



Virginia Commonwealth University
Student Government Association
Appropriations Bylaws

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Article I

Internal Structure

Section 1. Mission

- A. The mission of the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee is to disburse Student Activity Funds in a fair and consistent manner to all 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 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.
 - b. To recommend changes in the amount of the Student Activity Fee.
 - c. To coordinate with the University Student Commons & Activities regarding the allocation and disbursement of Student Activity Fee.
 - d. To report to the SGA Legislative Bodies regarding the allocation of funds.
 - e. To be good stewards of the money.

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 and actively participate in discussion. If a member cannot attend, then a delegate must take their place. A member can miss up to three meetings per semester.
 - b. They must fairly and objectively review all requests made by student organizations. If there is a conflict of interest, the member is trusted to recuse their self from deliberation and voting on the request.

- c. 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. Committee members can miss no more than three (3) meetings before their membership is terminated, barring extenuating circumstances. Board members must notify the Appropriations Chair and the Secretary regarding absences prior to the start of the meeting.
- G. 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.
- H. 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 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 Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association (VCU SGA) Senates 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. These minutes must be submitted to the Appropriations Committee within seven (7) days of every subcommittee hearing.

Article III

Funding Eligibility

Section 1. Organizations Eligible for Funding

- A. The Appropriations Committee will consider funding requests for allocation of the Student Activity Fee from only the SGA and all Student Organizations that are registered with the University.
- B. Any newly registered Student Organization or any Student Organization that has been inactive for one year or more must have been registered for thirty (30) days before becoming eligible to request funds.
- C. 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 will not be eligible to request funding again until registration has been current for thirty (30) days.
- D. Eligible Student Organizations must be registered via RamsConnect, meet student organization requirements, and must be in good standing with the University.
- E. If a student organization has or will receive funding from the Student Activity Fee via a different outlet, e.g. social fraternities and sororities, sports clubs, and graduate student groups applying via the Graduate Student Association, then that organization is ineligible for funding from the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee.
- F. At least two officers of the Student Organization must be Finance trained annually.

Section 2. Procedures for Allocation of Funds

- A. The Student Activity Fund 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. Seventy percent (70%) of funds shall be allocated to undergraduate student organizations, and thirty percent (30%) shall be allocated to graduate and professional student organizations.
- B. The Student Activity Fund will be further divided with a percentage of funds allocated to three funding periods, which correspond to the Summer, Spring, and Fall semesters. The deadlines for these funding periods will be March 1, April 1, and October 1, respectively.
- C. The Fall and Spring funding periods will be structured similarly.
 - a. For undergraduate student organizations, 46% of their cut of the Student Activity Fund, or 32.2% of the entire Student Activity Fund, will be available for the Fall and Spring semesters, respectively.
 - b. For graduate and professional student organizations, 42.5% of their cut of the Student Activity Fund, or 12.75% of the entire Student Activity Fund, will be available for the Fall and Spring semesters, respectively.

- c. For both Fall and Spring, eighty-five percent (85%) of the funds available will be allocated following the funding period deadline. Fifteen percent (15%) will be retained for Special Circumstances allocations once the funding period is active.
 - d. 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 and justifiable.
- D. The summer funding period will have a set amount that is dispersed at the deadline with no reserves.
- a. Eight percent (8%) of the undergraduate Student Activity Fund, or 5.6% of the entire Student Activity Fund, will be available.
 - b. Fifteen percent (15%) of the graduate and professional Student Activity Fund, or 4.5% of the entire Student Activity Fund, will be available in the summer.
- E. Funds not allocated and/or used by student organizations during a funding period are automatically added to the following funding period’s available funds unless the excess funds occur in the summer funding period, in which case the funds accrue to VCU SGA’s rollover account.
- F. If the total requested amount of funds for a funding period exceeds the allocable amount, then a percent reduction cut will be applied to all funding requests so that only the allocable funds are allocated.
- G. The Appropriations Committee will recognize two types of student organizations: undergraduates and graduate/professional student organizations. This designation will be based on majority membership.

Section 3. Funding Requests Deadlines

- A. Student organizations are asked to submit their funding requests for the funding period by the deadlines outlined below.
- B. Funding requests must encompass one of three funding categories: Travel, operational, and programming.
- C. The funding request deadlines for each funding period will be as follows:

VCU Student Government Association
Funding Request Calendar

<i>Funding Period</i>	For Programming Events, Operational, or Travel Dates in:	Deadline:
<i>Fall</i>	Fall Semester	October 1, 11:59 PM
<i>Spring</i>	Spring Semester	April 1, 11:59 PM
<i>Summer</i>	Summer Semester	March 11, 11:59 PM

Article IV

Funding Requests

Section 1. Operational Funds

- A. Eligible student organizations may request operational funds in their funding.
 - a. Undergraduate organizations may request up to five hundred dollars (\$500) for operational funds for each academic year.
 - b. Graduate and professional student organizations may request up to one hundred (\$100) for operational funds for each academic year.
- B. A basic outline of operational expenses must be provided alongside the funding. For requests over three hundred dollars (\$300), itemized documentation must be provided. Proper documentation consists of invoices, quotes, and/or shopping cart screenshots and must be dated within sixty (60) days of the date of submission.
- C. Appropriate 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. The following must be included on all purchased apparel funded by the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee: VCU SGA Logo or “Sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association.”
 - c. Items funded by the SGA Appropriations Committee may not be sold to the student body for profit or fundraising purposes.
 - d. Operational funding that is not used for during a funding period will be reallocated to the following funding period until the summer funding period in which case it will be reallocated to the SGA Rollover account. Eligible Student Organizations will not be able to keep this funding for the following funding period.

