GSO Budget and Club Funding Policy

Article I. GSO Budget Purpose.

Section 1. The Graduate Student Organization receives funding from the University to support its operations and to provide programming for the graduate student body.

Section 2. The GSO works to ensure that its budgets are inclusive and that its fiscal decisions are transparent.
Article II. Club Funding Purpose.

Section 1. The Graduate Student Organization allots funding to graduate student groups recognized by the GSO and by the University in order to fulfill the GSO’s responsibility to “create opportunities for graduate students to develop professionally, socially, and academically.”

Section 2. The GSO takes seriously its responsibility to provide programming that meets the needs of a diverse range of students, and seeks to maximize the value returned to students from the GSO budget.

Section 3. The GSO believes in using tools to foster transparency and accountability in order to ensure that student funds are being spent responsibly.

Section 4. Accordingly, this policy seeks to recognize clubs’ needs for clear guidance about funding procedures and the GSO’s decisions about what sorts of funding will best serve the student body’s interests, while simultaneously taking steps to ensure that responsible clubs are rewarded in future rounds of funding allocations. It therefore continues, codifies, and formally establishes the accountability procedures first laid out in the Spring 2011 semester by the Executive Board at the time.
Article III. The Budget Committee.

Section 1. The Constitution delegates the first review of the GSO Budget (hereafter “Budget”) and student club funding requests (hereafter “Requests”) to the Budget Committee of the General Assembly (hereafter the “Committee”). The Committee will

a) Be chaired by the Treasurer of the Graduate Student Organization;
b) Consist of a chair and at least two members but no more than four members chosen by the General Assembly, each of whom will have served on the Budget Committee for at least one semester;
c) Review and make recommendations to the Assembly on Requests submitted by graduate student groups.

Section 2. In the event that there are an insufficient number of Assembly members available for service on the Budget Committee, the Executive Board will serve as the Budget Committee pursuant to the Constitution. In that case, the Assembly will nominate alternate members of the Committee, who will not have a vote but whose service will count toward the requirement in Article III, Section 1 above.

Section 3. The Chair of the Budget Committee will officially receive all Requests. The Budget Committee and Executive Board will delegate their responsibilities to review all Requests for procedural defects to the Chair of the Budget Committee, although either body may, by a simple majority vote, overturn the Chair’s decision that a Request is or is not free of procedural defects.
Article IV. The GSO Annual Budget.

Section 1. The Constitution requires the GSO Annual Budget to be drafted by the Budget Committee and submitted to the incoming Executive Board before the final Assembly meeting of the Spring academic semester. The Constitution further specifies that the Assembly will consider and approve the Budget at its first meeting of the fall semester.

Section 2. The GSO Annual Budget will specify the amounts to be allocated to the following categories:

a) Executive Board Overhead (for office supplies and other organizational resources)
b) GSO Social and Networking Events (for social, academic, and professional events sponsored and co-sponsored by the GSO)
c) Club Funding Budget (for graduate student organizations)
d) Orientation (for orientation events for August and September)
e) Reserves (to cover unanticipated expenses or overruns in (a) through (d))

The Annual Budget may include other categories as the Budget Committee may consider necessary.

Section 3. The Treasurer will not be allowed to provide any payment for any expenditure, including club funding requests, that has not been approved by the Executive Board or by the General Assembly.

Section 4. The Treasurer will not be allowed to provide any payment for any expenditure that has not been approved by the Executive Board as a line item within the five categories above.
Article V. Club Funding Procedures.

Section 1. Graduate student groups receiving funds must comply with all University policies to remain in good standing with the GSO. Student groups must also remain in compliance with the Constitution’s Article VIII. Student groups must be recognized by the Center for Student Programs and have completed GSO’s club initiation procedures to be eligible for funding.

Section 2. The Budget Committee will take cognizance of the following group-level factors in allocating GSO funds for club groups:

a) Attendance at all non-election meetings of the GSO General Assembly (as required by the Constitution in Article VIII, Section 1, Paragraph C and Article VIII, Section, Paragraph D)
b) Active membership size
c) Anticipated attendance
d) Mission of the group
e) The group’s history in using GSO funds fully, responsibly, and in keeping with their purposes as stated in previous years’ requests
f) The ability of the group to carry out the events for which it is submitting Requests

Section 3. Groups will submit Requests for funding individual events in accordance with the Deadlines to be promulgated by the Treasurer each semester. The sum of all Requests made by an individual group may not exceed $1,500 in any individual semester, provided that a group that has submitted Requests totaling less than $500 in the Fall semester may submit Requests totaling $2,000 in the Spring semester. Requests for co-sponsored events will be divided equally against each group’s Request totals in each semester.

