GUSA Finance & Appropriations Committee

**FY19 Budget Summit**

Student Activity Fee Funding Application

(APPLICATION A - Advisory Boards, GPB, the GUSA Executive-Elect and the Lecture Fund)

Please email this application and accompanying materials to gusafinanceandappropriations@gmail.com by **Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 5:00 pm.**

**PART A.**

Name of Organization: **Student Activities Commission (SAC)**

Mission of Organization:

The Student Activities Commission (SAC) is an advisory board to the Vice President of Student Affairs. SAC provides funding and supervises the overall administration and effectiveness of student organizations, or clubs, and activities under its jurisdiction.

Total Amount of Funding Requested: $300,000

**PART B.**

Please fill out the Application A Financial Information excel document.

**PART C.**

Please attach a copy of the budgeting guidelines used by your organization for any and all purposed.

**PART D.**

Please answer the following questions individually:

1. How did your organization affect student life? Can this be measured?

SAC is an integral part of student life at Georgetown University. We support more student leaders than any other advisory board, providing over 130 student groups with funding and guidance how to best serve our community. Our organization helps our campus community's interests flourish—and those interests are broad. We have organizations that focus on anything from protecting the environment to fostering places where students can freely talk about their sexuality without fear to providing links to the many cultural heritages with which students identify. While we work, for the most part, behind the scenes crunching numbers, we are able to create a positive impact through our continuously working to fostering a community that is diverse as much as it is actively involved. With 13 commissioners dedicating themselves to SAC’s mission every semester, we are able to offer all of the organizations that we oversee fair and equitable treatment by following our thorough Budget Guide regulations. Thus, SAC has an immeasurable impact on the extracurricular lives of thousands of undergraduates, and offers opportunities for Hoyas, especially first-year students, to get involved and find their home on the Hilltop.

1. How many clubs/groups compose your organization? Please list them, noting especially any clubs/groups added (or planned to be added) within FY18.

SAC currently oversees 126 organizations. SAC has 20 groups in New Club Development, and expects to grant full access to benefits to 5-10 of these organizations. These organizations are listed at the bottom, and highlighted for your convenience.

* Anime Club
* Arab Society
* Art Aficionados
* Astronomical Society
* Bipartisan Coalition
* Chess Club International
* Chinese Student Alliance
* Classics Club
* Club Filipino
* College Academic Council
* College Democrats
* College Republicans
* Creative Writing Club
* Development Initiative
* European Club
* French Cultural Association
* Gaming
* Gastronomes
* German Club
* Grilling Society
* Hellenic Association
* Independent Film Society
* Irish American Society
* Israel Alliance
* Juggling Club
* Korean Students Association
* Marketing Association
* Mexican Student Association
* Mock Trial and Law Team
* Parliamentary Debate Team
* PorColombia
* Pre-Dental Society
* Pre-Law Society
* Pre-Med Society
* PRIDE
* Quiz Bowl
* Real Estate Club
* Right to Life
* Signs
* Solidarity Committee
* Student Investment Fund
* Tae Kwon Do Club
* Turkish Student Association
* Vietnamese Students Association
* Women in Leadership
* Women Of Color
* Active Minds at Georgetown University
* African Society of Georgetown
* Alexander Hamilton Society
* American Civil Liberties Union - Georgetown
* Animalia Georgetown
* Asian American Student Association
* Ballroom Dance Team
* Black Student Alliance
* Bodoni Creative
* Breaking the Bubble
* Caribbean Culture Circle
* Circolo Italiano
* Club Singapore
* Fundraisr
* Georgetown Speechwriting Advisory Group
* Georgetown University Queer People of Color
* GIVES
* GREEN
* GU Jawani
* GUerrilla Improv
* GUMAPS
* GUTEC
* Hawaii Club
* Hilltop Tacos
* Hong Kong Students Association
* Hoya Blue
* Hoya Teahouse
* Hoyasana
* International Relations Club
* International Students Association
* Iranian Cultural Society
* J Street U Georgetown
* Japan Network
* Latin American Student Association
* Lebanese Student Association
* Love Saxa
* MEChA
* Medieval Club
* Minority Pre-Law Association
* Clube Braziliero
* Philodemic Society
* Project Lighthouse GU
* Riqueza Dominicana (GURD)
* Roosevelt Institute @ Georgetown University
* Russian Association
* SFS Academic Council
* South Asian Society
* SPECTRUM
* Stemme
* Student Nurses Association of Georgetown
* Students for Justice in Palestine
* Taiwanese American Students Association
* Take Back the Night
* Tappin' Jacks
* The Spanish Club of Georgetown
* Thirty Seventh
* Tocqueville Forum Student Fellows
* Turning Point USA
* United Feminists
* Young Americans for Liberty
* GU Midwest Club
* Puerto Rican Student Association
* Georgetown University Cricket Club
* Georgetown University Public Speaking
* Platform 37th and O
* Central American Student Association
* Georgetown University Book Club
* Actively Moving Forward
* Hermanas
* Ethiopian Eritrean Students Association
* National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) - Georgetown Chapter
* Students of NROTC
* Georgetown University Moot Court Team
* GU Thai
* Georgetown University Armenian Student Association
* Hoya Snaps
* Smart Woman Securities at Georgetown (SWS)
* Georgetown University Cryptocurrency Investment Fund (GUCIF)
* Network of Enlightened Women at Georgetown University (NeW at GU)

