GSC Funding Guidelines

Appendix II of GSC By-Laws
Appendix II: Funding Policies

(Starting fiscal year of 2014-2015)

Section 1: General

A. The Usual Method for Approving Allocations

1. Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution, the Association By-Laws, or these By-Laws, all allocations of funds shall be made by consensus of the GSC members.

2. All meetings at which consensus funding allocations are made must have at least 1/3 of the voting members of the GSC present.

3. Officers and/or representatives of a VSO present at a GSC meeting shall not be included in the consensus required to approve funding allocations for that organization.

4. Decisions involving funds must be made publicly available within one week of the GSC meeting at which they were made.

5. Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution, the Association By-Laws, or these By-Laws, the voting members of the GSC may, by a majority vote, override any allocation of funds made by consensus. This may only take place at the first GSC meeting after the minutes of the meeting at which the initial consensus allocation occurred are made publicly available.

6. The allocated funds shall not be drawn upon until the override period has elapsed. During this period, the organization receiving the allocation spends money at its own risk.

B. All allocations of funds shall require explicit approval in the minutes of the GSC.

C. Transfers of funds from a group’s reserve account to its operating account shall be done by the Usual Method for Approving Allocations.

D. Schedule

1. The fractions of the base amount of the GSGF and Special Fees collected in each quarter shall be specified in the Funding Policies of the GSC.

2. Allocations shall be made on a rolling basis. Funds may be made available for the remainder of the current quarter, for subsequent quarters, or for the remainder of a fiscal year.

E. Funding Committee

1. The Funding Committee shall review funding and Special Fee requests from all Graduate Student Organizations, and present a recommendation on each to the GSC.

2. The Funding Committee shall consist of a subset of the members of the GSC, chosen by consensus.

3. A member of the Funding Committee may be removed by a 2/3 vote of the GSC.

4. No member of the Funding Committee shall formulate a recommendation for a request from a VSO of which s/he is a member.

5. The procedure for formulation and review of requests shall be specified in the GSC Funding Policies.
6. The Chair of the Funding Committee shall be chosen by the Funding Committee.

Section 2: Review Procedure

A. The review of a funding application for VSO partition funds will be conducted by, at a minimum, the Funding Committee Chair or Vice Chair during an in-person meeting, or via a web conference or equivalent if an in-person meeting is unreasonable.

B. The Funding Committee provides recommendations only. Final funding approval, for both recommended and rejected funding applications, is at the discretion of the GSC by consensus or by vote.

C. Groups applying for VSO partition funds must submit applications via MyGroups timed to ensure that meetings with both the Funding Committee and GSC can be scheduled before the event. No retroactive funding will be approved by the GSC. The financial officer of the VSO will be notified by email of the time and location of all relevant meetings at least 48 hours in advance. If either the Funding Committee or the GSC fails to meet the requirement and the group is not able to send a representative to the meeting as a result, the group may, within one week, request that their application be re-evaluated at a time when a member of their organization is able to attend.

D. Funding approval is generally conditional on advertising the event to the graduate student population in advance, including but not limited to registering the event on the Grad Events calendar early enough for the event to be advertised in at least one Grad Events email.

E. The Funding Committee shall consider necessary the answers to the following questions, with documentation where necessary, when formulating its judgment of a funding application for specific activities:

1. What is the target population, including dues-paying membership where applicable and membership makeup, of the organization and its activities?
2. How will the activities be advertised?
3. How realistic and specific are the activities and budget figures?
4. Is the allocation a fair and efficient use of the VSO partition?
5. If applicable, have the organization’s previous funded and non-funded events been successful and within budget?
6. Does the organization’s activities provide sufficient value for the amount of money allocated?
7. Does the organization’s activities make a unique contribution to the community?

F. The Committee shall prepare a brief recommendation to the GSC regarding each funding petition. At the first GSC meeting after preparation of the recommendation, the Committee shall summarize the application and present its recommendation.

