

FINANCE BYLAWS

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Anna Gillespie, Noah Guadagnoli, Ryan Lockwood, Danny Nickel, Jack Poulos, Clare Rudolph, Jamison Skelley, and Jocelyn Taylor

Finance Board

Megan Curling

Vice President of Finance

Table of Contents

Student Activity Fees and Finance Board	3
Overview	3
The Finance Board	3
Selection of Non-Senator Representatives	4
Selection of Assistant Comptroller	4
Funding Vision	4
Eligibility for Funding and Budgets	4
Undergraduate student organizations	4
Individuals	5
Early Semester Funding	5
Annual budgets allocated by the Vice President for Student Life	6
Finance Board Decision Criteria	6
Review and approval information	6
Funding decisions	7
Presentations	7
Legislation	8
Event-by-Event Budget Requests	8
Deadlines	9
Event expenditure restrictions	9
Spending caps	10
Non-fundable items	11
University Accounting Guidelines, Spending, and Reimbursements	11
Spending SAFs	11
Contracts	11
Purchase orders	12
Payment options	12
Receipt requirements	12
Audits	13
Sanctions	13
Organization Appeals Process	13
Grounds for appeal	13
Appeals process	14
Appeals decision	14

Student Activity Fees and Finance Board

Overview

Student Activity Fees (SAFs) are collected from all undergraduate Elon University students and are administered under the jurisdiction of the Vice President for Student Life. SAFs are set at the discretion of the Elon University Board of Trustees. The Vice President for Student Life allocates a fixed amount of the SAFs that are to be distributed at the discretion of the SGA Finance Board during the following academic year under the advisement of the Student Government Association (SGA) Advisor(s). All student groups should keep in mind that funding is limited and not all requests will be funded. The Finance Board has been designated as the advisory committee for the allocation of funds from this fixed amount of the SAFs. The SGA Senate will be required to review the Finance Bylaws annually. Additionally, being that the Finance Board is under the jurisdiction of the SGA, if any member of the Finance Board neglects their duties, incurs excessive absences, or violates the Finance Bylaws, they are subject to the authority and disciplinary action of the SGA Judicial Branch.

The Finance Board

The Finance Board shall be made up of ten members comprised of elected SGA senators and non-senator representatives. All members of the Finance Board must meet the GPA requirement of 2.7 or higher and be in good student conduct standing. The SGA Vice President of Finance will serve as the Finance Board Comptroller and as a non-voting member, be responsible for facilitating the weekly Finance Board meetings and notifying organizations of the Finance Board's decisions. The remainder of the Finance Board composition is as follows:

- SGA First-Year Class Treasurer
- SGA Sophomore Class Treasurer
- SGA Junior Class Treasurer
- SGA Senior Class Treasurer
- Four Non-Senator Representatives
- Assistant Comptroller of the Finance Board

Quorum must be met to run a Finance Board meeting and is set as five out of the nine voting members being present. A simple majority vote is required for a funding request to pass. In the case of a tie, the VP of Finance retains the right to vote.

The Finance Board meets at least once a week between the first and last days of class in the fall and spring semesters to vote on budget requests. The Finance Board is not required to meet from reading day through exams, breaks, January term, or during the summer months. The VP of Finance reserves the right to meet during January term or during the summer months if quorum can be made.

Selection of Non-Senator Representatives

The four non-Senator Finance Board representatives will be elected by the student body during the SGA general election in the spring semester. In the event of a vacancy, the VP of Finance will recommend an individual to the Student Body President to be appointed to the Finance Board.

Selection of Assistant Comptroller

The Assistant Comptroller of the Finance Board will be appointed at the discretion of the VP of Finance and will be responsible for conducting meetings and rendering decisions in the absence of the VP of Finance.

Funding Vision

To allocate the SAFs in a way that maximizes the benefit for all undergraduate students, the Finance Board seeks to promote an environment where:

1. Funds are primarily used for student activities.
2. Events are inclusive and open in nature.
3. Collaboration between student organizations is emphasized in the interest of promoting campus unity.
4. Events catering to large groups of students are balanced with those which cater to a smaller number.
5. Funding shall be spread out among a variety of organizations to ensure a wide array of events in all facets of campus life.

