



Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association Appropriations Bylaws

Table of Contents

Article I	2
Internal Structure	2
Section 1. Mission	2
Section 2. Membership	2
Article II	5
Governing Rules	5
Section 1. Governing Rules	5
Article III	5
Funding Eligibility	5
Section 1. Organizations Registered for Funding	5
Section 2. Procedures for Allocation of Funds	5
Section 3. Funding Requests Deadlines	7
Article IV	7
Funding Requests Types	7
Section 1. Annual Requests	7
Section 2. Semester Requests	7
Section 3. Special Circumstances Allocations	8
Section 4. Summer/Winter Break Funding	8
Section 5. Funding Outline & Submission	8
Article V	10
Guidelines for Use of Funds	10
Section 1. Appropriate Use of Funds	10
Section 2. Operational Funds	10
Section 3. Travel Funds	11
Section 4. Programming Funds	11
Section 4. Appeals	13
Article VI	16
Rollover	16
Section 1. SGA Capital Projects Fund	16

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Article VII	16
Freezing of Funds	16
Section 1. Freezing of Funds	16
Section 2. Release of Funds	17

Article I

Internal Structure

Section 1. Mission

- A. The mission of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association (VCU SGA) Appropriations Committee is to disburse the student activity fee in a fair and consistent manner to eligible student organizations. These student organizations should enhance the quality of the student experience at VCU.
- B. The Appropriations Committee operates under the authority of the VCU SGA.
- C. The Appropriations Committee was established by the VCU SGA for these purposes:
 - a. To set rules and guidelines for the requesting and distribution of the Student Activity Fees (SAF).
 - b. To fairly allocate the Student Activity Fee to the SGA, its subcommittees, and eligible student organizations. The allocations will be made with regard to the diverse needs of the student body.
 - c. To recommend changes in the amount of the student activity fee.
 - d. To coordinate with the University Student Commons & Activities regarding the allocation and disbursement of student activity fee.
 - e. To report to the SGA Legislative Bodies regarding the allocation of funds.
 - f. To be good stewards of the student activity fee.

Section 2. Membership

- A. All members of the Appropriations Committee must be members of the VCU Student Body.
- B. The Appropriations Committee shall consist of no more than nine (9) members consisting of Senators and Delegates of the VCU SGA: the Appropriations Chair and eight other members. The eight members aside from the Appropriations Chair must be composed of four undergraduate students, two graduate students, and two professional students. These members are appointed by an application process overseen by the President, Vice Presidents, and Election Committee. Two delegates may also be appointed to the committee who shall serve in the absence of the eight Appropriations Committee members.
- C. All members of the Appropriations Committee have voting power and the ability to make motions. The Chair may only vote in the case of a tie.
- D. Members of the SGA are permitted to observe but shall not participate nor interact with student organizations during an active hearing. Opinions and advice may be heard upon request by Appropriations Committee.
- E. All Appropriations Committee members have the following duties and responsibilities:
 - a. They must attend all committee meetings, either in person or electronically, and actively participate in discussion. If a member cannot attend, then a delegate may take their place.
 - b. Committee members can miss no more than three (3) meetings before their membership is terminated, barring extenuating circumstances. Committee members must notify the Appropriations Chair and the Secretary regarding an absence prior to the start of the meeting.
 - c. They must fairly and objectively review all requests made by student organizations. If

there is a conflict of interest, the members are trusted to recuse themselves from deliberation and voting on the request.

- d. The Appropriations Chair will work with the University Student Commons & Activities staff to ensure that programs allocated funds comply with the Appropriations Bylaws and the organization's request.
- F. The Appropriations Committee shall elect a Secretary from their members during their first meeting. The Secretary fills the role of the Appropriations Chair in their absence.
- G. The Appropriations Chair or designee must:
 - a. Serve as the presiding officer of the committee and for all meetings.
 - b. Set the agenda for all committee meetings.
 - c. Collaborate with the SGA Advisor in regards to hearing funding requests, reviewing expenditures, scheduling workshops and maintaining open communications with the university and committee.
 - d. Serve on VCU SGA Leadership Committee as a voting member.
 - e. Inform the Senate on all pertinent information regarding the spending of the student activity fee.

