Resolution 1: Amending GPSA Finance Commission Funding Guidelines to Align with Current Funding Protocol on Campus Groups

Abstract: University funding organizations have reorganized to streamline the budget request and payment request process within Campus Groups. The GPSA Finance Commission Funding Guidelines document no longer represents the funding protocol. This resolution re-writes the Funding Guidelines to follow the Campus Groups protocol and to streamline/minimize the funding requirements to make it simpler for funded organizations to use their money to put on community events.

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Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 10/02/2023

Whereas, University funding organizations utilize a new funding protocol in Campus Groups.

Whereas, the GPSA Finance Commission Funding Guidelines represent the requirements and guidelines for receiving and using GPSA funds.

Whereas, the current GPSA Finance Commission Funding Guidelines do not represent the new funding protocol in Campus Groups.

Whereas, student organizations will have difficulty understanding the new funding protocol with the mismatch of documents.

Be it therefore resolved, the GPSAFC shall amend its Funding Guidelines document to follow the new funding protocol in Campus Groups. Specifically removing budget requests and changing the requirements for funding reimbursement requests.

Be it further resolved, the GPSAFC Funding Guidelines will be re-written as the attached document shows.

Be it finally resolved, that these funding guideline changes shall go into effect by August 21, 2023 to align with the protocol for the 2023-2024 funding cycle.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melia Matthews  David Browne  Kripa Rajagopalan
President  Finance VP  Chair of the Finance Commission
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Section I: Eligibility Criteria for Organizations

a. An organization must register with Campus Activities (CA) (or equivalent office) for the current academic year. If an organization has not registered with CA, or an equivalent office, it cannot access any funds, even if such funds have already been allocated.
b. An organization’s Treasurer must be familiar with these Funding Guidelines and sign a statement to this effect. The GPSAFC will not be responsible for costs that it cannot reimburse due to violation of provisions set forth in these Funding Guidelines or university policies.
c. An organization must have an advisor who is a full-time member of the faculty or staff of Cornell University. University groups can have a grad/professional advisor if the university-sponsored departments assign one.
d. An organization must have more than 51% graduate/professional student membership.
e. The President or Treasurer of an organization must be registered as a graduate or professional student at Cornell University for the current academic year.
f. An organization must provide a valuable and distinctive service to the Cornell community.

Section II: General Funding Parameters

a. General:

1. The membership criteria and selection processes of an organization should enable any student to join and participate if they have interest and ability. See § VII (c) for exemptions.
2. All GPSAFC funds for all eligible groups are made available on CampusGroups on the first day of class, with no exceptions. No other university organization/body may restrict access to any GPSAFC funds for use on qualified expenditure.
3. All events must be open to the entire graduate and professional student community to receive GPSAFC funds. CampusGroups posting should state “Open to the Graduate Community” and “Please contact (name of event host) at (netID of the host) for any special arrangements you may require in order to attend this event”. See § VII (c)(1) for exemption.
4. The organization must submit the event details (i.e., time, location, program speakers, topic descriptions) to the CampusGroups Calendar (cornell.campusgroups.com/events) two (2) weeks before the event.
5. All Event require a CampusGroups posting and that posting must include location to receive GPSAFC funds. No exemption.

A. On-Campus, in-person

i. Indoor events: Will also require registration in 25Live (or Scheduling@cornell.edu). If you find that the location is not listed in 25Live (some departments don’t participate in 25Live). Then select “Location Not found” on that section. Include details about the food/snack noted in the comment section and attach the 25Live approval to the Payment Request at the time of submission. You must also list the location of the event on the CampusGroups posting.

ii. Outdoor events: such as the Arts Quad/AG Quad/Slope (non-exhaustive list) are permitted. Will also require registration in 25Live. You must also list the location of the event on the CampusGroups posting.
iii. **Big Red Barn Events**: require additional guidelines and regulations. BRB-hosted events require a confirmation of [BRB reservation](#) attached to the payment request. Big Red Barn does not charge reservation fees for events open to all Cornell graduate and professional students. **Big Red Barn does not charge reservation fees for Graduate and Professional events.**

B. **Off-Campus, in-person**: Do not require a 25Live registration. Location of the event must be listed on the CampusGroup event description. Events that do not adhere to § V(a)(2) and events without a listed location on CampusGroups will not receive funding.

