

**Official Guidelines of the Finance Commission**

**North Dakota State University Student Government**

Revised January 2015

1. **Overview of Student Government Finance**
   1. **Introduction**
      1. The NDSU Student Government Finance Commission is the financial arm of Student Government. The Commission is responsible for making recommendations to the NDSU Student Senate on how to distribute the Student Activity Fee. The Commission, in fulfilling its duty of making recommendations on budgeting and disbursing the Student Activity Fee, is obligated to consider all matters with fairness and consistency. To achieve objectivity in this task, the Commission adheres to this document as official policy and procedure that will be followed by the Commission.
      2. Although this document is binding in respect to what the Commission is allowed to do, the Commission does recognize the existence of circumstances and conditions warranting special considerations. The Commission gives the Student Senate the charge of making decisions based on the recommendations of the Commission as well as any other existing circumstances that should be considered.
   2. **Student Activity Fee**
      1. The amount of Student Activity Fee dollars available for the budgeting process is determined by NDSU enrollment figures along with consultation with the NDSU Budget Director. All eligible organizations may apply for funding from the Student Activity Fee. The eligibility of student organizations is outlined in Title 2.
      2. The Commission will present a recommendation to the Student Senate regarding any needed changes in the Student Activity Fee by the end of February. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Commissioner to obtain the information needed from the NDSU Budget Director to make an informed recommendation.
   3. **The Annual Student Activity Fee Budget**
      1. The Student Activity Fee budget for a fiscal year, excluding the appeals process, must be determined by March 15th, before the beginning of the next fiscal year, which is July 1 to June 30. It shall be the duty of the Finance Commission to ensure that the budget recommendation is submitted to the Student Senate with enough time to meet this deadline.
   4. **Financial Requests**
      1. Funds are allocated by the Commission through the annual Student Activity Fee budget as well as Contingency Requests, Reserve Requests, Special Project Requests, and Temporary Organization Requests for Funding (TORFF’s). All financial requests, as well as budgets, must be approved by the Student Senate.
      2. All financial requests, as well as the budgets for student organizations, are considered fiscal year requests. Budgets apply to the fiscal year they were designated and do not rollover to future years. Financial requests apply to the fiscal year in which they were requested and do not rollover to future years, unless explicitly stated in legislation.
   5. **Reallocation of Funds**
      1. All funds allocated through the budgeting process or through other financial requests are confined to the line item descriptions to which they were allocated. Since line items of travel, lodging, and registration are cumulative, there is no need to reallocate funds between competitions for competitive Tier 2 organizations. Reallocations between line items is not permitted.
   6. **Auditing**
      1. The purpose of auditing is to regulate organizations receiving funds from the Student Activity Fee that are allocated through Student Government. Any organization that receives funding through Student Government may be audited. Auditing will be done as needed to determine whether organizations are utilizing the Student Activity Fee appropriately. Details on the auditing process can be found in Title 5 of the Guidelines.
2. **The Tier System**
   1. **Introduction**
      1. The Commission, in its efforts to maintain consistency from year to year, categorizes organizations into three tiers. Each tier has requirements that organizations must meet to be eligible for the funding sources that the tiers provide. Funds will be dispersed based on neutrality of viewpoint as required by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Southworth v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin system and will not be based on popularity of speech, as stated by the U.S. Northern New York District Court in Amidon v. Student Association of SUNY-Albany.
   2. **Tier I Organizations**
      1. A Tier I Organization is defined as an organization which meets these qualifications:
         1. The organization provides important services to the entire student body
         2. The organization has established a continued and prominent existence in the NDSU community and will continue to remain in existence for an extended period of time
         3. The organization requires consistent funding to allow for continued existence and appropriate standing
      2. These organizations will receive a percentage of the Student Activity Fee as recommended by the Finance Advisory Board, and approved by the Student Senate. The disbursement percentages are outlined in the Student Government Code[[1]](#footnote-1). Any recommended change in the percentages received by Tier I Organizations must be approved with a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Student Senate[[2]](#footnote-2). Any change in percentages to Tier I Organizations will be done on the basis of financial need, with consideration to all other Tier I Organizations. Tier I Organizations are required to present an annual report to the Student Senate in the fall, detailing how Student Activity Fee dollars were spent.[[3]](#footnote-3)
      3. Tier I Roster
         1. The following is a list of the current roster of Tier I Organizations:
            1. Athletics
            2. Student Media Advisory Board (MAB)
            3. Campus Attractions
            4. Campus Recreations and Intramurals
            5. Performing Arts
            6. Memorial Union
            7. Student Government
         2. The following Tier I Organizations are classified as student-run:
            1. Student Media Advisory Board (MAB)
            2. Campus Attractions
            3. Student Government
   3. **Tier II Organizations**
      1. Tier II Organizations must be recognized by and fulfill the requirements of the Congress of Student Organizations (CSO). In addition, Tier II Organizations must allow any student to be involved in their organization. Any type of membership restriction, objective or subjective, will move an organization from Tier II to Tier III. Tier II Organizations that comply with the CSO Guidelines and maintain a CSO rating of a three, four, or five can request funding through the annual budgeting process and are eligible for Contingency and Special Project funding. The CSO status ratings are defined in the CSO Guidelines Title 8. All Tier II Organizations must submit a budget through the annual budgeting process in order to be eligible for a Standard Operating Expenses line item and submission of Contingency Requests. To be eligible for full funding, Tier II Organizations must be in good standing by the time the budget is passed by the Student Senate.
   4. **Temporary Tier II Organizations**
      1. Temporary Organizations are Tier II Organizations that have not been granted full status by CSO. To receive funding from the Student Activity Fee, Temporary Organizations must submit a Temporary Organization Request for Funding (TORFF). The TORFF will be reviewed by the Finance Commission then brought before the Student Senate for approval. Temporary Organizations will not be eligible for Contingency Requests for the fiscal year during which they were granted Temporary status.
   5. **Tier III Organizations**
      1. Tier III organizations must be recognized by and fulfill the requirements of the CSO. Tier III Organizations are defined as student organizations that have qualifications that could restrict interested parties from joining and fairly participating in the organization. Examples of these restrictions include, but are not limited to:
         1. Grade Point Average requirements
         2. Organizations restricted to individuals of a certain college, major, or enrolled course
         3. Groups with unilateral political or religious restrictions
         4. Any type of age (year in school), gender, ethnicity, race, or other diversity restriction
         5. Any organization with an application or recruitment process in which the organization can grant or refuse membership based on the application or recruitment process
      2. The Commission recognizes that each organization has unique functions. However, to be fair to the student body, the Commission's policy is that it will not fund Tier III organizations through the annual budgeting process or through Contingency Funds. Tier III organizations are eligible for Special Project Funds. If a Tier III organization is placed on probation, it must then be in good standing before being eligible to apply for Special Project funds.
3. **The Annual Budgeting Process**
   1. **Introduction**
      1. The annual budgeting process, which takes place in the spring semester, is the process by which the Commission and Student Senate allocates funds for the next fiscal year. Included in the annual budget will be the funding for:
         1. Tier I Organizations
            1. These recommended allocations are based on the percentage system outlined in the Student Government Code.[[4]](#footnote-4)
         2. Tier II Organizations eligible to receive funds
            1. These allocations are based on the recommendations of the Commission after being adjusted to fit into the standard allocations that are provided in the guidelines. All funding levels listed in this section should be considered recommendations by organizations, and organizations should understand that the Student Senate has the ultimate authority on funding issues.
         3. Temporary Organization Request for Funding (TORFF) Fund
            1. This allocation is to ensure that there will be an initial funding source for Temporary Organizations that wish to make such a request.
         4. The Contingency Fund
            1. This allocation is to ensure that there is an initial funding source for the unforeseen expenses of Tier II groups.
         5. The Special Project Fund
            1. This allocation is to ensure that there is an initial funding source in the case that eligible groups are putting on projects that can serve the student body.
   2. **Procedure for Requesting Funds**
      1. To facilitate the allocation of the Student Activity Fee for Tier II organizations eligible for funding, the Commission requires organizations to adhere to the following procedures:
         1. All eligible organizations that wish to request funds for the next fiscal year through the annual budgeting process must prepare a budget and defend the budget by attending a hearing with the Commission if they have line items beyond Standard Operating Expenses.
         2. If a Tier II Organization wishes, it may choose to submit a Standard Budget. A Standard budget consists solely of the Standard Operating Expenses line item outlined further in this section. Organizations submitting a Standard Budget do not need to attend a Budget Hearing. To submit a Standard Budget, an email should be sent to the Executive Commissioner of Finance with the organization name, the words “Standard Budget,” and the amount requested amount between $15 and $175 edrough a Contingency Request. still apply. The minimum budget, after late penalty applied,between $15 and $175 in the subject line. Such a budget will satisfy the requirement in 4-01-02.2.5 to be considered for a Contingency Request.
         3. The following considerations should be taken by organizations:
            1. Organizations are required to use the templates found on the Student Government website or Blackboard for budget requests. Incomplete budgets can result in a rejected budget by the Commission. Organizations must provide all of the information shown on the budget template.
            2. Organizations are required to type all budget requests and submit an electronic budget to the Student Government Finance Office by the specified deadline. All eligible organizations will receive a minimum of a two week notice before the due date of the electronic budgets.
            3. Items requested must be clearly defined in order for the Commission to make informed decisions. Poor or incomplete information will likely have a negative impact on funding an organization.
            4. Organizations should follow instructions contained in correspondence from the Commission to arrange appointments for discussing funding requests.
         4. Late budgets will be penalized 10% of requested funds for each day they are late, up to a maximum of 50%.
         5. To ensure organization budget accountability, a percentage dockage to the calculated budget will be recommended by the Finance Commission using the following guidelines.
            1. The Finance Commission will average the usage of the past two years of budgets for the student organization (total two-year reimbursement/total two-year budget allocated) to the percent of the budgets utilized.
            2. The percent of budgets utilized will then be referenced with the following dockage bracket:

