

Student Government Association

Financial Path

As amended 4 Dec 2006

As amended 23 Apr. 2007

As amended 3 September 2013

As amended 29 September 2014

As amended 27 April 2015

As amended 23 November 2015

As amended 8 February 2016

As amended 24 April 2017 Rayann Atway- Parliamentarian

TITLE I – Purpose, Definitions, the Committee, and Amendments

Section 101. Purpose.

(A) The Financial Path governs the usage of the Student Government Association (SGA) funds which have been designated to aid student organizations and university programs. The intention is to help fund events and organizations which will benefit Youngstown State University and its students. More assistance on the funding process will be available in the SGA office.

(B) Title I establishes the purpose of this document, definitions, provisions for the budget, and organizational structure for the Financial Appropriations Committee.

(C) Title II sets forth conditions for the nature of organizations, programs, events, travel, and so on that SGA may fund.

(D) Title III establishes procedures for the appropriations process.

Section 102. Definitions.

(A) An “appropriation” is an amount of money up to which an organization is given authority to spend through action of the Vice President for Financial Affairs in such a manner as the Financial Appropriations Committee, in its report, or the Legislative Assembly, in the language of an appropriation bill, may permit.

(B) An “outlay” is an amount appropriated and therefore is no longer available to fund other potential recipients. “Total outlays” is the aggregated amount of appropriated dollars.

(C) “Established organization” shall refer to any group officially recognized as a student organization by the Office of Student Activities.

(D) A “new student organization” shall refer to any group officially identified as a student organization by the Office of Student Activities which is in its first full semester of recognition, excluding summer. Formerly active student organizations that are currently inactive but seeking to regain their active status may be considered a “new student organization” on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Financial Affairs Committee.

(E) A “provisional student organization” shall refer to any group officially identified as a student organization by the Office of Student Activities that did not register during the defined organization registration periods.

(F) “Organization(s)” shall refer to every fundable entity as defined by Title I, Section 102, Subsections (C), (D), and (E) of this document.

(G) “University Program” shall refer to any student group that is affiliated with a certain department or division on campus.

(1) The Student Life Committee of SGA is a University Program per the above listed definition, and may apply for appropriations as such, though only to facilitate events of benefit to the student body at large.

(H) “Committee” shall at all times mean the Financial Affairs Committee, and “Chair” shall mean the chair of the same.

(I) “Fundraising” shall refer to any lawful activity in which an organization or program partakes for the purpose of generating discretionary income for said organization or program.

(J) “Community service” shall refer to any lawful activity of a benevolent nature in which an organization or program partakes, but through which the organization or program itself does not receive compensation.

(K) A “membership roster” shall be a complete list of persons currently active within an organization or program at a given time.

(L) “Itemized costs” shall signify a complete budget of estimated costs, requested amounts relative to those costs, and research and documentation supporting such estimates.

Section 103. Committee organization.

(A) Vice President for Financial Affairs. The Vice President for Financial Affairs shall –

- (1) Though not a Committee member, retain all rights and duties of Committee members except for a vote,
- (2) Fulfill appropriations, in conjunction with the Division of Student Experience and Office of Student Activities, to the fullest extent allowed by this document, approved legislation, and University policy, and maintain accountability to both SGA and student organizations,
- (3) Receive applications from organizations and university programs and verify their completeness, promptness, and conformity to the Financial Path as can best be determined,
- (4) Receive all communications concerning appropriations in the Student Government Association Office, whether in person, by telephone, electronically, or otherwise transmitted,
- (5) Have discretion to award previously appropriated monies to organizations or programs that have breached some Financial Path policy due to extenuating circumstances,
- (6) Have the option of appointing a Vice Chair and Secretary from the Committee, with the consent of a majority of the Committee, and
- (7) Maintain great latitude in formulating an agreeable distribution of responsibilities between him or herself, the Chair, and potentially the Vice Chair and Secretary of the Committee. Such formulations shall take effect pending the advice and consent of the committee.

(B) Chair. The Chair shall –

- (1) Be responsible for preparing Committee Reports and bills out of this Committee and presenting said materials to the Legislative Assembly for its consideration, and
- (2) Maintain a working relationship and communication with the Vice President for Financial Affairs.

(C) Vice Chair. The Vice Chair may, contingent on decisions by the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Chair –

- (1) Schedule hearing times, and
- (2) Forward applications and hearing times to Committee members and the Vice President for Financial Affairs.

(D) Secretary. The Secretary may, contingent on decisions by the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Chair, take notes of the occurrences of Committee meetings and compare notes with the Chair to aid in his or her reporting.