Section 3: Recommendation Guideline
The responsibility of the GSC Funding Committee is to provide a recommendation to the GSC on funds to be distributed to student groups (VSOs) by SSE. The guidelines they recommend by are to establish a provide fair and equitable distribution of funds to the entire graduate community. Groups shall organize events to benefit the entire graduate community. For the FC to issue a recommendation regarding specific types of funding, the GSC has set the following guidelines.

A. General Guidelines

1. To be fair and equitable to all those who put money into the fund:
   a. The maximum funding per fiscal year is soft capped\(^b,c\) (see glossary of terms) per student at $30/student/year.
   b. The soft cap\(^b\) may be waived if VSOs provide proof that their event(s) are highly attended by students beyond their regular attendance.
   c. Groups with highly overlapping populations or purpose will be treated as a single group to avoid double-funding.
   d. The hard cap\(^c\) for funding per fiscal year is $6000 for each VSO with 70% or more graduate student attendance. No VSO with 70% or more graduate student membership will receive approval for funds in excess of this from the GSC.
   e. The hard cap\(^c\) for funding per fiscal year is ($6000 multiplied by graduate student attendance percentage) for each VSO with 30-69% graduate student membership. No VSO with 30-69% graduate student attendance will receive approval for funds in excess of this from the GSC. This is because such groups are also eligible for funding from the ASSU Undergraduate Senate.

2. To encourage VSOs to organize joint events in collaboration, the soft cap for jointly organized events may be relaxed on a case-by-case basis. It should be noted that this is not to encourage multiple events by the same group of VSOs but to encourage different VSOs to try events with a variety of VSOs. Therefore only one collaboration between two VSOs per year will lead to a soft cap relax.
   a. The maximum amount allowed for an individual event, regardless of attendance and number of VSOs, will be $15,000.

3. Each fiscal year turns over on June 30th. All events must be submitted in the appropriate fiscal year category on myGroups.

4. All residual decisions regarding funding recommendations are subject to the discretion of the Funding Committee, and all funding approval is at the discretion of the GSC.

5. The GSC Funding Committee cannot and will not make unilateral decisions about events for which groups do or do not receive funding. Group funding is not secured until the GSC has provided approval.

6. Any VSO has the right to get themselves on the GSC meeting agenda by emailing the Co-chairs at chair@gsc.stanford.edu. This is highly encouraged in cases including, but not limited to:
   a. The Funding Committee rejects a funding application, but the VSO would like to seek approval from the GSC regardless.
b. The VSO would like to apply for funding that comes in direct conflict with one of the funding bylaws.

7. Every VSO must apply for funds through myGroups and attend the Monday funding meeting to be eligible for GSC approval. No approval will be given if the VSO gets put on the GSC agenda without first applying for funds and receiving a committee recommendation.

**B. What the Funding Committee Will and Will Not Recommend**

1. No retroactive funding.

2. No funding for events that may jeopardize the 501(c)(3) status of the GSC. This includes, but is not limited to, events that demonstrate particular partisan support.

3. Funds may be provided for purchasing capital equipment (this is anything that is non-consumable item) if it can be shown that:
   - a. The equipment is essential for the VSO.
   - b. The purchasing of the equipment will be cheaper than renting it for the events for the year. The equipment will belong to the GSC and be managed by the equipment master.
   - c. Or if it can be shown that the equipment purchase is less than $100. The GSC holds the right of first refusal with regards to ownership of the equipment.

4. Off campus events will be funded by the GSC provided they meet the following requirements:
   - a) Maximum of 1 night
   - b) Transportation for all interested students must be provided to/from Stanford campus. Additionally, no flights will be funded.
   - c) All requested food and alcohol will be subject to the cap for a single dinner.

5. On and Off campus Conferences/ Registration Events:
   - a. No funding will be provided for a student to attend a conference.
   - b. No funding will be provided to pay for event or conference registration fees.
   - c. No funding will be provided for student travel expenses.

6. Courses offered for credit:

Courses offered for credit in a department should, in general, be funded by that department. The GSC realizes, however, that departments are sometimes reluctant to fund a new course. Because of this, the GSC may partially fund a new course up to two (2) academic years. After that time, it is expected that the department will take over funding the course.

