General Overview

The 2016-2017 General Operating Budget is intended to serve as a financial representation of the Executive's strategic plan, as well as providing Arts and Science students with a detailed breakdown of how their student dollars are being spent by the Society. This report is intended to serve as a broad overview of the budget, with the specific details of each budget line being contained within the budget itself. This year, the budget was created in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. Adhering to the philosophy of budgeting from zero, ensuring that allocations are based off of detailed proposals;
2. Finding new ways to reduce fees and better allocate available funds into Society operations and new projects;
3. Re-examining all reoccurring payments levied against the Society to ensure that they are financially feasible in the short and long-tem, and beneficial for all members of the society;
4. And remaining open and transparent about the finances of the Society. Students expect ASUS to deliver real, meaningful results, while ensuring that their student dollars are spent fairly, efficiently, and responsibly.

If you have any questions about the budget, or would like clarification on any of the specifics, I would be more than happy to provide any additional information. The budget will be presented to ASUS Assembly on September 29th 2016, at which point it will be voted on and opened. To ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability to ASUS Assembly, I encourage all elected representatives and members at large to critically analyze and ask questions on the budget when it is presented.

Sincerely,

Brian MacKay
Vice-President
Arts & Science Undergraduate Society of Queen's University
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Understanding the Budget

The following are some general points of information for interpreting the budget:

- The budget adheres to the "budget from zero" philosophy, meaning that the 2016-2017 projected numbers are not exclusively based off the previous year, with the exception of reoccurring administrative costs (such as EI, CPP, photocopier, etc.);

- The proposed numbers for each budget line are derived from research-based proposals submitted during the summer, and approved by the Vice-President and the Advisory Board;

- A detailed breakdown of each individual commission/office budget can be found on the ASUS website at http://www.queensasus.com/assembly/

- All summer wages and honoraria are set out in the ASUS Policy Manual, and can only be changed through ASUS Assembly;

- The amount for all grants and awards is also set out in the policy manual, meaning that amounts can only change through a policy change.

What's New This Year

While the general layout of the budget has remained similar to previous years, some moderate changes have been made for the purpose of transparency and organization, as well as removing a few redundancies. The most notable change is the removal of the "BOD Discretionary Fund" as a separate account under ASUS Revenues. Given that the Advisory Board allocates funds from the Discretionary Fund to other ASUS initiatives, and that the Discretionary Fund has no direct expenses or revenue, it is impractical to have it contained within the General Operating Budget.

Budget Breakdown

This section aims to provide a broad overview of the following sections contained within the budget:

- Revenues
- Administration
- Information Technology
- Executive

Revenues

In accordance with the AMS regulations regarding mandatory student fees, the ASUS mandatory fee can be annually adjusted by the CPI. For the 2016-2017 year, the mandatory fee paid to ASUS by all Arts & Science Students (excluding Physical Education and Kinesiology) is $25.90. Based on information provided by the University Registrar on 1 September 2016, ASUS will receive approximately $271,950.00 in student fees for the 2016-2017 year, and will serve as our primary source of funding for the year.

The Queen's Canadian Leadership Conference (QCLC), the Queen's Equity Conference (QEC), and Arts & Science Formal are intended to be self-sustaining operations which do not receive any direct allocation from ASUS student fees, but rather are funded through registration fees and sponsorship. All are projected to break-even this year.

Below are some general information points on the revenue section:

- $9040.00 from "Poster Sale" is our contractual entitlement from our partnership with Imaginus for organizing the poster sale;

- Increase in revenue from jackets from the previous year is a result of increased supplier costs and corresponding price adjustments;

- "due from orientation/camps" refers to the repayment for all salaries & honoraria for the Head Gael & camps staff paid out of the general account.

Administration

Unlike all other sections within the budget, the projections of administrative costs are derived primarily from the final 2015-2016 numbers. A detailed breakdown of each administrative cost can be found within the budget. The specific amounts for all honoraria and salaries and honoraria are set out in the Policy Manual and can only be changed by a motion to amend the respective policy. The only significant change is a $300 increase in "taxi", which was made as no member of the Executive or Council has their own vehicle, which has resulted in taxis becoming the primary method of transpiration for moving money to the bank.

Information Technology

In order to decrease the density of the administration budget section and increase transparency, a new budget section of information technology has been added, which will be directly overseen by myself and Christian St. Louis, the Information Technology Director. This year, we are proposing that $5800 be spent on IT infrastructure, primarily in the form of a desktop computer for each Commissioner and Officer. Our justification for this purchase is that after consulting with IT services and conducting various research on workplace productivity, we decided that it was necessary to develop a more secure IT Infrastructure within ASUS to ensure that confidential documents are maintained on an internal server. Additionally, this will assist in developing further institutional knowledge by keeping information stored in the same place from year to year. The computers can be utilized by all volunteers within ASUS, and are not confined to individual use. Moving forward, the infrastructure budget line will most likely decrease and will be used for necessary yearly upgrades.

Executive

The following budget lines have been added to the executive portfolio to reflect policy changes implemented last year and new initiatives:

- Career projects: this line will be used by the Career Projects Director as the primary source of funding for Majors night and the "It All Adds Up" Campaign;

- Homecoming: in collaboration with the ReUnion Street Festival, this line will be used for the raffle baskets at the event to promote ASUS;

- Honours event: previously under the Human Resources budget, this line will cover the annual event for recipients of the ASUS Scholarship, Mark R. Wilson Award, and the ASUS Honorary President. This line was moved from HR as award recipients are not always volunteers of the society and selected by Assembly and the Executive. This year, we plan to invite more members of ASUS and more faculty members to attend the event, and ask the faculty to contribute financially.

Special Projects

The Executive special projects line has traditionally been used as a way to fund any new initiatives outlined in the Executive's platform. Over the past five years, the line has grown considerably, therefore it is important that the use of such a large sum remains as transparent as possible. For the 2016-2017 year, the special projects budget can be broken down as follows:

Red Room Revitalization	$8000
Undergraduate Research Hub	$500
Online Grant Applications	$275
Ongoing Projects & Opportunities	$1225

All of the above projects were laid out in our Strategic plan and election platform, and the use of all funds will be directly overseen by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Board. Unlike previous years, the special projects line will not be used to hear new initiatives and proposals, as we consider that to fall more within the purview of the Advisory Board and the Discretionary Fund rather than the Executive.

Closing Thoughts

This report is intended to serve as a concise and broad overview of the financials of the Society. It is my intention that this report becomes an annual tradition, and will help with financial transparency and further education of the ASUS financial system. Moving forward, budget reports such as this one should help further develop stronger institutional knowledge of finances within ASUS and assist future Vice-Presidents in the budget creation process.