

## STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE MANUAL

The Student Activity Fee (SAF) was enacted in 1983 to create an activity fee that would be allocated by students for students. Following its collection at the beginning of each academic year, the SAF is pooled into a University Fund where it awaits allocation; the Director of the Student Activities Business Office (SABO) has oversight of this fund. The fee may be increased each year by no more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 2% at the discretion of the Comptroller and with the approval of the Finance Board. If the students wish to increase the fee beyond this amount, a student-wide referendum may be initiated. Any adjustment to the fee must be approved by the administration of the Division of Student Affairs before it receives final approval by the University's Board of Trustees Finance Committee.

This edition of the SAF Manual was enacted as part of the 2020 Pilot Program and has been updated for Fiscal Year 2021. This manual is a living document which is updated and amended annually. The 2020 edition differs significantly from previously published versions and will continue to evolve as the pilot program continues.

### 1. **Mission**

- 1.1. The SAF serves to support a vibrant campus and allows students of all backgrounds to explore enriching extracurricular activities. The Finance Board's mission is to ensure the responsible, sustainable, and efficient allocation of the SAF.

### 2. **Eligibility for Funding**

- 2.1. Student groups recognized by and in good standing with the Student Involvement Board (SIB), the Center for Student Involvement (CSI), and the Student Activities Business Office (SABO) are eligible for funding.
- 2.2. All student groups which are chapters of an outside organization must be in good standing with said organization. Organizations must meet all re-registration deadlines.
- 2.3. Before requesting or spending funds, an organization's Treasurer must attend a Student Activity Fee Workshop within the current Fiscal Year.
  - 2.3.1. The Fiscal Year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th.
  - 2.3.2. The Board holds a minimum of two (2) Workshops within the first month of each semester. The Comptroller will strive to hold rolling Workshops as needed.
- 2.4. Organizations must complete all outstanding paperwork for previous requests funded by the SAF in order to be eligible for continued funding.

### 3. **Types of Budgets**

- 3.1. Funding will be allocated through two methods: Annual Budgets and Supplemental Budgets.
  - 3.1.1. Annual Budgets are allocated to groups at the beginning of the Fiscal Year. They allow groups with a strong SAF history to receive their budget for the year ahead of time and begin planning accordingly.
    - 3.1.1.1. The Finance Board will reserve at least \$2 million for Annual Budgets.
  - 3.1.2. Supplemental Budgets are allocated throughout the year to groups without an Annual Budget.

#### **4. Annual Budgets**

- 4.1. Annual Budgets are reserved for groups with a strong SAF history and predictable, recurring financial needs.
- 4.2. Annual Budgets can fund events, equipment purchases, registration fees, or (on a case-by-case basis) the expenditures outlined in Section 7.6.
- 4.3. Groups seeking an Annual Budget must submit an Annual Budget request by a date communicated by the Finance Board
  - 4.3.1. This deadline may be moved at the discretion of the Comptroller, with support from CSI and other affected departments.
- 4.4. The Finance Board will review requests over the month of March and determine the amount allocated to each group.
  - 4.4.1. Decisions will be made according to the criteria established in Section 6.
- 4.5. The Board's decisions will be sent to each requesting organization in a Decision Memo by April 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - 4.5.1. This date may be moved at the discretion of the Comptroller.
- 4.6. If an organization feels the decision of the Finance Board was incorrect, it will have five (5) business days following receipt of a decision memo to initiate the Appeals process as outlined in Section 12.

