

Student Finance Committee (SFC) Charter

Revised: 5/13/2022

I. Preamble

- a. The purpose of this document is to establish and outline the purpose of the Student Finance Committee (SFC). The Student Finance Committee shall administer and allocate the “activity fee”, this fee being designed for the creation of social, cultural, religious, and educational activities for students, for the improvement of student life, and to augment the general welfare of students.

II. Definitions

- a. The “Student Finance Committee” shall be referred to as the “SFC” in this document.
- b. The “Student Financial Charter” shall be referred to as the “Charter” in this document.
- c. The “Bylaws of the Student Finance Committee” shall be referred to as the “Bylaws” in this document.
- d. “Business Day” ordinarily refers to a weekday (Monday through Friday) during those weeks in which the college is in session, excluding vacations.
- e. “Student Activity Funds” refers to any financial resource collected via the “Activity Fee” to be allocated by the “Student Finance Committee”.
- f. “Activity Fee” is fee charged by Oberlin College & Conservatory to support and finance student organizations, campus events open to students, and special projects meant to support the student experience.

III. Purpose

- a. The purpose and intent of the Student Finance Committee (SFC) shall be:
 - i. To judiciously allocate student activity funds to fulfill the purposes stated in the preamble.
 - ii. To create policies for the judicious allocation of student activity funds.
 - iii. To monitor organizational expenditures of student activity funds as defined in this document.
 - iv. To hold student organizations which receive student activity funds accountable to the student body.
 - v. To preserve the integrity of the student finances.
- b. Allocation of student activity funds by the Student Finance Committee shall be done in a non-discriminatory manner.
 - i. Individuals and organizations requesting student activity funds shall not be discriminated against based on race, gender, gender expression or identity, religion, culture, sexual orientation, ethnic group, political orientation, or employment.
 - ii. Equal opportunity of participation in activities supported by student activity funds shall not be abridged or denied based on criteria established in Article III, Section B, Subsection i.
 - iii. An organization serving a minority of students should not be excluded from receiving allocations, if that organization lends to the diversity of the college

- community, provides a valued service to students, or augments the general student welfare.
- iv. An organization recognized by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, is not necessarily guaranteed funding through the Student Finance Committee (SFC).
 - v. Regulations for non-discriminatory use of student activity funds shall be established in the Bylaws of the Student Finance Committee.
 - vi. The SFC may withhold funding from any organization that has received or used funds in an unethical manner.
- c. The officers and agencies established in this document shall function as representatives of the student body at Oberlin College.

IV. The Activity Fee

- a. All students enrolled at Oberlin College, excluding those participating in off-campus programs, pay the Oberlin College "Activity Fee". This fee is used to support and finance student organizations, campus events open to students, and special projects meant to support the student experience.
- b. The "Activity Fee" is collected on a semesterly basis and is collected by the [Office of Student Accounts](#). The "Activity Fee" is amount [published](#) on the Oberlin College website, alongside other Tuition and Fees.
- c. The "Activity Fee" may be increased or decreased by the following process:
 - i. The SFC votes by a supermajority, as defined by the SFC Bylaws, to propose an "Activity Fee" amount change to the Oberlin College Student Senate.
 - ii. Members of the SFC should present a proposal for a change of the amount to the "Activity Fee" to Student Senate, alongside a rationale for such change.
 - iii. Consultation with appropriate offices including, but not limited to, the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, the Dean of Students Office, the Office of Financial Aid, and the Office of Admissions is encouraged prior to the SFC voting to propose a change to the amount of the "Activity Fee".
 - iv. Resolutions suggesting a change in the amount of the "Activity Fee" will be considered by Student Senate. A final decision will be affirmed by a majority vote of the Student Senate.
 1. If the Student Senate is not active at the time of the proposal, the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may convene a student and staff working group to approve the change in the amount to the "Activity Fee". This must include at least seven members, and four students. It will require a majority vote.
 - v. Once a proposed adjustment to the "Activity Fee" has been affirmed by a vote of Student Senate, the proposed change is considered valid starting at the beginning of the next academic year, unless amended or rescinded by the following mechanism(s):
 1. Any increase in the amount at a rate higher than the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) is subject to review by the Board of Trustees who may rescind or amend this change.

