

**GSO Funding Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday February, 16, 2021 at 5pm (Zoom)**

Chair: Scott Dufreche (GSO Treasurer, Architecture)

Present: Jahidul Alam (English), Elizabeth Heintz (Kinesiology), Louisa Peng (Music), MaKensey Sanders (Psychology), Sarah Smith (GSO President)

Discussions:

How applications currently come to GSO, are considered by Funding Committee, are presented during General Meeting, and are shared with Graduate School once approved

- > Treasurer demonstrated with screen sharing how applications, submitted via webform, come through to the GSO email to make the spreadsheet presented at meetings

- > Note that we no longer handle paper applications that would ask for GSO rep's signature, GSO reps are receiving notification that a student in their department has submitted an application without their consultation – and the GSO rep could have helped the student understand what GSO covers and what materials they need before the student applied

- >> One rep has started just saying “ask me about funding” in messages to students and stopped sharing the link to the application directly to cut down on these instances.

- >> We can add wording at the top of the webform that students should consult their GSO rep first before applying, with a link to the page listing reps.

Health of GSO account

- > We are still learning what steps we must take each semester with various offices on campus to ensure the applications we approve during the meeting will be processed. Before the beginning of each semester, we must complete an Encumbrance Form showing the amount of money we anticipate needing to spend. We are in the process of confirming the current account balance for GSO (likely pretty high after a few semesters with low activity) and we have a confirmed dollar amount for new monies collected by the University in student fees to GSO for Spring 2021.

Application for membership dues

- > A student applied for just membership dues, although in their letter they mentioned needing to register with the organization to be able to attend their upcoming conference. GSO officers via email had suggested the student reapply for funding, wrapping the membership into the cost of the conference registration, assuming that would be an adequate solution. This would not work for the student as a campus office had separately paid for the student's conference registration, leaving the student only with the cost of membership. GSO Bylaws currently make no mention of covering membership dues. This can be a topic the council debates further as students in several disciplines have said that joining a specific organization is cheaper for them when still a student vs after graduating and that membership in that organization is required of licensure. If GSO wants to proceed with a discussion of a Bylaw specifically including professional or academic organization membership (when not tied to registering for an event), it would need to be decided the amount, any further conditions, and when to consider that type of application in the schedule of semester meetings.

Application for certification exams

- > A student applied for certification exam fee. Their letter stated that taking and passing this exam is a requirement of the internship the student will do that is tied to their thesis research. GSO Bylaws currently make no mention of covering certification or professional licensure exam fees (though the Research & Supplies category *does* mention costs associated with *comprehensive exams*). Can we add a Bylaw to address this – maybe requiring a student show a result of a passing score (like how we ask students to provide confirmation of acceptance for presenting at a conference for Travel With Academic Duties) and put some restrictions on when

this is voted on (to still prioritize other application types?)? Sarah suggests we put a discussion of either moving forward with or abandoning a conversation about a Bylaw to cover exam fees in Meeting 1, if there is support it can be approved with refinements during Meeting 2.

#### Conference attendance by multiple students from same department

> One rep said they have an upcoming event (TWOAD) and wondered if it would be eligible for funding, whether the rep should put in one app for all the students. Wording on our website and talks with the Graduate School suggest that each student should register separately and put in separate GSO applications so that the name on the credit card receipt matches the name of the student.

#### Thesis and dissertation printing included costs

> Does GSO cover only the purchase of paper? No. We have seen applications come through for fees to buy the paper, register the document with ProQuest, etc. Anything that seems *reasonably* related to producing the thesis, dissertation – or in programs without such a requirement – a “graduation project” (if applicable).  
> One student with an outstanding request for Thesis printing put in a low estimate and may choose to resubmit, if GSO will allow, to cover more costs since they thought it was only for buying paper. If the student chooses to withdraw and resubmit, this seems to work with the “only one application for this category in a student’s time in their graduate program” rule.  
> When GSO does not receive a list of itemized expenses for this category, we have been directing students to a document from the Graduate School estimating these costs.

#### Comments on application process from a first-time applicant

> Without firm guidelines, it is hard as a first-time applicant to know what to put in the student letter to GSO.  
>> Perhaps we can work with the GSO Secretary to make a sample or template letter (we have circulated these in the past).  
> A list of FAQs or tips might be helpful.  
>> We do have a list of FAQs for funding on our website, but it might be time to revisit to be sure they align with our expectations for the webform application.

Call for general approval by Funding Committee members present of the budget spreadsheet as shared, including anomalies as discussed during this meeting.

> All attendees in favor of proceeding with this budget information and in agreement of initial decisions on applications. Treasurer will present this information to council at General Meeting 1 for discussion and approval.

#### Actions to take based on this meeting:

- Add a note at top of GSO webform application asking students to reach out to their GSO Department Representative (link to page) with questions *before* applying for funding.
- Present a discussion of membership dues for General Meeting 1 to see where reps stand.
- Create a Bylaw proposal to discuss for General Meeting 1 on certification exams.
- Inform the students (via email) whose applications are in good standing that their applications will be heard at the meeting on Friday.
- Prepare finalized Budget spreadsheet for Meeting 1 to present to all reps.
- Evaluate Funding FAQ page on website for any potential clarifications.
- Work with GSO Secretary to formulate a sample or template letter for applicants.