#### **5. Supplemental Budgets**

- 5.1. Any group that meets the eligibility criteria in Section 2 and does not have an Annual Budget may request a Supplemental Budget.
- 5.2. These budgets allow the SAF to support new groups and groups without an Annual Budget looking to push the boundaries of student life on campus.
- 5.3. Supplemental Budgets can fund events, equipment purchases, or registration fees.
- 5.4. A group may request up to \$ 1,500.00 for a Supplemental Budget.
- 5.5. Eligible groups may make up to four (4) Supplemental Budget requests per Fiscal Year.
- 5.6. Supplemental Budget requests for events must be made in accordance with a calendar of deadlines set by the Comptroller in advance of the Fiscal Year.
  - 5.6.1. This calendar will be made available to students on the Student Government Association (SGA) website and will be presented at SAF Workshops.
- 5.7. Budget requests for registration fees must be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the registration deadline.
- 5.8. Equipment requests can be submitted at any time.
- 5.9. After requests are submitted, groups must attend a meeting of the Board to present their budget.
- 5.10. The Finance Board will make a determination and send each group a Decision Memo within seven (7) business days of the meeting.
  - 5.10.1. Decisions will be made according to the criteria established in Section 6.
- 5.11. Groups will have five (5) business days to initiate the Appeals process, as outlined in Section 12.

#### **6. Allocation of Funds**

- 6.1. The Finance Board is not bound by precedent or comparison and reviews each request on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.2. The Finance Board will take the following factors into consideration when reviewing an Annual Budget request.

- 6.2.1. Amount allocated to group previously and adequacy of this amount.
- 6.2.2. Efficiency of previous spending.
- 6.2.3. Justification given for any requested increase in funding.
- 6.2.4. Audit, Spending Report, and Sanction history.
- 6.2.5. Funds available to the Finance Board.
- 6.2.6. Cost per student.
- 6.2.7. Sustainability and consistency of operation.
- 6.2.8. Group experience and seniority.
- 6.2.9. Exclusivity.
- 6.2.10. Student appeal and experiential value.
- 6.2.11. Membership and attendance history.
- 6.2.12. In the case of organizations which have not previously received an Annual Budget, recommendation of their Program Manager.
- 6.3. The Finance Board will take the following factors into consideration when reviewing a Supplemental Budget request.
  - 6.3.1. Presentation to the Board.
  - 6.3.2. Advertising and outreach plan.
  - 6.3.3. Correlation to group mission statement.
  - 6.3.4. Sustainability of operation.
  - 6.3.5. Funds available to the Finance Board.
  - 6.3.6. Cost per student.
  - 6.3.7. Exclusivity.
  - 6.3.8. Student appeal and experiential value.

## **7. Expenditure Restrictions**

- 7.1. Expenditures made prior to allocation by the Board cannot be funded.
- 7.2. Expenses for personal or private use cannot and will not be funded. Such spending will be regarded as larceny.
- 7.3. For Supplemental Budgets, no more than \$12 per anticipated attendee may be allocated for or spent on food.
- 7.4. The following cannot be funded by the SAF:
  - 7.4.1. Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products.
    - 7.4.1.1. Events where alcohol may be present may be funded so long as there is an environment where equal entertainment is provided for both of-age and underage students.
    - 7.4.1.2. Additional costs associated with the presence of alcohol will not be funded.
  - 7.4.2. Charitable contributions.
  - 7.4.3. Items for donation.
  - 7.4.4. Giveaways.
  - 7.4.5. Fundraisers or any items that generate revenue for an organization's cash index.
    - 7.4.5.1. Space fees for fundraisers may be funded.
  - 7.4.6. Class projects.
  - 7.4.7. Security deposits.
  - 7.4.8. Late fees, expediting charges, or penalties.