90-100% = 0% dockage

80-89.9% = 5% dockage

70-79.9% = 10% dockage

60-69.9% = 15% dockage

50-59.9% = 20% dockage

40-49.9% = 25% dockage

30-39.9% = 30% dockage

20-29.9% = 35% dockage

10-19.9% = 40% dockage

0-9.9% = 45% dockage

* + - * 1. The percent of dockage will be added to any other deductions applied to the budget being requested and included in the Finance Commission recommendation to Student Senate.
        2. If the organization only asked for a budget one of the last two fiscal years, the percentage of budget utilized for that one year will be the reference for the dockage bracket.
        3. If the organization did not request a budget in the past two fiscal years, no dockage will be applied to the current budget request.
        4. The organization may appeal the dockage to the Finance Commission. During discussion of appeal, current fiscal year budget usage can be considered. With a majority vote by the Finance Commission, the budget dockage can be adjusted in favor of the student organization, if the student organization gives a reasonable justification for lack of budget usage.
      1. In the event that the organization cannot or will not be attending a conference or competition or will not be purchasing equipment, the organization can release the funding budgeted by sending an email to the Assistant Executive Commissioner stating the reason for not planning to attend the event or purchase equipment. This request must be done prior to the date of the event or the purchase of related equipment.
      2. Budget requests will only include dollars for organizational activities which will occur during the fiscal year that is being budgeted.
  1. **Competitive and Non-Competitive Organizations**
     1. Competitive Organizations
        1. Competitive organizations are defined as organizations that compete at events against collegiate teams from other schools. Competitive Organizations requesting funding from the Student Activity Fee will be budgeted with the following rules and expectations:
           1. The Commission will fund only the minimum number of students to be competitive in the event. If there is no minimum number of students required, the Commission defines this number as one full team plus one-half a team of substitutes, and if one full team cannot be defined, then the recommendation will be for six participants.
           2. The Commission, to ensure that student groups are responsible with travel planning, shall recommend funding travel, lodging, and registration for five of the least expensive away events and registration for five home events. Should a student group request funding for more than five away events, the group shall be required to present to the Commission written justification from the league, Commission, or governing body in which the organization competes justifying the required participation in the additional events. The ultimate responsibility of proof of necessity lies on the group. Should sufficient evidence not be provided, the Commission shall not recommend funding more than five home and five away events.
           3. An organization that receives funding for a competitive event waives its right to funding for a non-competitive conference.
           4. Organizations affiliated with any university department must attempt to be funded by the respective department.
           5. Competitive organizations are eligible for hosting up to 5 competitive events. Organizations will be funded for home registration and/or what is absolutely necessary to host the event.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of funded items: referees, prep maintenance, required emergency vehicles.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of items not funded: awards, food, prizes, giveaways (i.e. t-shirts, pens, gift bags).

