

GRADUATE FUNDING BOARD BYLAWS – v10, UPDATED 12/09/2015

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I. INTRODUCTION – THE BUDGET PROCESS

A. FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) evaluates the funded programs at the end of every fall and winter semester, and sends its reports to the Student Life Fund Administrative Board (two reports/fiscal years). Based upon former evaluations, the Graduate Student Association will carry its budget to the Student Life Fund Administrative Board and advocate for a specific level of funding for the next fiscal year. The allocation of aggregate funding for organizations is determined on the basis of former year spending, the successful completion of past events, the benefit of each program to the graduate student body, and the number of graduate student members involved and/or affected by programs, events and conferences.

B. TIMELINE AND MILESTONES IN THE ANNUAL BUDGETING PROCESS

1. GVSU`s fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the forthcoming year. The budget review and modification process has the following milestones:
 - a) September: review of the annual report from former fiscal year; planning starts for next fiscal year
 - b) November: budget preparation and formulation of the budget for next fiscal year
 - c) January: consideration of budget requests and allocation of funding for next fiscal year
 - d) March: review of the allocated funds and modifications made if needed.
2. The annual budgeting process of individual graduate organizations should follow the university`s budget planning milestones and timelines. Registered graduate organizations should set their organizational budget for the forthcoming fiscal year before the end of October. Based upon the organizations` needs for the following fiscal year, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) will present the year`s funding needs to the Student Life Fund Administrative Board. The Student Life Fund Administrative Board will allocate the funds to the GSA for allocation to graduate student organizations.

II. FUNDING REQUESTS

A. REGISTERED GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

1. Only Graduate Registered Student Organizations (RSO) can receive funding. The registration process is described in the RSO handbook:
<http://www.gvsu.edu/rsohandbook/>
2. Colleges and students at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) are encouraged to form and register their own Graduate RSO. Graduate Registered Student Organizations strive to increase and balance their on-campus programs and off-campus event participation. On-campus events are to be organized professionally and ensured to be successful.
3. Promotion of events and communication between the related departments of GVSU are to be considered as major components of designing successful events. Graduate Student Organizations are intended to disseminate curriculum-, discipline- and field-related information to their member students regularly. They are intended to contribute to and influence the greater graduate student community through their social media network. Graduate Student Organizations do their best to fundraise for their on- and off-campus programs, events and conferences.

B. GRADUATE FUNDING BOARD AND FUNDING REQUESTS IN ORGSYNC

1. GSA oversees the Graduate Funding Board and the Finance Officer of GSA chairs the Funding Board Meetings. GSA does not vote on funding requests.
2. Positions within the GFB will be filled by representatives from current graduate student organizations, whereby each student group is allotted one voting seat on the GFB. It is at the sole discretion of the graduate student organization who they delegate to represent their interests at each meeting.
3. Following the budget approval by the Student Life Fund Administrative Board, a registered graduate organization at Grand Valley State University may submit a funding request via OrgSync (<http://www.orgsync.com/>).
4. The funding request of the organization needs to be related to the mission of the organization. Organizations need to seek the approval of the Graduate Funding Board after finalizing and submitting their funding requests in OrgSync. Organizations may wish to consult the Finance Officer of the Graduate Student Association (gsa_finance@gvsu.edu) before finalizing their funding requests.

5. Budget requests for each campus event or conference should be separate, i.e., events should not be combined when they are submitted. Only in the case where the events are the exact same or repeated may they be submitted in the same request. Additionally, any space reservations must be confirmed before the request is presented.
6. Organization must do their best to provide detailed and accurate request details. This includes, but is not limited to, getting food estimates from Campus Dining, looking up hotel estimates, etc. If a calculated number is requested, there should be an attached document that details said calculation(s).
7. The GFB approves or denies funding requests, and RSOs need to be present when requesting funding. A request is voted on only when quorum of at least 50% + 1 of the graduate RSOs are in attendance (i.e., if there are 18 organizations then at least 10 organizations would need to be in attendance). Additionally, a vote is passed by a simple majority.
8. Every Registered Student Organization is expected to have representation at all eight funding board meetings throughout the academic year. Acceptable representation (in order of preference) includes the Finance Officer, a member of the e-board, or any official member of the organization (registered on OrgSync).
9. After the meeting, the funding request(s) of the organization will be marked as approved, partially approved, or denied in OrgSync.
10. In the event of a tie, the Chair of the GFB can either cast a vote or table the funding request until the tie has been broken.
11. The Chair of the Graduate Funding Board will be the active Financial Officer of the Graduate Student Association, who represents the entire graduate student body. No funding decisions will be made without the Chair present.
12. Meetings are attended by GSA advisors and the assistant to the Dean of Graduate School. Advisors inform the decision-making process, however they do not vote.
13. Minutes will be taken during each meeting and uploaded to the GSA website to ensure effective communication path. Members of the committee will have knowledge of approved funding requests in OrgSync after the meeting.
14. Brief summary of “How to submit a funding request”:
 - a) Submit your request at least 10 days in advance of the Graduate Funding Board meeting.