Eligibility for Funding and Budgets

All funded events must adhere to the University's nondiscrimination statement, the Student Organization Handbook, the Honor Code, and the University's Code of Conduct.

Undergraduate student organizations

1. Only undergraduate student organizations and campus programs recognized by and in good standing with Student Involvement and the Office of Student Conduct are eligible to receive SAF funding.
2. Organizations which have requirements for membership including tryouts, auditions, receipt of an invitation for membership (bid), or academic criteria, are only eligible for funding for events which are open and inclusive to the entire student body.
 - a. Travel groups for competition or conference are eligible for funding, but only if organization membership and the travel group selection process are open to all students.

3. Organizations must have completed all obligations directed and required by the VP of Finance and/or Finance Board for previous events funded by SAFs.

SGA can use a portion of their SAFs for the following events and functions:

1. Executive Stipends
2. Administrative fees and operational expenses
3. Homecoming
4. The Dr. Leo M. Lambert Awards
5. Administrative Professional Day Recognition
6. The Academic Opportunities Fair
7. Senate Dinner
8. SGA Retreat
9. Organizational education and bonding events not to exceed \$2,500 in total

All events SGA hosts outside of those listed above are required to adhere to the Finance Bylaws.

Several organizational clusters receive SAF funding at the discretion of the Vice President for Student Life prior to the allocation of the Finance Board's fixed amount for distribution. For this reason, organizations in the following clusters are not eligible to receive operational funding from the Finance Board:

1. Campus Programs
2. Club Sports
3. Honorary Organizations
4. Media Organizations

Individuals

1. Individual undergraduate students are eligible to apply for SAF funding, adhering to the same guidelines as organization requests.
2. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and approved/denied at the discretion of the Finance Board.
3. Graduate students are not eligible to receive SAF funding.

Early Semester Funding

Recognizing that funding may be needed for organization events, activities, operations, or travel in the months of August and September or January and February, and that the Finance Board's first meeting of the semester may not give adequate time for reviewing requests and allocating funding before the events occur, organizations will be given the opportunity to submit a budget requests for the above months in the preceding semester. These requests will be reviewed with the understanding that events may not be fully planned at the time of the request.

Organizations must be given at least two weeks to prepare and submit their early semester funding requests prior to the final SGA Senate business meeting of the semester. Decisions will be made on the same case-by-case basis as in the regular funding period.

Annual budgets allocated by the Vice President for Student Life

The Finance Board recognizes that there are organizations that plan numerous events on a large scale, for which this model may not be feasible. For that reason, organizations that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply to receive a fixed SAF budget from the Vice President of Student Life:

1. Provide a service, events, and/or membership open to the entire undergraduate student body and are available throughout the academic year.
2. Has demonstrated proper spending habits, as evidenced through requests from the past year.
3. Is in good standing and has not been sanctioned/on probation within the past year.
4. Has a paid, full-time University faculty or staff member whose advising responsibilities are included in their job description. The advisor is responsible per their position description for assisting its student leaders in the proper administration of these Student Activity Fees.

Organizations who feel they meet the above criteria must submit their application on PhoenixCONNECT to the Finance Board by the deadline specified by the VP of Finance. The Finance Board will review the request and submit a recommendation to the Vice President for Student Life who will communicate their decision to the requestor. If the Finance Board approves an organization to receive an annual budget from the Vice President for Student Life, the student organization will only be eligible to apply to the Finance Board for additional SAF funding at the discretion of the VP of Finance. No decision made by the Vice President for Student Life sets precedent for future decisions.

Finance Board Decision Criteria

Review and approval information

The following review and approval guidelines are in effect for total cost of any budget request:

1. For funding requests of \$300 or less: the VP of Finance may approve or deny the request.
2. For funding requests from \$301 to \$5,000: the Finance Board must approve or deny the request.
3. For funding requests over \$5,000: the Finance Board must review the request and make a recommendation that will then be voted on by the SGA Senate.

- a. The request requires a simple majority vote by the SGA Senate to pass and be approved. The SGA Senate can pass the request with conditions. If the request does not pass, the decision is final.