Article II

Governing Rules

Section 1. Governing Rules

- A. The Bylaws for the Appropriations Committee must be reviewed every year and presented to the VCU SGA Legislative Body for approval.
- B. The Appropriations Committee will not fund:
 - 1. The purchase of alcohol, tobacco, or other intoxicants.
 - 2. Direct philanthropic contributions or direct financial contributions to any enterprise.
 - 3. Direct academic scholarships.
 - 4. Gifts for volunteers and non-VCU students
 - 5. Monetary rewards of any type such as gifts cards
 - 6. Gifts exclusive to organization members
- C. All meetings should be conducted with respect to Robert's Rules of Order with detailed minutes taken of attendance, motions, discussions, and votes.

Article III

Funding Eligibility

Section 1. Organizations Registered for Funding

- A. The Appropriations Committee will recognize two types of student organizations: undergraduates and graduate/professional student organizations. This designation will be based on majority membership.
- B. The Appropriations Committee will consider funding requests from only student organizations that are registered with the University Student Commons and Activities (USC&A).
- C. Any newly registered Student Organization or any Student Organization that has been inactive for one year or more must be registered for thirty (30) days before becoming eligible to request funds.
- D. Any registered Student Organization that receives funding must re-register each year for the following academic year with the University. Failure to re-register forfeits the allocation and the Student Organization may not be eligible to request funding again until registration has been current for thirty (30) days.
- E. Registered Student Organizations must be registered via RamsConnect, meet student organization requirements, and must be in good standing with the University.
- F. Student Organizations should submit a plan for acquiring additional sources of revenue (ie. Fundraising, Membership Dues, etc.) other than the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee. The plan should be sent to the Appropriations Committee with the student organization's first funding request of the academic year.
- G. If a student organization has or will receive funding from the Student Activity Fee via a different outlet, e.g. social fraternities and sororities, rec sports clubs, and graduate student groups applying via the Graduate Student Association, then that organization must indicate those funds on their request to the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee. The VCU SGA Appropriations Committee reserves the right to deny or approve funds based on these disclosures or when an organization failure to disclose.
- H. At least two officers of the student organization must be USC&A Finance trained annually.

Section 2. Procedures for Allocation of Funds

- A. The student activity fee will be divided with a percentage of funds allocated to undergraduate organizations and a percentage allocated to graduate and professional organizations so long as undergraduate, graduate, and professional students pay different Student Activity Fee amounts.
- B. The student activity fee will be further divided with a percentage of Funds will be allocated in three priorities: Annual Funding; Semester Funding; and Special Circumstance Funding. Special Circumstances requests will be accepted on a rolling basis.
- C. Special Circumstances Funding
 - a. Special Circumstances allocation is reserved for student organizations that are newly registered or can demonstrate a need for funding that was neither present, conceivable, nor existent by the funding period deadline. To request Special Circumstances funds, the need must be demonstrable, justifiable, explained, and supplied with the request.

- b. For each funding period, a portion of the available funds will be retained for special circumstances and used by a case by case basis.
- D. Funds not allocated and/or used by student organizations in the appropriations budget during an academic year are automatically returned to the VCU SGA's Capital Project Fund.
- E. If the total requested amount of funds for a funding period exceeds the allocatable amount, then a percent reduction cut will be applied to all funding requests so that only the allocable funds are allocated.
- F. Funding requests must encompass one of three funding categories: Travel, operational, and programming.

Section 3. Funding Requests Deadlines

- A. The funding request deadlines for each funding period will be announced through approved communications mediums as set by VCU SGA.