* + 1. Non-Competitive Organizations
       1. Non-competitive organizations are defined as organizations that do not compete at events against collegiate teams from other schools. Non-competitive organizations requesting funding from the Student Activity Fee will be budgeted with the following rules and expectations:
          1. Only one non-competitive conference will be funded per year for a maximum of six people.
          2. Organizations affiliated with any university department must attempt to be funded by the respective department.
  1. **Common Items Requested**
     1. **Transportation**
        1. Transportation expenses are recommended by the Commission based on calculating round-trip distance multiplied by a set mileage rate per vehicle, and the number of days for the trip multiplied by the rental rate for each vehicle. The Commission uses the following information in its calculations:
           1. Distance is calculated by using MapQuest (http://www.mapquest.com/), with the beginning location being “Fargo, ND” and the ending location being the location of the event. To calculate round-trip distance, the given mileage from MapQuest will be multiplied by two. The Commission will not include intercity travel in its calculations. The Commission reserves the right to use discretion in determining round-trip distance if the event takes place in multiple locations.
           2. Mileage rates are determined based on the GSA Government-Owned Vehicle rate at the time of budgeting in the spring (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715>). The current mileage rates can be found in Section 9-02 of the Guidelines. Vehicles are assigned based on the least expensive option. The Commission uses the following seating amounts for vehicles:

Sedan – 4 passengers

Minivan – 6 passengers

Passenger Van – 12 passengers

Pickup Truck– 4 passengers

* + - * 1. The Commission recognizes that a need may arise for additional space or specialized vehicles for travel by groups. The Commission has the discretion to recommend these vehicles when it sees fit.
        2. The Commission will fund $3 per vehicle per day to provide insurance for the Enterprise Rent-A-Car vehicle and its driver and passengers.
      1. International travel, with the exception of Canada, will not be funded for Tier II organizations for any reason.
         1. Travel in Canada will be calculated with the same guidelines used for travel within the United States.
      2. Student organizations will be eligible to request travel funding for any state of the United States of America with the exception of Hawaii.
    1. **Lodging**
       1. Lodging expenses are recommended by the Commission based on the following calculation: a per diem rate multiplied by the number of rooms multiplied by the number of nights stayed. The Commission uses the following information in its calculations:
          1. The per diem rate is determined by using the U.S. General Services Administration website (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>). Organizations will be funded at the Max Lodging (ML) monthly rate of the destination location. If the location is not listed, but another location in the same county is listed, the Commission will use the other location’s ML rate. If the location is not listed and there is no other location within the same county listed, the standard GSA rate will be used.
          2. The number of rooms is determined by using a base of four people per room, rounded up. For example, if nine people are lodging on a trip, the Commission will recommend three rooms. The Commission does not take gender into account when determining the number of rooms.
          3. Lodging en route will be recommended only when the following formula is true:

*m*>(*x*-5.5)\*65 OR m>650

*m* represents the one-way distance in miles and *x* represents the start time of the event in 24-hour format (e.g. 1:00pm = 13, 5:45pm = 17.75).

This formula assumes that the earliest reasonable time to depart is 5:00am, that groups need to arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the event, and that the average driving speed is 65mph.

The second option is if the destination is over 650 miles (one-way) and the organization does not know when the conference starts. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, passenger-carrying vehicles are not allowed to drive more than 10 hours a day. With the standard of 65 miles per hour, that equates to 650 miles.

The Commission will recommend one night of lodging en route on the trip to the destination and one night on the way back. The standard GSA rate shall be used, with the number of rooms being calculated as shown above.

* + - * 1. The Commission will not recommend funding for lodging if the round-trip distance does not exceed 50 miles.
        2. International lodging, with the exception of Canada, will not be funded for Tier II and III organizations for any reason.

Lodging in Canada will be funded at ¾ the Foreign GSA rate of the destination city.

