

**Appendix C**  
**The Hope College Student Congress**  
**Appropriations Committee Charter**  
**(Fall 2010)**

**Preamble**

The purpose of this document is to establish and outline the financial procedures of officially recognized student organizations of Hope College, specifically those funded by the Student Activity Fee, and to guide the administration of that fee for the creation and maintenance of social, cultural, political, and religious activities, open to all students; for the improvement of student life; and to augment the general student welfare.

**Article 1: Purpose**

The purpose and intent of the student financial system of Hope College is to judiciously allocate the monies of the Student Activities Fund, to provide a standard system of accountability to all student organizations for the student body, and to continually strive for the accomplishment of the goals stated in the Preamble. The officers and organizations shall be accountable to the Hope College student body for their actions.

**Article 2: The Student Activities Fund**

- 2.1 The Student Activities Fund shall consist of the receipts of the Student Activity Fee and certain funds received by student organizations. The Student Activity Fee is set by the Board of Trustees with the consultation of Student Congress and charges through the Business Office.
- 2.2 The Student Activity Fee was last raised during the 2003-2004 academic year. This fee may not be increased more frequently than every two years.
- 2.3 The use of this fund, in distribution, allocation, and expenditure shall in no way discriminate on the basis of race, sex, culture, ethnic group, or political orientation.
- 2.4 No members of the student body may be denied opportunity for participations in activities of projects provided for by the Student Activity Fee.

**Article 3: The Appropriations Committee**

- 3.1 The Student Congress Appropriations Committee will administer and allocate the Student Activities Fund.
- 3.2 The Appropriations Committee will consist of the Controller and six members, at least three of which will be selected from within Student Congress. Members will be chosen by the Controller and the Student Congress Appropriations Advisor after application. No members of the Appropriations Committee shall be members of the Executive Board other than the Controller. At least half of the Student Congress members must hold non-cabinet positions on Student Congress
  - a. The Controller will be chosen to serve as the student representative to the Board of Trustees Committee on Business and Finance.
  - b. A quorum consists of four Application Committee members.
- 3.3 The Appropriations Committee will allocate a portion of the Student Activities Fund to officially recognized student organizations.
  - a. It reserves the right to make line-item specifications.
  - b. It reserves the right to set all student salaries from Student Organizations
  - c. It reserves the right to deny any organization funds for a specific actions because that action is not consistent with the goals stated in the Preamble.
- 3.4 The Appropriations Committee will formally examine the financial records of any organization funded by the Student Activities Fund.
  - a. Individual Committee members observe the right to audit student organization accounts as deemed necessary by the committee, under the supervision of the Controller.
- 3.5 The committee will meet as needed throughout the course of the school year.
- 3.6 It will make every effort to acquaint itself with the specific purposes and functions of the organizations funded by the Student Activities Fund.

- 3.7 No member of the Appropriations Committee shall participate in the discussion, participation, or voting concerning a proposal directly related to an organization or committee of which that Appropriations member is currently a member.
- 3.8 The Appropriations Committee will choose one of its members to act as secretary, who will be responsible for a summary of the business discussed during the meetings of the committee.
- 3.9 Either the Student Congress Cabinet of the Appropriations Committee may recommend the dismissal of an Appropriations Committee member, to be approved by a two-thirds vote of the entire Congress.

#### **Article 4: The Controller**

- 4.1 The Controller will be chosen in a manner consistent with the Student Congress Constitution.
- 4.2 The Controller will chair the Appropriations Committee, will be responsible for its agenda, and will vote in all manners.
- 4.3 The Controller is the chief financial officer of the Student Activities Fund and all of its allocations
- 4.4 The Controller is responsible for the Appropriations Committee account and Contingency Fund. The Controller's signature, along with that of the faculty advisor, is considered proper authorization for these funds.
  - a. The Controller will keep records of the monthly spending of every organization funded by the Student Activity Fee.
  - b. The Controller is responsible for making clearly known to all leaders of student organizations the consequences of over-spending. These leaders must provide written acknowledgment of these consequences.

#### **Article 5: Financial Heads**

- 5.1 Each organization shall have a designated financial head that is responsible for the fiscal condition of that organization.
- 5.2 The signature of the financial head and the organization's advisor is considered proper authorization for the allocation of funds from the account. In the event that the financial head is not the overall leader, the leader's signature, along with that of the advisor, may also be considered proper authorization.
- 5.3 The financial head will keep records of all income and all expenditures of that organization.
- 5.4 The financial heads of all organizations will meet in forum called by the Controller not less than once a semester, to discuss financial matters.
- 5.5 Financial Heads of organizations must submit an end of semester report to the Controller in order to be considered for funding.