Article IV

Funding Requests Types

Section 1. Annual Requests

- A. Registered student organizations may request Annual funds in their funding requests. These funds may span the entire Academic year for any use that the student organization deems necessary.
 - a. While funding is not guaranteed, student organizations may request up to \$4,200 for Annual funds for each academic year.
- B. A detailed outline of Annual expenses must be provided alongside the funding request in a budgeted format. This outline should explain the impact on the VCU student body, how allocated funds will be used, and why should VCU SGA fund the organization for the academic year.
- C. If an annual funding request is submitted, Student Organizations are disqualified from submitting semester funding requests. Student Organizations are not eligible to submit more than one annual funding request per academic year.
 - a. Any overages requested may be visited through a submission of a special circumstance request

Section 2. Semester Requests

- A. Registered student organizations may request Semesterly funds in their funding request. These funds may span the entire Academic Semester (Fall or Spring) for any use that the Student Organization deems necessary.
 - a. While funding is not guaranteed, Student organizations may request up to \$2,000 for Semester funds for each academic year.
- B. A detailed outline of Semester expenses must be provided alongside the funding request in a budgeted format. This outline should explain the impact on the VCU student body, how allocated funds will be used, and why should VCU SGA fund the organization for the academic year.
- C. If an Annual request is submitted Student Organizations are not eligible to submit a semester request. Student Organizations are not eligible to submit more than one semester funding request per semester.
- D. Appropriate Use of Funds
 - a. Semester funding is intended to fund eligible student organizations from the beginning of the Fall or Spring semester to the end of the Fall or Spring Semester. These organizations may use the funds appropriately defined by these bylaws

Section 3. Special Circumstances Allocations

- A. A portion of the appropriations budget will be set aside for special circumstances.
- B. Special circumstances allocation is reserved for student organizations that are new or can demonstrate a need for funding that was neither present, conceivable, nor existent by the funding period deadline. To request special circumstances funds, the need must be demonstrable, justifiable, explained and supplied with the request.
- C. Registered student organizations seeking special circumstances allocation must submit a funding

request after the funding period deadline, but during the active funding period, at least 45 business days before the date of the event, alongside documentation of a need for funding that was neither present, conceivable, nor existent by the funding period deadline.

- D. The Appropriations Committee will have up to two weeks upon receipt of the submitted funding to approve or deny the funding request.
- E. Special circumstances allocations are made on a first-come, first-served basis.
- F. Submitted funding requests seeking special circumstances allocations must adhere to the existing guidelines for operational, travel, and programming funds.

Section 4. Summer/Winter Break Funding

- A. Summer/Winter Break Funding is defined as funding during times in which the academic calendar lists a closure of University or an absence of classes.
- B. Summer/Winter Break Funding may be declared in an Annual request. Requesting Summer/Winter Break funding through a semester request should be completed in the semester request prior to that funding need.
 - a. Any Summer Break funds requested prior to the beginning of the fall semester must be included in a spring funding request.
 - b. Any Winter Break funds requested prior to the beginning of the spring semester must be included in a fall funding request.
- C. Summer/Winter Break Funding should be clearly defined in the funding request.
- D. Summer/Winter Break funding is inclusive of the semester caps indicated above. Any overages requested may be visited through a submission of a special circumstance request.
- E. It is at the discretion of the Appropriations Committee to approve Summer/Winter Break Funding if available and it is by no means guaranteed.

Section 5. Funding Outline & Submission

- A. The Funding outline should include all estimated financial needs for each expected need throughout the funding period.
- B. The outline may be in a single document format at the choice of the organization (ex. Word document, Power Point, Spreadsheet, PDF, etc.).
- C. The outline must be submitted on Rams Connect as an uploaded document. If the file is too large, please email SGAFunding@vcu.edu with the complete file in addition to the organization's full name.
- D. For an event, the outline must include the following; total estimated event expenses, a detailed list of expenses anticipated for the event, event title, event date, event time, event location, event purpose, event description, expected attendance, and any other pertinent information.
 - a. Omission of either of these items may result in full denial of the event or request.
- E. Failure to submit an outline, may result in denial of funding.

Article V

Guidelines for Use of Funds

Section 1. Appropriate Use of Funds

- A. Funding is intended to fund eligible student organizations from the beginning of the Fall semester to the end of the Spring Semester. These organizations may use the funds appropriately as within these bylaw
- B. SGA Funding should be used for purposes that benefit a large number of the student body.
- C. Examples of funding include; food, supplies, equipment rental, decorations, beverages, etc.
- D. SGA will only fund purchasing of items within accordance of VCU Procurement Services. A document of allowable purchases can be found at <http://go.vcu.edu/sga-funding-allowable>.

