

Fiscal Governance Policies

of the **Graduate Student Senate** at **Lehigh University**

Approved March 28, 2007

Amended September 12, 2007

Amended November 11, 2007

Amended February 13, 2013

Amended June 18, 2014

Amended December 02, 2015 (II.A; IV.C.1-3; V.F-H)

Amended October 04, 2017 (V.I)

Amended April 3, 2018 (IV.A & IV.B)

Amended September 18, 2019

- I) Authority and Oversight
- II) Budget Committee
 - A) Formation
 - B) Duties
 - C) Rules of Order
 - D) Term, Definitions, and Guidelines
- III) Budget Implementation
 - A) Drafting and Approval
 - B) Misjudgment of Income
 - C) Exceeding a Line-Item
 - D) Exceeding the Operating Budget
 - E) Surplus
- IV) Travel Grants
 - A) Intent
 - B) Application Process
 - C) Coverage and Restrictions
 - D) Roll-over of Funds
- V) Club Funding
 - A) Definitions
 - B) Administration
 - C) Appropriation Rules
 - D) Exclusions
 - E) Misconduct
 - F) Public Outreach
 - G) Requirements for Club Funding
 - H) Annual Report
 - I) Guaranteed Funding
 - J) Funding Dedicated to Open Events
 - K) Executive Board Communication
- VI) Contingency Fund
- VII) Liquidation of Property
- VIII) Ratification
- IX) Amendment

I) Authority and Oversight

All financial allocations of the Graduate Student Senate shall be determined by the Budget Committee, which shall be governed by the rules stated in this document. The Budget Committee shall submit a budget for approval by the Executive Board and the Graduate Student Senate General Assembly. The Treasurer and Grants Officer shall control the budget and shall be subject to review by the Budget Committee and the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall serve as the appellate body for all appropriations grievances. The Graduate Student Senate Advisor, normally the Graduate Life Office Director, shall have final oversight of the fiscal governance of the Graduate Student Senate. The Graduate Life Office shall be responsible for administering all Graduate Student Senate accounts.

II) Budget Committee

A) Formation

At the first General Assembly meeting presided by the newly-elected Executive Board, the Graduate Student Senate Treasurer shall call for the formation of the Budget Committee. The voting members of the Budget Committee shall be the Treasurer and one delegate from each of the four (4) Colleges. The term of service for Budget Committee members shall be for the entire fiscal year. Other than the Treasurer, no Executive Board member shall be a voting member of the Budget Committee. The selection process for Budget Committee members shall be determined at the discretion of the President.

B) Duties

- 1) Determine the Graduate Student Senate operating budget.
- 2) Determine the overall budget for all graduate clubs and determine the budget allocations to each individual club according to Section V.B.
- 3) Decide any appeals to exceed any section of the budget.
- 4) Review the activities of the Treasurer and the Grant Officer on a semi-annual basis.
- 5) Approve or deny all solicitations for the allocation of Club Funds, College Grants, and Charitable Contributions.
- 6) Approve or deny Travel Grants that have been deferred to the committee by the Grant Officer.
- 7) Resolve any financial matter that is not within the power of the Treasurer or Grant Officer.

C) Rules of Order

- 1) Chair:
The Budget Committee shall elect one of its voting members to chair the committee. The Chair shall schedule meetings and preside over them.
- 2) Meetings:
The Budget Committee shall announce meetings and allow interested parties to attend where appropriate. No quorum shall be required, but voting members must be notified of a Budget Committee meeting 24 hours in advance, not including weekends or school holidays.

- 3) Voting:
All Budget Committee decisions require a simple majority vote, or more than half of the voting members present. If a decision cannot be reached, the Budget Committee shall refer the matter to the Executive Board for review.
- 4) Appeals:
Any financial decision made by the Treasurer or Grant Officer may be appealed to the Budget Committee. Any budget committee member may appeal a Budget Committee decision to the Executive Board. In the case of referrals and appeals, all decisions of the Executive Board shall be final unless the Graduate Student Senate Advisor recommends bringing the matter to the General Assembly for consideration. All appeals must be made in writing.
- 5) The GSS Executive Board shall establish the initial guidelines for the Budget Committee and may perform the Budget Committee's duties.

