

Saint Joseph's University

Student Budget Advisory Committee



*Annual Budget Report for the Fiscal Year 2008*

Written and Compiled in May 2007 by:

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## About the SBAC

The Student Budget Advisory Committee (SBAC) is a group of seven members who are charged with the responsibility of fairly and justifiably disbursing a budget of approximately \$200,000.00 across all interested and eligible student organizations at Saint Joseph's University. The SBAC receives its funding from the Office of the Vice President of Student Life and is not technically considered a student organization in and of itself. It is more aptly identified as a conglomeration of various student leaders from the umbrella organizations of our campus – that is, the University Student Senate (USS) and the Student Union Board (SUB). The *Student Vice President for Financial Affairs* of the USS chairs the committee, and is responsible for its overall functioning. He or she does not have a vote in the funding decisions of the SBAC, but provides background information and historical analysis of the student organization and its requests, additional insights, and the facilitation of an organized and objective atmosphere. The committee members include three elected USS Senators, who interview for their position and exhibit a strong interest in finance and budgeting, and three SUB representatives, one of which is the SUB Treasurer. Their background knowledge helps the committee to identify whether the requesting student organization is fulfilling existing campus programming needs. All seven committee members are intended to reflect the varying and diverse interests of our campus, and their votes should give consideration to this. An advisor, the *Assistant Director for Campus Programs*, serves as an aid to the committee and its chair in that he or she provides professional insights that may help the committee to be more cognizant of the grand scheme of the University.

## The Annual Budget Process

The Annual Budget Process begins in the spring semester when students complete the Annual Budget Request Packets. Blank packets can be obtained on the USS website, the Student Leadership and Activities Website, and in hard copy form on the Third Floor of Campion. There will be a presentation on how to fill out the budget packet at the first OPA Meeting of the spring semester. The budget requests should outline all the activities of the organization and the finances needed for the upcoming fiscal year. Annual Budget Request Packets must be turned in according to the budget timeline. Any budget turned in after the due date will be subject to the following penalties:

- Received up to week late: 25% Budget Reduction.
- Received later than a week: No additional budget applications accepted.

The six voting members of the SBAC will have served as liaisons to each student organization throughout the year, so their involvement in specific requests is heightened in the Annual Budget Process. Prior to submitting the Annual Budget Request Packet, but after filling it out, each student organization treasurer must meet with his or her assigned SBAC Liaison to discuss their annual budget request. In doing so, the SBAC Liaison will be able to make a case for that student organization's funding in the deliberations. Additionally, the SBAC Liaison will be able to help the treasurer of the student organization to catch any shortcomings or errors in the proposed annual budget prior to its submission. Following the submission of the budget packet, the SBAC meets with each student organization for its hearing and then deliberates.

Several factors are weighed into the deliberations (in no particular order):

- How funds have been used/misused in the past
- Overall feasibility of the request
- Financial feasibility of the request
- Number of people and who will benefit from the activity

- Co-sponsorship support provided for the activity
- Whether tentative or definite plans have been made for the event
- How detailed the information about the event is
- OPA Attendance: Two absences warrant a 15% reduction in the granted budget. Three absences warrant a 25% reduction in the granted budget. Four absences (all meetings in a semester) warrant a 50% reduction in the granted budget.

In addition to evaluating the activities and programs, the organization itself is evaluated. The SBAC looks at such items as:

- Number of active members of the group.
- Membership fees or dues charged to the club members
- Number of new members
- Group status (if a registered/recognized student organization)
- Copy of constitution on file with the Office of Student Leadership and Activities
- Copy of current officer list on file with the Office of Student Leadership and Activities

Shortly following the hearings and deliberations, each student organization will be able to pick up a copy of their approved budget with explanations and rationale compiled by their organization's SBAC Liaison. A representative from each organization must pick up their budget from the Office of Student Leadership and Activities and sign off upon its reception.

From the time the proposed budgets are made available to the student organizations, a representative of the group has five academic days to make a written appeal providing additional information that could be of assistance in reaching the appeal decision. The SBAC will decide whether or not an appeal is granted, and if so, forward that appeal to the USS for their recommendation. Upon receiving the USS recommendation, the SBAC will deliberate a second time and give the appeal decision in writing to the student organization. That decision of the SBAC will be final.

## The Nature of This Report

The following report is an analysis of the summary judgments of the SBAC for this year's annual budget review. The analysis was conducted by the *Student Vice President for Financial Affairs*, Lou Gretta, and is herein and thereby sworn to be accurate to the best of his knowledge. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact him or any member of the SBAC.