Section 2. Travel Funds

- A. Eligible Student Organizations may request travel funds in their funding request.
 - 1. Undergraduate organizations may request up to two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for travel each academic year.
 - 2. Graduate and professional student organizations may request up to two thousand (\$2,000) for travel each academic year.
- B. The Appropriations Committee will not spend more than five hundred dollars (\$500) on each traveling student.
 - 1. For co-sponsored programs involving travel, Eligible Student Organizations will have a maximum amount allowed of \$7,500. 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. For requests over three hundred (\$300), itemized documentation must be provided.
 - 1. Proper documentation consists of invoices, quotes, and/or shopping cart screenshots and must be dated within sixty (60) days of the date of submission.
 - 2. Examples of travel documentation include screenshots of flight prices, hotel bookings, expected miles traveled by vehicle, and per diem rates for locations.
- D. Appropriate Use of Funds
 - 1. Travel funding is meant for expenses relating to lodging, registration, and transportation.
 - 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 3. Programming Funds

- A. Eligible Student Organizations may request programming funds.
 - 1. Undergraduate student organizations may request up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for programming per year.
 - 2. Graduate and professional student organizations may request up to four thousand (\$4,000) for programming per year.
 - 3. For co-sponsored programming, Eligible Student Organizations will have a maximum amount allowed of \$15,000. 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. A basic outline of expenses must be provided as part of the funding request. For requests over three-hundred dollars (\$300), itemized documentation must be provided. Proper documentation consists of invoices, quotes, and/or shopping cart screenshots must be dated within sixty (60) days of the date of submission.
- C. Appropriate 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 ten dollars (\$10) for breakfast, fifteen dollars (\$15) for lunch, and twenty-five dollars (\$25) for dinner.
 - 5. Miscellaneous items must not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100).

6. Items funded by the VCU SGA Appropriations Committee may not be sold to the student body for profit purposes.
 7. A Student Organization cannot charge students to attend an event.
 8. 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.
- D. 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 for Affirmation for VCU's Equal Opportunity-Interim (found at <https://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Affirmation%20of%20VCU%27s%20Equal%20Opportunity-Interim.pdf>). 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.
- E. Publicity Requirements for Programming
1. Programming must be displayed on the Commons TV and in Larrick and Hunton Student Centers at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the event.
 2. Must be added to the RamsConnect calendar at least fourteen (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 for more than five hundred dollars (\$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"
- F. Eligibility and Non-Funded Items
1. Programming must benefit and be accessible to a large number of 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 thousand dollars (\$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 ninety (90) days before the program is scheduled (as submitted in the requested funding).

Section 4. Reallocations.

- A. Organizations may reallocate up to 10% of their total funding into different lines; the amount may not go over \$500.
- B. For organizations wishing to reallocate more than 10% or \$500 of a funding request, then they must request the Appropriations Committee's approval by emailing the Chair. Reallocations below this amount can be approved by the University Student Commons & Activities Finance Office.
- C. Reallocations cannot take place from one funding to another; leftover funds not used for any funding are to be reallocated to the following funding period unless it is the summer period, in which case funds are reallocated to the SGA Rollover Fund.

Section 5. Appeals

- A. If an organization is not satisfied with its allocation, it may first appeal to Appropriations Committee adhering to the following:
 - a. The appeal must be submitted to the SGA Advisor in written form no later than one weeks after funding allocations are made. The SGA Advisor will forward the appeal to the SGA's Chief Justice for the SGA Judicial Branch's consideration. The SGA Advisor and the Judicial Branch must come to an agreement and will have the final say.
 - b. Included in the appeal are the exact line items that the organization would like to appeal. No changes to amounts or additional documents are permitted during the appeal.
 - c. The appeal will take place during a time scheduled by the Chief Justice.
 - d. If the organization is still not satisfied after the initial appeal, they are able to appeal a second and final time to the Virginia Commonwealth University Finance Office.

Article V

Special Circumstances Allocations

Section 1. Immediately Allocated Funds

- A. In the Fall and Spring Funding Periods, eighty-five percent (85%) of available funds are allocated based on submitted funding requests.
- B. In the Summer Funding Period, one hundred percent (100%) of available funds are allocated based on the submitted funding requests.

Section 2. Special Circumstances Allocations

- A. In the Fall and Spring Funding Periods, fifteen percent (15%) of available funds are reserved for special circumstances allocation.
- 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 and justifiable.
- C. Eligible 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 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 four 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.

Article VI

Rollover

Section 1. Rollover

- A. Any funds not allocated or used by the VCU SGA by June 30 of the fiscal year are considered rollover funds. This includes any unused allocated funds appropriated by the Appropriations Committee.
- B. The majority of the VCU SGA Legislative Body must approve use of Rollover funds that exceed \$500. That is, both Senates must approve the use of Rollover funds.

Article VII

Freezing of Funds

Section 1. Freezing of Funds

- A. Organizations and committees receiving funding should be aware that the University Accounting Office may freeze funds if improper use is discovered without the knowledge of the Appropriations Committee. The University Accounting Office 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. Tangible items that will be sold or charging students to attend an event.
 - a. This does not include approved items purchased for purposes of fundraising by Eligible Student Organizations operating under fundraising rules for programming funds.
- B. The Appropriations Committee authorizes the Student Organization Financial Office, 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 Eligible 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. The Student Organization Financial Office 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 Student Organization Financial Office, the Student Organization Financial Office may release the account.
- 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.