D) Terms, Definitions, and Guidelines

- 1) The Budget Committee shall review and update its funding guidelines annually, either at the end of the spring semester or the beginning of the fall semester. It shall take into consideration the amount of money available to fund graduate clubs and the number of graduate clubs to be funded.
- 2) The Budget Committee shall prioritize budget items in the following order (highest priority listed first), and give funding preference to items with a higher priority.
 - (a) On-campus events that benefit ALL graduate students (Open Event).
 - (b) On-campus events that benefit only the members of the club (Closed Event).
 - (c) Non-events that benefit ALL graduate students (Open Event).
 - (d) Non-events that benefit only the members of the club (Closed Event).
 - (e) Off-campus events that benefit ALL graduate students (Open Event).
 - (f) Off-campus events that benefit only the members of the club (Closed Event).
- 3) On-campus shall be defined as on Lehigh's property. Any extension (e.g. to include a public park) of this definition shall be up to the discretion of the Club Affairs Committee.
- 4) If an event is considered to be open to all graduate students, it shall be properly advertised. This requires at least an announcement on the daily graduate email newsletter, an announcement at a GSS meeting (may be done through any graduate student attending), a posting on the GSS Facebook, twitter, an ad in the Brown & White (or the GSS digest), daily announcements, GSS Calendar or sufficient number of fliers posted around campus. Sufficient number of fliers requires that at least one flier shall be posted on every academic building. Clubs shall specify how they plan to advertise an event in the budget request.
- 5) Decorations shall not be considered fixed assets.

III) Budget Implementation

A) Drafting and Approval

The budget for the next fiscal year shall be drafted starting the week after general elections based upon the projected revenue for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget shall be divided into several line-items, and each line-item shall have a fixed amount associated with it, including projected expenses between July 1st and June 30th of the following calendar year. The Budget Committee, and the newly elected Treasurer are all responsible for drafting the

new budget. They may consult with the outgoing Treasurer. The budget must be brought to a vote at the August General Assembly meeting.

B) Misjudgment of Income

If the amount of income for the fiscal year is found to be lower than budgeted, the Budget Committee and Treasurer will create a new draft of the Budget as soon as possible after the discrepancy is discovered.

C) Exceeding a Line-Item

The Treasurer may give approval for a line-item to exceed the budget by 10%. The Budget Committee may give approval for a line-item to exceed the budget by no more than 50%. The Graduate Student Senate may give approval for any line-item to be exceeded by any amount and it may create new line items mid-year. Without the approval of one of the aforementioned, no one may intentionally exceed any line-item budget.

D) Exceeding the Operating Budget

The total operating budget for the fiscal year should not be exceeded

E) Surplus

Any surplus realized after all financial obligations for the fiscal year have been fulfilled may be rolled over into the following year's operating budget at the discretion of the Budget Committee unless otherwise specified in Graduate Student Senate law. Rolled-over funds may be considered as income and not necessarily fall under the line-items from which they came.

IV) Travel Grants

A) Intent

The purpose of the Travel Grant Program shall be to assist Graduate Students in attending professional conferences. The Program is intended to cover expenses which Graduate Students would otherwise be forced to pay out-of-pocket. It is intended to supplement existing funds, not to supersede them.

B) Application Process

1) Verification:

The Graduate Student Senate will provide applications which must be adequately filled out and returned to the Travel Grants Officer. Verification procedures are indicated on the application.

2) Qualification:

- (a) To qualify for a travel grant, the applicant must be from an active Graduate Unit. The student's unit must be active on both the date of application for the travel grant and during the dates of the conference. It shall be the responsibility of the student to ensure his/her unit maintains active status. All approved travel grant applications shall be contingent upon verification of active unit status during the dates of the conference.