V. The Student Finance Committee (SFC)

- a. The SFC is charged with determining the allocation of funds from the “Activity Fee” to student organizations, granting funding for special student-facing projects and events, the development of policies and regulations appropriate for allocating funds, and completing the necessary work to make sure that allocated funds were spent appropriately.
- b. **Membership:**
 - i. The SFC consists of nine (9) voting members:
 - 1. The following voting members are considered part of the “SFC Leadership Team”:
 - a. **Co-Chair(s) [2 Positions]:** Two (2) members of the SFC are hired to serve as “Co-Chairs” of the Student Finance Committee. The Co-Chairs are charged with providing leadership to the SFC, serving as a liaison with Student Senate and the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, and managing the SFC hiring and recruitment process.
 - b. **Treasurer [1 Position]:** One (1) member of the SFC is hired to serve as the “Treasurer” for the Student Finance Committee. The treasurer is charged with leading the administrative and financial rectification processes for the SFC. This includes directing the work of the Assistant Treasurer, as well as any controllers.
 - 2. The following voting members are considered part of the “SFC General Membership”
 - a. **Communications Coordinator [1 Position]:** One (1) member of the SFC is hired to serve as the “Communications Coordinator” for the Student Finance Committee. The Communications coordinator is charged with editing the SFC website, communicating SFC updates and deadlines, and taking notes at all SFC meetings.
 - b. **Education and Training Coordinator [1 Position]:** One (1) member of the SFC is hired to serve as the “Education and Training Coordinator” for the Student Finance Committee. The Education and Training Coordinator is charged with leading the Treasurer Training process (in conjunction with the Treasurer) and organizing SFC member training materials (in conjunction with the Co-Chairs).
 - c. **Policy Coordinator [1 Position]:** One (1) member of the SFC is hired to serve as the “Policy Coordinator” for the Student Finance Committee. The Policy Coordinator is charged with facilitating any SFC policy amendments or updates, including the Student Finance Committee Charter and Bylaws, and serving as a resource on policy related inquiries.
 - d. **Ad-Hoc Coordinator [2 Positions]:** Two (2) members of the SFC are hired to serve as “Ad-Hoc Coordinators” for the Student Finance Committee. The “Ad-Hoc Coordinators” are charged with leading the Ad-Hoc funding application process.

- i. One of the two Ad-Hoc Coordinator positions should be reserved from the Spring Hiring Process for an incoming first-year. This position should be hired in the Fall Semester using the selection process detailed in V.c (Student Finance Committee Selection Process).
 - e. **Assistant Treasurer [1 Position]:** One (1) member of the SFC is hired to serve as the “Assistant Treasurer”. The Assistant Treasurer is charged with assisting the Treasurer with administrative functions and the financial rectification process of the SFC.
 - 3. The SFC should, ordinarily, consist of at least two non-voting members that serve in the role of controllers.
 - a. **Controller [2 Positions]:** Two (2) members of the SFC are hired to serve as Controllers. Controllers are charged with assisting the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer in rectifying financial documentation.
 - i. Additional controllers may be hired as necessary, with approval by the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement.
 - ii. All controllers, including additional controllers hired with approval by the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement are non-voting members of the SFC.
- c. Student Finance Committee Selection Process:**
- i. All members of the SFC are hired by a committee that consists of the following:
 1. Four (4) current members of the Student Finance Committee (SFC). Two (2) of these members are required to be the current Co-Chairs of the SFC. The remaining two (2) positions may be filled by other interested current members of the SFC.
 2. The Director of Student Leadership and Involvement.
 3. One (1) current member of the Oberlin College Student Senate. This student cannot not also be a member of the Student Finance Committee.
 4. One (1) staff member in the Division of Student Affairs. It is recommended that this staff member have a role working with Student Organizations.
 - a. The Director of Student Leadership and Involvement should take reasonable efforts to ensure that the SFC Hiring Committee is a diverse group that represents the interests of all Oberlin College students and student organizations.
 - ii. Hiring for positions on the SFC should be completed in three phases.
 1. **Phase 1 – Returning Members to Same Position:** Internal candidates indicate a willingness to return to their current position.