C. **Online events**: do not require a 25Live registration. Zoom link (or equivalent) must be listed on the CampusGroup event description. Online events without link will not receive funding.

6. All CampusGroups postings must include the “Funded by GPSA” tag. Description must say “Funded by GPSA” and all advertising/posters must include the statements “Funded by the GPSAFC”. **Events without stating that it is funded by GPSA will not receive funding.** GPSAFC Chair and VP of Finance and Appropriations may approve the expense with warning, excessive violations will lead to Funding Tier demotion. No exemptions.

7. University organizations (as defined by the CA) are encouraged to consult with their specific school or department’s financial affairs office, if applicable, in submitting funding requests.

8. Help with CampusGroups and more information about GPSAFC is available at [https://cornell.campusgroups.com/gpsafc/](https://cornell.campusgroups.com/gpsafc/). Student organizations may also request help from the Cornell Student Organization Business Office (SOBO) on budgeting, direct payments to vendors, food ordering, and reimbursement by emailing sobo@cornell.edu.

b. **Budget Cycle:**

1. **Academic Year:**

   A. Academic year begins on the first class of the Fall Term (usually the third Monday of August). The Academic year ends on the last day of class in the Spring Term (usually the third Saturday of May).

   B. All Funding Allocation (including additional GPSA funding) must be used before the end of the Academic cycle and will not carry over to the next Academic Year.

   C. Up to 15% of the Funding Tier may be used during the Summer Term.

2. **Summer Budgets and Requests:**

   A. Summer events cover the dates between Graduation and the day before classes begin in the Fall Term.

   B. The Summer Budget is the remaining funds from the Academic Year GPSAFC Funding Tier up to 15% of your allocated Funding Tier. The amount over 15% will return to GPSAFC and at the end of the Summer Term all remaining GPSAFC allocated funds will return to GPSAFC.

   C. Submissions for (1) Tier Promotion, (2) Fifth Funding Tier Renewal or (3) First-Year Continued Existence Confirmation must be submitted before August 10th. Submissions after this date will not be considered.
c. Payment Requests:

1. Once you receive a budget allocation and/or a funding application approval, you MUST submit a payment request on CampusGroups to utilize that allocation. If you do not submit a payment request, nothing will be purchased, paid for, or transferred. Unused allocations will be reverted to each funding source at the end of the academic year.

   When submitting a payment request:

   A. You can ask to have items purchased on your group’s behalf,
   2. Request a Transfer to a University Department that paid for an expense already.
   3. Request a Payment for a University reservation fee or other departmental charges.
   4. Request a Payment for a registration fee to a conference or tournament.
   5. Request a Payment for services or guest speakers/performers.
      A. This must be done by Cornell and is not able to be reimbursed for
      B. Should be submitted 3 weeks ahead of the event.
   6. Request a reimbursement for expenses paid out of pocket.
      A. Must be submitted within 30 days of expenditure.
      B. If the person being reimbursed is not the person whom the receipt shows made the payment, you must show proof of permission (an email saying the purchaser is fine with reimbursement going to someone else) to process the payment.
      C. A copy of the original receipt must be submitted with itemization of the purchase, the date of purchase and the seller’s information.
   7. For more information on how to submit Payment Requests.
   8. Payment requests should be for the exact amount of money spent/needed for an event, not the amount of money originally budgeted for the event. The total of payment and reimbursement requests must be less than the total GPSA funding allocated to your student organization for the academic year.
   9. Submission of payment requests for all events opens on the first day of classes of the Fall Term. Events or any other expense made during the Academic Year must be requested by the last day of the Spring Term, with no exceptions. Submission of payment requests for summer events opens on the first day of summer classes and must be submitted by the day before the Fall Term starts.

