

Student Activities Fee Guidelines

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Introduction

In 1946, President Colgate Darden, recognizing the strong tradition of student self-governance at the University of Virginia, delegated to Student Council the power to recognize all student organizations. In the early seventies, Council began funding student organizations that qualified for funds under the Board of Visitors' guidelines. After a lengthy debate, the Board of Visitors' fundable categories of organizations were first adopted in 1973. The original ten categories were expanded to thirteen and are currently at eleven.

The purpose of the Student Activity Fee (SAF) is to provide financial support for student organizations that are related to the educational purpose of the University of Virginia. As a mandatory student fee, the monies collected by the University for funding student activities are public funds that must be administered in a manner consistent with the educational purpose of the University as well as with state and federal law.

Should you have any questions regarding the procedures contained herein, please do not hesitate to contact Student Council or the VPSAO-Finance office at any time during the year. Suggestions for additions or revisions are welcome and should be directed to the Vice President for Organizations.

Information in this manual has been compiled from the Student Council Constitution and Bylaws and the Board of Visitors Guidelines.

Student Council Vice President for Organizations: studco-vpo@virginia.edu

Student Council Appropriations Committee: studco-appropriations@virginia.edu

Student Council Board of Audit & Management: studco-bam@virginia.edu

VPSA-Finance Office: vpsafinance@virginia.edu

Eligibility for Funds

In order for a student organization to be funded by Student Council:

- The organization must be a Student Council qualified CIO for the current academic year and must also renew its status for the academic year in which it will spend the allocated funds.
- The Organization cannot duplicate the goals or services of another organization that is funded by the Student Activity Fee.
- The organization cannot be in debt. (A CIO must not have any outstanding debts. A debt will be considered outstanding if it is unpaid more than 90 days past its due date.)
- The group must fall into one of the fundable categories as defined by the Board of Visitors' guidelines:
 - Special Status Student Organizations charged by the Board of Visitors;
 - Cocurricular organizations that are not administered by the University departments or units;
 - Club Sports;
 - Student News, information, opinion, entertainment, or academic communications media groups;
 - Cultural organizations;
 - Fine arts organizations;
 - Madison House;
 - Hobby organizations;
 - Groups whose predominate purpose is to present speakers on topics of general interest to the University;
 - the Student Legal Services;
 - Political organizations; and
 - Religious organizations.

The Board of Visitors has determined that fraternities, sororities, honor societies, and special status student organizations not charged by the Board of Visitors are ineligible for funds from the student activities fees. An organization is also ineligible when admission is exclusionary in nature and not open to all students or if membership is restricted by reason of race, religion, disability, national origin, political affiliation, or gender. Notwithstanding these requirements, a student organization may restrict membership based on ability to perform the activities related to the organization's purpose. In determining cases of discrimination, it is not sufficient to look merely to the constitution of an organization but to its actual practices and operations.

Uses of Funds

Purpose

The purpose of the student activity fee is to provide financial support for student organizations that are related to the educational purpose of the University of Virginia. As a required student fee, the monies collected by the University for funding student activities are public funds that must be administered in a manner consistent with the educational purpose of the University as well as with state and federal law. The Appropriations Committee of Student Council allocates these monies pursuant to its own guidelines and those established by the Board of Visitors.

Restrictions on Funds - General Rules

All allocations to students from SAF are subject to applicable restrictions as established by the Board of Visitors, the Student Activities Committee, and Student Council. All fundable expenditures must show a demonstrated need for expenditure to occur and be for some activity that benefits the University community.

Cheapest Alternatives:

In general, Student Council will fund the cheapest viable option for any given expense; however, a more expensive alternative will be considered if it is more environmentally friendly (see “**Renewable Alternatives**”).

This means, for example, that CIOs will not receive SAF funding for the following:

- Items that can be reserved or received from the University for a lower price
- Space reservations for programs that could be held on-Grounds without charge

External Revenue and Profits:

CIOs must also report all non-SAF revenue streams and expenditures in order to receive SAF funds.

When a CIO’s combined net savings and revenues (i.e. their combined savings and revenues remaining after accounting for planned non-SAF expenses) exceed \$10,000, Student Council will deduct \$x from their approved funding amount such that their combined net savings and revenues after accounting for the costs of the requested line items not funded with SAF does not exceed \$10,000.