Section 4. Groups must inform the Chair under which Category of Funding they are submitting each Request. The Categories of Funding are:

a) Academic Events, designed to support students’ academic growth and interactions with faculty
b) Social Events, designed to support recreational interactions among the graduate student body
c) Networking Events, designed to support opportunities for students to meet with valuable professional contacts for career-building purposes
d) Diversity Events, designed to recognize the contributions of diverse cultures and experiences to the University community.
e) Service Events, designed to support Georgetown students’ participation in charitable and voluntary events.

The Chair may reassign Requests to the category he believes most fitting. The Committee may reassign Requests as well.

Section 5. Each Request must include

a) A tentative date for the event for which funds are being requested
A narrative description of what the event will consist of and how it meets GSO's goals for receiving maximum value per dollar spent.

A budget detailing expenses for food, for marketing, and other expenses.

Estimated minimum, likeliest, and maximum attendance.

An indication of whether the event is open to all Georgetown graduate students or closed only to club’s members. If the event is closed, 10 percent of the event’s score will be deducted before the allocation of funding for event proposals.

An indication of whether the event is the club’s single most important initiative for the semester. The Budget Committee will consider this information before making their final allocations at their discretion.

Section 6. The GSO’s logo must be prominently displayed on all promotional materials for events funded by the GSO.

Section 7. Food and beverage expenses funded by GSO are capped at $11 per head for lunches, $14 per head for dinners, and $7 per head for breakfasts, teas, or other events. The Chair will adjust budgets so that these maximums are obeyed.

Section 8. Total expenses funded by GSO for each Request may not exceed $17 per head for all expenses. No Request may be made for more than $750 for any single event. The Chair will adjust budgets so that these maximums are obeyed. Larger events may apply directly to the GSO Executive Board for co-sponsorships to be considered by the Assembly.

Section 9. GSO does not fund the consumption or purchase of alcoholic beverages, of membership dues in national organizations, or of any expenses at which graduate students will not be the predominant (>75%) audience.

Section 10. The Chair and the Committee will not consider Requests for events that have already taken place, that will have taken place before the awarding of funds for the semester, or that are submitted after the deadlines for each semester.

Section 11. After carrying out the adjustments and other procedures outlined above, the Chair and the Committee will score each Request individually. Requests will be ranked within their category from the most highly ranked to the least highly ranked. Ties will be broken based on the highest score on the mission category. Requests will be ranked in the following categories:

- Breadth of Appeal.
- Cost Effectiveness.
- Quality of Proposal.
- Need for GSO Funding.
- Uniqueness and Originality.

Section 12. If a group’s most important event has been denied funding but another event from that group has received funding, then the Committee may, at its discretion, deny funding for the successful event and grant funding to the group’s most important priority at no more than the level of funding awarded the successful event.
Section 13. The Chair’s report to the General Assembly will consist of a ranking of those Requests that can be fully funded within the Categories of Funding, as well as a recommendation as to whether any surplus remaining should be redistributed to fully fund other Requests, to partially fund other Requests, or returned to the main GSO budget.

Section 14. The General Assembly will consider the Chair’s report under a closed rule. The debate will last no less than half an hour and no more than an hour, including the presentation of the Committee report. No amendments will be permitted. Should the report be accepted, then funds will be disbursed accordingly with all deliberate speed. Should the report not be accepted, then the process will begin again, and the new club funding budget will be considered at the next regularly scheduled Assembly meeting.
Article VI. Responsibility of Clubs Receiving GSO Funding.

Section 1. Graduate student groups receiving funds agree to abide by GSO’s procedures for events as contained in this policy.

Section 2. Graduate student groups will make clear to their members and attendees that the event has been funded wholly or partly by the Graduate Student Organization.

Section 3. If an event has been marked “open” to the public, then at least two weeks before their event the group must post a flyer on the GSO bulletin board, post an event listing on the GSO Web site, and submit the event listing for inclusion in the weekly GSO email. Failure to do so will result in a 20 percent penalty on project scores in the following semester.

Section 3. Graduate student groups will make available to the GSO Treasurer and Information Officer at least one photograph of each event. These may be used in GSO publications and/or social media to publicize GSO’s activities. Photographs must be submitted electronically.

Section 4. Graduate student groups will file reports by the first Monday of each month to the Treasurer and the Information Officer on each event they have hosted, giving the following information:

a) The number of attendees
b) The date of the event
c) The actual expenses broken down by category (including scans of any and all receipts) for the event, and how GSO funds were used
d) A copy of the flyer prepared for the event

All such information must be submitted electronically.

Section 6. Executive Board members may choose to conduct spot checks of GSO-funded events to ensure that funds are being spent properly.

Section 7. The Executive Board will, in keeping with the Constitution, bar student groups from receiving future GSO funding should any misappropriations or fraudulent activity be discovered. Further, the GSO will work with the University to recover any misappropriated funds.