

Office of the Assemblies

SA Appropriations: Appendix A: Guidelines for the
Allocation of the Student Activity Fee (February 24,
2009 Draft)

Cornell Assemblies

February 25, 2009, at 02:35 PM

I. Preamble

The Student Assembly (the Assembly), through the delegated authority of the President and the Board of Trustees, is charged with the allocation of the Student Activity Fee (SAF). This fee is mandatory for all undergraduate students of the University and shall be used to fund participation in, and viewing of, activities and programs that benefit the Cornell community. The SAF shall be determined during the fall semester of every odd-numbered year, and be subject to the approval of the President of the University.

II. Definitions

The following terms, which appear frequently in this Appendix, shall be defined as follows:

Organization a registered Independent or University organization that has authorization to receive funding.

SAFC Student Assembly Finance Commission, a committee of the Student Assembly.

New applicant an organization that did not receive funding in the previous two funding cycles.

Returning applicant an organization that did receive funding in the previous two funding cycles.

Funding cycle a two-year period of time spanning from the start of the third quarter of an even-numbered year to the end of the second quarter of the next even-numbered year (e.g. July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008).

Petition document to collect signatures that includes the name of the organization, its mission statement, and monetary request. All petitions must be registered with and prepared by the Office of the Assemblies.

By-line funding line item funding that comes directly from the SAF and not from an intermediary source, such as the SAFC.

Appropriations Committee a committee of the Student Assembly as outlined in Bylaw 7.6.a.1.

III. Eligibility

~~In order to be considered eligible for by-line funding,~~ To receive byline funding organizations applicants must:

- A. directly and primarily serve/benefit the entire undergraduate Cornell community
- B. allow all students equal access to services and/or participation
- C. request as part of their annual operating budget at least \$0.50 per student, per year, from the SAF ~~(the minimum amount set by the Board of Trustees)~~
- D. if a new applicant, present a petition of fifteen hundred (1500) registered undergraduates to the Student Assembly

~~In order to be considered eligible for by-line funding, organizations must also (if a group does not meet the following criteria, a majority vote of the SA and approval from the President of the University is required to be deemed eligible)~~ Except at the discretion of the Assembly and with approval of the President, organizations must also:

- A. be a registered organization
- B. be student-directed and student-led
- C. possess a University operating account with internally controlled funds
- D. have a Cornell-employed advisor with oversight of its account
- E. be previously funded by either the SAFC, the Student Assembly, or a University department/unit for at least two semesters

IV. Procedure

A. Qualification Application

- A.1. The Office of the Assemblies shall make applications materials available for all interested applicants by noon on ~~February 1st~~ the first business day in February of the academic year preceding the fee-setting year. ~~If February 1st falls on a weekend, applications shall be made available the immediately following Monday at noon. The VP for Public Relations will~~

~~advertise the availability of applications in The Cornell Daily Sun. Returning applicants shall not be required to submit petitions, though they must submit a formal application for by-line funding.~~

A.2. ~~Completed applications for new and returning applicants shall be submitted to the Office of the Assemblies no later than noon on April 25th of the academic year preceding the fee-setting year. If April 25th falls on a weekend, the deadline shall be considered the immediately following Monday at noon.~~ By noon on April 25 or the first business day thereafter in the semester preceding a fee-setting year, each applicant must submit, using forms provided by the Office of the Assemblies, a preliminary application including:

- name of applicant,
- amount of request in dollars per student per year,
- checklist statement regarding eligibility criteria,
- current primary and secondary contacts for the organization, and,
- if a new applicant, petitions bearing the signature of fifteen hundred (1500) undergraduate students registered in that semester.