- b) Submit the request through OrgSync. Instructions on the submission process can be found here:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/gsa/documents-and-resources-9.htm>

- c) See Graduate Funding Quick Guide for more details:

http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/C1327597-CA41-2C52-D968CE5D03904636/financecommittee/graduate_finance_committee_quick_guidev3_1.pdf

C. PRESENTING A REQUEST TO THE GRADUATE FUNDING BOARD

1. Make sure your request has been submitted via OrgSync.
2. The Chair of the Graduate Funding Board will determine the schedule of monthly meetings to hear funding requests. The dates, times and locations are posted on the GSA website.
3. Send a student representative to the scheduled meeting (preferably an officer of the organization).
4. Present a brief synopsis of your event, followed by a question-and-answer period.
5. Be prepared to answer questions about the funding request at the planned event.

D. ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.

1. To be eligible for funding, a requesting organization must:
 - a) Be in good standing with the University.
 - i. Be registered on OrgSync with a complete roster (President, Financial Officer, 2 other Officers, Campus Advisor).
 - ii. Have an updated OrgSync profile, which must be renewed at the beginning of the academic year.
 - iii. Have no outstanding judicial sanctions with the Student Organization Review Board (SORB).

b) Be in good standing with the GSA

i. Adhering to the zero-tolerance attendance policy

1. All RSO's must send a registered member to each Funding Board Meeting (finance officer preferred).
2. The RSO must have attended the last four consecutive Funding Board Meetings prior to the date of the budget request. Missing a meeting will result in suspension of funding for the organization until four consecutive meetings have been attended.

E. BUDGET REQUEST DEADLINE.

1. Budget requests must be submitted BEFORE the travel or event occurs (i.e. before money is spent). Budget requests must be submitted in OrgSync at least 10 days prior to the Funding Board Meeting. Budget requests will be considered and awarded on a rolling basis as funds are available.
2. For the approval of budget requests in OrgSync, the Graduate Funding Board meetings will be held once a month or upon request of a majority of organizations.

F. SPENDING APPROVED FUNDING.

1. Organizations must consult with the Graduate School BEFORE spending the approved funding. Funds spent before consulting with the representatives of the Graduate School might result in the cancelation of registration fees and other inconveniences. Contact with the Graduate School can be obtained via phone (616-331-7123) or fountaii@gvsu.edu.
2. Organizations must acquire approval from the Graduate School BEFORE signing a contract with a lecturer as only the Director of Student Life can sign said contract. Undertaken obligations in a contract signed by students without having consultation with the Graduate School will result in the personal responsibility of the students to carry out the obligations in the contract.
3. Every registered student organization should designate a Financial Officer (labeled in OrgSync) who will be the exclusive contact with Graduate School to arrange for expense payments and reimbursement.
4. The Graduate School and the Finance Officer of Graduate Student Association must be informed about any modifications on formerly approved items, without delay.

5. For reimbursements, the Graduate School should receive the event assessment form on OrgSync. the reimbursement forms and all the receipts of costs, fares and fees concerning an event, including the confirmation forms for food, room order and lecturer`s fee, not later than 14 days after the event.
6. Organizations must fill out an event assessment form after each event that used Student Life money. Clarifying example: Five lecture series that was approved. The evaluation form must be filled out five separate times.
7. Brief summary of “What to do once your request is approved”:
 - a) Read the comments posted on your approved funding request in OrgSync.
 - b) DO NOT SPEND FUNDS until you get approval through the staff at Graduate School. They will assist you with the logistics of placing orders, purchasing items, and processing reimbursements. The Financial Officer of the organization should contact the Graduate School within 5 business days to discuss payment/reimbursement procedures.
 - c) Adhere to student organization policies/procedures found in www.gvsu.edu/rsohandbook
 - d) Direct any questions to the Graduate School.
 - e) Submit event assessment form within 7 days of the event.