## The Committee

The following students were voting members of the SBAC that determined the annual budget for fiscal year 2008 (FY08):

- Catie Buttner, *SUB Member*
- Joseph Jennings, *SUB Member*
- Michele Mestrinaro, *USS Student Senator for the Class of 2010*
- William Novick, *USS Student Senator for the Class of 2009*
- Victoria Reigart, *SJU 'til 2 Coordinator*
- Samantha Tweedie, *USS Student Senator for the Class of 2010*

The committee was overseen by Lou Gretta, *Student Vice President for Financial Affairs* on the Seventh University Student Senate, and advised by Stacey Sottung, *Assistant Director for Campus Programs*.

## Budget Analysis

1. Last year, 57 out of 62 existing student organizations requested an annual budget, indicating that 92% of student organizations are aware of the annual budget process. This year, 75 out of 81 student organizations requested an annual budget, indicating a 93% awareness level. Based on this data, one can conclude that for the most part, student organizations understand and are aware of the annual budget process.
2. In fiscal year 2007, student organizations requested a total of \$361,750.93. This year, student organizations requested \$414,125.00, an increase of \$52,374.07. The previous

year's increase in funds had been by \$128,510.09, and while the increase in requested funds was the most blameworthy factor for the decrease in the percentage of funds allocated to student groups, some attention needs to be pointed at the fact that the funds made available for allocation have stayed at the same level for the past several years, again limiting the feasibility of meeting these requests. For this reason, and in an effort to remain consistent, 20% of every student organization's initially granted budget was deducted in order to fund as much of every organization's projects across the board.

3. This year, there were 12 new student organizations who made annual budget requests, to which they received 8% of the final granted budget. The average percentage granted to each new student organization was 33%, down 4% from last year's average percentage granted. The range went from 11% to 80%.
4. For FY08, Greek organizations received 8% of the entire budget. This was an unfortunate decrease from last year's record-breaking increase in allocation at 21%. It is important to note that the amount requested by Greek organizations this year also increased by \$10,132.00. Despite this fact, additional plans are being implemented this year to ensure that Greek organizations are adequately prepared for the FY09 Annual Budget Process, including a budget training program designed specifically for Greek Treasurers, as well as the SBAC Liaison program initiated for all student organizations. With the assistance of these programs, it is our goal to see approximately 20% of the entire budget going towards Greek organizations.
5. For this report's analysis, the following student organizations have been labeled "academically and professionally oriented:"

Accounting Society	ACM Mathematics/Computer Science	American Institute of Biological Sciences	American Marketing Association
BITS/ISSS	Classics Club	Delta Sigma Pi	Education Society
Entrepreneurship Club	Finance Society	Food Marketing Association	French Club
Gamma Iota Sigma	German Club	Greek American Student Association	Haub Co-Op Society
Honors Program Student Council	Hayes History Society	Irish Culture Club	Italian Club
Malloy Chemical Society	Management Society	Order of Omega	Polish Cultural Society
PILOT	PSEA	Spanish Club	Students in Free Enterprise
Women Business Leaders of the Future			

The aforementioned organizations requested a total of \$68,382.00 and received \$23,723.80, which was 35% of the total requested amount among them. These organizations received 12% of the entire budget. Because of the increased number of new organizations this year categorized as “academically and professionally oriented,” it becomes difficult to use time-series analysis. However, for evaluative purposes, it is important to note that last year’s “academically and professionally oriented” student organizations requested \$45,010.00 and received \$21,349.00, which was 47% of the entire amount of their requests. This came to 11% of the entire budget being allocated to these organizations in fiscal year 2007. As one can see, the percentage of the entire budget going toward these organizations has not changed; however, the amount requested has increased and the amount available to allocate has remained static.

- For this report’s analysis, the following student organizations have been labeled to contribute to the mission of our university in promoting service through *Cura Personalis* (“men and women with and for others”):

1 in 4	Best Buddies	Collegiate Challenge
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Council for Exceptional Children	Green Cow	Harambee
Hand in Hand	HAWKS	Hawks for Life
Hawks Against Hunger	Helping Hawks	Holding Hawks Responsible
SJU Students for Peace and Justice	SJU Students for Workers Rights	Students for Tolerance, Openness, and Pride (STOP)
Up 'til Dawn	Women's Organization	

The aforementioned student organizations requested \$129,313.66 and received \$50,935.63, at 39% of the amount of their requests and 27% of the total budget for FY08. Last year, the group of student organizations labeled to promote service in this faction requested \$139,252.00 and were granted \$56,908.05, which was 41% of their requests and 30% of the total budget for FY07. These numbers appear to have remained relatively constant over the past few years.