1. What were significant challenges for your organization over the past year? What were significant successes for your organization over the past year?

As shown in the quantitative portion of this application, SAC regularly receives over half a million dollars’ worth of funding requests from our organizations. The sheer amount of programming that our organizations attempt each year is truly amazing, and has a profound impact on the undergraduate community. However, due to budget constraints, SAC is forced to cut these requests by more than half. We are constantly facing pressure to turn down wonderful programming ideas due to lack of funds, and very rarely are we ever able to fund any event in full. SAC is forced to impose severe scale cuts on all ad hoc and travel requests that we see from our organizations, often making some events impossible or cost prohibitive for many members of our organizations.

As such, SAC has been thinking about creative ways for our organization to approach the question of affordability on this campus. Sometimes it can seem like money is the norm here at Georgetown, but as our campus continues to become more diverse and inclusive, SAC has been trying to ensure that all students are able to be fully integrated into clubs and that our students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not left out of the conversation. The biggest area for improvement, from SAC’s perspective, is in travel. With our aforementioned forced scale cuts on travel, we often worry about subsequent feasibility for many members of our community. As such, when considering the generous bump in funding that FinApp gave us last year, we felt that we finally had the ability to focus our efforts on improvement in affordability in this area. This semester, we tried out a new policy on funding travel events that removed a cap on funding for any organization’s first travel event of the semester. We have seen groups take full advantage of this change, and have had more groups traveling than years previously, which is wonderful to see. We take this as a sign from our community that they want and need SAC’s support in making travel events more affordable, and as SAC is a responsive and dynamic board, we’ve decide to listen to our community.

However, this policy has caused our travel fund to dwindle more quickly than anticipated. Specifically, this policy allows us to consider the funding of travel meals for students from low-income backgrounds for the first time. Clubs have in good faith asked for funding of these meals because it would become inaccessible for some students to eat while travelling otherwise. As many conversations have been reverberating around campus about issues related to diversity and inclusion, SAC has been proud to maintain this inclusivity in clubs through our funding process. In short, SAC has quite a few challenges over our budget in terms of making programming accessible to all Hoyas, and hopes that FinApp and GUSA will continue to support us as we attempt to find creative solutions to address this issue.

A conversation about organizational challenges would not complete without mentioning Love Saxa. I am extremely proud of the full engagement of the entire commission we approached this issue. The main challenge here was, of course, grappling with our own personal convictions about current issues while also remaining stewards of university policy. SAC’s decision not to defund Love Saxa speaks to the commission’s commitment to university policy over personal biases and beliefs, which ultimately reflects the fair and equitable treatment that we try to afford all of our groups.

1. Do you have any budget concerns for the next 5-10 years?

Any attempt to make programming more affordable for our current ATB organizations is often complicated by the growing number of student organizations that are continually assigned to SAC, straining our already limited funds even more. While we admire the entrepreneurship that these new organizations embody, CAB’s NCD process is imperfect, and often results in SAC taking more clubs than we think our commission should responsibly take on. As SAC only has one vote on a board of 6, CAB often admits new organizations and assigns them to SAC without the consent of SAC itself, which is arguably the only board with the real authority to know what SAC has the ability to take on in terms of new clubs. While we can decide, after a semester, to remove them from the commission, over that semester they have the potential to significantly strain our resources in terms of manpower and funding. This year is particularly exemplary of this kind of imposed strain, as SAC now has 20 groups in NCD. For comparison, in a typical semester, SAC sees roughly 8 groups in NCD. Next semester, we expect to see at least 5-10 new groups assigned to us once again by CAB, and so the cycle continues until it is properly addressed.