Section III: Organizations and Activities Ineligible for GPSAFC Funding

a. Per GPSA policy, the GPSAFC cannot fund:

   1. Partisan political organizations and activities: Student Organizations funded by GPSAFC or Cornell must not take a substantial part in activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempt, to influence legislation including the publishing or distributing of statements), or any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. This is to stay consistent with 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) and other relevant NY State Law.

   2. Any religious activities: The GPSAFC relies on the University definition of religious activities: “A practice or observance that includes moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong that
is sincerely held, with the strength of traditional religious views, even if no religious group espouses such beliefs, or the religious group to which the individual professes to belong may not accept such belief.” The GPSAFC may fund activities comparing religious systems of belief and activities examining the intersection of religion with one or more non-theological academic disciplines. Activities that a religious organization organizes to achieve research, educational, or public service goals are not considered religious activities and are eligible for GPSAFC funding. Additional funding is available for some of these activities by the Interfaith Council at Cornell (ICC) see § IX (a)(1)(B).

3. Charitable organizations: Direct allocation to charitable organizations is prohibited; Student Organizations are allowed to use funds for recruiting, administration, or travel expenses, which are necessary for Cornell students to participate in service projects.

4. Non-discrimination: Per the University policy 6.4, the organization shall not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, marital status, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, or protected veteran status when determining its membership.

b. The GPSAFC will not fund activities for which any organization member receives academic credit.

c. The GPSAFC avoids funding activities that duplicate the activities of other campus organizations. In allocating funds, the GPSAFC considers whether an organization provides a unique service or event for the Cornell community. The GPSAFC may make organizations aware of other groups providing similar services to the University community to encourage collaboration.

1. In the case of collaborative events by multiple student organizations: GPSAFC organizations cannot transfer funding from one group to another. Organizations must detail what expenses each group will bear at the event, but then all organizations involved should submit Payment Requests to pay for specific items for one, collaborative, event.

Section IV: Additional Funding Requirements and Restrictions

a. To be eligible for funds, a Student Organization must make full disclosure of its income and expenses (refer to § XII for Enforcement). If additional funding is obtained from other University sources and/or external sources during a school year, a report of this funding should be furnished to the GPSAFC upon request.

b. People who cannot receive GPSAFC funds: (1) Anyone who receives a salary from Cornell (faculty, administrators, facilities, etc.) (2) No enrolled Cornell student.

c. The GPSAFC will not provide funds to student organizations funded by the Student Assembly (SA); GPSAFC will co-sponsor events with SA if an event is held by a GPSAFC-funded group collaborating with an SA-funded group.

d. Student organizations are expected to maximize potential revenue and alternative funds, GPSAFC will take into consideration student organizations’ capacity to raise funds and their willingness when assigning student organizations their tier. Student organizations are prohibited from becoming profit-seeking entities.

e. In making funding allocations, the GPSAFC will consider the extent to which student organizations' funds are used directly for the organizations’ purpose/mission.

f. Student Organizations must leave all items purchased with GPSAFC funds on campus at the end of the Academic Year. As well as keeping an inventory of all such items so that the Student Organization may continue to use them in future years, this list should also be provided to GPSAFC.
Section V: Restricted and Prohibited Expenses for GPSAFC Funding

a. Ineligible Items:

1. Any items or activities that are illegal under federal, state, local, and university laws and rules.

2. If your organization is hosting an event off campus and it likely would not be approved if on campus, it is recommended that the event not occur.

3. Food for activities that do NOT benefit most of a Student Organization’s members.

4. Illegal/illicit drugs or any drug paraphernalia.

5. Parking tickets/fines.

6. Raffle tickets (for money), lotteries, or any form of gambling, betting, or wagering.

7. Donations made directly to Charity or any other Organization. See § III (a)(3)

8. Prizes exceeding $75 are discouraged - including gift cards or any other items.
   A. If prizes over $75 are provided, there is additional paperwork required, including Pre-Approval. Email GPSAFC@cornell.edu and SOBO@cornell.edu.

