discussion at the monthly GSAC meeting. A majority vote of GSAC is needed to overturn any GFAC ruling.

Advertising of Events:

Any student organization wholly or partially funded by the Student Assessment Fee must include on all 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 accordingly (the suspension of future Student Assessment Fee funding). All publications wholly or partially funded by the Student Assessment Fee must include the words: Student Assessment Fee Funded or SAF Funded in a prominent place. Student Assessment Fee Funded or SAF Funded must appear with/on any item funded by the GSAC. Distinction must be made between projects or parts of projects funded by organizational funds (e. g. dues, fund raising activities, etc.) and by GSAC allocated funds. Failure to do so could result in current and future suspension of Student Assessment Fee funding. In addition, the GSAC logo should appear on all promotional materials for any event for which we provide funding. Logos can be found at the GFAC home page.

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