#### **Article 6: Budgeting**

- 6.1 There are two accepted methods for organizations to receive a portion of the Student Activities Fund: in the annual allocations process occurring each spring, and through Ad-Hoc requests throughout the school year.
- 6.2 Requests at the annual spring allocations process shall be considered in two categories:
  - a. Organizations must submit requests clearly stating the purposes and costs associated with that request. "Same as last year" is not clearly stating the purpose.
  - b. Operational requests are those monies necessary for the continued operation of the organization.
  - c. Capital Requests are those monies designated for purchases of goods or services that are permanent in nature, such as equipment. All approved Capital Requests will be placed in the Appropriations Capital Account and administered to student organizations through the Controller
- 6.3 Any monies not allocated during the spring shall remain in the Student Appropriations Account, from which Ad-Hoc Requests can be filled. Ad-Hoc consists of any requests not made during the spring budgeting process and come in three categories: Appeals, Additions, and Special Requests.
  - a. An Appeal is an Ad-Hoc request based on an inadequacy within the specific intentions of the current budget.

- b. An Addition is an Ad-Hoc request made to expand upon the specific intentions of the current budget, but not to appropriate funds for requests which were submitted and denied during the original budgeting process.
  - c. A Special Request is an Ad-Hoc request made by an individual or group sponsoring a special event or project that will benefit the student body as a whole.
  - d. Any Ad-Hoc request under \$500.00 shall be approved or rejected by a majority vote of the Appropriations Committee. Any Ad-Hoc request for \$500.00 or over must also be approved or rejected by a majority vote of Congress.
  - e. Any Ad-Hoc request may be rejected by the Controller in the event that there are insufficient funds.
  - f. Any Ad-Hoc request can be appealed by the organization to Student Congress on the grounds that the Appropriations Committee is violating the purpose of procedure of this document. An appeal such as this falls under the jurisdiction of the Student Congress President and shall be submitted within *five calendar days* of receiving the committee's decision for the original Ad-Hoc requests. The appeal procedure for an Ad-Hoc decision shall follow the guidelines presented in Article 9.3 pertaining to all Appropriations Committee financial decisions.
- 6.4 If the Appropriations Committee has allocated the monies to each group the Committee sees fit and the total for all groups is not within the required budget range, an across the board percentage cut will be issued. This percentage cut will be taken off the total of each group's budget with the only exception being the Capital Request budget. It will be the responsibility of the individual groups to then determine where in their own budgets they can sustain a shortage of funds and spend accordingly.
- 6.5 if no monies in the approved budge of student organizations have been spent after 90 days from the official beginning of the academic year, then the entire budget /or all monies allocated to the group will be returned to the Student Appropriations Account.
- a. The operating budgets of these organizations will have no funds available to spend after this 90 day period has passed.
  - b. After 90 days have passed, the Appropriations Committee will meet to review the constitution and Activities of the organization in question.
  - c. If the organization wishes to regain control of these funds, the financial head of the organization must request a budge hearing from the Controller within 30 days of the seizure of these funds.
  - d. The intent of this section is to ensure that organizations still exist and to ensure that the Student Activity Fee is not funding inactive groups.

**Article 7: Student Organization Income**

- 7.1 Income is defined as money received by the organization in return for products or services
- 7.2 Income levels will be determined by organizations financial heads and approved by the Appropriations Committee.
- 7.3 The Appropriations Committee reserves the right to set specified income levels for all student organizations.
- 7.4 Income amounts set for an organization are expected to be filled in full by the end of the fiscal year. Any income not earned by an organization will be counted as a deficit.
- 7.5 Any income earned by an organization over their allotted amount shall be reported to the Appropriations Committee and held under the jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee to be allocated as follows only after the entire Student Activities Fund has been balanced and finalized:
  - a. 50 percent to the student Activities Fund
  - b. 50 percent retained by the Student Organization that earned the income.

**Article 8: The Annual Allocation Process**

- 8.1 The Appropriations Committee will publish a schedule for the allocation process.
- 8.2 At a time dictated by the schedule, each organization will submit a total budget request with the rationale for the upcoming school year.
- 8.3 Each organization must present a listening of officers who will assume responsibility for the organization.

- a. It is the responsibility of the officers of the organization to supply the Appropriations Committee with a reasonable estimation of the number of members of the organization for the following year and a general plan of intended programs for the upcoming year.
- 8.4 The officer(s) of the organizations must, during the budget hearings, adequately explain their budget requests to the Appropriations Committee.
- 8.5 The Appropriations Committee will then prepare recommendations for the next year's budget. Records of rationale shall be kept by the Controller.
  - a. A Contingency Fund will be maintained at 2.5% of the total budget.
  - b. Capital requests (See Article 6.2) will be considered after all operating budgets have been determined.
- 8.6 Members of the Campus Life Board will review the final budgets to determine consistency and fairness.
- 8.7 The Controller along with input from the Appropriations Committee will present it's recommendations to Student Congress for approval or revisions.
- 8.8 The recommendations will then be returned with rationale to the requesting organizations
- 8.9 After the final budgets have been approved by Student Congress, the Controller will submit the budgets to the business office.