2. **Phase 2 – Returning Members to New Position:** Existing members of the SFC are welcome to apply for open positions on the SFC. This process may be staggered to allow for internal candidates who are not selected for a new position, to return to their current position.
 - a. SFC Leadership Positions (please reference the two co-chairs and the one treasurer) should prioritize candidates with previous SFC experience.
 3. **Phase 3 – External Candidates:** Remaining open positions are posted for external applications.
- iii. The Student Finance Committee Hiring Process should be completed on an annual basis, during the Spring Semester for the following academic year. If a position becomes vacant during academic year, the position may be filled either by an alternate identified during the Spring Semester hiring process, or committee following the above listed process (beginning at Phase 2) may be formed.
 - iv. If a current member of SFC plans to take a leave of absence from Oberlin College or enroll in an off-campus study program, the SFC member must indicate this plan to the SFC Leadership and the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement. If the length of the planned absence is one semester or shorter, an interim may be appointed to the position until the student returns to campus. If the length of the planned absence is longer than one semester, the student must vacate the position.
- d. Student Finance Committee Compensation:**
- i. All members (voting and non-voting) of the SFC receive compensation for their duties. Wages are set by the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement for SFC members. The pay-rates should follow guidance issued by Oberlin College Human Resources and Oberlin College Student Employment.
- e. Non-Bias of a Student Finance Committee Member:**
- i. Members of the Student Finance Committee are expected to hold themselves to a high-ethical standard. Given this:
 1. Members of the Student Finance Committee who belong or are significantly affiliated with a Student Organization or other proposal to the Student Finance Committee should recuse themselves from the vote, as demonstrated in the SFC Bylaws, by voting to abstain.
 - a. If a SFC member has to recuse themselves due to a conflict of interest, they should moderate their participation in the conversation on the voting process.
 2. No member of the Student Finance Committee may be a treasurer of a student organization.
 - ii. The “SFC Leadership Team” is charged with enforcement of this standard.
- f. Removal of a Student Finance Committee Member:**

- i. If an SFC member is not performing their duties in a satisfactory manner, it should be communicated to the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement.
- ii. The Director of Student Leadership and Involvement should prioritize education and performance improvement in their follow-up with the SFC member who is not completing their duties in a satisfactory manner.
- iii. In the case of a serious violation of the SFC Charter and Bylaws, a violation of Oberlin College Policy, or repeated inability to perform job duties, the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement may terminate the employment of the SFC Member.
- iv. In the case of a violation of Oberlin College Policy, the SFC and the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement may refer the report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

VI. Oversight of the Student Finance Committee

a. Appeals:

- i. If a Student Organization or individual student would like to appeal an SFC allocation, they should first submit a request for reconsideration to SFC. This request for reconsideration should include any additional information, rationale, or amendments requested by the SFC.
- ii. If the Student Organization or individual student has their request for reconsideration denied, they may appeal in writing to the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement. The decision of the Director of Student Leadership and Involvement is final.
- iii. Appeals must be filed within five (5) business days of the notification of an allocation decision. The following are grounds for an appeal:
 - 1. A procedural error or deviation from the SFC Charter or bylaws that fundamentally altered the final allocation decision.
 - 2. New information not readily available at the time of the allocation decision.
 - 3. Demonstrated evidence that the SFC has used power in an unfair or arbitrary manner.

b. Allocation Transparency

- i. On a semesterly basis, the SFC is required to publish a report regarding the spending of the previous semester and year. This report should be written by the “Communications Coordinator”, in consultation with other members of the SFC. The report should be available upon request and shared with relevant partners, including Student Senate and the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.

VII. Types of Allocations

- a. The SFC shall allocate funds to student organizations in two ways:
 - i. **Term-Based Allocations:** A semesterly or annual (annual budgets must be requested in the Spring Semester) allocation process to establish base budgets

for student organizations, effective for the follow academic year. All chartered organizations who utilize funds must submit a budget per the SFC By-Laws.

