

SFC Policy Handbook 2008-2009

I - Background

The Student Finance Committee is charged with stewardship of the Student Activity Fee, which is comprised of the \$268 each student will contribute in the 08-09 academic year. This money is allocated primarily to nearly 200 student organizations for their operation and/or programming. Some funding is also allocated to individual students for the organization of events and activities through ad-hoc hearings. Dorms are allocated an amount of money based on the number of residents in a given dorm. SFC allocates through 3 different processes, Spring Budgeting, Appeals and Weekly Ad-hoc hearings.

The SFC policy handbook is designed to allow the student body to better understand the rules SFC uses to determine budget allocations. This document is open to annual revision by the SFC but is in effect between the time it is released and the end of budget determination for a given year.

Committee members are bound to respect the wishes of the student body while also protecting the integrity of student finances. Therefore the SFC Policy Handbook is a working document, and the committee encourages debate over these rules that will formulate evolution in regulations to more closely fit with student needs.

Spending Policies

All money in an organization's budget must be spent in accordance with organizational charters, the policies of the SFC and the Student Financial Charter, and the rules and policies of Oberlin College. If the SFC feels that a request is inappropriate, they may hold a spending request. In questionable cases, the Office of the Student Treasurer must present an issue to the SFC, whose decision will be final unless appealed to Senate. Any unused money rolls back into the SFC reserve fund at the end of the year and is available for use by students in the following years.

Permitted Transactions

Activity Fee Funds may be used for the following pursuits and organizational purposes:

1. Paying the honorarium and other professional costs of speakers/performers
2. Supporting student programs. This includes but is not limited to the costs associated with sports tournaments, conferences, religious events, parades, conferences, protests, banquets, concerts, copyrights for films, plays and other artistic events.
3. Equipment necessary for organizational functions, upgrades to existing equipment, storage space and or/security associated with equipment maintenance. All equipment must have a designated safe location for storage. All equipment requests must be accompanied by an updated inventory.
4. Costs associated with maintenance of an office or resource center, including supplies, media, and phone bills.
5. Compensation for services to organization and students at large. Can be to either students or outside support if specifically granted by the SFC.
6. Organizational outreach to the student body such as publicity and general meetings.

Prohibited Items

- i. Completely prohibited: programming during summer break, firearms, explosives, weapons, drugs, and other illegal items.
- ii. The following are prohibited from SFC budget allocations, but can be purchased with organizational income: silk screens, t-shirts and bulk-order clothing (except uniforms), banners, mailings, gifts, outside donations, rent, and spray paint (with the exception of arts groups).
- iii. Exemptions to section ii may be made in special circumstances by a unanimous vote of the SFC.

Allocation Policies By Category

Cultural/Social/Political

\$2400 for one large event (or two medium events at \$1200 each)

\$800 for 3 small events.

\$35 accumulating media resources
(standard for all orgs unless noted)

\$60 for public or small group reception accompanying one event
(standard for all orgs unless noted)

\$14 for publicity for large events \$7 for small
(standard for all orgs unless noted)

\$50 for food at general meetings (standard for all orgs unless noted)

\$25 for supplies
(standard for all orgs unless noted)

\$600 for conferences.

Media

News

Printing costs are provided for 26 issues for a week or 13 for a bi-weekly publication. This includes all weeks of the academic year as well as commencement and orientation.

Eligible for compensation to student employees as outlined in SFC compensation policy. Technical or administrative work not done by students can be requested through ad-hoc.

It expected that there are large equipment costs necessary to maintain the functioning of news organizations. These may be requested in the spring process or through ad-hoc as necessary.

Journals

Printing costs are provided for up to two publications per semester. This is capped at 500 copies total or \$1000 per issue. If a journal wishes to publish bi-annually the caps are doubled.

Not eligible for compensation to employees.

Non Print Media

Eligible for student compensation as outlined in SFC policy. Can hire outside technical support as needed to comply with broadcasting/media regulations.

Club Sports

Competitive

These organizations may receive allocations for no more than six off campus tournaments/competitions per year. They are also granted costs associated with hosting tournaments and games.

Extra competitions can be requested through ad-hoc in cases where seasons are extended into league playoffs.

Equipment as necessary, including protective gear and uniforms.

Recreational

\$3500 cap for general instruction

2 special workshops/seminars up to \$800 each

Equipment as necessary, including protective gear, no uniforms.

Arts

Performing Arts

There are no monetary caps on equipment/supplies for performances but there are caps on the number of events for large umbrella performance groups and also for more specialized purposes within performing arts.

Small

2 large shows, 3 small shows/master-classes per year

Large – OMTA, OSTA, Dance Umbrella

3 large shows, 4 small shows / master-classes per year

Visual Arts

Eligible to receive art supplies, equipment and infrastructure necessary to pursue specific visual arts.

Equipment allocations depend on the clear itemization of existing inventory and reasonable proof that items will be safely stored.