A.3. ~~All applicants shall present the following information to the Office of the Assemblies by the application deadline, as described in §IV.A.2 of this document: By noon on Friday of the third week in which classes are held in a fee setting year, each applicant must submit, using forms provided by the Office of the Assemblies, a final application including:~~

- ~~Constitution.~~
- Mission statement, charter, and bylaws of the organization or program,
- ~~Detailed financial statements for the past two academic years and current academic year., not to exceed ten pages,~~
- Detailed financial projections for the two years during the funding cycle., not to exceed five pages,
- ~~Request for funding in terms of dollars per student, per year, which may not be increased during the remainder of the funding process.~~
- Written organization biography profile, not to exceed three pages, including:
 - officers,
 - number of members,
 - history, and
 - description of activities/, programming/, and events conducted in the present cycle, etc.
- ~~A two-page summary of request for funding, highlighting purpose and background of group and expectations of what funding will be used for, and including a budget. All information will be kept on record in the Office of the Assemblies for public viewing and may be duplicated upon request.~~ not to exceed two pages, describing how the applicant intends to use funding and summarizing any changes if the applicant is a returning applicant.
- ~~New applicants shall also present at least fifteen hundred (1500) signatures of registered undergraduates.~~

Spring requirement.

A.4. Applicants may submit materials in excess of specified numbers of pages

only with written permission by the Vice President for Finance.

- A.5. The Office of the Assemblies will make received application materials available for public viewing online. Any pages containing confidential information must be explicitly stamped “confidential” and clearly identified to distinguish them from the publicly viewable portion of the application.
- A.6. ~~Within one week of the petitioning deadline, the Appropriations Committee will review all applicants to ensure eligibility as per these guidelines or to make decisions regarding exceptions to eligibility requirements, which will be affirmed by a majority vote of the Appropriations Committee. The decisions of the Appropriations Committee shall be reported to the Student Assembly for approval by majority vote. All applicants have the right to appeal Appropriations Committee decisions to the Student Assembly, as outlined in Section 7.3.3 of the Student Assembly Charter.~~
- A.7. ~~After the decisions on eligibility have been made and before the end of the academic year prior to the fee-setting year, members of the sitting Executive Committees or designee thereof shall present the total SAF requested figure to the Office of Student and Academic Services and the Office of Planning and Budget.~~
- B. Preliminary Report by Appropriations Committee
- B.1. By the last day of classes in the academic year preceding a fee-setting year, the Vice President of Finance will report each request received and the total amount of requests received in dollars per student per year to the Assembly, the Vice President for Student and Academic Services, and the President of the University.
- B.2. Before the deadline for final applications, the Appropriations Committee will report to the Assembly on the eligibility of each applicant, identifying:
- any new applicants that do not meet one or more eligibility criteria, and
 - any returning applicants that do not meet one or more eligibility criteria which the Assembly may not waive.
- B.3. The Assembly may waive those eligibility requirements it is empowered to waive on a per organization basis for any organization for the remainder of the semester. Such organizations may then proceed through the appropriation process, provided they meet all other eligibility criteria not waived by the Assembly.
- C. ~~Authorization of SAF Applicants~~Appropriation Process
- C.1. Within one week after the deadline for final applications, the Appropriations Committee (the committee) shall convene to review applications.
- C.2. For each applicant deemed to be eligible or for which eligibility criteria are waived by the Assembly, the committee will:
- C.2.1. arrange a hearing where the applicant may address questions of the committee,
- C.2.2. decide whether to fund the applicant in any amount, and,
- C.2.3. if it decides to fund the applicant, adopt an allocation in dollars per student per year of no less than fifty cents and no more than the request submitted by the applicant.

- C.3. At each meeting of the Assembly immediately preceding such a meeting of the committee, the Vice President of Finance will report the date, time, and location of the meetings as well as the names of applicants the committee intends to review.
- C.4. At each meeting of the Assembly immediately following such a meeting of the committee, the Vice President of Finance will provide a written executive summary, not to exceed a page for each applicant, including:
- name of applicant,
 - names of committee members present,
 - names of applicant representatives present,
 - amount requested by applicant,
 - amount of allocation recommended by committee,
 - rationale explaining committee's recommendation, and
 - a brief response from the applicant, including any request for the Assembly to review the committee's recommendation.
- C.5. The Vice President of Finance shall also file minutes of the committee's meetings with the Office of the Assemblies.
- C.6. The committee will submit its final recommendation, including individual allocations, to the Assembly in the form of a legislative resolution before the first business day in November of the fee setting year.