G. PROGRAM, EVENT AND CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Student Organizations need to fulfill the criteria of completing and submitting (online) an event assessment form within 7 days after each specific program, event or conference. Event and travel assessment forms are to be found via the Graduate Funding Board website.

The Finance Officer of the Graduate Student Association updates the relevant financial summaries and keeps track of the remaining funding. These reports can be found on the GFB website:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/gsa/documents-and-resources-9.htm>

III. GRADUATE NON-TRAVEL FUNDING GUIDELINES

A. FUNDABLE EXPENSES

1. Lecturers` fees. Fees cannot be paid to GVSU faculty/staff
2. On-campus dining and off-campus dining with an approved waiver from campus catering.
3. Room reservation fee (except if registration fee or individual contributions from students are required to the event).
4. Honoraria or gift at the value of \$50 or less for non GVSU faculty/staff/students or contract speaker.
5. Equipment
6. Marketing expenses, like promotional items
7. Organizational membership dues to local/regional/national affiliated organizations, except for individual membership dues.

B. EXPENSES NOT FUNDABLE

1. Activities to present or showcase any specific religious doctrine.
2. Activities to promote a political candidate or position on a political referendum (cannot promote "Vote for ____" activities).
3. Arts and craft items, office supplies, or decorations. These items are available through the Graduate Supplies Center located in the Graduate School.
4. Clothing/accessories that will become personal property of an individual student, except for promotional items
5. Individual membership dues to local/regional/national organizations.
6. Any expense incurred prior to GFB approval will not be reimbursed.
7. Revenue-generating events (unless the revenue goes back to the Student Life Fund).
8. Only academic and professionally focused GVSU events/programs will be funded. Non-GVSU events are defined as community events, fundraising, events that charge registration, etc.

9. Speaker gifts/honoraria exceeding \$50 for non GVSU faculty/staff/students or contract speaker, except if the speaker already has a contract for his/her services for the event with GVSU.
10. Items that are to be given away or donated to anyone who is not a GVSU student.
11. Food for closed (members-only) activities will not be funded. In order to receive funding for food, organizations must provide a quote from campus dining or an off-campus establishment with an approved waiver at the time of the funding request.

IV. GRADUATE TRAVEL FUNDING GUIDELINES

A. THE DO'S AND DON'TS

1. Only travel to professional conferences/meetings sponsored by recognized professional organizations will be considered. Preference will be given for domestic travel and for events or conferences with regional or national importance.
2. Preference will be given for travel requests of one trip per student per fiscal year.
3. The selection of participants can take place after the program has been funded by the Graduate Funding Board; however, the organization must make sure that there is adequate interest in the conference from students.
4. Participants who are allowed to attend conferences and use funds received by an RSO have to be registered members of that student organization and members of GSA. Their OrgSync accounts should have the RSO listing them as members.
5. The applicant must be enrolled during the semester of his/her travel. If a student is traveling between semesters, he/she must also be enrolled for the semester following travel.
6. After the event, applicants are highly encouraged to report the results of their participation in such a way that the greater graduate community will benefit. They should report the primary reason of the conference, give a brief and practical summary about best practices and research results learned at the event, pass recommendations for improvements and indicate how the conference contributed/will contribute to his/her professional development. The report may be disseminated to the graduate student community.
7. Funded applicants should encourage their graduate community, especially their program peers, to benefit from such events. Applicants are to continue contributing to their graduate organizations.
8. Funding cannot be extended for additional expenses once a funding request is approved. Only originally approved expenses will be reimbursed, based on the original funding request.