9. Payment or engagement fee paid directly to Student Organization members or advisors.

10. Student organizations or students directly paying for a service. Services should be paid directly by the university see § II (c)(5).
   A. DO NOT pay photographers, officials, umpires, DJs, artists, production services, entertainers, workshops with physical activity and speakers or any other service provider with personal or organizational funds.

   B. Services MUST be paid directly by the University.
      i. Reimbursements will NOT be processed for services paid with personal funds.
      ii. Contracts/Agreements should be submitted prior to the event (3 weeks is ideal)

   I. University Organizations must use a Cornell Contract
   II. Independent Organizations must use an Engagement Agreement

b. Restricted Item (Alcohol):

1. All event sponsors hosting events with alcohol on university property must adhere to the University's Policy 4.8, Alcohol and Other Drugs.
2. Total GPSAFC-funded alcohol expenditures per academic year should not exceed 10% of the Tier cap. Alcohol cannot be distributed by groups or group officers. Groups should monitor the number of individuals who plan to buy alcohol individually to prevent exceeding 10% of the tier cap. Alternatively, the faculty advisor can accept liability for alcohol distribution. In this case, written approval from the faculty advisor is required for each event where alcohol is distributed. Hard alcohol cannot be purchased with GPSAFC funds. Events involving alcohol should be registered with the Events Planning Management Team (EPMT) and adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Campus Code of Conduct and University Policy 4.8 (Alcohol and Other Drugs). Organizations wishing to spend more than 10% of their Tier cap on alcohol in an academic year must email the GPSAFC Chair with an explanation of why the additional alcohol purchase would be necessary, along with specific details about how the event(s) with alcohol present will be advertised to the broader Cornell community and kept in compliance with the Events Planning Management Team (EPMT) and Campus Code of Conduct guidelines; this request may be approved or denied by the GPSAFC Chair.

Section VI: Student Organizations Funding Allocation

a. Funding Tiers and Requirements: Student organizations are categorized into specific funding tiers, which dictate the upper limit of funds each organization is eligible for per Academic Year. At the beginning of August GPSAFC in consultation with the GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriation, will re-evaluate these funding brackets. Changes to funding brackets may be made at any time at the GPSAFC’s discretion, and do not require formal amendment of these Guidelines. Funding Tiers must be made available to organizations on the first day of the Fall Term of each year. GPSAFC Funding Tiers are as follows:

1. First Funding Tier: $250 USD Cap
   A. This tier is only available to new student organizations that missed the August 10th deadline to apply for the full-year Second Funding Tier funding. The first Tier will be applied on the first day of the Spring Term.
   B. First Tier Student Organizations will automatically be promoted to Second Funding Tier the following Fall Term if a Student Organization leader reaches out to the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) confirming the Student Organization’s continued operation. See § VI (b)(1).

2. Second Funding Tier: $500 USD Cap
   A. First-year applicants may qualify for this tier if they submit their application before the August 10th deadline.
   B. The student organization must have at least 10 current student members on CampusGroups. First-year applicants are exempted from this rule.
   C. First-year applicants must reach out to the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) and confirm the Student Organization’s continued operation to maintain Tier 2 status for the following school year. See § VI (b)(1).

3. Third Funding Tier: $1,500 USD Cap
   A. The student organization must have at least 25 current student members on CampusGroups.
4. Forth Funding Tier: $2,500 USD Cap
   A. The student organizations in this tier must elect a GPSA representative, who must contact the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) by the first day of the Fall Term. This GPSA representative must attend at least 50% of the GPSA meetings. Failure to do either will lead to immediate Tier demotion.
   B. The student organization must have at least 50 current student members on CampusGroups.