7. Academic Seminars:
   - a. Only academic talks of broad interest will be funded.
   - b. No funding will be provided for departmental seminars. The department specified should fund this type of seminar.
c. No funding can be applied toward honoraria for on campus scholars including, but not limited to faculty, visiting scholars (for example, a professor on sabbatical), post-doctoral scholars, students, etc.

8. Departmental Information sessions (such as a Town hall meeting):
   a. Approval for these types of events will not be given via the GSC Funding Committee, but might be funded by the GSC through other means such as through the GSC advocacy byline.

11. Community service events:
Community services, for the purpose of GSC funding, is defined as an activity or event in which Stanford students work together to promote community, learning, health, or social well being for themselves and for others. The GSC will consider funding community service events and activities of VSOs through regular funding process provided that:
   a. The service work takes place on campus or in the San Francisco Bay Area.
   b. Funds are used in a way that encourages the involvement and enrichment of the participating Stanford graduate students.

C. The 70/30 Attendance Rule
1. If the event attendance is 70% graduate or more, the GSC will fund 100% of the funding request (pending application review, of course).
2. If the event attendance is under 30% graduate, the GSC will not fund the event.
3. If the event attendance is less than 70% graduate, but more than 30% graduate, the GSC will fund proportional to the graduate percentage. (Example: The VSO experiences 65% graduate involvement, the GSC will be responsible for 65% of the total fund request and the Undergrad Senate will be responsible for 35% of the total fund request.)

D. Community Service Groups
1. No soft caps will be applied.
2. Fundraisers:
   a. Fundraisers are considered normal events, not community service.
   b. Soft caps will be applied.

E. Ticketed events (or those with limited spots)
1. At least 20% of the tickets/spots must still be open the Tuesday after the event is advertised in the Grad Events email.
2. For any event where the total budget is over N x $30 (N: estimated number of attending grad students), VSOs must charge tickets. (This is based on the fact that grad students pay a student activities fee of ~$30 each quarter.)

F. Recurring Events
1. Tight restriction will be held on funds for regular, consistent meetings including space rental, food, and other meeting costs.
   a. The GSC will NOT approve funds for officer’s meetings, VSO information update meetings, or anything that is deemed to be solely in the interest of the particular VSO.
b. VSOs can be pre-approved for a series of events in which time the VSO in question will be audited.

   i. The auditor will be looking to make sure that each individual event in the series shows broad appeal to grad students and that attendance of a following event is not contingent on attendance of a preceding event, to assure the Funding Committee that the event is worth funding on a regular basis. This approval must be re-obtained every fiscal year.

c. Funding amounts for a series of events will be treated as though all events are a single event with regard to all other funding guidelines.

d. The attendance will be calculated from the unique number of graduate students served.

2. Groups are encouraged to keep records of numbers of attendees (grad and undergrad) to aid in future funding approval.

G. Advertising Rules

1. The GSC will not fund advertising or marketing expenses.

2. Groups who do not advertise on Grad Events have their funding revoked.

3. All advertising materials must feature the GSC logo and/or state either "Sponsored by the GSC" or "Co-sponsored by the GSC" as appropriate. This includes submissions to Grad Events!

H. Line Item 6310: Honorarium and Travel Fares

1. Maximum $1000, includes fees, transportation and accommodations per performing group, presentation or entity.

2. Honorarium can only be delivered in the form of a check payment. No gifts.

I. Line Item 6560: Event Food, and Line Item 6570: Alcohol

Combined Food and Alcohol Caps (one meal type per event, including catering)

1. For events including 50 graduate students or less, the following food caps will apply:
   a. Snacks/parties without alcohol: $4/person
   b. Snacks/parties with alcohol: $8/person
   c. Lunch with or without alcohol: $12/person
   d. Dinner with or without alcohol: $14/person

2. For events including over 50 graduate students, the first 50 will receive the above specified caps and the following will be applied to the number of students over the first 50:
   a. Snacks/parties without alcohol: $4/person
   b. Snacks/parties with alcohol: $8/person
   c. Lunch with or without alcohol: $10/person
   d. Dinner with or without alcohol: $12/person

3. An example of maximum funding for 60 students for lunch is as follows:
a. $12 for lunch x 50 grad students = $600
b. $10 for lunch x 10 grad students = $100
c. Thus, a 60 grad student lunch event can receive $700 maximum.