(E) Members. All Committee members shall partake in the questioning of applicants, the deliberation on recommendations, and the formulation of funding policies within the bounds of the Financial Path.

Section 104. Committee Reports and legislation.

(A) The Committee Report shall –

(1) Include all relevant information from the applications and interviews, the sense of the Committee regarding the benefit of events, and other details as needed,

(2) Suggest an amount up to which to be appropriated and as much guidance in how to use it as the Committee deems necessary,

(3) Remind the Legislative Assembly of current balances and the effect appropriations as recommended would have on such balances, and

(4) Describe judgments or new policies of the Committee, which must be within the bounds of this document and University policy.

(B) Appropriation bills shall be written with each appropriation as a line-item and may include temporary corollaries to the Financial Path that do not conflict with it.

Section 105. Amendments to the Financial Path.

(A) The Legislative Assembly may enact changes to the Financial Path through a supermajority vote of two-thirds (2/3).

(B) No amendment made to the Financial Path shall go into effect until the beginning of the semester following such an amendment.

(C) No amendment to the Financial Path shall affect enacted appropriation bills or applications pending prior to the enactment of amendments.

(D) Subsections (B) and (C) above exclude amendments which are made to conform to University policy, in which case a vote shall be cast by the Legislative Assembly.

Section 106. Earmarked SGA Carry-Over Fund

(A) At the conclusion of the Summer I appropriations period, defined in Title III, Section 306 of this document, any unappropriated dollars may be transferred to a carry-over fund within the Student Activities budget. This fund will be earmarked for use consistent with the provisions below stated.(B) Any unappropriated dollars from one fiscal year that are carried over to the next must be appropriated in the latter.

(1) Such appropriations shall result from collaboration between SGA and Student Activities, and shall subsidize an activity or event of benefit to the student body at large.

TITLE II – Guidelines for Applying Organizations and University Programs

Section 201. General guidelines.

(A) All funding and events funded must be within the bounds of federal, state, and local laws, as well as University policies.

(B) Funds shall be disbursed to organizations for a specific event or events, travel, or to offset the itemized start-up costs of new and provisional student organizations, and never for the sole discretion of the organization.

(C) Funds shall also be disbursed to student-sponsored events through university programs (including, but not limited to, Penguin Productions, Marching Band, and Emerging Leaders).

(1) Student-sponsored events shall include events put on by university programs that are run by students, and never for the sole discretion of a course or graduation requirement.

(D) Organizations and university programs must use SGA funds with honesty and integrity.

(E) No organization shall be awarded a combined amount of more than three (3) percent of the appropriations budget during a fiscal year. Any recommended appropriation beyond this amount shall be voted on and passed only with the unanimous consent of the Financial Affairs Committee. Any appropriation beyond this amount shall be noted as being beyond the limit in any legislation and committee reports pertaining to it.

(1) The total amount appropriated to an event in which multiple organizations are collaborating will be equally divided by the number of organizations in the collaboration. The dollar figure resulting from the aforementioned division will then be removed from each of the collaborating organization's maximum funding potential (up to three (3) percent of the appropriations budget as stated in Title II, Section 201, Subsection (E)).

(F) No university program shall be awarded a combined amount of more than two (2) percent of the appropriations budget during a fiscal year. Any recommended appropriation beyond this amount shall be voted on and passed only with the unanimous consent of the Financial Affairs Committee. Any appropriation beyond this amount shall be noted as being beyond the limit in any legislation and committee reports pertaining to it.

(G) No new student organization or provisional student organization shall be awarded more than two hundred (200) dollars for itemized start-up costs during a fiscal year. Any recommended appropriation beyond this amount shall be voted on and passed only with the unanimous consent of the Financial Affairs Committee. Any appropriation beyond this amount shall be noted as being beyond the limit in any legislation and committee reports pertaining to it.

(1) Any appropriation to a new or provisional organization for itemized start-up costs shall not count against said organization's three (3) percent cap as outlined in Title II, Section 201, Subsection (E).

(H) Applications will be accepted –

(1) during the fall and spring semesters for events occurring during or between those semesters,

(2) during the spring semester for events occurring during the summer requiring payment before the end of the fiscal year (June 30th), and

(3) during the summer semester as outlined in Title III, Section 306 of this Financial Path.

(I) Funding is not permissible for events which satisfy graduation or course requirements.

(J) Organizations and university programs may apply only once per event.

(1) Should two (2) or more organizations collaborate on an event, the organizations shall have one organization in the collaboration submit an application on behalf of the entire event and all collaborating organizations. The submitting organization is required to disclose that the event is a collaboration of multiple student organizations to the Committee during their scheduled hearing.

Section 202. Open events.