Musical Arts

2 large events, 3 small events/master classes

Funds for recording are prohibited due to the availability of recording facilities in the conservatory.

Cultural Arts

2 large events 3 small events

Can include outside speakers relevant to the cultural goals of the charter.

Note: Specific caps for all arts groups can be increased by up to two with a 2/3 vote of the SFC.

Interest

Campus Interest

Are granted the screening rights to copyrighted media for events to provide services to the student body as a whole. They are not eligible for programs, compensation, or any honorariums.

Student Interest

Eligible for one large and three small events.

Co-ops

Eligible for supplies and equipment as necessary.

Eligible for two Small events

Off Campus Interest

Refer to Off Campus Policy

Equipment allowed as necessary.

Competitive Interest

5 Tournaments per year.

Religious Organizations

- I. Religious organizations are those which provide the student body with events designed to fulfill a religious obligation, such as Ramadan, Yom Kippur, or Ash Wednesday.

- II. Budgets for religious organizations shall be organized into the two separate and independent categories of “religious events” and “social events.”

- III. Religious Events
 - a. A religious event is one which serves the sole or primary purpose of fulfilling a major religious holy day obligation.
 - b. Events that have a religious theme but do not serve the purpose of fulfilling a religious obligation are not to be considered religious observances. These events shall be considered social events, and funds shall be allocated according to section IV.
 - c. A List of Major Religious Holy Days will be provided to religious organizations with their sample budget. If an organization desires funding for a holy day celebration not included on the List of Major Religious Holy Days, the organization shall be required to submit a letter from a religious official detailing why the Holy Day should be considered a major religious observance.
 - d. There shall be no cap on the number of religious observances allowed to each religious organization.
 - e. One religious observance shall not be allocated to more than one organization.
 - f. Religious observances that occur weekly will be considered one religious observance that is capped at \$750 each semester, \$1,500 each year.
 - g. No religious observances shall be performed off campus, except in situations in which a key aspect of the religious obligation is impossible to fulfill on campus. In these situations, transportations costs will be given special consideration.

- h. Publicity, sound, technology, transportation, and equipment costs are to be considered according to the standard SFC allocation policies.
- i. Food items that are central to fulfilling the religious obligation of a religious observance shall be allocated:
 - i. according to the SFC pricing list for religious organizations,
 - ii. according to the cost provided on the budget by the organization treasurer (for items that are not on the pricing list for religious organizations), and
 - iii. according to the duration of the holiday and the expected attendance of the event.
 - iv. Special consideration shall be given to the additional expense of Halal and Kosher foods.
 - v. An allocation will not be made to cover a meal at the religious observance, unless this meal is itself the religious observance (e.g., Eid Al-Fitr).
- j. Food provided during or after the religious observance but not necessary to fulfilling the religious obligation of that event shall be allocated according to standard SFC allocation policy.
- k. Organizations requesting alcohol for religious ceremonies must submit with their budget an Advisor Responsibility Form. This form states that the organization's faculty/staff advisor will purchase, store, and oversee the appropriate use of the organization's alcohol during and after religious ceremonies.

IV. Social/political Events for Religious Organizations

- a. Funds for a religious organization's social/political events shall be considered independently of the allocation granted for religious events.
- b. Social/political events constitute all events which do not serve the sole or primary purpose of fulfilling a religious obligation. This includes events that celebrate, incorporate, or promote a religious theme or holiday, but serve primarily as a social, political, or cultural event. Social/political events shall be allocated according to the standard SFC allocation policy for social/political organizations.

Debt Policy

The SFC office staff will attempt to assist treasurers in staying within budgetary constraints. In doing so, the SFC will provide warnings to groups that are in danger of going into debt and will hold spending when groups go into the red.

If debt at the end of a fiscal year is less than 10% of total SFC allocation for the next year the total debt amount will be deducted from their allocation in the following fall. If organizational debt is greater than 10 % of total SFC allocation for the next fiscal year, then 10% of this allocation will be deducted.

Student Compensation Policy

For positions in organizations serving the entire campus or performing critical functions for the Oberlin community, it is recognized that students may request financial compensation. Stipends offset the large amount of work and expertise that it takes to run large organizations. It is not necessary that students are compensated completely for services rendered to the community.

Through the following stipend structure the SFC hopes to encourage professionalism and accountability in positions and build the skills that strengthen organizations. At the same time it must be acknowledged that most groups could make a case for stipends to improve their operations. This is necessarily in conflict with maximizing to programming available for the campus at large; SFC expects that stipends are an exception to the rule that working with student groups is mainly for personal enjoyment, development of cultural experiences, and skills that will be used in the future.

Guidelines for Stipends

A diverse set of conditions is used to consider the allocation of stipends. These conditions are a set of guidelines that for consideration, that will be creatively and fairly judged by the SFC to fit evolving needs of the student body.