This means, for example, that:

- A CIO with \$20,000 in combined net savings/revenues that requests \$100 in funding can be approved for up to \$0 in funding (\$100 deducted)
- A CIO with \$20,000 in combined net savings/revenues that requests \$9,900 in funding can be approved for up to \$0 in funding (\$9,990 deducted)
- A CIO with \$20,000 in combined net savings/revenues that requests \$15,000 in funding can be approved for up to \$5,000 in funding (\$10,000 deducted)

Rare exceptions to these rules will be made at Student Council’s discretion depending on the organization’s explained financial circumstances .

CIOs may use SAF-funded expenditures to generate revenue provided that all generated funds are kept within and spent on the organization itself. Additionally, any generated funds may not be spent on:

- Weapons
- Drugs or alcohol
- Financial instruments and other speculative investments
- Other expenses that conflict with university policy

Funding Limits:

During a given semester, an organization may not:

- Request more than \$20,000 of SAF funding
- Be approved for more than \$15,000 of SAF funding

The \$5,000 gap is meant to give CIOs leeway in the event that a significant portion of their requests are rejected.

Guidelines Quiz:

Student Council reserves the right to make funding eligibility contingent upon the completion of a SAF Guidelines quiz. The quiz will be created and issued by the Appropriations Committee, and it will *briefly* test CIOs on what the committee deems to be the most basic and important rules outlined in the SAF Guidelines with the intended purpose of educating CIOs on these rules.

CIOs will be required to take this quiz *no more than once per semester*, and CIOs will be notified in a timely manner when the quiz is activated and required. CIOs will also have unlimited attempts to receive a passing score.

Ownership of Funded Items:

All expenditures purchased with SAF funds must be maintained, owned, and kept by the organization. It is the responsibility of the organization to track all SAF-purchased items, including their condition and location.

Individuals may not keep any SAF-purchased items. This means, for example, that the following expenses will not be funded:

- T-shirts, uniforms, and clothing that are personalized or kept by individuals
- Awards for members

Price Verification:

Organizations must submit all required information using the current funding request form to Student Council to be considered for SAF funding and respond to any requests for supplementary information.

Any requested expenses not accompanied by official proof of the expense's exact price on the funding request form will not be funded. Valid forms of price verification are:

- Screenshots of receipts/invoices
- Photographs of receipts/invoices
- Price quotes

Unofficial estimates of prices and URLs are NOT a valid form of price verification.

There are a few expense-specific exceptions to the price verification rules above:

- For train or bus travel, CIOs should provide a Google maps screenshot of the trip route with the distance in miles shown in addition to an official receipt/invoice/quote that shows the ticket price.
- For car travel, CIOs may simply provide a Google maps screenshot of the trip route with the distance in miles shown.
- For honoraria, CIOs need not provide price verification. However, they must specify who the speaker is, what they are coming to speak about, and when they are coming to speak. They should also provide a screenshot of some form of communication (e.g. an email) with the speaker or someone who works on their behalf that confirms the speaker will be coming to the event/activity.
- If a CIO cannot provide valid price verification when submitting a request, Student Council will approve up to \$500 per semester for unverified expenses. However, the CIO will still need to provide adequate price verification when submitting a reimbursement/payment request form to VPSA Finance Office to access its funds.

Renewable Alternatives:

Renewable, zero-waste, and other environmentally friendly alternatives to expenses will be looked upon favorably and are an exception to the rules listed under “**Cheapest Alternatives.**”

In a similar vein, single-use plastics will not be funded. Please note that the UVA Recycling Office can provide CIOs with compostable plates, cups, and utensils for events with up to 150 attendees, in addition to compost and recycling bins.

Requests Across Multiple Rounds:

Funding for the same expense may not be requested in multiple rounds, unless that expense is repeated (out of necessity) or divided.