Additionally, SAC is still deeply and personally invested in having conversations about the growing GUPD, space, and equipment costs garnered from the university. Why does Georgetown reclaim such a large portion of the student activities fee by charging groups for space usage? Why must student groups rent out expensive equipment that the university already owns? When considering growing minimum fee requirements and nonexistent—daresay trivial—standards from the university, it’s time that our student organizations get some answers to their questions. I would like to see the commission and GUSA move away from complacency with questionable university policy and toward a sense of solidarity with the student body. We all pay the same activities fee out of our ever-rising tuition and SAC is concerned with ensuring that that this money is spent fairly, efficiently, and, most importantly, not funneled back into the university.

Finally, SAC has recently started paying close attention to the Uber/Lyft usage of our student organizations. As this service becomes more popular, we are beginning to have concerns over how to best allocate funds for group travel. Specifically, SAC is concerned with the variability in costs of these services, due to things like surcharges, which makes it difficult for our groups to give an accurate estimate of the amount of money they will actually need. In a city as accessible as D.C., SAC would like to explore other options for transportation, like providing MetroCards for our organizations in the future.

1. What level of financial risk does your organization incur?

SAC is a safe investment. If you ever have the chance to attend one of our meetings, you will see the level of attention that our 13-member board pays to every financial decision we make, from ad hoc requests as small as $20 to travel events upwards of $10,000. This often means that our meetings can and will last for upwards of 3 hours, but SAC truly takes pride in being fair and equitable to all of our groups regardless of how long it takes. Additionally, all funding decisions are made with our advisor, Ali Stowe from the CSE, in the room to offer her guidance.

While the commission itself cannot directly oversee what our student organizations are spending every dollar on, the CSE’S system of receipt reconciliation ensures that no inappropriate charges are made by our organizations. Furthermore, we coordinate with the CSE through our public budgets system which ensures that organizations are only allowed to spend money on SAC-approved purchases.

1. How could the Budget Summit process be improved this year? How could relations with GUSA be improved?

As a new chair with limited experience with GUSA, I have appreciated FinApp’s willingness to walk through the entire Budget Summit process with me. Hopefully, I will be able to provide further feedback after SAC’s presentation, but as of now I think something that could be beneficial to your process and in SAC’s best interests is if every FinApp senator came to at least one SAC meeting. We have an extensive Budget Guide, and to get beyond the paper and see exactly how SAC spends the funds we receive from GUSA, attending one of our meetings could give FinApp the clearest picture of our processes.

1. If you are requesting more funding for FY19 than FY18, please explain why.

SAC is immensely grateful for current amount of funding that it receives from GUSA. However, in order to best pursue our goals of affordability and equity across groups, we are requesting more funding for FY19 than FY18. We are already making progress in the area of inclusivity, and would truly appreciate an increase in funding as a sign that GUSA shares in this goal with us. As previously stated, SAC is a dynamic board, constantly changing our policy and responding to the changing needs of our community. With GUSA’s support, we could continue exploring ways to do just that.

Above, I have described why SAC wants an increase in funding for FY19; now, I will explain why we needit. As it currently stands, SAC is unable to fully meet funding requests from clubs every single year, even after common-sense cuts are made by the commission. We impose several rounds of cuts during the budgeting process, have strict conditions for the ad-hoc stage in addition to a 75% scale, and fund travel at 60% for the first event, 40% for the second, and 20% for the final two, with caps of $150/student on the latter three. Even with these strict funding policies, we estimate that SAC will need to pull an additional $44,000 from our reserve accounts.

This problem is only expected to grow as we continue to be assigned exorbitant numbers of new groups from CAB. While we are excited to see our new organizations fill programming gaps in our undergraduate community, we know that they—and our existing organizations—will not be able to fully realize their potential with our current level of funding.

**PART E.**

Please ensure your organization continues to comply with the 2010 6-Point Reform Plan by **commenting in the affirmative and detailing** how your group is compliant for each of the 6 points individually.

1. The total balance of any advisory board’s reserve account shall not be excessive (as deemed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs), and boards with surplus funds should provide a plan for their reserves.

SAC is mandated by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs to keep at least $100,000 in liquid reserves as a safety net against unforeseen costs from our organizations. In order to allow for the incredible level of programming that we expect our organizations to provide, SAC allows groups to overspend as needed, and this deficit cannot simply be covered under the university's budget.