* + 1. **Registration Fees**
       1. An organization may request funds for registration fees to events attended for the betterment of the organization, its members, or the NDSU Campus. Standard deductions will be taken for registration fees that include food ([www.gsa.gov/mie](http://www.gsa.gov/mie)). The deduction will be ¾ of the government rate. The standard deductions are as follows:
          1. Breakfast- $5.25/person
          2. Lunch- $8.25/person
          3. Banquet/Dinner- $17.25/person
       2. International registration, with the exception of Canada, will not be funded for Tier II and III organizations for any reason.
    2. **Dues**
       1. For dues to be recommended for funding by the Commission, the organization must be competitive in nature. In addition, the Commission will only fund one level of dues (national, state, local, etc.) and will only fund team dues, not dues for individuals in an organization, unless individual or multiple levels of dues are necessary to be competitive. The Commission will recommend funding for the lesser of the competitive dues.
    3. **Practices**
       1. For practice line items to be recommended by the Commission, the group must justify the need to the Commission. The Commission will not recommend funding for travel or lodging for practice.
    4. **Insurance**
       1. The Commission will recommend funding for necessary insurance, such as general liability and accident medical, for events/competitions of the organization.
       2. Insurance rates will be determined from Campus Connexions ([www.campusconnexions.com](http://www.campusconnexions.com)) on NDSU’s landing page. The Commission requires the organization to do the work of requesting the quote from Campus Connexions before meeting with the Commission for a funding recommendation. The organization must also provide either a paper or digital copy of the quote to the Executive Commissioners before the meeting.
  1. **Standard Operating Expenses**
     1. The Commission will recommend $15-$175 to any eligible Tier II Organization that submits a budget for its operating expenses and requests the amount needed for the year. If a budget for operating expenses is submitted, but no amount, the default funding amount is $15.
     2. If an organization requests less than $175, the organization may request an increase to their Standard Operating Expenses, up to the $175 or maximum after late penalty applied to $175, through a Contingency Request.
     3. In general, this money is to be used to help the group with programming events, advertising, website costs, displays, postage, office supplies, etc.
     4. This money can be used towards printing allocation on a “Student Organization Printing Card.”
        1. Printing cards can be requested by filling out the corresponding form on the Student Government website.
        2. Once the form has been submitted by email or delivered to the Student Government Finance Office, the student organization’s standard operating expense budget will be reviewed to make sure there are allocated funds matching the request.
        3. The printing card request will then be sent to the Bison Card Center to load the printing card with the requested amount.
        4. The Executive or Assistant Finance Commissioner will notify the organization, based on the contact information given on the printing card request form, when the printing card is ready to be picked up in the Finance Office.
     5. This money may not be used in conjunction with any trip already funded by the Commission. Also, this money is not to be used for food or any other item in Section 3-07.
     6. This $175 is not subject to CSO status deductions or fundraising requirements, but is subject to the late penalty for the budget deadline. However, it is still only allocated to those groups in good standing with CSO. If the organization requests less than $175, the late penalty will still apply. The minimum budget, after late penalty applied, is $15 for the fiscal year.
  2. **Equipment**
     1. Student organizations may request funding for equipment that fall into one of the following conditions:
        1. Necessary for competition or for the organization’s purpose.
        2. Necessary for the safety of the group and its members (example: climbing rope, baseball helmets, etc.).
     2. If multiple items of the same equipment are being requested, the maximum number of individual items funded will be the number of members calculated based on 3-03-01.1.1 for competitive organizations and maximum of six people for non-competitive organizations.
     3. Equipment must be stored in a convenient, secure location where access is available to members of the organization.
     4. Equipment must remain with the group for the duration of the equipment’s life.
     5. Equipment reimbursed with Student Government funds cannot be sold as it is to be considered property of Student Government. If the group dissolves or disbands, said equipment must be returned to Student Government, in which the equipment will be liquidated.
     6. Each organization requesting funds for equipment will need to fill out the Organization Equipment Agreement and supply members with the Member Equipment Agreement. Prior to approval of funds the organization must provide the Finance Commission with the signed Organization Equipment Agreement and a copy of the Member Equipment Agreement.
  3. **Items Not Funded by the Commission**
     1. The following is a non-exhaustive list of commonly requested items that the Commission will not recommend for funding:
        1. Expenses for faculty members, non-student coaches, non-required coaches, or advisors. NDSU faculty or advisors cannot receive compensation for speaking at an organization’s meeting.
        2. Loans for any purpose
        3. Food or drink
        4. Equipment that will not remain with an organization for an extended period of time
        5. Personal Insurance
  4. **Fundraising Requirement of Tier II Organizations**
     1. Tier II organizations should not expect their sole funding to come from the Student Activity Fee. To make sure that organizations are putting forth an effort to fund their organizations, the Commission will enforce the following rules:
        1. Tier II organizations are required to fundraise at a level of 15% of the amount allowed by Title 3 of the Finance Guidelines. If “X” is the amount an organization would be allowed from Title 3, the maximum the Commission will recommend the Student Senate to allocate to a group can be calculated with this formula:
           1. X \* 0.85 = Maximum the Commission can recommend to the Student Senate to allocate to an organization. For example, if an organization is allowed to receive $3,000 from the items listed in Title 3 of the Finance Guidelines, the Finance Commission will recommend funding for up to $2,550 to the Student Senate. The organization must fundraise the remaining $450.
        2. The recommended allocation from the Finance Commission must still fall within the Guidelines.
  5. **Other Considerations on Funding of Tier II Organizations**
     1. Dual-College and Tri-College organizations will have their budgets adjusted on the following scale:
        1. Competitive Tier II organizations must turn in a team roster at the beginning of each semester. Competitive Tier II student organizations will be funded based on the percentage of NDSU students on their roster up to 85%. CSO status will also apply. For example, if there are 10 people on a competitive Tier II organization with a CSO status of 5, and 7 students are from NDSU, they will be funded at 70%.
     2. The CSO ratings of student organizations will impact their budget allocations on the following scale:
        1. Organizations with a CSO rating of 5 will be funded at a level of 100% of the standard allocations.
        2. Organizations with a CSO rating of 4 will be funded at a level of 95% of the standard allocations.
        3. Organizations with a CSO rating of 3 will be funded at a level of 85% of the standard allocations.
     3. The Finance Commission strongly advises the NDSU Student Senate to strictly adhere to the recommendations made by the Commission with respect to organizations with overt political, religious, or advocacy agendas, in an effort to protect NDSU and the Student Government from civil litigation. This advisement is to ensure compliance with court decisions made in Southworth vs. The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System and Amidon vs. The Student Association of SUNY at Albany.
     4. No Tier II organization will receive funding recommendations that total over $30,000 for a particular fiscal year. This rule applies to the annual budget as well as any Contingency Requests for that fiscal year.