For example, suppose every trip a CIO takes costs \$100 for gas. This means:

- The CIO can request \$100 for gas in two separate rounds for two different trips
- The CIO can request \$50 for gas for an individual trip in each of two separate rounds (or some other combination that adds up to \$100, such as \$60 in round 1 and \$40 in round 2)
- The CIO cannot request more than \$100 for gas for an individual trip across multiple rounds (so requesting the trip’s full gas expenses twice is not allowed)

However, CIOs may request funding equal to the difference between the funds approved for them and the funds allocated to them in a previous funding round that occurred within the same school year as the current round. In such a case, CIOs should include the price verification of every expense the funding will be used to cover, and all of these expenses must have been approved in the previous round in question.

Timing of Expenses:

CIOs may only request SAF funding for activities and events that will occur or have occurred during the school year.

Restrictions on Funds - Expenditure-Specific

BOV-Mandated Restrictions:

CIOs may not receive SAF funding for the following:

- Honoraria or similar fees for events that are not open to the University community
- Religious activities
- Social entertainment or related expenses
- Direct philanthropic contributions and activities
- Political activities
- Activities which would jeopardize the University's tax exempt status

Food:

All CIOs may be approved for up to \$150/semester in food/beverages and food/beverage-related expenses for events that pertain to the mission of the organization (such as but not limited to general body meetings, practices, and networking events). This does NOT include social events.

Food/beverages and food/beverage-related expenditures will only be funded without restriction when they are an *essential* part of an activity that is directly relevant to the organization's mission.

In any case, alcohol will not be funded.

Guest Speakers:

Guest speaker amenities (travel, lodging) will be funded at the same rates as they are for CIO members. See the "Travel" section for info on these rates.

CIOs may also request up to \$500 per speaker event for honoraria, with a maximum of \$1,000 per funding round. Honoraria for a guest speaker event will only be funded when the event meets all requirements:

- It is central to the mission of the organization.
- It is open to the University community and no admission fees are charged.
- Speakers receiving honoraria do not financially support the organization giving it.
- The organization provides ample information regarding the speaker's specific purpose and what they will be doing for the organization.

Publicity and Advertising:

CIOs are encouraged to utilize the SAF-funded printing and copying services in the Student Activities and at the Newcomb Desk, but for other forms of advertising, CIOs may request up to \$100 per semester.

Services:

CIOs will not receive SAF funding for paid wages or salaries; however, fees for services that are an **essential** component of an approved activity may be considered for SAF funding.

****Instructors and coaches are not deemed essential to this end.****

Any payments towards individuals that financially support the organization making the payments will not be funded.

Any payments toward individuals currently enrolled as students at the university will not be funded due to potential conflicts with financial aid. This does not include reimbursements to students as a part of the process to access already-allocated SAF funds--it only pertains to line-item requests in the initial funding request form.

Subscriptions:

CIOs may receive funding for subscriptions to media-related resources when the resources are **essential** to fulfilling the CIO's stated mission and are not personalized. To this extent, CIOs will only be funded one subscription per resource and will be expected to share it amongst their members unless the CIO can justify why multiple subscriptions are needed for members to utilize the resource effectively.

Travel:

CIOs whose main function does not require travel are limited to one major travel request per semester (any request in travel over \$500). Expenses included for travel requests are lodging, gas, airfare, and all expenses related to the event. Travel expenses for activities beyond reasonable distances or for more members than necessary will not be funded. Travel expenses for non-members will also not be funded unless Student Council deems the non-member travel to be an essential part of a SAF-funded event.

Lodging Rates:

\$100 per night lodging (per room of four)

Ground Travel Funding Rates:

- \$0.20 per mile of travel by car per four persons

This applies to gas expenses, Uber expenses, etc.

- \$75 per day per rental car (midsize sedan) or \$100 per day per rental car (passenger van) when approved at the discretion of Student Council
- \$0.20 per mile of travel by bus per person
- \$0.60 per mile of travel by train per person
- Parking-related expenses will not be funded

Public transportation tickets will be funded in full and override the rates outlined above.

Air Travel Funding Rates:

All airfare requests must be supported by actual quotes from the airline or travel agency. Funding for airfare is subject to the following standards.

Airfare to destinations under 300 miles from the University will not be funded.

Following the rules outlined under the “Cheapest Alternatives,” we will only fund economy-class tickets.