~~## At the first regularly scheduled business meeting of the SA, the VP for Finance shall introduce legislation to authorize all SAF applicants deemed eligible the previous semester. This legislation shall be deemed as "New Business," and it shall be governed under the rules according with that section of the agenda. A suspension of the rules to change its placement on the agenda shall be considered out of order.~~

~~## Assembly members shall have the ability to state their objections to authorization of specific SAF applicants.~~

~~## Applicants objected to shall be notified of the objection on the same day and requested to appear for a hearing at the next regularly scheduled business meeting of the SA.~~

~~## At the second regularly scheduled business meeting of the SA, the legislation to authorize shall be deemed the first item of business under "Business of the Day," and shall be governed under the rules according with that section of the agenda.~~

~~## An objection to a specific applicant shall be considered an amendment to strike the applicant from the legislation to authorize; these shall be considered individually as subsidiary motions to the main motion.~~

~~## All applicants objected to should be heard before the Assembly while the legislation to authorize is on the floor.~~

~~## The legislation to authorize shall require a 3/5 majority vote to pass.~~

~~## Upon passage of this legislation, the authorized applicants shall be referred to the Appropriations Committee for appropriation.~~

~~# Appropriations Committee Budgeting Process~~

~~## Composition~~

~~### The Appropriations Committee shall be composed as delineated in Bylaw 7.6.a.1 included with the Student Assemblies Charter.~~

~~## Procedure~~

~~### The Appropriations Committee shall convene hearings for each of the authorized~~

~~groups and compile recommendations into a budget, to be passed by majority vote, and presented to the Assembly on the fifth regularly scheduled meeting of the academic year.~~

~~### The Appropriations Committee shall review each group's petition, beginning with new groups' petitions first, and each of the subsequent groups in random order. Appropriations Committee hearings shall consist of a presentation by the group applying for funding and of questioning by the members of the Committee.~~

~~### The Committee shall hear each group, entertain questions, and debate, and then move into executive session to propose a recommended allocation by majority vote.~~

~~### After each group has been heard, the Appropriation's committee shall pass the entire budget as a document to be presented to the Assembly.~~

~~### Upon receipt of the SAF Budget from the Appropriations Committee, the Executive Committee or designee thereof shall present the total SAF figure to the Office of Student and Academic Services and the Office of Planning and Budget.~~

1. Student Assembly Appropriation Process

1.1. The Assembly shall not adopt the recommendation of the Appropriations Committee at the same meeting that it is proposed.

1.2. The Assembly shall provide notice to all applicants at least one full day in advance at any meeting where legislation related to its funding is discussed.

1.3. ~~At the fifth regularly scheduled business meeting of the SA, the VP for Finance shall present the SAF Budget of the Appropriations Committee under "Business of the Day."~~

~~## The SAF Budget shall be considered "open legislation" under Business of the Day of the SA Agenda for all regularly scheduled business meetings during the fee-setting semester. The legislation shall always be considered amendable by majority vote. The legislation shall be open to all motions with the following three exceptions: 1) a suspension of the rules to change its placement on the agenda shall be considered out of order; 2) a motion to divide the question shall be considered out of order; 3) a motion to bring the legislation to a vote (e.g. "motion of the previous question") shall be considered out of order until on or after December 1 of the fee-setting semester.~~

~~## SAF Applicants deemed authorized shall be heard before the SA at some time during the fee-setting semester.~~

~~## The VP for Finance shall be charged with scheduling all SAF applicants for hearings before the SA. The Vice President for Public Relations shall, at least 48 hours before the Assembly meeting at which voting of funding requests is to take place, place an advertisement in The Cornell Daily Sun outlining each groups funding request and the date, place, and time of the SA meetings.~~