5. Fifth Funding Tier: $3,500 USD Cap
   A. The student organizations in this tier must elect a GPSA representative, who must contact the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) by the first day of the Fall Term. This GPSA representative must attend at least 75% of the GPSA meetings. Failure to do either will lead to immediate Tier demotion.
   B. The student organizations must renew this Tier every year. The renewal must be submitted before the August 10th deadline. Failure to do either will lead to immediate Tier demotion.
   C. The student organization must have at least 100 current student members on CampusGroups.

b. Application For Tier Promotion/Tier 5 Renewal/First-Year Group Confirmation

1. Deadline For Applications:
   A. The submission deadline is August 10th for applications for Tier Promotion, Fifth Funding Tier renewal, First-Year Student Organization Confirmation and Fall Field Funding. First-time applicants may apply for First Tier funding after this deadline but lose the opportunity to apply for Second Tier funding. There are no other exceptions to this deadline and GPSAFC and GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriations will not consider promoting any student organization nor maintaining a student organization's Fifth Tier status after this deadline.
   B. First Tier Funding deadline and Field Funding for the Spring Semester is December 10th. No Exception.

2. First-Year Student Organizations Mandatory Confirmation:
   A. First-Year Student Organizations (whether First or Second Tier) must contact the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) and confirm the Student Organizations continued operations to maintain their GPSAFC funding.
   B. First-Year Student Organizations are defined as Student Organizations that have been funded by GPSAFC for less than two (2) consecutive years. Groups who have been funded by GPSAFC previously but were not funded for an Academic Year or longer will be considered a First Year Student Organization. Groups that have existed before receiving GPSAFC funding will still be considered First-Year Student Organization.

3. Tier Promotion Application:
   A. The applying student organization must have utilized at least 90% of their current Funding Tier Allocation for the last two years to qualify for a promotion.
   i. Student organizations must wait two years between promotions unless they are the First Funding Tier or a recently demoted Fifth Funding Tier. Demotions from tiers other than the Fifth Funding Tier must wait two years to be repromoted.
B. Must have enough current members to satisfy the next Funding Tier’s current member requirement.

C. The Promotion Application must be sent to the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) and must include the following information:

   i. The group must show that they have complied with GPSAFC guidelines and must not have more than three GPSAFC violations in the previous academic year.

   ii. A statement explaining why they believe they require the Fund Tier increase. Should include but not be limited to the growth of membership, future events, and plans.

   iii. Financial plan for how the organization would utilize the funds in the upcoming academic year.

4. Fifth Funding Tier Renewal:

   A. Either the Fifth Tier President or Treasurer must contact the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu) and express the student organization’s interest in renewing its Fifth-Tier status. Failing to renew will lead to an automatic demotion, the student organization will be able to apply the following year.

5. Funding Tier Demotion:

   A. Student Organizations that utilized less than 80% may be demoted at the discretion of the GPSAFC Chair and/or GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriation. Student Organizations utilizing less than 70% will automatically be demoted (90% for the Fifth Funding Tier).

   i. Additional GPSA funding beyond Funding Tier are not calculated in Utilization.

   B. Student Organization that utilized 0% will receive no funding the following Academic Year.

   C. Student Organizations with excessive GPSAFC guideline violations. At the discretion of the GPSAFC Chair and GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriation will demote student organizations failing to follow GPSAFC funding guidelines.

   D. Student Organizations that fail to meet their Funding Tier requirements will automatically be demoted.

6. Funding Tier Demotion Appeal:

   A. Only appeals-based mistakes or administrative errors on the part of either GPSA/GPAAFC or university administration will be considered. Mistakes on the part of a student organization or anyone acting on their behalf are not grounds for an appeal of tier status. Any other reason will not be grounds for an appeal of tier status.

   B. Only send appeals if it is for reasons specified in § VI(b)(6)(A). To make an appeal contact the GPSAFC Chair (GPSAFC@Cornell.edu).

c. Additional GPSA Funding

   1. Field Funding:

   A. Only one organization per academic field can apply for this funding, once per academic year. This funding does not renew and must be applied for every year. The deadline for applications for field funding for the Fall Term must be before the August 10th deadline and for the Spring Term must be before December 10th.
B. An executive of the Student Organization receiving field funding must be a voting member of GPSA and attend at least 75% of the meetings.