(A) All events which are social in nature, or are educational but do not involve travel, must be open to either the general public or all YSU students and publicized as such.

(B) If an event is intended to generate revenue for philanthropic or fundraising purposes, any commodity subsidized by SGA must not be sold for profit. Tickets, however, may be listed as an itemized cost by an organization or university program and subsidized by SGA in order to facilitate student participation and attendance at such events.

(1) Tickets subsidized in the manner above described will be distributed through the Student Life Committee of SGA in a way consistent with university policy.

(2) Such tickets will be given to YSU students and YSU students only on a first-come, first-served basis.

Section 203. Travel.

(A) All events which take an organization's or program's members to a conference, competition, or event of some relevant educational benefit shall be considered travel.

(B) Events of this nature shall be funded through a Travel Expense Report (formerly known as a travel voucher) on which all travelers must be included. Eligible student driver(s) with appropriate insurance as determined by University policy will be required.

(C) Travel funded through SGA shall be done so at rates consistent with University policy.

(D) Students should refer to the Web site of the Vice President for Finance and Business Operations of the University, currently located at <http://www.ysu.edu/vpadmin/>, for up-to-date University policy regarding travel. The Vice President for Financial Affairs of SGA is also a resource for understanding this information.

(E) If one or more University departments are committing funds to travel pending approval by SGA, the funds shall be transferred from SGA's account to one of the other departments, and travel arrangements shall be handled through that department.

(F) Only travel expenses that can be funded through pre-payment can be reimbursed for summer travel, unless the funds are to be transferred to another department before the end of the fiscal year.

Section 204. Itemized start-up costs of new and provisional student organizations.

(A) A new or provisional student organization, as defined in Title I, Section 102, Subsections (D) and (E) of this document, may apply for funding from SGA in order to offset itemized start-up costs.

(B) Specifics pertaining to the amount of funding available to new and provisional student organizations are enumerated in Title II, Section 201, Subsections (E) and (G) of this document.

(C) Such itemized start-up costs may include, but are not limited to: printed literature, YSU catering, checks, and other expenditures related to the early success and continuity of a new or provisional student organization.

TITLE III – The Appropriations Process

Section 301. Applying for funds.

(A) Any organization or recognized university program may apply for funding for a specific purpose which is allowed under Title II of this document.

(B) At minimum, any official application for funding shall contain room for the organization/university program and contact person(s)' names, event description, itemized costs, other funding, community service, and the intended benefit of the event to YSU.

(C) The Committee reserves the right to request an organization or university program membership roster if it would be material to the application.

(D) Organizations and university programs will have read any ancillary materials concerning appropriations published by SGA. These materials will be distributed during the application process.

(E) It is strongly recommended that applications be submitted to the Student Government Association, either in the office or electronically through the website, no later than four (4) weeks prior to the event for which funds are requested. The Financial Affairs Committee may appropriate funds for an organization if their application is beyond the four (4) week period, only if it will be logistically possible to transfer the funds in time for the event. Applicants are responsible for retaining all receipts and materials concerning their appropriation request.

(F) An applicant can expect a response from an officer of the Committee within one (1) week from the date of application. After that point, it becomes the responsibility of the applicant to contact the Vice President for Financial Affairs regarding the pending application.

(G) A meeting shall be scheduled with the Committee during regularly scheduled meeting hours as determined by the Student Government Association, unless the Committee decides otherwise. Attendance at this hearing shall be mandatory unless the organization or university program has already applied for funds in a given semester. In such circumstances, the necessity of meeting attendance by the organization or program will be at the discretion of the Vice President for Financial Affairs.

(H) The Committee shall hold make-up meetings for missed appointments at its discretion and convenience.

(I) All organizations and university programs must have at least two (2) members attend at least one (1) leadership summit during the Fiscal Year in order to be eligible for appropriations. Moreover, organizations and university programs shall not receive appropriations during a Fiscal Year before they have attended a leadership summit during that same Fiscal Year.

Section 302. Committee meeting

(A) The Committee shall entertain from each applicant a presentation on the information found in the application. At least one student member of the applying organization or program must be present, unless the organization or university program has already applied for funds in a given semester. In such circumstances, the necessity of meeting attendance by the organization or program will be at the discretion of the Vice President for Financial Affairs, as enumerated in Title III, Section 301, Subsection (G) of this document.

(B) If the Vice President for Financial Affairs determines presence by an organization or program at a committee meeting is not necessary, the organization or program must nevertheless be available starting at 4:00pm on the Monday of the committee meeting for a phone conference if the Committee deems it is necessary to clarify the application.

(C) Advisors are not permitted to speak on behalf of their organization or program at the committee meeting.

