

Policy on the Disbursement of Student Activities Fees

Approved by University Finance Committee May 7, 1998

The purpose of the Student Activity Fee is to fund activities which contribute to the general enrichment of the undergraduate student's university experience by:

- serving the interests of the diverse student population which pays the fee
- personalizing the campus experience through the support of programs for various sub populations
- creating opportunities for student participation in a wide range of activities
- providing opportunities for student development of leadership and civic skills
- creating supportive social environments on campus
- fostering the development of satisfying leisure-time interests
- contributing to a sense of community for the entire student population
- supporting student-run learning experiences outside the formal classroom
- serving the interests of as many students as possible

The authority to review requests by student organizations and to make recommendations for allocations to those groups from the Student Activities Fee is delegated by the University Finance Committee to the Student Government Association with the following stipulations:

1. The allocation process must be conducted with the review and advice of the Vice President for Student Affairs (or his/her designee).
2. The process of allocating and administering the Student Activities Fee should be consistent with the fee's purposes and be fair and equitable.
3. All eligible student groups shall be given the opportunity to present their budget requests both in writing and in formal presentation to the SGA Finance Committee in accordance with published processes made available in advance to all eligible groups.
4. The allocation process will include a procedure whereby groups will receive an explanation in writing for the funding decisions and a procedure whereby groups may appeal those decisions at each level of the review process.
5. Written records will be kept of decisions made by the SGA Finance Committee and the SGA Legislature or other levels in the process which might be established and a copy of these will be maintained on file with the SGA Accounts Office in a timely fashion.
6. Appropriate checks and balances will be adopted to insure that the funds are expended according to the stated purposes of the approved allocations and that there is compliance with any restrictions on allocated funds.
7. The process should be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the student body while providing for appropriate continuity of services and programs.
8. The Student Activities Fee shall not be allocated or disbursed in a manner which discriminates on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin,

political affiliation, physical or mental handicap in accordance with the University of Maryland Human Relations Code.

Funding from the Student Activities Fee shall not be allocated to groups which meet the following criteria:

Groups which are not currently registered with the Office of Campus Programs in accordance with the *Student Organization Registration Guidelines*.

Groups which deny membership or the privileges of membership to any currently enrolled student. Membership must be open to all students.

Groups which do not have undergraduate students responsible for the final decisions as to the group's purpose, organizational structure, budget, or choice of activities.

Church affiliated groups which are organized and coordinated under the direct control of a denomination, sect, or order such that funding would constitute a violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and/or the Constitution or statutes of the State of Maryland.

Political Groups whose primary function involves supporting the campaign of a candidate for an off campus public office or specific federal, state, or local legislative action.

Groups which are engaged in activities that result in personal financial gain for individual members. The exclusion does not preclude the payment of wages or honoraria pursuant to a supervised contract for services.

Student Activities Fee funds may not be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, drugs or other illegal substances, nor for making direct payments to philanthropic organizations or charities. Payments for food, lodging, travel, wearing apparel, trophies and plaques, or scholarships must be made only in the context of a program with broad reaching impact and not have as its primary purpose the financial or other material advantage of individual persons.

Student Activities Fee allocations should be made upon published criteria related to the ability of the student organization's ability to make full and appropriate use of the funds. These criteria may include factors such as strong leadership, solid programming experience, group size and stability, and previous year's expenditures. To insure a desired level of continuity and stability among the student organizations on campus and to support a thoughtful review in a broad perspective on behalf of the campus student body, reasonable care must be taken to prevent drastic cuts or inexplicably large increases in an individual organization's allocated amount from year to year.

The amount of Student Activities Fee funds available for disbursement to student organizations is determined by the calculation of anticipated fee revenue for an upcoming fiscal year. This amount is adjusted to cover the costs associated with accounting for the expenditures of the funds, the costs associated with on-going staff commitments funded by the fee, and a contingency amount to cover fluctuations in actual enrollment.

Issues related to the management of the Student Activities Fee allocation process and the expenditures from those allocations are under the purview of the University Finance Committee. On behalf of the University Finance Committee, the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee is responsible for the accounting of the expenditures of Student Activities Fee funds and other matters related to the management of the Student Activities Fee allocation process.