1. **In-Year Request Preparation**
   1. **Introduction**
      1. The Commission recognizes that organizations may not have the knowledge during the annual budgeting process needed to make decisions on their budget for the following fiscal year. In addition, unforeseen expenses and opportunities may appear after the budgeting process which, if funded, would serve the student body of NDSU. For these reasons, Student Government has created four funds from which groups can request. These are the Contingency Fund, the Special Project Fund, the TORFF Fund, and the Reserve Fund. The process for requesting these funds is outlined in this section.
   2. **Contingency Requests**
      1. A portion of the Student Activity Fee budget[[5]](#footnote-5) is allocated by the Commission for Contingency Requests. The intent of the Contingency Fund is to assist organizations in covering expenses that are unforeseen at the time of budgeting. The Contingency Fund is intended to supplement the budgeting of Tier II organizations.
      2. Some factors to consider when submitting a Contingency request:
         1. The Commission recommends funding for Contingency Requests under the same allocation guidelines as the general budget. Look to Title 3 to assist in preparing the request. Please refrain from asking for items that are not funded through the annual budgeting process.
         2. Contingency Requests only require data on the specific item or event being requested.
         3. It is imperative that the group includes contact information on the request. The Assistant Executive Commissioner will contact the organization to set up a meeting time with the Commission.
         4. The organization is required to submit any necessary quotes for items such as registration fees, league dues, practice space rental costs, equipment or any other items included in the Contingency Request that is deemed necessary by the Assistant Executive Commissioner. A meeting time will not be scheduled until all necessary quotes have been received by the Assistant Executive Commissioner.
         5. The Commission requires a representative of the organization who has significant knowledge of the requests to be present at the meeting so that any questions the Commission may have about the request can be answered. This individual, however, does not necessarily have to be the president or the treasurer of the organization.
         6. In order for the request to be eligible for consideration, the organization must have submitted a budget in the annual budgeting process the previous year, unless the organization was of Temporary status at the current fiscal year’s budget submission deadline and has since been approved as an organization in good standing with CSO.
         7. The organization will be encouraged to have representation from the organization at the Student Senate meeting in which the request is being discussed. Contact the Assistant Executive Commissioner for information regarding the time the request is up for discussion on the Senate floor.
         8. In the event that the organization cannot or will not be attending a conference or competition or will not be purchasing equipment, the organization can release the funding for the respective Contingency Request by sending an email to the Assistant Executive Commissioner stating the reason for not planning to attend the event or purchase equipment. This request must be done prior to the date of the event or the purchase of related equipment.
   3. **Special Project Requests**
      1. A portion of the Student Activity Fee budget[[6]](#footnote-6) is allocated by the Commission for Special Project Requests. The intent of the Special Project Fund is to assist organizations in covering expenses related to projects and events that can benefit the student body. Special Project funding is open to student-run Tier I Organizations, as well as Tier II and Tier III Organizations, as noted in Title 2 of the Finance Guidelines.
      2. Some factors to consider when submitting a Special Project Request:
         1. The recommendations of the Commission are based on merit and the requesting organization must be in good standing with CSO.
         2. Special Project Requests require a full budget for the event being held, not just the line items being requested.
         3. Special Project Requests are not subject to the limits of Title 3. Therefore, organizations can request funding for items that are not listed in Title 3.
         4. Funds that are distributed for Special Project Requests are subject to a 60 day timeline from the date of the event. Any non-reimbursed funds allocated for the Special Project will be reissued into the Special Project Fund at the conclusion of the 60 day timeline.
         5. If any invoices, receipts, or any other required documents for reimbursement are not received within the 60 day timeline, the organization must submit a written document to the Finance Commission before the 60th day stating a request for an extension. Extensions will last for 30 extra days. Only one extension will be allowed for each Special Project Request.
         6. The Special Project Fund will be divided among requesting groups on a first come, first serve basis.
         7. The Finance Commission will not recommend funding for more than one Special Project per organization per year.
         8. It is preferable that the event be free or at a reduced cost to NDSU students.
         9. Requests must be submitted to the Finance Office of Student Government at least three weeks before the event is intended to be held.
         10. The organization is required to submit quotes prior to meeting with the Finance Commission for all items the organization is requesting funds for that are included in the Special Project Request. A meeting time will not be scheduled until all necessary quotes have been received by the Assistant Executive Commissioner.
         11. The Finance Commission will only recommend, at an absolute maximum, 85% of the total expected cost of the event, regardless of their CSO status of three, four, or five. The additional amount must be fundraised by the organization.
         12. Organizations will be expected to demonstrate that the request can benefit the student body.
         13. The Commission requires a representative of the organization who has significant knowledge of the requests to be present at the Finance Commission, and encourages a representative to attend Student Senate meetings so that any questions can be answered. This individual, however, does not necessarily have to be the president or the treasurer of the organization.
      3. Annual Events
         1. The Commission, in an effort to ensure that annual events are not continually funded through the Special Project Fund, has established a percentage system for funding these events. It is the Commission’s duty to ensure that Special Project Requests continue to be meritorious and have a recurrent benefit to the student body; repeatedly funding annual events detracts from this duty. Thus, the following percentage deductions will be taken from like-kind Special Project Requests that are submitted by an organization:
            1. For the first submitted request, the Commission will only recommend up to 85% of the total expected cost of the event. The additional 15% must be fundraised by the organization.
            2. For the second submitted request, the Commission will only recommend up to 70% of the total expected cost of the event. The additional 30% must be fundraised by the organization.
            3. For the third submitted request, the Commission will only recommend up to 50% of the total expected cost of the event. The additional 50% must be fundraised by the organization.
            4. For the fourth submitted request, the Commission will only recommend up to 25% of the total expected cost of the event. The additional 75% must be fundraised by the organization.
            5. For the fifth submitted request and beyond, the Commission will not recommend any funding. The organization will be expected to fundraise the entire amount completely.
         2. There is no timeframe for which the annual event deductions are taken. For example, should a group request a Special Project one year, not request money during the second year, but request a Special Project the third year, the third-year request shall be considered the second submitted request.
         3. The Commission considers similar requests from the same group to be like-kind. Like-kind requests shall be considered annual events, regardless of if they are wholly identical.
   4. **Reserve Requests**
      1. Allocated funds that are not requested by Tier II groups by the end of a fiscal year are pooled into the Reserve Fund. If an organization would like to submit a Reserve Request, please contact the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners and they will assist the organization in determining if the request falls into this category.
      2. All Reserve Requests, with the exception of requests related to replenishing the Contingency Fund, will be reviewed by the Finance Commission with a formal recommendation of “support” or “do not support” funding of the Reserve Request as presented. No dollar values will be recommended.
      3. Some factors to consider when submitting a Reserve Request:
         1. The recommendations of the Commission are based on merit.
         2. A full budget shall be attached to the request including items that are not being requested. The Commission may not recommend by line-item, but only on the full budget of the Reserve Request.
         3. Reserve Requests are not subject to the limits of Title 3. Therefore, Student Senators and other sponsors can request funding for items that are not listed in Title 3.
         4. These requests are to be a one-time funding, preferably with a sustainable funding model for costs to continue, whether self-sufficient or through funding sources other than Student Government.
         5. Reserve Requests shall be used to fund capital projects or campus-wide programs, services, or events. The proceeding subsections define the allowable expenditures:
            1. Capital projects include the categories of campus improvement or campus beautification; a nonrestrictive speaker, workshop, or presentation; or other projects addressing student-related concerns.
            2. Campus-wide programs, services, or events are to be of general appeal and access to the student body.
      4. The Commission will designate a Commission member to evaluate the merits of the request and bring the findings to the next Commission meeting, where the Commission will make their recommendation.
      5. The evaluation of the Reserve Request and recommendation from the Commission must take place before the vote on the Reserve Request at Senate.
      6. Reserve Fund money may not be used for the sole benefit of a department or division of the University.
      7. Reserve Fund money may be used for emergencies.
   5. **Temporary Organization Requests for Funding (TORFFs)**
      1. A portion of the Student Activity Fee Budget[[7]](#footnote-7) is allocated by the Commission for Temporary Organization Requests for Funding. The intent of the TORFF Fund is to assist organizations that would otherwise be allocated funds in the budgeting process. Because Temporary Organizations are not eligible to receive funds in the annual budgeting process, they must submit a TORFF to receive Standard Operating Expenses as outlined in Title 3 of the Finance Guidelines. The rules from Title 3 will apply to TORFFs with the exception that only Standard Operating Expenses are allowed to be requested. In an effort to encourage the move to full status, each organization will only be eligible to submit one TORFF over the span of its temporary status.
   6. **Absence from Commission meeting**
      1. With an In-Year Request (Contingency Request, Special Project Request, and Temporary Organization Requests for Funding), a representative must be present at their scheduled meeting time with the Finance Commission.
      2. If a representative is not present at the originally scheduled meeting for an In-Year Request, the Assistant Executive Commissioner will work to reschedule the meeting. At this second meeting, the original request will be deducted 5% of the overall budget that the Commission would have recommended at the original meeting.
      3. If a representative is not present at the rescheduled meeting, a 5% deduction will be added with each additional absence (ex. 10% deduction at the next meeting from original request, 15% the next meeting, etc.). The 5% deduction will only be added to the request(s) that the representative was in absence. The deduction will not affect new requests that are brought forth for the first time.
2. **Auditing of Student Organizations**
   1. **Introduction**
      1. The Finance Commission reserves the right to investigate all funding allocated from the Student Activity Fee. If it is determined that there has been inappropriate use, the organization will be subject to disciplinary action by Student Government and University administration. Inappropriate use of the Student Activity Fee can result in funding ineligibility for the remainder of the year in question and the following fiscal year.
      2. It is strongly recommended that organizations keep accurate records of all financial activity, especially funds allocated through Student Government.
   2. **Selection of Audited organizations**
      1. The only organizations that will be audited are Tier II organizations.
      2. The selection will be done by the Assistant Finance Commissioner and will consist of a random selection of one-third of the current student organizations.
      3. Audited organizations will not be selected again until after the other two-thirds have been audited.
      4. Selected organizations must be given six weeks’ notice before the audit paperwork is due.
   3. **Requirements of Organizations**
      1. The selected organizations will have to submit financial documents from the past six months to the Student Government Finance Office. Requested financial documents may include, but is not limited to, the following:

* Bank statements
* Copy of checkbook ledger
* Explanation of debit card uses
* Signature card from bank (or similar documentation)
* Inventory report from competitive organizations
  + 1. These finance documents are only required if applicable to the corresponding student organization.
    2. Deadline for all of the required documents will be the second Friday in March at 5pm.
    3. Failure to meet the deadline will lead to the following disciplinary procedures:
       1. **Warning:** If the organization does not meet requirements within two weeks from deadline.
       2. **Loss of a CSO status:** Requirements not met after two weeks of deadline.
       3. **Temporary probation of funding:** No contact from organization or requirements turned in after six weeks from deadline. Funding will be reinstated once organization talks with Student Government Finance and explains reasoning of missed deadline. Requirements still need to be met or funding will not be reinstated and no further requests can be made until audit is resolved.
  1. **Review Process**
     1. The following are items that will be looked for during the audit in the required documents:
        1. Direct paper trail- meaning that the income and expenses match up with receipts given to Student Government and/or reimbursement checks to the organization.
        2. Matching expenses with reimbursements from Student Government- the bank statements reflect deposits and withdrawals that are reasonable for the organization.
        3. Related purchases- checks/card use that seems germane to the organization (i.e. buying footballs for the football club) and other expenses for general operation.
     2. If the Assistant Executive Commissioner of Finance finds anything suspicious in the requirements, he/she will contact the organization to meet for clarification.
     3. After review by the Assistant Executive Commissioner of Finance, any disciplinary actions or corrective measures must be brought before the Audit Appeals Board to review the recommended actions.
  2. **Appeal Process**
     1. If the Assistant Executive Commissioner of Finance recommends disciplinary action after reviewing a student organization, the organization can appeal to the Audit Appeals Board.
     2. The Audit Appeals Board will only be established to resolve any issues from auditing.
     3. Members of the Audit Appeals Board shall be:
        1. 1 senate-appointed member from CSO commission,
        2. 1 senate-appointed member from Finance commission,
        3. 1 member appointed by the Student Senate,
        4. 4 at-large (2 CSO and 2 Finance) commissioners from respective commissions,
        5. The Executive Commissioner of CSO shall serve as the chair and non-voting member, except in the case of ties.
        6. The Assistant Executive Commissioner of Finance shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board.
     4. The Audit Appeals Board will follow the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised,* whenever appropriate.
     5. The Assistant Executive Commissioner of Finance will schedule meetings with any organizations that need to be reviewed.
     6. The Audit Appeals Board will vote to approve or deny appeal of the disciplinary action as recommended by the Assistant Executive Commissioner of Finance.
     7. The organization being reviewed may appeal the decision of the Audit Appeals Board through Student Court.