Miscellaneous Rules:

CIOs may not receive SAF funding for the following:

- Expenses that are unrelated to the mission of the organization (most notably but, not limited to, general social expenses)
- Bank charges
- Non-essential security and insurance fees
- Supplies to paint the Beta Bridge

Steps of the SAF Funding Process

Appropriations Schedule

The traditional SAF funding process is structured to provide support to CIOs throughout the academic year. Each semester, the funding request window will open for approximately three months, with requests reviewed on a rolling basis. CIOs may submit as many applications during the request window as desired. A funding request window will also open in the mid-to-late summer to provide in the early school year.

Once receiving an allocation, CIOs have until the end of the school year to spend their funds. However, if a CIO fails to spend a significant amount of allocated funding before the semester ends, Student Council may request that the CIO spend those funds before receiving more.

Specific dates and deadlines for the SAF funding process can be found on the Student Council website.

Submitting a Funding Request

All requests for SAF funding must be submitted using the SAF request form at virginia.presence.io. Organizations must use the most up-to-date SAF request form that can be found on the Student Council website. Student Council will not consider requests in other formats. Specific submission instructions can also be found on the Student Council website.

CIO officers submitting a funding request must pledge on their Honor as to the accuracy of the information presented in the request. All information presented is subject to verification by Student Council.

Hearings

Once a funding request has been submitted, the Appropriations Committee may contact the requesting CIOs about attending a hearing. Hearings are approximately five to fifteen minutes in length, and will be administered by members of the Appropriations Committee.

During the hearing, the Appropriations Committee will gather further information to determine that requested expenses are eligible for funding and to confirm that the information presented in the request is accurate and reflects the needs of the organization. The group's officers will have an opportunity to explain anything that may be unclear in the budget and to stress expenditures that are especially important to the group. At the Committee's discretion, an organization may be called for additional hearings. While a CIO may not be required to attend a hearing for its funding request, the CIO may request a hearing if it chooses.

Deliberations

Once all the hearings are completed, the VPO and the Appropriations Committee leadership deliberate to determine the approved expenses and an allocation for each group. The VPO and Appropriations Committee leadership have discretion in postponing deliberation of any budget without notice to the group.

Allocations

Each group will be contacted with its final allocation by the established date for the funding round. CIOs should note that the amount of allocated funding they receive is most often less than the total of its approved expenses due to limited SAF funding. It is important that CIOs understand exactly how much money it has to spend and on what expenses:

- **Requested amounts:** Organizations request Student Activities Fee funding through Student Council through line-item expenditures. These requests should accurately reflect the needs of the organizations as well the actual costs of the requested expenditures, supported by price verification. The Appropriations committee will review requested funding.
- **Approved amounts:** SAF funding is distributed on a line-item basis. The Committee will evaluate every itemized expenditure by the SAF Guidelines and apply standardized cuts as appropriate. Approved amounts take into consideration past SAF purchases by the organization, less expensive alternative prices for similar expenses, the total amount requested, standard committee rates, and other factors. The committee designates the approved amount of each line-item on the returned budget sheet. This amount signifies how much SAF money Student Council thinks it is appropriate for the organization to utilize for that expense; it does not indicate how much money the organization will receive to spend. The approved amounts on the budget are not finalized until the funding request is officially approved by the Appropriations Committee and the CIO is notified. An organization will not be reimbursed beyond the approved amount for an expenditure. It may request a reallocation of approved funds.
- **Allocated funding:** The actual amount of funding that an organization is given to spend appears on the atUVA platform and is sent as an email to the CIO upon official approval of the request. This amount is calculated by summing the approved amounts from the returned budget and applying across-the-board cuts to achieve the amount of funding available to give out during that round of funding. The allocated amount is almost always lower than the total approved amount on the budget sheet. Total spending by the CIO may not exceed this amount.

Organizations will have to make decisions about how they will spend their allocated funding. For example, if a CIO is allocated \$500 to spend but is approved \$350 for Expenditure A and approved \$425 for Expenditure B, it might choose to:

- Spend \$350 on Expenditure A and \$150 on Expenditure B; or
- Spend \$425 on Expenditure B and \$75 on Expenditure A; or
- Divide the SAF funding any way between Expenditures A and B without exceeding \$500 or the approved amount of either one.

