

Virginia Commonwealth University

Graduate Student Association

Appropriations Committee Bylaws

Amended: 8 January 2021

1. Mission

The mission of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) Appropriations Committee is to disburse student activity funds in a fair and consistent manner to all Graduate Student Organizations (GSO). The majority of their members should be graduate and/or professional students paying Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Student Activity Fees. These organizations must enhance the quality of the graduate student experience at VCU. The GSA Appropriations Committee is a standing committee of the GSA Representative Council and was established by the VCU Student Government Association (SGA) for these purposes:

- 1.1. To allocate the student activity fee to VCU GSOs by the GSA Appropriations Committee.
 - 1.1.1. The allocations will be made with full consideration to the diverse needs of the members of the Graduate Student community. The University Student Commons and Activities (USC&A) maintains final disbursement power over these allocations.
- 1.2. To recommend changes in the amount of the student activity fee allocated to the GSA Appropriations Committee.

2. Composition

The Appropriations Committee shall consist of between five (5) to thirteen (13) voting Committee members. Those members will include the GSA Appropriations Committee Chair, the GSA Treasurer, at least three (3) representatives of the GSA Representative Council, and up to three (3) optional at-large members appointed by the Appropriations Committee Chair. All appointments to the Appropriations Committee shall be for a term length of one (1) Academic Year. It is recommended that Committee members be treasurers from GSOs, and that at least one member of the Committee has served a previous term.

- 2.1. Before the first Appropriations meeting, the Chair shall provide the most recent standardized forms and Finance Training Manual from USC&A for the GSOs.
- 2.2. The procedure by which qualified student organizations may request funding from the Appropriations Committee shall be governed by the *GSA Appropriations Guidelines* document that the Committee shall approve and

publish each year on the GSA Website. This document will also be emailed to all GSO Presidents and Treasurers with an address on file.

- 2.3. GSA Appropriations Request deadlines for the upcoming Academic Year (August-May) shall be set in accordance with USC&A requirements.
- 2.4. The Appropriations Committee shall make every effort to ensure GSOs have ample notice and time to prepare budget requests, following the publishing of the *GSA Appropriations Guidelines* document.
 - 2.4.1. Upon receipt of the USC&A budget deadlines, the Appropriations Chair will update the *GSA Appropriations Guidelines* document to reflect the due date for GSOs to submit their Appropriations Requests to VCU GSA.
- 2.5. Per GSA Bylaws section 7.2.2 and 7.2.5 barring extenuating circumstances, each organization must have one (1) representative on the GSA Representative Council to be eligible for funding.
- 2.6. The Appropriations Chair will submit all of the approved GSO budgets as one GSA Appropriations Committee budget, with a separate budget for the GSA. The GSA budget and the GSA Appropriations Committee budgets will be submitted to an appropriate USC&A staff member. This shall be completed before the deadline set by the USC&A.

3. The Appropriations Committee Chair

The Chair of the Committee will be responsible for conducting meetings and record keeping.

- 3.1. The Chair is responsible for assigning a Committee member to take the minutes during the Appropriations Committee meetings and posting the minutes to the GSA Website in a timely manner.
- 3.2. The Chair will organize records of each student organization and upload copies of all proposed and approved budgets to the GSA Shared Drive. The GSA Faculty Advisor will maintain access to the Shared Drive from year to year, and share the content with incoming Appropriations Chairs.
- 3.3. The Chair will provide any training materials necessary (such as the Finance Training Manual) for the Committee members and the GSOs.
- 3.4. The Chair may serve as a liaison between the GSA, all GSOs, and the VCU SGA.
- 3.5. If any decisions are made by the Appropriations Committee or the USC&A Finance Department (allocations, freezing of funds, return of funds, line item changes, etc.), they must be communicated to the affected GSO and/or USC&A Associate Director of Finance (as appropriate) within 48 hours.

4. Meetings

- 4.1. All meetings shall follow the most recent edition of Robert's Rule of Order. For more information, please visit www.rulesonline.com.
- 4.2. The Chair shall form an Appropriations Committee early in the Fall Semester and schedule a formal Appropriations Committee meeting no later than three (3) weeks after the first GSA General Body Meeting (GBM). Notice of the meeting should be given to all members at least one (1) week in advance.
 - 4.2.1. It is recommended that Fall Appropriations Committee meetings address updating the *GSA Appropriations Guidelines* document and making any desired amendments to budget request sheets.
 - 4.2.2. It is recommended that Spring Appropriations Committee meetings address approving budgets for all GSOs for the following Academic Year.
- 4.3. All GSOs may schedule a Funding Hearing with the Appropriations Committee if desired. This would be to address any questions or concerns about the status of their budget request. This should be done prior to the GSA Appropriations Request deadline, as specified in the *GSA Appropriations Guidelines* document for that year.
- 4.4. Funding Hearings shall not take place while the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee is in session.

5. Amendments to the Bylaws

- 5.1. Changes to the Appropriations Bylaws require approval by a majority of the GSA Representative Council. To do so, a majority of the Appropriations Committee must approve the proposed amendments.
- 5.2. Amendments to the Appropriations Bylaws shall go into effect at the start of the Academic Year following their adoption.
- 5.3. The Appropriations Committee Chair shall preside over a subcommittee with the purpose of reviewing and offering amendments to these bylaws every three (3) years.
- 5.4. Final amendments are approved by the dean of The VCU Graduate School.