- (b) The applicant must be an enrolled graduate student at Lehigh during the semester in which the travel occurs. An exception will be allowed if the applicant is not enrolled during the Summer, but was enrolled the previous Fall and Spring semester.
 - (c) Travel grants are only available for expenses incurred in traveling to a conference, whether the student is presenting work or merely attending the conference that relates to the student's field of study at Lehigh. Students who present their work are eligible for a greater degree of travel funding. To qualify as a presenter at a conference, the student must be addressing an audience with a paper, poster, or demonstration. The presenter must also be at least a co-author if not the primary author.
- 3) After the Conference:
After the conference, the student must complete an expense form within 30 days of the last date of the conference. Expense forms will be provided by the Graduate Student Senate. The student must also provide copies of his/her receipts verifying all expenses reported. The Travel Grants Officer will decide what types of receipts are acceptable.

C) Coverage and Restrictions

- 1) Valid Expenses:
The following will be considered valid expenses: registration fees, hotel accommodations, parking, public transportation, food and non-alcoholic drink (but no more than \$20 on any given day), gasoline (\$0.20/mile), or any other expense the Budget Committee deems valid. Car mileage will not be reimbursed.
- 2) Amount:
Presenting applicants will receive a maximum of \$150 for any one conference. Non-presenting applicants will receive a maximum of \$75 for any one conference. Out-of-pocket expenses are the total amount of valid expenses minus funding from other sources including, but not limited to, their department and/or advisor. Students may submit an application for every conference they attend.
- 3) Restrictions on Travel Grant Funds:
No one student will receive more than \$225 in Travel Grants within a fiscal year. The Fall semester runs September 1 - December 31, Spring is January 1 - May 31, and the Summer semester is June 1 - August 31. The last day of the attended conference will determine which semester the application falls under.
- 4) Misconduct:
If fraud, misrepresentation, non-responsiveness, or any other form of misconduct is found in any student, department, or college, the Graduate Student Senate reserves the right to revoke Travel Grant privileges from the guilty party for any duration the Graduate Student Senate sees fit. Decisions concerning misconduct will be made by the Executive Board.

D) Roll-over of Funds

Any budgeted amount not spent in one semester will be rolled over into the next until the end of the fiscal year. If a roll-over does occur the budgeted amount for the new semester becomes the original amount plus the rolled-over amount.

v) Club Funding

A) Definitions

- 1) A “graduate club” is defined by the following requirements:
 - A) A graduate club must have an Executive Board consisting of, at minimum, a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Treasurer and Secretary positions may be combined into a Treasurer/Secretary. See “Model Constitution” Article IV section three for lists of the minimum duties of each officer.
 - B) The President and Treasurer must be graduate students.
 - C) The club’s active membership must consist of at least 51% graduate students.
 - D) The club’s leadership must consist of at least 51% graduate students.
- 2) A club is considered active if it is funded (See V.G) or held at least one open event (See V.F)
- 3) Fixed assets shall be defined as non-perishable and re-usable items purchased for an event. Fixed assets shall be inventoried with the Graduate Life Office for future use by any club. Examples of fixed assets are:
 - a) Uniforms, costumes
 - b) Equipment
 - c) Board games
 - d) Tables, chairs
 - e) Christmas trees

B) Administration

- 1) 2) All graduate clubs that request budget shall be required to use the University account administered by the Graduate Life Office. In addition, if there are any funds left in the club account at the end of the fiscal year, and those funds were provided by the GSS, such funds should be subtracted from the next year’s allocation. The “**Club Funds**” will be rolled over to the next year. In summary, a club is allowed to have the following funds in the university account: To receive the base funding, each club must have an open event each year.
 - (a) GSS funds given out by the GSS (can be rolled over only from the last years allocated budget, any leftover from more than one year ago will be subtracted from the next year’s allocation)
 - (b) Club funds: collected from fundraisers, donations and club dues (can be rolled over)
 - (c) Close to the end of the fiscal year, GSS Budget Committee has the authority to move unused rolled over funds, **ONLY** in the light of unexpected events like budget shortfall etc. Thus affected clubs can petition reallocation of this amount in the next fiscal year for up to one year from the date of money removal by GSS. Only the rolled over funds can be moved in this fashion.
- 3) If any club is inactive for one whole fiscal year, their account balance shall be reduced to zero in the next budget. The club will subsequently be deactivated.