~~## Should the total of the individual by lines of the SAF not be a whole-dollar amount, it shall be rounded up to the nearest whole-dollar, with the difference being allocated to the SAFC. In no circumstance shall the SAFC receive less than 35% of the total amount of the SAF. If the amount allocated to the SAFC is less than 35% of the total SAF, the allocation of the SAFC shall automatically be adjusted.~~

~~## The legislation shall require a 3/5 majority vote of the Student Assembly to pass.~~

~~## { This SAF recommendation shall be delivered~~The President of the Assembly will transmit its recommendation to the President for consideration by the last day of classes of the fall semester. In his/her letter the President of the Student Assembly shall report, including:

- the total amount of SAF recommendation,
- the allocations of each by-line funded organization, and
- a short description of each organization.

V. Specifications

~~# The VP for Finance shall prepare all materials required for the SAF process prior to the first regularly scheduled meeting of the SA in the fee-setting semester. This shall include, but is not limited to: copies of all application materials for SA and Appropriations Committee members, the schedule of groups' appearance before the Appropriations Committee, and the schedule of groups' appearance before the Student Assembly.~~

~~# The VP for Finance shall convene the Appropriations Committee immediately upon the commencement of classes in the fee-setting semester.~~

~~# The Vice President of Finance shall chair the Appropriations Committee, with membership as outlined in the Student Assembly Bylaws. All Appropriations Committee members must be staffed by May 1, and no changes may be made to its membership until the completion of the SAF allocation process, unless by a majority vote of the Student Assembly.~~

- A. ~~Should the Vice President of Finance or a member of the Appropriations Committee be affiliated with a new or returning applicant for by-line funding (with the exception of the Student Assembly), then that Appropriations Committee member shall remove himself/herself from the decision-making process for the portion of the meeting in which a conflict of interest arises. In circumstances in which a conflict of interest arises for the Vice President of Finance, he/she shall also excuse himself/herself from presiding over that portion of the meeting and a member of the Appropriations Committee, who has been designated by the President of the Student Assembly, shall serve as chair.~~Members of the Assembly or the Appropriations Committee must disclose to the Vice President of Finance any personal affiliations with applicants and must recuse themselves from any business related to such applicants to prevent conflicts of interest.
- B. Members of the Assembly and of the Appropriations Committee must sign a confidentiality statement and submit it to the Office of the Assemblies before they are seated in the fall semester of a fee-setting year.

VI. “Check-off” or “Pay-extra” Options

Neither a check-off option nor an option to pay an amount in addition to the established SAF for specific programs or services will be allowed for purposes of exempting a student from paying the full amount of the SAF. Exceptions may be considered if recommended and approved by the Student Assembly and approved by the President of the University.

VII. Voting

All decisions of the Student Assembly regarding the SAF during the SAF allocation process shall be of ~~present membership~~ members present. Proxy votes shall not be permitted on any ~~and all~~ votes pertaining to the SAF.

VIII. Freedom of Information

Unless otherwise noted, all documents regarding the SAF shall be considered public and shall be available to members of the Cornell community for review within 24 hours of their request. All deliberations regarding allocations and authorization shall be ~~in accordance with Bylaw 6.3.a~~ conducted in open session unless otherwise required by university policy or law.

If a closed session is necessary to review or discuss confidential materials, discussion in such session must be limited only to those materials and no vote may be taken regarding the disposition of the request itself. Confidential materials may be disclosed publicly only at the discretion of authorized university personnel.

IX. Conference with GPSA

If a disparity arises in funding levels between the GPSA and SA of an organization that is funded by both, the financial officers of each body will meet to discuss the discrepancy and recommend action to their respective bodies.