**Article 9: Appeal**

- 9.1 Any Appropriations Committee financial decision shall follow the guidelines presented in this document. An appeal shall be warranted if a decision of the Appropriations Committee specifically violates any of the articles contained in this document.
- 9.2 Any Appropriations Committee financial decision for a specific organization shall be in within the context of all student organization budgets. An appeal shall be warranted if the Appropriations Committee budgeting decision presents a clear discrepancy between the particular organizations budget and that of other Student Organizations.
- 9.3 Should an organization wish to make an appeal of the original Appropriations Committee budgeting decision, the following procedure should be followed:
  - a. Any organization wishing to appeal any Appropriations Committee financial decision must do so in writing to the Student Congress Controller within *five calendar days* of receiving approved budgets.
  - b. The Controller will then give this appeal to the Student Congress President. The president will be responsible for setting up a committee to make a final decision on this appeal. The committee will consist of five Student Congress members (one of whom is the president, and none of whom are Appropriations members). The Student Congress Advisor and Appropriations Committee Advisor will also be present. Only those submitting a written appeal may personally appear before the Congress sub-committee.
  - c. The Controller will have an opportunity to present the Appropriations Committees justifications for the budgeting decision and the financial head of the organization making the appeal will have an opportunity to present that organization's reason for appeal.
  - d. The final decision for an appeal can be expected within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the appeal.
- 9.4 Should an organization have an overdrawn account and be in debt at the end of a fiscal year, the following penalties shall take effect:
  - a. The amount of the debt shall be taken into consideration when budgeting for the organization the following year.
  - b. An overdrawn account shall exclude an organization from Special Requests and Capital Expenses in the following year, unless approved by a majority vote of Student Congress, if:
    - 1. An organization budgeted for \$1000.00 or less is overdrawn by \$50.00 or more.
    - 2. An organization budged for over 1000.00 is overdrawn by \$100.00 or more.
  - c. Should an organization be irreparably (with irreparably being defined as 10% or more) over budget during the fiscal year, or in the estimation of the Appropriations Committee, be unable to stay within budget that fiscal year, the Appropriations Committee may do one or more of the following:

1. Appropriate funds from the Contingency fund to cover any outstanding or estimated debts.
  2. Direct the business office to accept no new expenses from that account, except for those which goods or services have already been received.
  3. Withhold student salaries.
  4. Recommend officers to appropriate Judicial Board for disciplinary actions.
- 9.5 Any mandated disciplinary decision made by the Appropriations Committee can be appealed to the Student Congress President and will be dealt with in the same manner as detailed in Article 9.3.

#### **Article 10: Malfeasance**

- 10.1 Should an organization seek to deliberately deceive the student body in the expenditure, allocation, or distribution of the Student Activities Fund, the organization is subject to disciplinary action by the Appropriations Committee. Punishment may include fines issued to the organization; denial or withdrawal of Special Requests, Capital Requests or entire budgets; or any other actions described under Article 9.2c of this Charter. These decisions may be appealed to the Student Congress.
- 10.2 Should an individual seek to deliberately deceive, defraud, or cheat any organization or the student body of funds, that individual shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Appropriations Committee and the College. The Appropriations Committee may recommend the individual to any or all of the following persons for disciplinary action; Advisor of Appropriations, Student Congress Advisor, Dean of Students, Director of Student Activities, Hope College Judicial Board, or Hope College Public Safety.

#### **Article 11: Amendments**

- 11.1 All areas of this charter may be amended by the following procedure:
- a. The Student Congress Cabinet or the Appropriations Committee will present the proposed amendment to Student Congress.
  - b. Student Congress can amend or reject the amendment according to the same procedure for the amendment of the Student Congress Constitution.

#### **Article 12: Student Congress Fiscal Responsibility Policy:**

Student Congress, recognizing the need for fiscal responsibility among all student organizations, has implemented a five tiered funding system. This system is intended to maximize the use of the Student Activities Fund so that every student dollar is used in the way intended.

The Controller, in association with the Executive Board, will look at all student organizations' budgets<sup>1</sup> at the end of the fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>. This review will happen no later than the Friday before classes begin. This will be the responsibility of the rising Executive Board that will serve in the following school year. After reviewing the budgets, these three members will decide if an organization needs to change to a different tier level and if any fiscal sanctions need to be put into place. The greater Cabinet will review any appeals as soon as possible, but these appeals must be received by the end of the second week of classes. In the event that an organization's budge has been reduced due to the regulations of this document, the excess money will be directly placed into the Ad-Hoc fund in the Appropriations Budget. This money may then be used throughout the year under the discretion of the Appropriations Committee.