Funding decisions

The Finance Board is responsible for funding events for the undergraduate student body. All student groups should keep in mind that funding is limited and not all requests will be funded. The Finance Board will consider funding events that are open to all undergraduate students at Elon University and do not appear to be excessive in nature. The Finance Board will consider the following factors to determine an event's benefit to the undergraduate student body:

1. Student appeal
2. Experiential value (e.g. educational, cultural, entertainment)
3. Correlation to the university or student organization mission statement
4. Strength of promotional plan
5. Anticipated attendance
6. Co-sponsorship
7. Inclusivity
8. Presentation to the Finance Board (if requested)
9. Thorough completion of a budget request in accordance with deadlines

Events may be fully funded, partially funded, or not funded. Any organization that requests funding for an event and receives less-than-full funding will be provided with the Finance Board's rationale for its decision. The Finance Board may reduce allocations based on any information given in the request or during the presentation. Allocation decisions of the Finance Board are generally communicated electronically within two business days of the Finance Board's decision.

The total amount to be reimbursed may not exceed the amount allocated by the Finance Board. Groups and individuals whose expenses exceed the allocation are responsible for any overages.

Presentations

Organizations submitting a budget request may be requested to present their request to the Finance Board. Organization contacts will receive an email with the specific date, time, and location of the presentation at least 24 hours prior to the presentation.

1. At least one student member of the organization's executive board is expected to give a thorough presentation to the Finance Board. An outside designee may be appointed in extenuating circumstances with the approval of the VP of Finance.
 - a. The representative should:
 - i. Introduce themselves and their positions.

- ii. Present the details and purpose of the event.
 - iii. Explain how the event benefits the organization and the undergraduate community.
 - iv. Define the reasons for each budget line item.
 - v. Be prepared to identify which part(s) of the request are necessary for the intent of the event to be successful.
2. Individuals/organizations will be notified within two business days of their presentation on the outcome of the request to the Finance Board. Requests that exceed \$5,000 will be forwarded to the Senate for approval and voted on at the next scheduled SGA business meeting.
- a. All large requests will require a simple majority to pass, and the requestor will be notified of the outcome of their request within two business days of the SGA Senate meeting.
 - b. If the Senate votes to table the request to the Finance Board, the request goes back to the Finance Board for a second and final consideration and vote.

Legislation

All proposed legislation which authorizes funds for use from the SGA Reserve Fund must be presented to the Finance Board before being presented to the SGA Senate. A formal recommendation from the Finance Board will be given and presented by the VP of Finance to the SGA Senate with the proposal of the legislation.

Event-by-Event Budget Requests

All SGA funding is allocated on a case-by-case basis upon submission of a request to PhoenixCONNECT. An event-by-event budget request must include all required fields, attestations, and approvals. A completed PhoenixCONNECT budget request, including all required fields, attestations, and approvals.

All SAF funded events must adhere to the University's nondiscrimination statement, the Student Organization Handbook, the Elon University Honor Code, and the University's Code of Conduct.

All events funded by SAFs must be registered and listed on the Events page on PhoenixCONNECT and bear the statement, "funded by SGA" on materials including, but not limited to fliers, programs, tickets, and social media posts.

Deadlines

The Finance Manual will be made public to all student organizations before the start of each semester and include a calendar of submission deadlines set by the VP of Finance and approved by the Finance Board.

Any individual/organization may petition the VP of Finance to submit a budget request after the set deadlines have passed, provided there is justification of extenuating circumstances that the request could not have been submitted prior to the appropriate deadlines. This request to present late must be accompanied by a completed PhoenixCONNECT budget request.

It is the responsibility of the student organization to seek out deadlines and request information. Members of the Finance Board and the VP of Finance are not responsible for contacting vendors or service providers on behalf of student organizations.

Event expenditure restrictions

The Finance Board will impose the following limitations on the use of SAFs:

1. Service Events
 - a. It is encouraged that community service events funded by SAFs work with local and state partners, however, direct financial donations/contributions to charitable or philanthropic groups will not be funded by SAFs.
2. Political Events/Activities/Services
 - a. Political events, activities, and services may only be funded when they are educational in nature. Events that support the campaign of an individual candidate or party for a political office cannot be funded.
 - b. All requests for political events must adhere to University policies and guidelines regarding speakers on campus.
3. Religious Events and Activities
 - a. Religious events and activities funded by SAFs must be open in nature. Events may not discriminate based on a student's religious beliefs.
4. Costumes/Uniforms/Props
 - a. Organizations are encouraged to rent unless items can be reused on an annual basis. Should the Finance Board fund costumes and/or props, the following stipulations are required:
 - i. Items must be reusable and maintained at the expense of the organization.
 - ii. Items must be appropriately stored by the organization in a location where they will be secured from damage and theft and be accessible by the organization for similar events in future years.