1. Stipend positions must fulfill a critical service for the welfare of the Oberlin College Community.
2. Students are not necessarily compensated for all their work. Stipends will be designed to offset commitments that seriously take away from other employment opportunities. Any compensation will be distributed across all pay periods in a given semester, not granted in lump sum.
3. The existence of the organization must depend on a position for it to qualify for a stipend. These positions must be essential for the central functions of an organization not tangential.
 - I. Top managerial positions are by definition more critical. Stipends will be provided for these positions, at rates closer to full compensation for hours.
4. Positions that have been present historically, especially those written into organizational charters, are allocated more favorably. Any new stipend positions must be clearly justified to the SFC in personal meetings as well in budget requests before they can be created.
5. SFC treasurers and a member of the controller's office must sign off on the stipends before funds are moved. It is encouraged to work with organization advisors, in this process.
6. Students granted compensation must be held accountable to the public for the responsibilities entrusted to them. In this vein, all organizations must submit biannual time logs, and reports that are readily accessible to all students, and stay in frequent contact with the SFC regarding fluctuations in the needs and outcomes of compensated positions.
7. Staff opportunities must be allocated by organizations in a demonstrably transparent, and democratic manner. There must be public solicitation of potential applicants that reach the most students possible.

8. Compensated position will be more likely to remain if they are bolstered by tangible indications of support from the student body. This support must extend beyond from that particular group.

9. Compensation will not be granted in cases where students have clear opportunities to obtain course credit for an identical position. These opportunities include advertising of credit through the course catalog, or media publications, as well as street level publicity for a particular position.

10. All stipend positions will be limited to the minimum level of the student pay scale.

11. All compensation is subject to review. To provide stability, this review should mainly take place during the spring allocation process. Compensated positions may be cut during the year only if new information dramatically alters the outlook for that position during the fiscal year. For this to occur, SFC must widely publicize evidence indicating that there is malfeasance or a failure to perform the duties of a particular position.

Changes in the needs of the student body and the relevance of particular positions must be accessed to determine whether stipends need to be augmented or scaled back in the spring process. Stipend positions can be eliminated upon discovery of disregard for stated responsibilities. The SFC will provide written justification for cutting or increasing compensation for a position.

12. The SFC office is responsible for making sure that stipend payments do not exceed the approved grant and concurrently that organizations do not go into debt by issuing stipends. If a group has exhausted its funds, their payroll will be held until the next fiscal year. This is possible because these are stipends and not contractual salaries.

I - Groups will be given a written notice from SFC before compensation is held, and have the right to appeal to the SFC for reconsideration. If groups do not agree with stipend decisions they have redress to the Senate as outlined in the SFC Charter. A decision to hold compensation stands until it is reversed and any attempts to subvert this decision outside the proper channels is punishable by a fine to the organization.

13. There are cases whereby the positions overseen by the SFC can be granted in the form of hourly wages capped a particular amount. These cases are limited to consultant positions, where groups need limited amounts of effort at erratic intervals and where a stipend distributed over a semesters pay periods would be a poor fit. Capped wages are subject to the same processes of oversight.

Off Campus Programs (Includes WT & Midterm Breaks)

1. Off campus programs are defined as those that do not take place on Oberlin College campus, and all events during breaks. This does not apply to programs that are prepared or rehearsed during midterm breaks or Winter term, but that occur during Fall or Spring Semester.
2. Off campus programs are limited to events central to the charter and purpose of the student organization requesting funds. To receive SFC funding, off campus events must only be possible outside Oberlin.
3. The SFC can allocate funds for one off campus event per semester for chartered organizations, under prevailing program caps.
4. Off campus events must demonstrably promote general student welfare. These events should positively represent Oberlin in the wider world.
5. The program cap levels of one per semester, and the levels for distinct event size, that apply to chartered organizations, can be bypassed in special circumstances. This requires a unanimous vote of SFC. To make such an exception, a majority of SFC members must be present.
6. Distinct ad-hoc groups are limited to one off campus program in the full period before they enter the chartering process, and during all steps pursuant to chartering. This must be ratified by a unanimous vote of SFC. If granted, this event will be limited to prevailing allocation caps. To receive any further funding, the ad-hoc group must provide a brief report on the event to SFC.

Fundraising and Income

Income generated by groups through ticket sales, donations from outside the SFC system, advertisements, or other means must be reflected in organizational budgets. These funds can be used to help cover items allocated by SFC or to purchase items SFC didn't allocate.

Organizations will not be granted income funded items in spring budgeting but can submit detailed memos, or request ad-hoc hearings anytime during the fiscal year to redirect their income.

To be granted, income based expenditures must directly enhance events and goals that SFC has allocated and significantly increase the value of a program for students. To use funding from a program all bills related to that program must be squared away.

If income is earned after spring budgeting begins (by the last scheduled ad-hoc hearing), organizations can request that these carry over income to the next year, without any penalty. The only condition that prevents carry over is outstanding debt.

Organizations with large equipment, supply, or infrastructure costs can make requests through ad-hoc hearings to use income for equipment upgrade, maintenance, or necessary supplies.