

Approved: 6-14-2017

GSA BUDGET POLICY

I. Initial budget and general budget considerations

- A. Each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), the GSA is funded by the School of Medicine Administration (usually with the equivalent of one graduate student's stipend).
- B. The GSA VP Finance and the finance committee (if one exists) should allocate these funds into categories such as but not limited to the following: lectures, travel awards, student groups, events, and GSA council. For more specific guidelines as to the proportion of funds that should be budgeted for each category, the VP Finance should refer to the budget of the previous academic year(s).
- C. The VP Finance should work with the GSA executive committee for creation of the initial budget, before presenting the initial budget to the GSA council for approval at the July GSA meeting. The initial budget creation must be done as close as possible to the beginning of the fiscal year.
- D. Initial allocation of funding will be to broad categories listed above. For example, a discrete amount of money may be set aside for student travel awards without allocations towards individual students for those awards. Likewise, a discrete amount of money may be set aside for student group funding without allocations towards individual student groups. This applies to the other categories as well (GSA Council funding, GSA events, and any other categories).
- E. Upon approval, the budget can be modified within a category by a vote of the executive board. Transfer of funds over \$1000 between categories must be approved by the GSA council.
- F. Specific allocations of funds to student groups, travel awards, Council meetings, or social events, do not need to be approved by the Council before being allocated, but do need approval in the form of quarterly reports administered by the Vice President of Finances. Votes of approval and recommendations or suggestions will be recorded in that meeting's minutes.

II. Allocations of funding for student groups

- A. Student groups may apply for annual funding at the end of the fiscal year (before June 25th of that fiscal year). Student groups who wish to receive funding must fill out the "GSA Student Group Recognition Form" form, having fulfilled the criteria listed on the "GSA Student Group Funding Policy".
- B. In July, the Vice President of Finance, along with the rest of the executive board, and the Finance Committee, if it exists, will look through the applications of students groups that

have correctly filled out the appropriate forms. Student groups that have failed to correctly fill out the appropriate forms may be asked to resubmit their funding requests, or may be rejected, through the discretion of the Vice President- Finance.

- C. All student group funding requests will be taken into equal consideration. Student groups cannot be penalized for funding due to any form of group identity (i.e. religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ethnicity, mental disability, physical disability, or political orientation). Student groups, however, must meet the criteria of student group recognition and be open to any graduate student, regardless of the any of the above identities (i.e. a dog-lover can still join a group dedicated to cats only). Additionally, student groups whose mission actively harms any other group of students may not receive funding (i.e. no hate groups may be funded, nor any group that harms or discriminates against any other individual or group).
- D. Student group funding requests will be graded on the following loose criteria, with justification for this criteria listed where appropriate:
 - a. Number of person-hours the group has completed (i.e. if 30 people consistently meet for 10, 1-hour meetings, then that group has completed 300 person-hours. If a group of 250 people does one two-hour event, then that group has completed 500 person-hours. Please see the student group funding policy and form for more details).
 - b. Originality of the group (i.e. does this student group contribute something interesting, useful, and unique, and does not overlap with other groups that exist?). Note here that this does not mean that we will be basing criteria on how “exciting” a student group is, but rather to make sure that there are not two student groups with the same mission and goals. If “Hopkins Cat Lovers” exists, then a proposed group of “Hopkins Cat Enthusiasts” likely overlaps too much.
 - c. Completeness and thoroughness of the proposed budget, with a comparison to the previous year’s budget and mid-year report (i.e. will this student group use their proposed funds in an effective manner?)
 - d. Completion of the annual mid-year report (i.e. did this student group do what it set out to do? If there were changes to the budget, were they handled well?)
 - e. Attendance of their student group representative to the previous year’s general GSA body meetings (i.e. will the student groups be actively involved in the GSA after receiving funding?)
- E. Final allocation of student group funding must be approved by the Council as soon as possible after the decisions are made.
- F. Occasionally, the VP-Finance may decide to reopen GSA monies for further allocation. It is at the discretion of the VP-Finance for how this process will be carried out. Failure of the student groups to follow the instructions of the VP-Finance for non-annual proposals

for funding may result in the funding proposal being rejected, or asked to be resubmitted, at the discretion of the VP-Finance.

III. Allocations of funding for student travel awards

- A. There are four travel award deadlines: September 15th, December 1st, March 1st, and May 15th. Students who wish to win a travel award must fill out the “GSA Travel Award Application Form” and submit the required materials before one of these dates, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the VP-Finance, the executive board, and the Council. Any applications that are received more than five business days after one of these deadlines will be automatically rejected, unless approved by the Council.
- B. Any PhD or Masters student who has matriculated into the School of Medicine may apply for a travel award.
- C. Applications will be reviewed by the VP-Finance and the Finance Committee, if the Finance Committee exists. The applications will be judged by this criteria, ranked in this order:
 - a. Financial need: would the student otherwise be unable to attend due to the lack of funding from their lab?
 - b. Academic merit: is this student presenting original work at this conference? Generally, being selected for an oral presentation is given more weight than being selected for a poster presentation.
 - c. Year of student and previous conferences attended: Students who are in their fifth or sixth years who have never been to a conference before will rank higher in this category than first or second year students who have attended conferences in their labs.
 - d. This means an “ideal” candidate is presenting original work in an oral presentation at a conference, and would not be able to attend the conference without financial aid from the GSA. This person would also be a senior student who had never attended a conference before.
 - e. A candidate who is unlikely to get funded is a candidate whose lab can absolutely afford to reimburse their students, who is not presenting any work at the conference and who would not benefit from attending the conference, and is a junior student who has been to many conferences before.
- D. Students can expect to receive decisions about their applications between one to two weeks after the application deadline.

IV. Allocation of funding for GSA social events

- A. As proclaimed in the GSA Constitution, there shall be at least four social events each year, not including the annual happy hours, interschool events, or the GSA Week events. This means that planning for the events should occur at the beginning of the year. Allocations should be made to the broad category of GSA social events upon the initial planning of the budget (see above). Specific allocations of GSA social event monies to specific events should be carried out as the year progresses.
- B. No special permission or approval is required for spending of GSA money already allocated towards GSA social events towards those social event, except for the requirement that the VP-Events inform the rest of the GSA executive board of their decision.