1. **General Expectations/Disbursement Process**
   1. **Responsibilities of Organizations**
      1. Organizations who receive funds from the Commission and Student Senate agree to accept the added responsibilities set forth by those agencies. The Commission and Student Senate are agents of NDSU and the State of North Dakota. Therefore, it is important for all organizations to carry out the following responsibilities:
         1. Represent NDSU properly and professionally in accordance with the overall goals of the University.
         2. Adequately advertise every activity funded through the Student Activity Fee.
         3. Direct energy toward betterment of the University, rather than the organization’s sole existence.
   2. **Reimbursement/Disbursement Policy**
      1. To ensure that Tier II and Tier III Organizations utilize the funds allocated by the Student Senate appropriately, the Finance Commission works off a strict reimbursement-only policy. The Student Senate allocates amounts of the Student Activity Fee to groups; it does not disburse the money. Groups are required to follow the process outlined in Section 6-03 of the Guidelines in order to receive allocated money from the Student Activity Fee.
      2. Tier I Organizations are not subject to the reimbursement-only policy. The Executive Commissioner of Finance shall direct the NDSU Accounting Office to disburse Tier I allocated money to the respective organizations at the beginning of the fall semester.
      3. Every organization must fill out the travel notification form prior to traveling to each event. Failure to do so would forfeit the funding for that event. Each organization will be given one warning per semester. The Travel Notification Form can be found under the Congress of Student Organizations Blackboard page.
   3. **Procedures for Disbursement of Funds**
      1. Organizations granted a fund allocation can request those funds directly from the Student Government Finance office, as outlined below:
         1. Organizations can find Reimbursement Request forms and examples of Reimbursement Request forms on the Student Government webpage.
         2. Organizations will receive reimbursement for proven expenses. When completing the Request for Reimbursement, all related receipts and proof of payment must be attached and turned into the Student Government Finance office for review. After review, the Executive or Assistant Executive Commissioner will then fill out the necessary paperwork and contact the organization after the check has been processed by the University.
            1. Organizations may be required to present an oral report regarding any conference or competition utilized through the Student Activity Fee. If requested, the organization must forward a report to the Commission and/or the Student Senate.
            2. All requests for any given fiscal year must be submitted by June 1st of that fiscal year. If an organization is requesting reimbursement for an event that occurs after May 27th then the request must be submitted within five days of returning from the event, but no later than June 29th.
         3. Email is the official means of communication for Student Government Finance, whose email address shall be ndsu.sg.finance@ndsu.edu. The email address listed on any given request shall be considered the official means of communication for that request. If organizations have incorrectly listed an email address, the Finance Commission shall not be held responsible for withheld funding.
         4. If an organization needs allocated dollars prior to the expenditures, the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners must approve the process of having the vendor bill Student Government directly. Money will not be disbursed directly to organizations without proof of purchase under any circumstance.
2. **Operating Procedures of the Commission**
   1. **Introduction**
      1. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out the duties of the Commission, these standard operating procedures have been created to clarify the mechanics of the Commission. Outside of exceptions noted in this section of the Official Guidelines of the Finance Commission, *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* will be used to effectively run Commission meetings.
   2. **Membership**
      1. The Commission shall consist of the Executive Commissioner, the Assistant Executive Commissioner, two Student Senate members, and six student-at-large members. The Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners are appointed by the Student Body President with approval of the Student Senate. The Student Senate members are appointed and approved by the Student Senate. The student-at-large members are appointed by the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners with approval of the Student Senate.
      2. Terms for the Executive Commissioner, Assistant Executive Commissioner, and the Student Senate members run from the date of appointment until the swearing in of the new Student Senate and executive team. The terms of at-large members run from the time of appointment until the end of the fiscal year. There is no limit to the number of terms an individual can serve on the Commission.
      3. Members of the Commission must adhere to the minimum academic requirements for office eligibility in organizations.
   3. **Replacement of Members**
      1. If a vacancy arises on the Commission, the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioner shall take the appropriate steps to advertise the vacancy and appoint a replacement, subject to Student Senate approval.
   4. **Quorum**
      1. A simple majority (five voting members) shall constitute a quorum. The Executive Commissioner will serve as the chair of the Commission. The chair will be counted as a member of the quorum and is granted full voting rights when he/she is needed to reach five votes on a motion.
   5. **Voting**
      1. The method of voting shall be determined by the Commission. Voting by proxy is not allowed on the Commission. Members of the Commission are expected to abstain from voting on motions in which there is a clear conflict of interest. The chair shall vote only to break a tie or to reach quorum. A simple majority shall constitute the ruling decision. The Assistant Executive Commissioner will act as secretary of the Commission and is a full voting member of the Commission. The Assistant Executive Commissioner will serve as chair of the Commission in the absence of the Executive Commissioner and will appoint a member of the Commission to serve as acting secretary in the Executive Commissioner’s absence. When acting as chairperson, the Assistant Executive Commissioner’s voting rights will be limited to the voting rights of the chair.
   6. **Meetings**
      1. All Commission meetings are open to the public. The Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners are responsible for the agenda and for setting a regular meeting time and place in accordance with the schedules of the Commission members.
      2. The minutes of each meeting shall include a brief rationale for each financial request and the conclusion of the Commission (as to the granting, denial, or alteration of each budget). The Assistant Executive Commissioner should prepare and distribute the minutes of each meeting to the Commission members.
      3. Requests for funding should be presented by a representative of the organization requesting funds. This will allow the Commission an opportunity to ask questions. After all questions are answered and a vote is taken, the next request should be presented.
   7. **Member Responsibilities**
      1. Commission members’ primary responsibility is to evaluate each organization carefully in accordance with the Guidelines. The Executive Commissioner may assign additional duties to the Commission as needed to fully carry out the duties of the Commission.
   8. **Removal of Members**
      1. The Executive Commissioner of Finance can remove at-large members of the Commission for excessive absences, withholding information that may affect a request, promising funds to an organization before the request is presented, breaking or failing to uphold the Guidelines, failing to perform assigned responsibilities, or other misconduct, with approval of the Commission. Alternatively, the Commission may vote to remove an at-large member with a two-thirds affirmative vote for the reasons mentioned above. Recommendations to the Student Senate for the removal of a Senate-appointed member will be made whenever the Commission decides the Senator has not met his/her responsibilities.
   9. **Responsibilities of Student Senators**
      1. The Commission shall recommend the responsibilities of Student Senators to the Finance Guidelines. It is recommended that each Student Senator shall attend at least one Commission meeting and one hour of Budget Hearings in the spring, or two hours of Budget Hearings, plus the required office hours during the week before the budget is approved. A Student Senator’s failure to fulfill their obligations during the budgeting process can result in losing voting privileges during budgeting at the Senate’s discretion.
   10. **The Student Activity Fee budget**
       1. The budgets for the following fiscal year of each requesting student organization must be submitted prior to the start of budgeting. Failure by an organization to turn in its budget may result in ineligibility of funding for that organization, or any other action deemed appropriate by the Commission. Exceptions can be made by the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners if an organization can show that a later submission will provide more accurate information.
       2. It is important that each request be heard individually on its own merits within the guidelines set by the Commission. The Commission should strive for consistency in its rationale in granting or not granting a budget.
       3. The proposed budget must be ratified by the Student Senate and signed by the Student Body President, Executive Commissioner, and the University President before the budget is final.
   11. **Rounding**
       1. The Finance Commission shall round all of its recommendations to the nearest dollar. This includes all budget line items as well as any funding requests.
   12. **Advisor**
       1. The Advisor to the Commission will be selected by the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioner with the approval of the Commission. The Advisor should ideally be either an administrator of the Memorial Union or a faculty member of the College of Business. The Advisor will serve as a neutral and impartial resource to the Commission. The Advisor will attend Commission meetings, Advisory Board meetings, Budget Hearings, and the Finance Forums as needed, provide a historical perspective, and make any recommendations to the Executive and Assistant Executive Commissioners regarding the Commission’s activity. The term of the Advisor is unlimited; the Advisor will serve until his/her resignation. However, the Commission may remove its Advisor with an affirmative vote of 6 of the 9 voting members.
3. **Reviews and Amendments of the Guidelines**
   1. **Review of the Guidelines**
      1. In the fall of odd-numbered years, these Guidelines will be formally reviewed. The group reviewing the Guidelines will be called the Finance Guideline Review Committee. This committee will consist of the Executive Commissioner of Finance, the Assistant Finance Commissioner, and the Student Body Vice President, who shall all serve as co-chairs, five Student Senators chosen by the Senate, and two at-large Finance Commissioners chosen by the Commission. The committee will meet as needed to complete a thorough review of these Guidelines and bring its recommendations to the Student Senate in the form of a Senate Bill.
   2. **Amendments to the Guidelines**
      1. The Commission can propose amendments to these guidelines as needed by an affirmative vote. In addition, Student Senators can bring forth amendments to these guidelines at any time. If a Senator wishes to bring forth a potential amendment, it is considered proper procedure that the Senator will present the proposed change and supporting rationale to the Commission.
4. **Appendices**
   1. **Enterprise Rent-A-Car Rates – page 18**
   2. **Government Mileage Reimbursement Rate – page 18**

**Rental Rates for Enterprise Rent-A-Car[[8]](#footnote-8)**

Sedan $32.71/day

Minivan $52.93/day

Half-Ton Pickup $52.27/day

12-Passenger Van $99.42/day

**Government Mileage Reimbursement Rate[[9]](#footnote-9)** $0.235/mile/vehicle

1. Section 7-02-02.1 of the Student Government Code [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Section 7-02-03 of the Student Government Code [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Section 7-03-01 of the Student Government Code [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Section 7-02-02.1 of the Student Government Code [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Contingency Fund must be budgeted at a minimum of $20,000 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Special Project Fund must be budgeted at a minimum of $20,000 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The TORFF Fund must be budgeted at a minimum of ten times the amount of a Standard Budget. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. These rates will be adjusted before budget hearings for the following fiscal year. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. These rates will be adjusted before budget hearings for the following fiscal year. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)