We recognize that there are some concerns about the size of our reserves. It is true that our reserves have grown over the years, due to the fact that any money left over in our organizations’ accounts are absorbed into our reserves over the summer. While SAC is collecting this money, we most certainly do not want to keep it in an inaccessible and stagnant account. Last fiscal year, SAC spent $15,000 from our reserves, and this year we expect to spend $44,000. We have decided to pursue this policy instead of outright instituting scale cuts during Budget Summit, as SAC felt that it ethically could not deny funding to our organizations while we were sitting on such large reserves. Spending out of our reserve account this year will bring our reserves much closer to the minimum amount mandated by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, and we hope to continue this attitude toward our reserves in the future.

2. An appeals process shall be implemented and publicized, where such processes do not already exist, for clubs that are denied full funding for an activity or annual budget under its advisory board.

SAC has extensive appeals processes for every funding decision that we make, outlined in our Budget Guide. The most common type of appeal is one for our budget allocation decisions from our biannual Budget Summit. We afford groups 2-3 weeks to make those appeals before the end of the semester. Additionally, we allow for appeals on funding decisions throughout the year on ad hoc and travel requests by holding a public comment section of every meeting. During this time, groups can come talk about anything that they may want the commission to know, from appeals to updates on events to feedback on things that we can do to better serve the community.

3. Clubs shall have the option of requesting a lump sum, annual budget with an opportunity to reapply for additional funding from its advisory board.

SAC holds a Budget Summit every semester, at which we consider budget submissions from every organization and decide on their budget for the following semester. Further, groups have access to travel and ad hoc funds throughout the semester for unforeseen events or for events that could not be budgeted for at the time of our Summit. SAC sets aside a specific amount of money for both travel and ad hoc funds at the beginning of the semester, depending on the level of funding that we receive from GUSA.

4. All meetings and recorded minutes of all meetings of an advisory board shall be open to the public, including any and all votes, and that all records are posted online in a timely fashion.

All of SAC’s meetings are open to the public, and all of our meeting minutes are posted on Hoyalink. Only in extraordinary circumstances does the commission ever break from this position. Our constitution allows for the commission to enter executive session when we feel that speaking privately among the commission would be more conducive to reaching a consensus free from the influence of the will of the public. However, no voting takes place in executive session, so when the commission is ready to vote, we must exit executive session and reopen the meeting to the community.

5. Members of the advisory board are, in some way, directly accountable to their constituents or to the student body in general, such as having GUSA Senate confirmation or being elected by the leaders of the clubs they represent.\*

The chair of SAC is directly elected by the leaders of all SAC organizations, and then that person oversees the selection of new commissioners. Recently SAC has implemented a new selection committee system to ensure greater accountability to our organizations. The selection committee, comprised of the chair, vice chair, and outgoing members of the commission, review the performance of each commissioner to ensure that they are best serving their groups. Organizations have two opportunities to submit feedback about their commissioners, once in the middle of the semester, and once after Budget Summit. We take the feedback from our organizations very seriously, and weigh them against individual participation in meetings to determine whether or not we ask a commissioner to return to the board after every semester. The same committee then reviews the applications for new commissioner slots.

6. Clubs have reasonable control over all funds that they fundraise outside of the normal allocations process.

In order to ensure that the student activities fee directly benefits our undergraduate community, SAC has been thinking critically about our fundraising policy for external, non-Georgetown affiliated organizations. This semester, we are offering fundraising loans to our organizations so that they have the opportunity to hold fundraising events, without any portion of the student activities fee going to an outside organization. The expectation is that groups will pay back the fundraising loan and then use their leftover profits however they wish. In this way, SAC actively encourages our organizations to fundraise, makes all fundraising efforts possible with our initial investment, and ensures that the student activities fee benefits the students.

\*The committee is aware that the structure of boards has changed in the past eight years; please note ‘such as’ merely indicates examples of how accountability is manifested and focus on the spirit of the Point.

**CERTIFICATION:**

By signing below, I hereby certify that the information enclosed is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

**Funding Request Form Submitted By: Kylie Navarro**

**Name of Group Student Chair: Kylie Navarro**

**Signature of Group Student Chair (type your name): Kylie Navarro**

**Name of Group Advisor: Ali Stowe**

**Signature of Group Advisor (type your name): *Ali Stowe***

**Date: 2/13/18**

**Contact Email:** [**kmn57@georgetown.edu**](mailto:kmn57@georgetown.edu)

**Contact Phone Number: 3025309099**