4. Groups are encouraged to spend under the caps.

5. Event food line item cannot be used to fund alcoholic drinks. Alcohol line item cannot be used to fund food or non-alcoholic drinks.

6. With the exception of the “snacks/parties without alcohol” meal type, combined food and alcohol caps apply to the sum of requests in Event Food and Alcohol line items. Distribution of the funding request between the two line items is subject to GSC approval on a case-by-case basis.

7. For events where food is funded by non-GSC sources, and where VSOs wish to request GSC funding for alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks only, the cap for “snacks/parties with alcohol” applies.

J. Line Item 5760: Event Services

Event Services include the following categories of expenses:

1. Programming expenses
   a. These are single-use items that are essential for the event, such as paper plates, napkins, cups or decorations.
   b. Programming expenses are soft capped at $0.50 per attendee for a standard event.
   c. Requests in excess of $0.50 per attendee will need to be itemized, with quotes if possible, and justified.

2. Equipment rental and Event and Labor Services (ELS)
   a. Quotes from vendors and ELS must be presented at the Funding Committee meeting.
   b. Requests for delivery funds are strongly discouraged, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and will be highly restricted unless need is sufficiently demonstrated.
   c. VSOs are strongly encouraged to utilize GSC equipment services and other free or low-cost on-campus equipment services.
   d. VSOs can borrow a sound system and a projector from the GSC. Case-by-case exceptions may be made if the GSC sound system proves inadequate for the event venue.
   e. Video equipment can be borrowed from Meyer library for free. Case-by-case exceptions may be made if the Meyer library equipment proves inadequate for the event in question.

3. Facilities rental
   a. VSOs must try to book free venues first, unless all suitable free venues are booked. Rare exceptions may be made.
   b. For large venue bookings, VSOs must ensure that venue size is appropriate for the size of the event.
   c. Quotes must be presented at the Funding Committee meeting.
4. Facilities janitorial
   a. Funding for janitorial services is highly restricted. Unless building administrators insist otherwise, VSOs should do setup and cleanup.
   b. Quotes must be presented at the Funding Committee meeting.

K. Line Item 7730: Car/Van Rental
1. The Funding Committee may recommend up to 3 hours of car rental, at Zipcar Stanford hourly rates or Enterprise Stanford student and staff/faculty hourly rates, for the sole purpose of procuring supplies and/or renting equipment essential for the event.
2. Cases where more than 3 hours of car rental is necessary due to the scale of the event must be presented to the GSC for approval.
3. Quotes must be presented at the Funding Committee meeting.

Notes:
1. Glossary of Terms
   a. Fiscal Year 20XX-20YY: July 1, 20XX to June 30, 20YY.
   b. Soft Cap: A yearly limit on the amount any VSO can be approved for GSC funding, which is based on the average attendance N (Soft Cap = Nx$30), or the dues-paying membership M (Soft Cap = Mx$30). This limit may be raised only on a case-by-case basis.
   c. Hard Cap: The maximum fixed yearly limit for each VSO on the amount that can be approved for by the GSC ($6000 for groups with 70% or more graduate student membership; $6000xF% for groups with F% graduate membership, where 30<=F<=69).
   d. Retroactive Funding: Requesting funding for events after they are held.
   e. Attendance: The number of people who regularly attend the VSO’s GSC-funded events. This is calculated by taking the average attendance of the VSO’s events on a yearly basis.
   f. Seed Funding: An initial approval of funds for the first (or first few) in a series of recurring or new events organized by a VSO. These events will be audited by the Internal Auditor, and full funding for the series would only be granted after his/her approval.
   g. Parties: An event that does not require elaborate lunch/ dinner preparations (subject to Funding Committee’s discretion)
   h. 501(c)(3) status: The tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code that makes the GSC a not-for-profit entity.
   i. Dues-paying Membership: The number of members who pay $10/yr or more in membership dues. When used to calculate the VSO’s Soft Cap, this number must be supported by documentation (such as a full list of member names and email addresses) and is subject to auditing by the Internal Auditor.
2. The GSC is not a bank! Please contact SSE regarding any and all reimbursements or myGroups questions.
3. Fiscal Year Turnover:
   a. Please be aware that the fiscal year turns over before the school year ends/begins. All reimbursements should be negotiated with SSE.
   b. SSE has deadlines regarding reimbursements for the current fiscal year. For more information, contact SSE sse.stanford.edu.