7. For this report's analysis, the following student organizations have been labeled "special interest organizations":

Alternate Universes	Arnold Air Society	Cap + Bells
College Democrats	College Republicans	Crimson & Grey
Greatonian	Hawk Arts	Jazz Ensemble
Middle East Etc.	Newsmedia Propagation Society	SJU Otaku
SJU Political Union	Ski Club	Students in Other States
Student Theatre Guild	WSJR	

The aforementioned student organizations requested \$69,229.35 and received \$23,163.24, at 33% of the amount of their requests and 12% of the total budget for FY08. Last year, the group of student organizations labeled "special interest organizations" requested \$73,182.93 and received \$34,193.68, which was 47% of their

requests and 18% of the FY07 budget. Thus, a decrease of 6% of the entire budget could be seen here.

8. After careful contemplation, the previously existing Multicultural Council, which served as an umbrella organization for several different groups working to promote diversity within their ethnic and cultural backgrounds on campus, was disbanded. Permission and qualification were given to each individual multicultural student organization to request budgets for the fiscal year 2008. The following student organizations have been labeled “multicultural”:

Asian Students' Association	Black Student Union	Caribbean Students' Association
Hawks of India	Latino Students' Association	

This year, these organizations requested a combined total of \$31,413.99 and received \$10,490.35; 33% of their total requests. Last year, these organizations requested \$19,325.00 under the Multicultural Council umbrella. They received \$6209.50, at 32% of their request. Therefore, the amount of funds received compared to the amount requested has remained relatively constant despite the conversion to separate requests among multicultural student organizations.

## Summary Remarks

The budget process for the fiscal year 2008 was one marked with many changes implemented in order to increase awareness about the process, educate student organizations on the structure and provisions of the process, and make the SBAC a more consistent and fluid organization as a whole. In January of 2007, the SBAC voted unanimously on the first ever set of procedures and guidelines to be made available both on paper and electronically to all student organizations on campus. This step was a major one in explaining the purpose and the

rationale behind obtaining funding for one's student organization. Under the new procedures implemented, SBAC Liaisons were enacted in order to set up each student organization with a "point person" on the SBAC who could advise it in all budget-related matters. Clearly, the SBAC has taken great strides in order to manage many of the problems that have been recurring over the past several years. Additionally, the excess dollars left over in all of the student organizations' budgets at the end of fiscal year 2007 decreased by two-thirds from the previous year, a momentous achievement for the SBAC and the treasurers of each student organization on campus, because it shows that we are allocating and spending the money more effectively. My humble congratulations go out to all of you for your continued efforts and success in these areas.

All of the positive aspects of the process, of course, come with increased knowledge of areas where improvement is needed. For one, student organizations are requesting funds at an ever-increasing rate, while the funds available remain constant. One may quickly conclude that in order to be successful, the SBAC must be funded additional dollars by the University itself. However, it is my contention that if we are still turning up with excess funds left over in all of the student organizations' combined budgets at the end of the fiscal year, this may not be the best assumption to make. The SBAC has taken great strides in order to ensure that it is putting the most money into the student organizations that have showed the initiative to use their funds wisely and effectively. In addition, fairness and accountability for our decisions are absolutely necessary to maintain the high ethical standards we pride ourselves on as Saint Joseph's University students. Historical analysis, attention and monitoring of financial details throughout the fiscal year, the SBAC Liaisons, the noticeable level of preparation that goes into an Annual Budget Packet, and of course, asking the right questions in hearings, leads us to make the decisions we feel are in the best financial interest of the student body.

I feel safe speaking on behalf of the entire SBAC when I say that the FY08 budget was released with careful attention to the myriad of considerations to be made when funding a student organization's budget. I encourage you to contact myself or any member of the SBAC with any questions you may have.

Finally, on a personal note, it has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work with each of your organizations over the past three years. Having served two terms as *Student Vice President for Financial Affairs*, it has been one of my chief and most rewarding duties to chair the SBAC. Working with the members of this committee in order to fairly and justifiably disburse the funds allocated to us by the University has been a privilege, a challenge, and a learning experience; but most importantly, it has been an opportunity for me to discover so much about the vibrant campus life we have at Saint Joseph's. Each of your student organizations has brought such an amazing contribution to student life; and it is my belief after visiting multiple different schools and talking with administrators and students elsewhere that what we have at Saint Joseph's is truly unique. As this is my senior year, this fall will be my last semester serving SJU and the USS in this capacity. I wish all of you the best of luck with your student organizations, and continued budgetary success under our new leadership!

Sincerely,

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