Section 2. Operational Funds

- A. Registered student organizations may use funding for operations of their organization.
- B. Operational Funding may be used for organization specific events or needs.
- C. Operational Funding must be declared in the outline clearly as an operational need. The Appropriations Committee does not assume uses of funding.
- E. Use of Funds
 - a. Operational funding is meant for expenses relating to rental of equipment, skilled and/or contracted personnel and services, publicity, facilities, and supplies.
 - b. Operational funding may be requested through an Annual Funding Request which does not exceed \$500. Operational Funding may be requested through a submission of a semester request which does not exceed \$250 requested for operations.
- F. Maximum amount of allocated funds to be used for operational funding should not exceed \$500.

Section 3. Travel Funds

- A. Registered Student Organizations may use funding for travel of members of the student body.
- B. The Appropriations Committee will not spend more than \$500 on each traveling student.
 - 1. For co-sponsored programs involving travel, all organizations involved assume equal responsibilities to follow all policies of Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU SGA Appropriations Bylaws when having funds allocated to them.
- C. A basic outline of expenses must be provided alongside the funding for all travel requests.
 - 1. This outline should include all pertinent information to the travel opportunity. At minimum the outline should include; Traveling dates, number of students traveling, travel event dates, purpose of the event, impact on the VCU Student body, and an estimation of cost needs.
- D. Appropriate Use of Funds
 - 1. Travel funding is meant for expenses relating to lodging, registration, and transportation.
 - i. Transportation funding is limited to ticket based transport such as an air or train ticket.
 - 2. The VCU SGA will only fund VCU students. It will not fund student organization advisors, volunteers, professors, or non-VCU students.
 - 3. Travel funds allocated by the Appropriations Committee are awarded to groups for, but

not limited to, competitions, conferences, and other activities that allow students to promote Virginia Commonwealth University or to gain beneficial knowledge or information that benefits the student body.

Section 4. Programming Funds

A. Registered Student Organizations may use allocated funds for programming.

1. For co-sponsored programming, Registered Student Organizations will have a maximum amount allowed of \$8,400 of VCU SGA Funds. There is no limit on how many student organizations may co-sponsor an event.
2. All organizations involved assume equal responsibilities to follow all policies of Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU SGA Appropriations Bylaws when having funds allocated to them.

B. Use of Funds

1. Programming must be open and accessible to any member of the Student Body.
2. Programming must support the entertainment, educational, cultural, and social mission of the student activity fee.
3. Programming funds are limited to rental of equipment, food, facilities, skilled or contracted personnel and/or services, publicity, supplies, and miscellaneous.
4. Food items must follow a per diem limit of \$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch, and \$25 for dinner.
5. Items funded by the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee may not be sold to the student body for profit or fundraising purposes.
6. A Student Organization cannot charge students to attend an event.
7. If a change in the name of a program, date of a program, or line item amount is needed after committee approval, a request must be made to the Appropriations Committee by emailing the Appropriations Chair at SGAFunding@vcu.edu.

C. Philanthropic programming

1. Programming may have the additional purpose of raising funds meant for donation to a third-party 501(c)3 nonprofit philanthropic organization.
2. Nonprofit organization recipients of the donated funds must not conflict with VCU's policy Preventing and Responding to Discrimination (approved 05/29/2018), or any superseding policy. In short, the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization must promote and ensure equal opportunity with regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, political affiliation, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or disability.
3. Items funded by the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee may not be sold to the student body for a student organization to profit.

D. Publicity Requirements for Programming

1. Programming must be displayed on the Commons TV and in Larrick and Hunton Student Centers at least 14 days before the date of the event.
2. Must be added to the RamsConnect calendar at least 14 days before the date of the event.

3. Must appear in the TeleGRAM if the event takes place on Virginia Commonwealth University property.
4. The Appropriations Committee will not fund more than \$500 in t-shirts or other apparel for an event. The following must be included on all purchased apparel funded by the Student Government Association Appropriations Committee:
 - i. The Event Title
 - ii. VCU SGA Logo or “Sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association”

E. Eligibility and Non-Funded Items

1. Programming must benefit and be accessible to all VCU students. If the nature of the activity itself does not permit people of all abilities to participate, then a special allowance may be made by vote of approval at the discretion of the Appropriations Committee.
2. The organization must demonstrate they are capable of implementing and succeeding in the programming for which they are requesting funding.
3. Consideration will be given to other organizations at VCU that could help with the proposed programming, either through co-funding, co-sponsoring, or providing advice and assistance. Funding may be provided conditional on this collaboration.
4. Programming should address how the program will meet the diverse needs of VCU students.
5. All eligible student organizations that request a \$1,000 or more for programming *and* the event will take place at a University Student Commons and Activities facility will be required to meet with the assigned event planner at least 90 days before the program is scheduled (as submitted in the requested funding).