2. Internal Auditing (see also section 4):
   a. The Funding Committee has hired an internal auditor. This is part of the GSC internal control system to make sure funds dispensed go toward the expenses purposed. If selected for audit, please help the internal auditor do his/her job, and be aware that the decision for who is audited is random. Selection for audit does not suggest any wrongdoing on the VSO’s part.

3. Other funding sources:
   b. For international events, please also apply for funds from the Bechtel Center.
   c. For graduate student social events which cannot be funded through the GSC Funding Committee, please also check the Graduate Student Programming Board (GSPB, gspb.stanford.edu). (Be advised: the GSPB CAN fund individuals, but cannot fund VSOs.)

4. VSOs are encouraged to raise group funds with such simple fundraisers as car washes, bake sales, and the like. Group funds are not subject to GSC restrictions and guidelines.

Section 4: Verification
A. Funding Committee Auditing
The Funding Committee includes an Internal Auditor who may be present at meetings with VSOs and perform audits of events and VSO reimbursements.

1. The Internal Auditor may audit events in person on a random basis, in order to gather information including but not limited to event attendance, type and quantity of food served, ticket charges and event duration.

2. The Internal Auditor may audit some or all reimbursements involving VSO partition funds for some or all VSOs. Results of the audit will be made available to the Funding Committee. The Funding Chair may decide to arrange meetings with the President, Vice President and/or Financial Officer of the VSO to discuss audit results, and options for dealing with irregularities. Reimbursement irregularities involving $500 or more must be reported to the GSC for discussion and imposition of penalties. All reimbursement irregularities may be reported to the GSC for discussion and imposition of penalties at the discretion of the Internal Auditor.

3. The Internal Auditor may audit some or all dues-paying membership lists provided by VSOs by contacting some or all of the members listed to verify their membership. Results of the audit will be made available to the Funding Committee. The Chair may decide to arrange meetings with the Financial Officer of the VSO to discuss audit results, and options for dealing with irregularities.
4. The Internal Auditor reserves the right to refuse to audit any event for reasons of unavailability, personal objection and/or concern over potential retaliation.

B. GSC Auditing and Penalties for Violation of Funding Conditions
The GSC can perform additional event auditing and impose penalties for violation of funding conditions, including those outlined in this document as well as additional stipulations as a condition of funding.

Section 5: Terms and Conditions for Use of Funds
A. The Financial Manager shall notify an organization when funds become available to it.
B. The Financial Manager may, at his/her discretion, grant extensions to the ending date of an allocation to ensure that all transactions are cleared. No extension may be granted beyond the end of the fiscal year to which the allocation applies.
C. Unless otherwise specified by the GSC, title to all tangible property purchased, in whole or in part, through the use of funds from the GSGF shall vest with the ASSU, and possession shall devolve upon the ASSU in the event of the dissolution of the VSO possessing the property.
D. A VSO shall be considered to be dissolved upon the receipt of a declaration of dissolution by its membership, failure to register with the Office of Student Activities for 15 months, or after a declaration of dissolution by the GSC following reasonable efforts to contact the last known officers of the VSO. All allocations to a VSO shall end upon dissolution of that VSO.
E. Advertisements for events funded by the GSGF shall cite the GSC as a sponsor or cosponsor.

Section 6: Collection Schedule
Equal fractions of all fees shall be collected in the Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters. No fee shall be collected in the Summer Quarter.