Appeals

If a group is not satisfied with its allocation, it may first appeal to Student Council. The group must submit an appeal to the VPO and the Board of Audit and Management within two weeks of the funding request approval. The appeal should be in the form of a typed rationale detailing the specific line-items SAF Guidelines being appealed, explaining why the CIO feels the Appropriations Committee's decision was incorrect, and indicating what they feel the correct approved amount should be. The VPO and the Board of Audit and Management will deliberate on the appeal and request further information, including further hearings, as necessary.

After deliberations have completed, and the party is still unhappy with the verdict, the party may petition the Student Council Representative Body for further consideration of the appeal. Discussion

before the Student Council Representative Body must be limited to the specific line items only. No corrections, non-line items, or new information may be presented at this time. This is not an opportunity to rectify any mistakes or oversight made with original budget. Depending on the number of groups appealing, deliberations and hearings may be held on separate nights. The procedure for appeals before the Representative Body shall be as follows: The group will have five minutes to explain its rationale, following which a member of the Appropriations Committee and Board of Audit and Management will have five minutes to explain their decision. There will be fifteen minutes to make any concluding statements, followed by a two-minute summation from the Appropriations Committee and Board of Audit and Management. The Representative Body will reach a decision on the items in question by a majority vote after unlimited discussion.

If a group is still not satisfied that it received a fair hearing, it may appeal to the Student Activities Committee, subject to deadlines set down by that body. Normally, the SAC will not accept an appeal based on the amount of the allocation. The SAC is the final avenue of appeal.

Accessing Allocated Funding

Following the allocation of SAF funds by Student Council, CIOs must fill out the necessary forms with VPSA Finance Office to spend these funds. CIOs have the option of either reimbursing their organization or an organization member, or using their SAF allocation to pay a vendor directly. Please see the Student Council and VPSA Finance Office websites for additional information on each payment method.

Glossary

APPEAL – A request made for Student Council to reconsider the approval of certain expenditures.

ALLOCATED FUNDING AMOUNT: The amount of funding available for an organization to spend.

APPROVED FUNDING AMOUNT: The amount of funding approved for a given line-item expenditure, representing the maximum amount of allocated funding that may be theoretically spent on that item. It does not represent how much funding is actually available to spend.

AWARDS – Any items that are given to individuals.

BANK CHARGES – Monthly bank service charges and opening deposits. All CIOs are eligible to receive a free checking accounts by receiving a Bank Fee Waiver form from VPSAO-Finance.

CIO CENSUS – An annual questionnaire to that all CIOs must complete to provide information about their membership, activities, and financial need.

CO-CURRICULAR ORGANIZATION – A CIO that provides opportunities outside the classroom setting for student to apply classroom theory and/or to acquire knowledge, experience and/or skills.

COMPETITIVE ORGANIZATION – An organization for whom participating in competitions is an essential part of its stated mission.

CULTURAL ACTIVITY An activity which promotes understanding, identify and/or the celebration of the heritage of a specific racial, ethnic, or affinity group. Although the heritage of a racial, ethnic or affinity group may be closely intertwined with the group's religious tradition, this definition is not intended to make eligible for funding religious activities which primarily promote or manifest a particular belief or beliefs in or about a deity or an ultimate reality.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATION – A CIO that is primarily concerned with studying, promoting, and/or expressing racial, ethnic, or affinity group traditions, social forms, art, and/or tastes.

EQUIPMENT – Equipment purchases involving SAF are intended for the long-term benefit of the organization. The SAF is not for the personal benefit of the organization's officers or for the other improper uses.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR – The cost of maintaining and repairing any equipment.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCE – An unforeseen expense that is essential to the continued operation of a CIO, if approved by Student Council Appropriation Committee.

FUNDING REQUEST FORM – The informational document that organizations must complete in order to receive funding in a given round.

FUNDRAISING – The organized activity of raising funds. Fundraising expenses are expected to be paid from the proceeds of the particular event. These expenses include film rental, facility rental, advertising, printing and copying, and any other expenses related to fundraising.

