

Dear Chairman Holshouser and Senators of the FinApp Committee,

As representatives of the Georgetown University Student Association, we are writing to appeal the Fiscal Year 2019 allocation we received in the Draft Budget of the FY19 Student Activities Fee Allocation of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.

After requesting **\$25,325** for FY19, GUSA disappointingly received just **\$6,455** — a significant decrease from the FY18 allocation of **\$23,950**. This **73% decrease** effectively defunds the largest line item of GUSA: **GUSA Fund**, a critical tool for funding student projects that often face burdensome funding gaps that exist within current Georgetown funding mechanisms. We are asking for **\$21,455**, which will fully fund this popular, effective, and necessary student resource on top of our originally approved FY19 allocation.

What distinguishes GUSA Fund from other funding mechanisms on campus is its unique project focus. It's designed specifically to scrutinize at the project level and hone in on diversity, especially with projects and organizations that would otherwise be left, more or less, ignored in bulk funding. GUSA Fund serves as a better funding board in financing specific projects that align with the values put forth by the concept of student government and more broadly, Georgetown as a Jesuit institution. Consequently, the defunding of GUSA Fund would be a harmful disservice to the Georgetown student body whom this Student Association serves.

GUSA Fund currently addresses three major funding gaps for student projects on campus:

- 1) **It provides funding for projects that might not have been possible otherwise.**
- 2) **It provides funding for projects geared toward minority communities.**
- 3) **It provides funding for projects to reduce barriers to engagement for students.**

First, consider the examples of the annual *Visions of Excellence* Ball, Figure Skating Club's Annual Showcase, or the funding of the CSJ's Alternative Spring Break Program, Magis Jamaica. In the case of the Annual Showcase, due to a last minute change of mind in previous funding sources, Figure Skating Club were \$500 short. Club Sports was tied to only funding competitive events, and thus the Figure Skating event was deemed ineligible. Not any less valuable of a program, they looked to GUSA Fund to provide support. After coming to GUSA Fund, Figure Skating was granted the money they needed to break even on their Annual Showcase, while also being able to donate proceeds from their ticket sales to a cancer research foundation. The Club also did not need to raise ticket prices, thus keeping costs as low as possible. Without GUSA Fund support, the Figure Skating Club would have been left without the financial means to engage in their programming.

Second, consider the BRAVE Summit, the African Society of Georgetown's *Abissa* and *Ubuntu* events, the Caribbean Culture Circle's *Carib Night*, the South Asian Society's *Rangila*, the Latin American Student Association's *Reventón*, the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Chapter at Georgetown University, and OWN IT Summit. Marquee campus events such as OWN IT, Reventón, and Rangila rely on GUSA Fund to fill in key gaps presented by the current campus fiscal climate. These events color the experiences of the majority of Georgetown students while advancing the university's reputation and would not be possible without GUSA Fund project support and funding. Alongside its support of marquee projects and programming, GUSA Fund remains an invaluable resource for lesser-known, smaller, and/or less-established organizations at Georgetown, as more than half of its total budget this year (\$7,845) allocated to non-SAC organization projects.

Third, consider the examples of unrecognized student groups, such as H*yas For Choice (HFC) and Georgetown's NSBE Chapter, why rely on GUSA Fund to maintain their presence on campus and serve the student body in new and different ways than the university might currently provide. The support of GUSA Fund enables HFC to improve sexual health on campus while promoting important dialogue around reproductive rights and healthy relationships. Additionally, GUSA Fund prevents leaders of NSBE at Georgetown from paying out of pocket for their programming, removing financial barriers for the club's sustained presence on campus and promoting equity and inclusion for the student community NSBE serves.

The Fund scrutinizes at the project level to promote student wellness, equity, and access for student organizations and communities on campus. With projects that impact every Hoya alongside those serving marginalized groups ignored by bulk funding, the portfolio of GUSA Fund is woven into the fabric of Georgetown.

Below, you will find a testimonial by leadership of a key project that the Fund supported:

*"H*yas for Choice has been unrecognized as a student group since the early 1990s, during which time we have operated without financial assistance from the University. Because of our unrecognized status, our organization relies on donations, grants, and internal fundraising in order to hold events on campus and share our mission, programming, and advocacy with the Georgetown community. GUSA Fund has been a useful source of funding to H*yas for Choice in the past; most recently, we secured a generous GUSA Fund donation in order to help pay the honorarium for our "Choice Week" keynote speaker. Because all of our funds are independently raised, H*yas for Choice and other student groups that do not enjoy the funding and other benefits ensured by University recognition rely on non-administrative bodies such as GUSA Fund in order to reach students who are interested in, inspired by, and committed to our work."* — Michaela Pepi-Lewis, co-president of HFC (COL '18)

We hope that through this appeals process, the committee will agree that the work of GUSA Fund is not only extremely valuable, but vitally necessary to support a number of important student projects at Georgetown. Because of the current funding landscape, GUSA Fund is uniquely positioned to further this critical work. Defunding GUSA Fund would be a grave mistake and a disservice to the Georgetown student body at large.

Please be in touch if the committee requires any further materials. We look forward to discussing this further in person tomorrow evening.

Best,

Sahil Nair
President-Elect, GUSA

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Vice President-Elect, GUSA