- iii. Organizations must keep an inventory of all costumes and/or props purchased detailing the specific items. Up-to-date inventories must be submitted if requested by the Finance Board.
- 5. Equipment Rentals
 - a. Equipment rentals for events may be funded if the venue equipment cannot meet the expectations of the planned event and the requestor has explored all on-campus options for obtaining adequate equipment.
- 6. Food
 - a. Food purchases/events/meals must follow University guidelines. Elon University Campus Dining, Harvest Table, has exclusive rights to sell and distribute food on campus.
 - b. Organizations and individuals must obtain prior approval from the Resident District Manager of Harvest Table to use caterers from vendors outside of Elon's partnerships.
- 7. Giveaways/Gifts/Prizes
 - a. Giveaways are constituted as a promotional item distributed without cost to organization members or others with no expectation that the item be returned to the organization.
 - b. Gifts for student organization members will not be funded by SAFs.
 - c. T-shirts are considered gifts when purchased with the sole purpose of members wearing them.
- 8. Conferences/Competitions/Retreats
 - a. Requests to attend conferences, competitions, or retreats will be reviewed with all standard information, as well as an anticipated student-to-faculty attendance ratio and a statement of clear outcomes to be achieved during the experience.

Spending caps

While the best price available should always be sought after, the Finance Board has instituted caps for frequently requested items:

- 1. Giveaways/Gifts/Prizes
 - a. Printed programs, \$3 per program
 - b. Promotional materials, \$10 total per recipient
 - c. T-shirts, \$10 per shirt
 - d. Guest gifts, \$20 total per recipient
- 2. Food
 - a. \$20 per person, per meal
- 3. Travel
 - a. Flights, \$300 per person
 - b. Hotels, \$75 per person, per night

- c. Gas, up to the current University mileage reimbursement rate as stated in annual Finance Manual

Non-fundable items

1. Items, events, services, or trips purchased prior to budget request approval
2. Expenses for personal or private use
3. Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products
4. Direct contributions/donations to charities, charitable foundations, educational institutions, or other non-profit organizations
5. Fundraisers or any items that directly generate revenue for the organization's cash index
6. Late fees/expediting charges/penalties of any type
7. Loans or other grants for students
8. Scholarships or tuition/fees for a curricular event or program, including study abroad/USA
9. Requests from individuals from any of Elon's graduate schools

University Accounting Guidelines, Spending, and Reimbursements

Spending SAFs

If an individual or organization receives SAF funding, all ordering, purchases, and contracts must adhere to University guidelines and policies.

Purchases can only be made after the budget request has been approved.

Contracts

If the event involves the provision of services or goods, the SGA VP of Finance or designee will provide the requestor with contract templates to be completed by a set date prior to the event.

1. If the budget is approved, the SGA VP of Finance and SGA Advisors will begin the process of University contract approval. Contracts take approximately 2-3 weeks to be processed. Contracts cannot be signed retroactively.
2. The contract and budget authorization are not complete until the contract has been signed by the Director of Purchasing and returned to SGA.
 - a. Students may not sign any agreement for goods or services on behalf of their organization, SGA, or the University. Contracts are carefully reviewed by Purchasing to minimize the risk to students, organizations, and the University.
 - i. Students who do sign such agreements or who host events without properly executed contracts are personally liable.

Purchase orders

Orders for goods and supplies should not be placed until all SGA and University authorizations are secured. If the event involves the purchase of any goods more than \$2,500, a properly executed Purchase Order must be obtained by the SGA VP of Finance. Students who order supplies or goods without obtaining proper contracts or purchase orders will be personally responsible.