FUNDABLE EXPENSES – These are any expenses that are eligible to be funded by SAF money. Almost all expenses are fundable. Some exceptions are any expenses related to political, religious, social, or fundraising activities.

GUEST SPEAKER – An individual who gives a lecture, presentation, or speech, on a particular subject matter to UVA staff, student, and community members. UVA faculty, UVA students, performers, dancers, musicians, artists, etc., are not considered as guest speakers.

FUNDABLE EXPENSES – Expenses that are eligible to be funded by SAF money.

HOBBY ORGANIZATION – A CIO that primarily pursues an activity for relaxation, recreation, or entertainment.

HONORARIUM – A payment for services on which custom or propriety forbids a price to be set. Examples include honoraria for speakers.

INELIGIBLE – Not qualified to receive SAF funds. The most common reasons for declaring a group ineligible for funding are the failure to qualify as one of the eleven categories of student groups determined to be eligible to receive SAF or if the group is judged to be fiscally irresponsible. In declaring a group ineligible, Student Council declares that the group does not meet the guidelines or standards, regardless of need. A group may also be considered temporarily ineligible for funding if it does not meet the necessary requirements and deadlines for requesting funding.

NON-FUNDABLE EXPENSES – Expenses that are not eligible to be covered by SAF funds.

PHILANTHROPIC – Dispensing or receiving aid from funds set aside for humanitarian purpose (e.g. a foundation). Philanthropic activities that have a mandatory fee that contributes to a donation are non-fundable. Events with an optional donation aspect that primarily seek to raise awareness may be eligible for funding.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY – An activity related to: (1) lobbying the principal purpose of which is to influence the passage or defeat of specific legislation, and/or (2) electioneering which encompasses participation or intervention in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. These restrictions on funding political activities are not intended to preclude funding of any otherwise eligible student organization which: (1) advocates, as an incidental or insubstantial part of its activities, the adoption or rejection of legislation; (2) engages in nonpartisan analysis, study, or research, and makes the results available to the public, or (3) espouses particular positions or ideological viewpoints, including those that may be unpopular or are not generally accepted, or that may coincidentally be prominently held by particular political parties or political candidates.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION – An organization primarily devoted to political discussion or debate and the organization of meetings to further such interests, and which in advancing such general social and educational interests through its membership does not use SAF funding for political activity as defined herein.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY – The organized worship of a deity, divine power, or supernatural entity, whether or not such activity is consistent with the precepts of an organized denomination. No student news, information, opinion, entertainment or academic communications media group shall be considered to be engaging in religious activity merely because it expresses ideas or viewpoints that are religious in nature. Resolved, the SAF funding guidelines be amended to include the following languages: Notwithstanding any other provision of these SAF funding guidelines, no student news, information, opinion, entertainment or academic communications media group shall be deemed ineligible for funding on the grounds that the ideas or viewpoints expressed or advocated by such group are religious in nature or because such group primarily promotes or manifests a particular belief(s) in or about a deity or an ultimate reality.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION – An organization primarily devoted to religious discussion or debate and the organization of meetings to further such interests, and which in advancing such general social and educational interests in a secular context through its membership does not use SAF funding for religious activity as defined herein.

REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT: The amount of money included on the funding request form. This amount should reflect the need of the organization.

RESTRICTED FUNDS – SAF cannot be used to reimburse organizations for expenses made from other restricted funds. For example, if an organization receives a grant or contribution from non-SAF sources that

have its use restricted to paying for printing a booklet or brochure, the organization should not request reimbursement from the Student Activities allocation for these expenses.

SAF – The Student Activities Fund. This is the pool from which student groups receive allocations. The SAF is drawn from the Student Activities Fee assessed to all full-time, fee-paying University students each semester. (It should be noted that SAF is also used to abbreviate Student Activities Fee. It is generally acceptable to use the terms interchangeably.)

SALARIES – Fixed compensation paid regularly for services.

SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT OR RELATED EXPENSES – Activities that may be participated in by members of the organization that are not necessary to the stated mission of the organization, such as group bonding or social engagements.

TAX-EXEMPT – Exempted from a tax; bearing interest that is free from federal or state income tax.

WAGES – A payment, usually of money, for labor or services, according to a contract or an hourly, daily or piecework basis.