- (a) A club is considered inactive if they don't hold any event open or closed in the fiscal year concerned or fail to advertise open events.

An inactive club can be reactivated by requesting a new budget from GSS in which case they will have to begin with the minimum budget amount as allocated to any new club in that fiscal year. Reactivation will NOT require the club to be voted on by the Graduate Student Senate for approval.

C) Appropriation Rules

The Budget Committee shall follow the subsequent rules for providing funds to graduate clubs:

- 1) Every active club (subsequently referred to as "club" only) shall submit a budget each spring requesting for funding for the next fiscal year. The budget shall be co-authored by the outgoing and by the newly elected club executive board. The deadline is June 30th. New clubs shall submit a budget within two weeks of their recognition by GSS.
- 2) Every club shall receive a base amount of funding as determined by the Budget Committee. Funding to clubs shall be allocated no later than the first day of the Fall Semester. New clubs shall at least be provided with the base amount if recognized in the fall semester, and with at least half the base amount if recognized in the spring semester. This funding shall only be provided for approved budget items. If less than the base amount was approved, the club shall receive only the approved amount, not the full base amount.
- 3) The Graduate Life Office shall enforce the correct spending of GSS funds provided to clubs. A club can use its own money, obtained via dues, fundraisers or donations, for all activities, except those that violate university policies or Section 6 (Club Formation and Recognition Policy) of this Bylaw.
- 4) Club events shall be classified as follows (see the section on "Funding Guidelines" on event advertising):
 - (a) Open Events: events open to the general Lehigh community and at least three different places of advertisement
 - (b) Closed Events: events open to club members only.
- 5) Since it is the objective of the Budget Committee that clubs be encouraged to have events that benefit the entire Lehigh community, the budget approved in the club funding line of the budget shall be allocated among clubs based on past performance and what they have planned for the future. Performance should be measured based on how many open events the club held in the previous year, and how many events the club has planned for the upcoming year. Clubs are required to hold one open event per year. Budget allocation should also depend on the percentage of General Assembly meetings each club has attended in the previous academic year.
 - 1) Funding for new events can be requested at any time. New events may not have appeared on previous budget requests.

D) Exclusions

Funding for the following shall NOT be approved. Any exceptions must be approved by the GSS executive board.

- 1) Lodging, meal or entertainment expenses incurred by the organization's members while traveling or on organizational business. Only a reasonable amount as determined by the budget committee can be spent on club e-board meetings and small group events.

- 2) Clothing expenses or other personal equipment for general membership distribution (includes T-shirts, gloves, bats, clubs, masks, etc.).
- 3) Purchase or promotion of alcohol.
- 4) Any activity relating to gambling.
- 5) Any activity that violates the University Code of Conduct.
- 6) Any activity that is primarily for non-students, e.g. spouses of graduate students or invited non-student guests.
- 7) Sectionals, Regionals, Nationals (Submit as New Events).
- 8) Any function that excludes any student from attending (i.e. Military Balls, etc.).
- 9) Political or religious organizations or activities.
- 10) Speakers tied to a political campaign.
- 11) Illegal activity.
- 12) Mock interviews (See the Career & Professional Development Center)
- 13) Any revenue generating activity. Clubs can request a loan of up to \$100 in total for their fundraising activities. Clubs may petition the Club Affairs Committee for a higher amount if necessary. The Budget Committee shall determine individually which activity is for fundraising purposes, and which is not.
- 14) Awards.
- 15) Reimbursement for miles of travel repetition.
- 16) Any subscriptions/rentals of benefit only to club membership repetition e.g. registration fees
- 17) Other items covered by the GSS itself, e.g. through college or travel grants.
- 18) Medical Kits: Medical kits shall not be included in the budget. It is the responsibility of the club to provide a medical kit for its members. Basic medication can be obtained from the Lehigh University Health Center.
- 19) Operating Expenses: NO FUNDING and no member of the club can be paid for services
- 20) Donations to charitable organizations except for money raised through fundraising events which abide by university policies

E) Misconduct:

If fraud, misrepresentation, non-responsiveness, or any other form of misconduct is found from any club or its members, the Graduate Student Senate reserves the right to freeze the account balance of the guilty party for any duration as the Graduate Student Senate sees fit. The guilty club will thereafter have to begin as a 'Reactivated club' as defined in Section V.B .1. Decisions concerning misconduct will be made by the Executive Board.