Section 4. Appeals

- A. If an organization is not satisfied with its allocation, it may first appeal to VCU SGA Judiciary Committee adhering to the following:
 - a. The appeal must be submitted to the SGA Judicial Appeals form on the SGA website (sga.vcu.edu/funding).
 - b. Included in the appeal are the exact line items that the organization would like to appeal and the reason that they believe that the appropriations committee unfairly or accidentally denied their request. No changes to amounts or additional documents are permitted during the appeal.
- B. If the organization is still not satisfied after the initial appeal, they are able to appeal a second and final time to the SGA Advisor(s) and the Director of the University Student Commons & Activities or his/her representative.

Article VI

Rollover

Section 1. SGA Capital Projects Fund

- A. Any funds not used by registered student organizations that were allocated the VCU SGA must be used by the purchasing deadline to be determined by USC&A. This includes any unused allocated funds appropriated by the Appropriations Committee.
- B. The majority of both VCU SGA Legislative Bodies must approve use of Capital funds.

Article VII

Freezing of Funds

Section 1. Freezing of Funds

- A. Organizations and committees receiving funding should be aware that the University Student Commons and Activities may freeze funds if improper use is discovered without the knowledge of the Appropriations Committee. University Student Commons and Activities is not bound by the Appropriations Committee Bylaws. Improper use of funds includes, but is not limited to:
1. The purchase of alcohol, tobacco, or other intoxicants.
 2. Off campus social activities that do not benefit a large number of students or meet the diverse needs of VCU students.
 - a. The Appropriations Committee will consider several criteria in determining the benefit of an off campus meeting location, including but not limited to:
 - i. Space availability in VCU facilities;
 - ii. The size of the event;
 - iii. Reasonable accessibility to a large number of VCU students; and
 - iv. The nature of the event.
 3. Activities that would jeopardize the University's tax exempt status.
 4. Direct philanthropic contributions or direct financial contributions to any enterprise.
 5. The sale of tangible items or charging students to attend an event.
 - a. This does not include approved items purchased for purposes of fundraising by Registered Student Organizations operating under fundraising rules for programming funds.
- B. The Appropriations Committee authorizes the University Student Commons and Activities, with approval of the Appropriations Chair, to freeze the funds (i.e., authorize no expenditures for any reason) of any organization or committee that has received an allocation if that organization or committee fails to accomplish any one of the following:
1. Observe and adhere to the procedures of the Appropriations Bylaws.
 2. Observe and adhere to the procedures and provisions of the Policies and Information for Registered Organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- C. The Registered Student Organization's account will be frozen to guard against further inappropriate expenditures. An audit of the account will be conducted to determine the account balance and whether or not there has been any inappropriate expenditures.
- D. University Student Commons and Activities will communicate the results of the audit and the reasons for freezing the account to the organization president and faculty advisor and to the Appropriations Committee at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Section 2. Release of Funds

- A. If the organization is able to resolve the issues that caused the account to be frozen in a satisfactory manner with the University Student Commons and Activities may release the account with the concurrence of the Appropriations Committee.

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- B. If the organization wishes to appeal the freezing of its account, it should request a consultation with the VCU SGA Faculty Advisor.
- C. In considering an appeal, the Appropriations Committee may take a variety of actions such as, but not limited to, removing the freeze, removing the freeze with conditions, or imposing restrictions on future allocations.
- D. The VCU SGA Judiciary Committee may review sanctions, freezing of funds, and other Committee decisions at the request of any individual, in the form of a Judicial Brief. The Judiciary Committee can be reached by contacting the SGA Advisor and emailing SGAJudicial@vcu.edu.