Payment options

For products orders totaling less than \$2,500 (including taxes and shipping) options include:

1. A representative of the organization may order the product with personal funds.
2. A representative of the organization may request the VP of Finance to use their purchasing card.
3. A representative of the organization may request the VP of Finance to transfer funds into another on-campus account or request a check to the place of purchase.
4. An advisor of the organization may order the product with other on-campus funds.

Receipt requirements

University Accounting procedures require that all receipts meet the guidelines outlined below. If guidelines are not met, authorization for reimbursement and/or purchasing will not be granted.

Receipts must be uploaded to an SGA form on PhoenixCONNECT. After uploading the receipt, it is the student's responsibility to retain the original receipt until the reimbursement process is complete. This assures the documentation is retained until it is cleared by accounting.

All receipts must:

1. Be clearly legible and readable when uploaded.
2. Include the name of the vendor, contact information, and date of purchase.
3. Be itemized and individually list all goods and their quantities, taxes, gratuities, and other charges (i.e. shipping and handling).
4. Indicate the method of payment (cash, check, credit, or debit).
 - a. If credit or debit, contain the last four digits of the card used
5. Be a final receipt.
 - a. If the product was purchased online, the receipt must indicate the product has been shipped and delivered along with all required payment information.
 - b. If the expense is for airfare or a hotel expense, the receipt cannot be an itinerary or reservation confirmation, it must be a final receipt.

Audits

The Finance Board, to determine the overall SAF utilization, reserves the right to perform random audits of organizations, accounts, membership, and events. If an audit reveals evidence of mispending of funds, the student organization may be subjected to sanctions.

Sanctions

Sanctions may be imposed upon an organization for the following:

1. Unapproved spending of SAFs
2. Spending which violates any clause of this Finance Manual
3. Inappropriate storage or record-keeping of equipment, costumes, or props
4. Falsifying information on any submissions to the Finance Board

Sanctions that may be implemented upon an organization include but are not limited to:

1. Loss of eligibility to request funding for a specified time period
2. Referral to Student Involvement for organization status review
3. Referral to the Office of Student Conduct

Sanctions imposed upon organizations will be detailed and outlined in a written memorandum to the organization president, treasurer, and advisor. Appeals on sanctions may be submitted on any decision made by the Finance Board or VP of Finance. Appeals should follow the guidelines set forth in the Appealing a Decision section of the Finance Bylaws.

Organization Appeals Process

Grounds for appeal

The following appeals process will allow student organizations to request decisions made by the VP of Finance or the Finance Board be reconsidered. An appeal may only be based upon the following criteria:

1. Established policies and procedures were not followed.
2. The funding allocation decision was arbitrary or capricious.
3. The severity of imposed sanctions was unnecessarily harsh in nature compared to the severity of the infraction.

The fact that the Finance Board did not fund a request in its entirety does not in itself constitute grounds for an appeal.

Appeals process

If an organization chooses to appeal a decision rendered by the VP of Finance or the Finance Board, they must submit an appeal request on PhoenixCONNECT within seven business days of the funding decision notification. The written appeal should include the following, when applicable:

1. The request for which the decision was made, along with all supporting materials
2. The funding decision
3. The sanction decision
4. Any other related communication from SGA
5. The criteria on which the appeal is based, noting the specific policies within the Finance Bylaws that were violated

The SGA Chief Justice will receive the appeal and determine if the appeal has merit based on the aforementioned criteria. An appeal that has been found to have merit will be considered by the Appeals Board within five business days of receipt. The Appeals Board will consist of the following members:

1. SGA Chief Justice, who will serve as the convener of the appeals process
2. Student Body President
3. SGA VP of Finance
4. SGA VP of Communications
5. SGA Speaker of the Senate

Appeals decision

The Appeals Board will make one of the following decisions with a simple majority vote:

1. Uphold the original decision of the Finance Board
2. Amend the decision to allocate funding for items not originally funded
 - a. The Appeals Board may not allocate funding above the originally requested amount
3. Amend imposed sanctions

Once a decision has been made, the Appeals Board must provide the rationale of its decision within two business days in a memorandum to the Finance Board as well as the student organization's advisor, president, and treasurer. Decisions made by the Appeals Board will not have precedent on future appeals, and all appeals will be considered independently. The decision of the Appeals Board is final.

In the event that SGA is the appealing organization, the Vice President for Student Life, or a designee, will make the decision on the appeal.