(D) The applicant should be prepared to illustrate how the funding requested is a supplement to funds raised thus far, or how raising other funds has been impossible or impractical, discuss the organization or program's record in community service, and explain the intended benefit of the relevant event to the University and its current students. In general, the most beneficial events are those which positively affect the most students and are closest in proximity to them.

(E) Once the Committee is done questioning the applicant, the Vice President for Financial Affairs, or his or her designee, will inform the applicant of the Legislative Assembly meeting during which his or her request will come to a vote, excuse the applicant, and commence deliberations.

(F) The Committee shall deliberate on the request and prepare a recommendation to be included in the Committee Report.

(G) An appropriation bill, containing both zero and non-zero recommendations codified as legislation, shall also be reported out of the Committee.

(H) The Committee may determine that it has been presented with inadequate information and put the request on hold until it has access to the information it needs.

Section 303. Legislative Assembly approval.

(A) The Vice President for Financial Affairs shall report on the status of outlays with respect to the resolution on the budget and the total amount of the budget. This will be read into the minutes.

(B) The Chair shall yield approximately thirty (30) seconds of speaking time to each applying organization or university program in attendance during his or her report.

(C) No SGA member may address an applicant without prior permission from the President, except for the Chair of Financial Affairs.

(D) Amendments may be proposed to adjust the amount allocated to an organization or university program, including instances in which the Committee has not recommended funds.

(E) It shall not be in order in the Legislative Assembly to consider any appropriation bill or amendment thereto which violates the terms of this document.

Section 304. Spending on appropriations.

(A) It is the responsibility of the Vice President for Financial Affairs to contact the organization or program that has received an appropriation following said appropriation. This shall be done in a timely manner.

(B) The Vice President for Financial Affairs shall impart all relevant information, particularly that which is extraneous to the Financial Path or unique to the situation, to the recipient of funds. Moreover, the Vice President for Financial Affairs shall connect the recipient of funds to the appropriate University administrator(s) so that such funding is released in a way consistent with University policy and conducive to the needs of the recipient as articulated through the application and appropriation processes.

(C) The Vice President for Financial Affairs shall avail him or herself to the funding recipient for subsequent meetings as necessary and at the convenience of both parties.

(D) If there are alterations to the cost of a funded event, the Vice President for Financial Affairs shall recalculate the appropriation accordingly, but never to increase the sum of the appropriation.

(E) If it is believed that a substantive change to the basis of funding occurs, the Committee must be informed and determine if a new hearing must be scheduled.

(1) After such a hearing, Legislative approval will again be necessary if the Committee must recommend for a different amount or purpose.

(2) No re-appropriation may exceed the original appropriation.

Section 305. Documentation and other requirements.

(A) The Vice President for Financial Affairs, in conjunction with appropriate University officials and administrators, shall assist funding recipients in finalizing transactions in such a way that is necessary and appropriate.

(B) Summer. The Vice President for Financial Affairs, or his/her designee for summer, shall take care to ensure that no appropriation affects any fiscal year following its enactment.

Section 306. Summer appropriations.

(A) Applications will be deemed as Summer I appropriations if they are received at a point in time in which the legislative assembly cannot vote to appropriate, but before the Summer II period begins.

(1) Summer I appropriations are only feasible when the appropriations budget for a given fiscal year has not been exhausted before that year's SGA transition meeting.

(2) Summer I appropriations will be for equipment only, and all such equipment will be made available for use by an organization or university program, but is nonetheless property of the University.

(B) Summer I appropriations will be voted on by the outgoing Vice President for Financial Affairs, incoming Vice President for Financial Affairs, and incoming President. They will likewise be made with the advice and consent of the Director of Student Activities (or his or her equivalent) and, if needed, Vice President for Student Experience (or his or her equivalent).

(C) Appropriations up to seven-hundred (700) dollars for applications deemed to be in the Summer I appropriations period may be made.

(1) The total number of appropriations made in this fashion shall not exceed a total of fifteen (15) during the Summer I appropriations period.

(D) Applications will be deemed as Summer II appropriations if they are received where payment must occur –

(1) between the end of a previous fiscal year and

(2) before a new committee for hearing such requests is assembled.

(E) The Vice President for Financial Affairs shall be burdened with the duties of both the temporary chairship and his/her normal duties during this period.

(F) The Vice President for Financial Affairs, along with the President and Executive Vice President of SGA, shall approve Summer II appropriations through vote.

(G) Appropriations up to seven-hundred (700) dollars for applications deemed to be in the Summer II appropriations period may be made.

(1) The total number of appropriations made in this fashion shall not exceed a total of fifteen (15) during the Summer II appropriations period.