X. Default

~~Should these processes and procedures regarding the allocation of the SAF fail to be completed in their entirety by the last day of classes of the fall semester, the total fee amount shall be set at the same level as in the current funding cycle. If the Assembly does not adopt a recommendation in the fall semester of a fee setting year, its recommendation shall be presumed to be that all individual by-lines shall revert to the same level as in the current funding cycle with the following exception:~~

- A. Should an applicant's newly approved allocation be less than that of the current cycle, the applicant shall receive the lower allocation.

XI. Amendment

Appendix A may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Assembly. In order to ensure consistency and fairness to the applicants and student body at-large, no amendments to this appendix may be ~~considered~~adopted during the fall semester of a ~~funding~~fee-setting year.

XII. Review

The SA and the GPSA and a representative of the President of the University shall review these guidelines and the procedures established in accordance therewith at least every four years in a non-fee-setting year (e.g. 2006–2007, 2010–2011). This review shall be conducted with strict adherence to the guidelines set forth by the Board of Trustees in Attachment A: Criteria for Setting and Allocating the Student Activity Fee (03/01/99).

Attachment A: Criteria for Setting and Allocating the Student Activity Fee ?

Cornell University
March 1, 1999

Pursuant to a letter dated March 1, 1999, the President of the University has delegated responsibility for the setting and allocation of the Student Activity Fee to the Student Assembly (SA) and the Graduate & Professional Student Assembly (GPSA) within the following guidelines:

- A. The SA and the GPSA shall each amend their respective charters to include the criteria for the setting and allocation of the Student Activity Fee, including the guidelines set forth herein and which criteria shall be reviewed by and meet the approval of the President of the University.
- B. The Student Activity Fee for undergraduate students and for graduate and professional students shall be set every two years for a period of two years by the SA and the GPSA, respectively.
- C. The amount of the Student Activity Fee shall be determined by the last day of classes in the fall semester of the fee-setting year by the SA and the GPSA, after substantive input and active participation in the fee-setting process by their constituencies. In the event the SA or the GPSA is unable to meet this deadline, the applicable Student Activity Fee will default to the amount and allocation currently in effect during the fee-setting year.
- D. In general, in order to be considered for funding from the monies collected through the Student Activity Fee, an organization must meet the following criteria:

- D.1. Register as a student or university organization with the Student Activities Office
- D.2. Allow students equal access to the services being provided by the organization or participation in the organization's activities
- D.3. Operate primarily for students by students with funds disbursed through a university operating account
- D.4. Have an advisor to assist with oversight of the university operating account.
- E. Funding from the monies collected through the Student Activities Fee may be provided directly to an organization, which applies for and receives "by-line" funding status, outside of the established Student Assembly Finance Commission or Graduate and Professional Student Assembly Finance Commission processes. In addition to the general criteria set out above, an organization wishing to receive by-line funding must demonstrate:
 - E.1. Its activities are of direct and primary benefit to the entire Cornell community represented by the respective assembly; and
 - E.2. It has a demonstrated budgetary need equivalent to at least 50 cents per student per year.
- F. The SA and the GPSA may also elect to provide by-line funding for other programs and services, which are not registered organizations (e.g., Students Helping Students, club insurance) but whose organizational structure and programs and services are consistent with the criteria outlined above for by-line funded organizations. Such funding would require the approval of the respective assembly and the President of the University.
- G. The SA and the GPSA will ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between funds allocated to by-line funded organizations and the Student Assembly Finance Commission or Graduate and Professional Student Assembly Finance Commission, respectively. The SA and GPSA shall allocate no less than 35% of their respective Student Activity Fees to the applicable Finance Commission for disbursement among non-by-line funded organizations.
- H. Neither a check-off option nor an option to pay an amount in addition to the established Student Activity Fee for specific programs or services will be allowed for purposes of exempting a student from paying the full amount of the Student Activity Fee, due to the funding instability inherent in administering such a system. Exceptions may be considered if recommended and approved by the respective assembly and approved by the President of the University.
- I. These guidelines and the procedures established in accordance therewith shall be reviewed by the SA and the GPSA and a representative of the President of the University at least every four years in a non-fee-setting year.

Appendix A ^(w)