F) Open Events

Clubs are required to hold one open event each year to receive club funding. Examples of open events include, but are not limited to:

- A) Sponsor a happy hour
- B) Hold a movie night
- C) Cultural breakfasts
- D) Cultural events

G) Requirements for Club Funding

In order for a club to be eligible to receive GSS funding for the next fiscal year they must submit the following documentation by April 1 of the previous fiscal year.

- a) Annual Report
- b) Current Club Constitution
- c) Current Member List

H) Annual Report

In order to keep accurate graduate club records and fairly determine distribution of club funds, the Graduate Student Senate Budget Committee shall require the annual reports from the previous year along with the next year's budget request from every graduate club. These reports shall be submitted by April 1 of each fiscal year and shall provide the following information about each club event:

- 1) Type of Events (Open/Closed)
- 2) Number of attendees, including the number of non-club members, at each event
- 3) Amount spent at each event
- 4) How events are advertised
- 5) Amount of funding from other sources
- 6) Current Club E-board
- 7) Last Club election date

This information shall be disclosed to the members of the General Assembly upon request to the treasurer. Funding for clubs shall only be considered if both reports for the previous year have been received.

I) Guaranteed Funding

In order to promote club attendance and involvement in GSS general meetings, clubs will be guaranteed to receive \$200 in GSS club funding if they meet both of the following requirements:

- 1) Had a club representative attend the GSS general meetings, missing at most 1 meeting per academic semester
- 2) Had Submitted annual report, current club constitution, and current member list by April 1.
- 3) Followed the club requirements (See V.J, V.F, V.C.7 and V.K) during the previous Fiscal Year.

J) Funding Dedicated to Open Events

Consistent with our goal that graduate clubs organize events that benefit the entire Lehigh community, all clubs must use at least 50% of their GSS-allocated budget on open events (see II.D.2; V.B.7). If clubs do not meet this requirement, they lose the guarantee of receiving the base amount of funding (see V.H).

K) Executive Board Communication

In order to ensure continued communication across academic years between club members and between clubs and the Executive Board:

- 1) All clubs must have a 'lehigh.edu' email address. One of the club's officers must be assigned the responsibility of the email account, which must be noted in the club's constitution. The account information must be handed down when E-boards transition leadership. All communication between the GSS E-board and the graduate club will occur through this email account.
- 2) the GSS Vice President will oversee club communication and events. As part of this duty, the Vice President will create and send out club check-in forms at the beginning

of each month during the academic year. Clubs will be required to complete check-in forms by the date designated by the Vice President. Failure to complete the check-in forms will be taken into consideration during the Budget Committee's determination of the club's future operating budget.

VI) Contingency Fund

The Contingency Fund will consist of no less than two percent of the Graduate Student Senate's total Operating Budget. It may be used at the discretion of the President or Treasurer to cover under-budgeted projects, unexpected expenses, or any other activity that serves the best interest of the Graduate Student Senate. Move to budget implementation, defined as a line number

VII) Liquidation of Property

Only the Executive Board can decide to sell property of the Graduate Student Senate. However the E-Board must get approval from the Budget Committee for any item valued at \$500 or less, and the E-Board must get approval from the Graduate Student Senate for any item exceeding \$500 in value.

VIII) Ratification

Ratification of this document shall require a vote of three-fourths of the active Unit Representatives present at a General Assembly meeting. One to two weeks after the vote, an open meeting for all graduate students shall be held. A simple majority vote shall be required for ratification.

IX) Amendment

Amendments to this document shall be presented to the General Assembly and may be approved by a simple majority vote at that meeting. Any amendment shall be dated and recorded. A copy of the former Fiscal Governance Policies shall be filed for future reference and all changes shall be incorporated into the document posted on the Graduate Student Senate website.