While it is required that an organization drop a tier level if overspending occurs, as spelled out below, it is the discretion of the Executive Board, with appeal to the Cabinet, to move an organization to a lower tier level than the one immediately below the tier they are currently on. This should only happen should an extreme grievance occur.

The five tiers are outlined below:

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<sup>1</sup> Student Congress considers both the expenditure and income reports to be included in an organization's budget. For example, if an organization does not meet their income requirements for a given year, the organization would be expected to balance this lack of income with a cut in spending.

**Level One:**

An organization has not overspent in the past year; they show excellent fiscal responsibility:

- The organization is in good fiscal standing and may present a budget request to the Appropriations Committee for the following fiscal year

**Level Two:**

At the end of a given fiscal year, if a level one organization has overspent by over 5%<sup>2</sup> of their budget, the organization will be considered a level two organization and the following will happen:

- The Executive Board will notify the student leader(s) and advisor(s) of the organization
- The organization will receive a budget no greater than the budget received in the previous year, even if the Appropriations Committee has already approved an increase in the proposed budget.
- The Executive Board will take into account how much the organization has overspent and could make further modification to the budget, if deemed necessary
- A level two organization will not receive funding for capital requests
- If an organization maintains their budget while at level two, the following year they will be considered a level one organization<sup>3</sup>

**Level Three:**

At the end of a given fiscal year, if a level two organization has overspent by over 5% of their budget, they will be considered a level three organization and the following will happen:

- The Executive Board will notify the student leader(s) and advisor(s) of the organization
- The leader(s) of the organization must meet with the Controller or members of the Appropriations Committee once a semester.
- The organization will receive a budget no greater than the budget received in the previous year, even if the Appropriations Committee has already approved an increase in the proposed budget
- The Executive Board will take into account how much the organization has overspent and will decrease the budget by at least 10% more if deemed necessary
- A level three organization will not receive funding for capital requests or ad-hoc requests
- A level three organization will not be allowed to ask the Appropriations Committee for more than their current allocation during the budgeting process for the upcoming year
- If an organization maintains their budget while at level three, the following year they will be considered a level one organization, however due to the previous stipulation, they will only be funded what they received as a level three organization.

**Level Four:**

At the end of a given fiscal year, if a level three organization has overspent by over 5% of their budget, they will be considered a level four organization and the following will happen:

- The executive Board will notify the student leader(s) and advisor(s) of the organization
- The leader(s) of the organization must meet with the Controller or members of the Appropriations Committee each month.
- The advisor(s) of the organization must meet with the Controller once a semester

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document, 5% is used as a hard number for mandatory sanctions to be implemented if an organization overspends by more than this amount. It is important that organizations have flexibility before sanctions take place. However, it is expected that the Appropriations Committee will take into account, during the annual budgeting process, organizations that consistently overspend by less than 5%.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this document, maintaining an organization's budget implies that the organization will not exceed their budget by any given amount. IN the case that an organization should overspend by less than 5%, they will remain at their current tier level and the Executive Board will examine the organization for further action.

- The organization's leader(s) and advisor(s) must meet with the Extra Curricular Activities Committee, or a like committee under the Campus Life Board, to discuss reform in the organization's fiscal responsibility and the future of the organization.
- The organization will receive a budget no greater than the budget received in the previous year
- The executive Board will take into account how much the organization has overspent and will decrease the budget by at least 10% more if deemed necessary
- A level four organization will not receive funding for capital requests or Ad-Hoc requests
- A level four organization will not be allowed to ask the Appropriations Committee for more than their current allocation during the budgeting process for the upcoming year
- If an organization maintains their budget while at level four, the following year they will be considered a level two organization, however, due to the previous stipulation, they will only be funded what they received as a level four organization

**Level Five:**

At the end of a given fiscal year, if a level four organization has overspent by over 5% of their budget, they will be considered a level five organization and the following will happen:

- The Executive Board will notify the student leader(s) and advisor(s) of the organization
- The organization will not receive any funding from the Student Activity Fee
- A level five organization will not receive funding for capital requests or Ad-Hoc requests
- In order for the organization to be considered for funding in the future, the organization's leader(s) and advisor(s) need to meet with the Extra Curricular Activities Committee, or a like committee under the Campus Life Board, as well as Student Congress, to discuss how they plan to correct and responsibly use their budget in the future
- It is the sole discretion of Student Congress to reinstate this organization for funding from the Student Activity Fee and at what tier level the organization will be placed at
- Student Congress could ask this organization to repay any monetary grievances to the Student Activity Fee.