9. Each applicant must submit two (2) travel conduct forms to the Graduate School one week prior to the event (revised Behavioral Contract and Travel Release Statement which include consent form), in alignment with the university's general travel funding requirements. The Code of Student Conduct and the RSO Handbook apply to all participants in funded travel. GVSU university-wide funding guidelines are to be considered and obeyed. For further information please visit the GFB website:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/gsa/about-gfb-10.htm>

10. Students must submit an Event or travel event assessment form online within 7 days of travel.

B. FUNDING TIMELINE (PRE-PAID AND POST-REIMBURSED EXPENSES)

1. The registration fee, air-fare, and lodging can be pre-paid before the conference. Bus and train fees and car rental fees will be reimbursed after the conference. Meal costs, fuel and parking cannot be reimbursed (meals can only be funded if they are included in the registration fee).
2. In case of group travel to a conference, the reimbursement forms together with the receipts and other supporting and verifying documents need to be collected by one individual of the group and handled in to the Graduate School in a sealed envelope/package. Reimbursement forms and attachments need to be easily identifiable to the attendees of the conference (they need to contain the names, the G-numbers of the participants and the name and date of the conference). Reimbursement forms handled in by attendees separately will not be accepted and processed but returned to the individuals for pick-up.

C. TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

1. Appropriate reimbursement forms need to be handled within 14 days after travel. Travel reimbursement forms are to be sent to the Graduate School. Any questions and requests regarding the travel expense reimbursements need to be consulted with the Graduate School (Irene Fountain; DeVos Center, Pew Campus, tel.: 616-331-7123, mail: fountaini@gvsu.edu) before submitting the forms.
2. Graduate School will facilitate the timely processing of travel funds and reimbursements in respect of the orderly closing the fiscal year.
3. Reimbursement to the student will not be given until the event evaluation form is received, which is due not later than 7 days after the travel.

D. FUNDABLE EXPENSES

1. Organization travel/professional field trip with a clear benefit to the graduate student community
2. Organizational conference
3. Airfares return ticket (after taxes).
4. Airport, train or bus station transfer to/from hotel or conference site (except for taxi fare).
5. Reasonable air, bus or train fare*. Car rental fees will be reimbursed only if the travel to the event/conference will take place primarily by car. Car rental fees will not be reimbursed when traveling to conference take place by plane, train or bus. Car drivers must obey federal and state law while driving and must keep rest time. *Reasonable air, bus, or train fare is defined as the cost of a standard advance purchase air ticket, Greyhound bus fare or Amtrak train fare.
6. Early and regular registration fee (after taxes).
7. Lodging (after taxes).

E. EXPENSES NOT FUNDABLE

1. The GFB will only fund student travel for a member who has not been awarded funds from another university fund designed for student travel. A different funding request for the University's Academic Conference Fund must be submitted for students presenting their research, participating as a chairmanship of a research session or discussant on a symposium panel, which must be affiliated with a conference. Approved travel request from the Academic Conference Fund cannot be combined with one from the Graduate Funding Board. If the Graduate Funding Board approves conference attendance of a selected student, who also received funding from the Academic Conference Fund, the funding from the Graduate Funding Board will be cancelled prior to travel. However, an exception can be made when a University Department co-sponsors travel. This can be used as funding for the trip as well.
2. Late registration fees.
3. Attendance to events for personal career development.
4. Funding will not be provided to students who are enrolled in fewer than 3 credit hours a semester and are not seeking funding through an RSO. Additionally, funds will not be awarded to adjunct faculty or staff by Graduate Funding Board.
5. Funding will not cover fuel or mileage for travel.

6. Meals*, taxi fares and parking tickets are not reimbursed. They are counted as individual cost contributions together with the compulsory individual membership fees for attending certain conferences.
7. Individuals can obtain no more than \$500 funding / domestic conference travel and \$750 funding / international conference travel.
8. RSOs will receive a maximum of \$3,500.00 for a conference travel.
9. Any expense incurred prior to GFB approval will not be reimbursed.

F. CANCELLATION POLICY

1. Students attending a conference must sign a letter of agreement / a consent form which shows that the student has serious intention and possesses the necessary individual financial contribution for his/her travel. Cancellation of the travel will result in no later conference funding for the student while studying in a program. Exceptions are unforeseeable family crisis and individual health related problems which prevent or hinder students' participation. Cancellation of funded events and conferences or that of an individual student travel is considered seriously.