- 7.4.9. Financial investment vehicles or loans.
- 7.4.10. Payments to other Northeastern students.
- 7.4.11. Plaques, trophies, prizes, or gifts.
- 7.4.12. Scholarships or awards.
- 7.4.13. Gift cards.
- 7.5. Any events funded by the SAF must be open to the entire undergraduate student body.
  - 7.5.1. Political events and activities may be considered when they are not exclusive in nature. Events that support, in whole or in part, the campaign of an individual candidate or party for political office cannot be funded.
  - 7.5.2. Religious-themed events and activities may be considered when they are not exclusive or persuasive in nature. Events that are exclusive in attendance to one religion cannot be funded.
- 7.6. The following can be funded by the SAF on a case-by-case basis. The Board may require groups to present their request in person in order to be considered for these expenditures:
  - 7.6.1. Stipends.
  - 7.6.2. Travel and transportation.
  - 7.6.3. Lodging.
  - 7.6.4. Storage.
  - 7.6.5. Media subscriptions.
- 7.7. The following can be funded by the SAF, but according to the following restrictions:
  - 7.7.1. An organization may receive no more than \$750.00 for organization fees per Fiscal Year.
  - 7.7.2. No more than \$500.00 will be allocated to a student group for conference fees per Fiscal Year.
- 7.8. Durable equipment purchased with SAF funds belongs to the student body. As such, it must be tagged and stored according to CSI guidelines.
  - 7.8.1. Durable equipment means any item of cost greater than \$250.00 or having a useful life longer than 2 years.
  - 7.8.2. Equipment cannot be sold or donated, as it belongs to the student body.
  - 7.8.3. The Finance Board may conduct equipment audits at its discretion.
- 7.9. Any advertisement or promotional material must bear the SAF logo.
- 7.10. Groups may request tickets for any event, but the Board will have final determination over all ticket prices.
  - 7.10.1. Any event or expenditure over \$25,000.00 in cost requires that the Finance Board be notified at least 30 days in advance of the event or expenditure to determine if ticketing is appropriate.
  - 7.10.2. All ticket revenue will be returned to the SAF.
- 8. **Reallocation Notices**
  - 8.1. Funds are allocated in line-item form. If a group wishes to shift funds from one line item to another, they must submit a Reallocation Notice.
  - 8.2. Reallocations must not violate any expenditure restrictions or run contrary to a decision made by the Board.

## 9. Spending Reports

- 9.1. In order to verify that spending of funds is in compliance with expenditure restrictions and adheres to the nature of the original budget request, any spending of funds must be well-documented and sent to the Finance Board using the most up-to-date online platform.
  - 9.1.1. These ad-hoc Spending Reports are due within 30 days of spending.
    - 9.1.1.1. Purchases made for events are due within 30 days after the event.
- 9.2. The Finance Board, in collaboration with SABO and the Student Involvement Board, will monitor all spending.
  - 9.2.1. Any violations will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate sanctions may be imposed.
- 9.3. In addition to ad-hoc Spending Reports, groups with Annual Budgets must submit a Midyear Spending Report, which is due after January 1<sup>st</sup>, at a date determined by the Finance Board, and must cover all spending from the first half of the Fiscal Year.
- 9.4. A Year-End Spending Report is due by July 1<sup>st</sup> for all Annual Budget groups and must cover all spending from the second half of the Fiscal Year.
- 9.5. Groups should keep in mind that Executive Board leadership may change. Accordingly, organizations should plan ahead and ensure records are well-kept. Change in leadership is not an extenuating circumstance for missing deadlines or violating the SAF Manual, and groups are responsible for changing leadership effectively.
- 9.6. Any unused funds at the end of the Fiscal Year will be returned to the SAF.
- 9.7. Failure to submit Spending Reports will result in the imposition of Sanctions as outlined in Section 11.

## 10. Audits

- 10.1. The Board reserves the right to perform both random and targeted audits of organizations, accounts, and events. If an audit reveals evidence of misspending of funds or other policy violations, the student group may be subject to Sanctions, as outlined in Section 11 of this manual.

## 11. Sanctions

- 11.1. As the trustees of the contributed funds of all undergraduate students, the Finance Board must ensure that funds are spent responsibly. As such, the Board may impose Sanctions to hold groups accountable to the student body.
- 11.2. Sanctions may be imposed for the following:
  - 11.2.1. Failure to submit a spending report by the deadline.
  - 11.2.2. Spending funds in any way that violates the rules set forth in this Manual.
  - 11.2.3. Falsifying information.
  - 11.2.4. Inadequate storage or record keeping of durable goods.
  - 11.2.5. Theft of items purchased with SAF funds.
  - 11.2.6. Using the SAF to purchase items or services for personal use.
  - 11.2.7. Any action or attempted action to defraud the student body.
- 11.3. Sanctions include, but are not limited to:
  - 11.3.1. Written warning.
  - 11.3.2. Budget Account freeze.