C. Each eligible field organization that applies for funding will receive a base allocation of 200 USD, with an additional 1 USD per student member on CampusGroups.

2. Initiative Funding:

A. Student Organization’s with the primary mission that is consistent with the Appropriations Committee’s Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement will receive an additional $200 USD on top of their Funding Tier allocation.

B. These Student Organization’s must have one designated member sit on the Appropriations Committee and attend the monthly Diversity and Inclusion meetings. At these monthly meetings these Initiative Leaders can make recommendations for additional GPSA diversity initiatives, recommend changes to Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement, and discuss their student organizations current initiatives in promoting Diversity and Inclusion among Cornell’s Graduate and Professional Schools.

Section VII: Enforcement

a. If, at any point, the GPSAFC finds that an organization has not adhered to these Funding Guidelines, has used funds improperly, The GPSAFC or GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriations has the right to take one or more of the following actions:

1. Provide the organization with a written warning noting the violation and asking the organization to change its practices so that it is no longer in violation.

2. Impose a probationary period during which the organization cannot apply for GPSAFC funding.

3. Withdraw part or all remaining funding for the current Academic Year.

4. Demote Funding Tier.

b. The GPSAFC reserves the right to audit (budget, spending, and inventory) all GPSAFC-funded organizations, and it is incumbent on all organizations to aid the audit to the fullest.

c. GPSAFC designates student organizations belonging to professional schools. The three Professional School designations are (1) Johnson, (2) Law, and (3) Vet. These groups may limit membership to just students attending their designated Professional School.

1. Professional School-designated student organizations are permitted to limit GPSAFC-funded events to students within their designated professional school.

2. GPSAFC guidelines do not apply to any funds provided directly to these Student Organization’s by these Professional Schools or any other non-GPSAFC funds.

3. Funding guidelines on professional school funds do not apply to any funds provided by GPSAFC.

4. Organizations led by professional students in itself; does not qualify for Professional School designation. The student organization must be designed to meet the requirements of their designated professional school. Student Organizations can only be designated up to one Professional School.
Section VIII: Amendments

a. These Funding Guidelines may be amended by a majority vote of seated GPSA members.

b. The GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriations will review these Funding Guidelines each year and suggest appropriate alterations to GPSA.

c. The GPSAFC or GPSA VP of Finance and Appropriations can raise the percentage allocation on Restricted Items (§ V(b)) at any time; any lowering of maximums will not take effect until the next budget cycle. Increasing a student organizations maximum percentage allocation does not require a formal amendment to the GPSAFC Funding Guidelines, but decreases will require a formal amendment.

d. The VP of Finance and Appropriations must recommend changes to these Funding Guidelines necessitated by changes in university policies and procedures.

e. Amendments to the Funding Guidelines must be presented to the GPSA for discussion and may be voted on in the same meeting. GPSAFC Chair or VP of Finance and Appropriations may change the Funding Tiers to Student Organizations at their discretion, and do not require formal amendment to the GPSAFC Funding Guidelines.

Section IX: Non-GPSA Sources of Additional Funding

a. GPSAFC guidelines does not apply to the following funding sources. This list is an aid for Graduate Student Organizations to be aware of other possible funding sources available to them. This list is not exhaustive, there are a lot of graduate departments funding not listed, you should check with your department to see if additional funding is available.

1. Additional Funding Boards
   A. Interfaith Council at Cornell (ICC)
   B. Cornell Club Sports Council (CSC)

2. Professional School Funds and Others
   A. Johnson School
      i. Student Budget Committee (SBC)
      ii. Title-Town
   B. Law School
      i. Dean of Students
      ii. Cornell Law Student Association (CLSA)

3. Graduate Schools
   A. SIPS/Plant Biology/Plant Pathology
   B. Biomedical & Biological Sciences
   C. Biomedical Engineering