1. Generally, the SFC will create a term-based allocation for Residential Education at a set-amount within the bylaws for the Residential Hall Association (RHA). Purchases by the RHA must follow SFC guidelines. All unspent money must be returned to SFC at the end of the academic year.
 - ii. **Ad-Hoc:** Ad-Hoc requests by chartered student organizations and non-chartered student organizations, groups, and individuals throughout the year. Organizations may submit Ad-Hoc requests whether or not they received funds via the term-based budgeting process.
 - iii. **Office of Student Leadership and Involvement:** On an annual basis, the Student Finance Committee allocates the budget for programmatic functions of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement. These functions typically include the Campus Lanes, Dionysus, Cat in the Cream, Program Board, and office-led annual programming. The Director of Student Leadership and Involvement will send this budget to the Student Finance Committee during the preceding Spring Semester.
- b. If the SFC chooses to fund an organization or individual, whether it be term-based or ad-hoc, this allocation may be for the full-amount requested, for additional funds, or for partial funds.

VIII. The Term-Based Allocation Process

- a. The SFC shall allocate funds to student organizations related to the needs of the organization for the upcoming year. Examples of needs that are included in a budget are core overhead costs, upcoming event budgets, and necessary supplies.
- b. Requests may be for an annual budget, or for a semester-long budget.
- c. The allocation process shall be conducted on a semesterly basis. Treasurers will submit allocation requests for their organizations' needs.
- d. Allocation requests that are not submitted within the parameters established by the SFC and the SFC By-Laws will be defaulted to the Ad-Hoc process.
 - i. The timeline for budget requests should occur prior to the end of the previous semester.

IX. Student Organization Treasurer Responsibility

- a. The treasurer of a student organization must affirm and agree to the following statement, before taking the role of the treasurer for a student organization: "I understand that I am personally responsible and liable for all funds that I withdraw from the organization's account. I am aware that the SFC has the has the right to request reimbursement for all unaccountable expenditures. If the SFC is unable to receive reimbursement or I am suspected to have performed my duties as a Student Organization Treasurer in an unethical manner, I may be subject to the Oberlin College Student Conduct process."

- b. All Student Organization Treasurers must be trained to submit an allocation request to the SFC. Training is announced via the process set-in-place by the SFC By-Laws.

X. Overdrawn Accounts and Surpluses

- a. The SFC reserves the right to deal with the deficits and debts of individual organizations on a case-by-case basis, with the intention of maintaining the solvency of the SFC account.

XI. Special Components of the Activity Fee

- a. Capital Equipment Requests
 - i. The SFC shall consider capital equipment requests made by student organizations, including student organizations that represent departments in the Division of Student Affairs (including the Office of Residential Education), provided that the capital equipment request is meant to support an activity or programmatic endeavor.
 - 1. Allocation requests that are denied due the request not being programmatic or student-facing are able to be appealed via the process established in section VI.
 - ii. Capital Equipment requests by organizations may be made via an ad-hoc or a term-based budgeting request.
- b. Compensation of Student Organization Members from the "Activity Fee"
 - i. While student organization work is meant to be voluntary, the SFC acknowledges that some roles within student organizations are unsustainable without providing compensation.
 - ii. The SFC shall publish guidelines regarding requests for compensation out of the "Activity Fee" within their bylaws.

XII. Bylaws and Amendments

- a. The SFC Charter shall have an accompanying set of By-laws.
 - i. The bylaws shall refer to specific articles and sections of this document that call for them.
 - ii. Bylaws may be established to clarify any section of this document.
 - iii. Bylaws contradictory to this document shall be invalid.
 - iv. Should the bylaws be lacking, incomplete, or invalid, their absence or invalidity shall not hinder or negate the functioning of this document.
- b. Bylaws shall be written by the SFC. A successful amendment to the bylaws must be passed by a super-majority vote of the SFC.
- c. All areas of the SFC Charter may be amended by the following mechanism:
 - i. Amendments to the Charter may originate in the SFC.
 - 1. Members of the general student body may also propose amendments by contacting the SFC.
 - ii. A successful amendment must be passed by a super-majority vote of the SFC.

1. A successful amendment to the charter must also be passed by Student Senate by a majority vote.