- 11.3.3. Loss of eligibility to request funding for a specified time period.
- 11.3.4. Return of SAF funds.
  - 11.3.4.1. These funds will be drawn from the student organization's Cash Account if the Budget Account balance is insufficient to cover the amount.
- 11.3.5. Referral to the Student Involvement Board for status review.
- 11.3.6. Referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- 11.4. Sanctioned groups will be notified via Decision Memo.
  - 11.4.1. Groups have five (5) business days after the Decision Memo is sent out to initiate the Appeals process as outlined in Section 12.

## **12. Appeals**

- 12.1. If a group finds a decision of the Finance Board to be incorrect, it may request a meeting with the Finance Board to review the decision.
  - 12.1.1. Groups have five (5) business days once Decision Memos have been sent out to make this request.
  - 12.1.2. This meeting will serve to foster conversation, but no negotiation will take place.
- 12.2. If a group completes the process outlined in 12.1. and still feels an incorrect decision was made, the group may file an Appeal.
  - 12.2.1. Groups have three (3) business days after the date of the meeting with the Finance Board to file an appeal.
- 12.3. Groups may file an appeal based on two grounds:
  - 12.3.1. The Board neglected to follow procedure in a way that was detrimental to the appealing group.
  - 12.3.2. The Board's decision was unreasonable to the extent that it cannot be ascribed to a difference in view.
- 12.4. The fact that the Board did not fund a request in its entirety does not in itself constitute grounds for an Appeal.
- 12.5. Appeals must be sent to the Parliamentarian of the Student Government Association within the three (3) business day period.
- 12.6. The Parliamentarian will read the Appeal and determine if it has merit based on the criteria in Section 12.3. If it is determined to have merit, the Appeals Board will convene in a timely manner to hear the case.
  - 12.6.1. The Appeals Board will consist of the following members:
    - 12.6.1.1. Comptroller.
    - 12.6.1.2. Student Body President.
    - 12.6.1.3. Parliamentarian.
    - 12.6.1.4. Designated Operational Appeals Board Justice.
    - 12.6.1.5. University Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee
  - 12.6.2. The Appeals Board may make one of the following decisions:
    - 12.6.2.1. Uphold the original decision of the Board,
    - 12.6.2.2. Amend the decision to allocate funding for items not originally funded (the Board may not allocate funding above the originally requested amount),
    - 12.6.2.3. Fully fund the event.

12.7. Once a decision has been made, the Appeals Board must provide the rationale of the decision within three business days in a memorandum to the student organization, the organization's advisor, program manager, and the Finance Board.

12.8. Decisions made by the Appeals Board will not have precedent on future Appeals, and all Appeals will be considered independently.

12.9. The decision of the Appeals Board is final.

### **13. Confidentiality**

13.1. The Finance Board is committed to the privacy of the groups with which it works and will maintain confidentiality in regards to organizational financial information.

### **14. Overriding the Manual**

14.1. While it is important to note that the policies in this Manual hold true in nearly all cases, it is also important to recognize that exceptions may be needed on occasion.

14.1.1. Specifically, the Board recognizes that changes to the SAF Manual may cause challenges for groups during its implementation.

14.2. The Board may override any portion of this Manual on a case-by-case basis with a 2/3 majority vote of present members.

14.2.1. Overrides do not set precedent.

### **15. Approving the Manual**

15.1. In order to amend this Manual, the Finance Board must approve of the changes by a 2/3 majority of present members.

15.2. The Manual must then be approved by the Student Involvement Board, the Student Activities Business Office, and a representative from the University's Department of Student Affairs.

15.3. The Student Government Association Senate may exercise its authority to edit governing documents by passing a Resolution of Governance with a 2/3 majority of the Senate.

