

October 10, 2011

Rules and Constitution Committee Recommendations

RCC Report

RCC Members Present: Catherine Salussolia (Chair), Rik Bose (Computer Science), Ginny Anderson (Linguistics), Rich Wrase (Social Work), Xing Chen (Pharmacology)

-Call to order at 5:30pm

- Approval of the agenda: Motion: Rik, Second: Ginny; unanimous consent

1. Update Standing Committee Bylaws to reflect changes noted in February 2011 minutes

Section J: Committee on Academic Affairs

1. As noted in the Constitution, the CAA shall be chaired by the Speaker of the Senate and shall include a minimum of three other GSO members. The committee shall invite the senator(s) of the affected departments to join the committee.
2. The committee will meet to make recommendations regarding any proposed changes that could affect the academic progress of graduate students.
3. The committee shall also serve as an official liaison between GSO and the University Council.
4. The committee shall invite three faculty members to review the applications for the Distinguished Travel Award, according to the guidelines in the application.

Suggested Revision:

Section J: Committee on Academic Affairs

1. As noted in the Constitution, the CAA shall be chaired by the Speaker of the Senate and shall include a minimum of three other GSO members. ~~The committee shall invite the senator(s) of the affected departments to join the committee.~~
2. The committee will meet to make recommendations regarding any proposed changes that could affect the academic progress of graduate students. **If said changes involve a particular department, the committee shall invite the senator(s) of that department to participate and provide recommendations on behalf of the GSO.**
3. The committee shall also serve as an official liaison between GSO and the University Council.
4. The committee shall invite three faculty members to review the applications for the Distinguished Travel Award, according to the guidelines in the application.

2. Update the Internal Control Program

6.3.5.1 The Tarabac Distinguished Travel Award

- A. Is a special line of funding designated to support graduate students, who present their work at prestigious conferences, performances and professional meetings that will contribute to and build the national and international reputation of their departments and the University.
- B. The application call will be sent the first week of the Spring semester and will be

forwarded to all the departments represented by a GSO Senator. The application will require the following documents:

- a. A written statement of no more than 500 words on the scientific or artistic contribution of the presentation, its impact in the national and international discussion of his/her area of specialty, and the significance of the event.
- b. An invitation or acceptance letter to the event. This requirement will be waived for conferences taking place between the call for applications and June 30. In such cases, an invitation or acceptance letter shall be a requirement for the reimbursement.
- c. A letter of recommendation from the student's advisor, stating the student's contribution and impact on the field or discipline.
- C. Every department can nominate a maximum of two students for each academic year. The program director should write a letter of support to the nomination.
- D. The applications will be reviewed, and evaluated by the Committee on Academic Affairs and three invited faculty members.
- E. All funds will be reimbursed following the same guidelines as for RAP (6.3.2.).
- F. The award can only be used once during a student's academic career, and the student is

Suggested Revision

6.3.5.1 The *Tarabae Distinguished Travel Award*

- A. Is a special line of funding designated to support graduate students, who present their work at prestigious conferences, performances and professional meetings that will contribute to and build the national and international reputation of their departments and the University.
- B. The application call will be ~~sent the first week of the Spring semester~~ **issued twice a year- typically, during the first week of each semester-** and will be forwarded to all the departments represented by a GSO Senator. The application will require the following documents:
 - a. A written statement of no more than 500 words on the scientific or artistic contribution of the presentation, its impact in the national and international discussion of his/her area of specialty, and the significance of the event.
 - b. An invitation or acceptance letter to the event. This requirement will be waived for conferences taking place between the call for applications and **the first day of classes of the Spring semester (Fall applications) or June 30 (Spring applications)**. In such cases, an invitation or acceptance letter shall be a requirement for the reimbursement.
 - c. A letter of recommendation from the student's advisor, stating the student's contribution and impact on the field or discipline.
 - C. Every department can nominate ~~a maximum of~~ two students for each academic year. **However, additional nominations based on merit will be considered by the Committee of Academic Affairs in extraordinary circumstances.**
~~The program director should write a letter of support to~~ **A letter of support is required from the Graduate Program Director.**
 - D. The applications will be reviewed, and evaluated by the Committee on Academic Affairs and three invited faculty members.
 - E. All funds will be reimbursed following the same guidelines as for RAP (6.3.2.).

F. ~~The award can only be used~~ **student may receive the Distinguished Travel Award only** once during ~~his/hers~~ student's academic career. **Further, and** the student is not eligible for RAP funding for the same conference.

3. Distinguished Travel Award Information

The Distinguished Travel Award is a special line of funding designated to support graduate students who present their work at prestigious conferences, performances and professional meetings that will contribute to and build the national and international reputation of their department and the University.

This is a competitive award funded by the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Organization. A student may receive this award only once during his/her academic career at Stony Brook University. Award recipients will be reimbursed after their conference/performance, as per the RAP funding guidelines. Award amounts may not exceed \$1500.

2011-2012 Application deadlines:

A. Conferences/Performances occurring between July 1- December 30, 2011
November 22, 2011 at 11:59pm EST

B. Conferences/Performances occurring between January 1- June 30, 2012
April 2, 2012 at 11:59pm EST

[Click here to download the application.](#)

Distinguished Travel Award FAQs

1. *I am going to/have been to "X" conference, am I eligible to apply for the Distinguished Travel Award?*

If your presentation/conference occurs between July 1 and December 30 of the given year, you are eligible to apply during the Fall call for applications. If your presentation/conference occurs between January 1 and June 30 of the given year, you are eligible to apply during the Spring call for applications. If the presentation/conference will take place after June 30 of the given calendar year, you are welcome to apply the following Fall.

2. *What if my conference/presentation occurs after the application deadline, but during the eligibility period?*

You are encouraged to submit an application, however funding is contingent on your acceptance to present or speak at the conference.

3. Can the award be used for posters?

Yes, however, it is important to note that in some fields, posters are considered less prestigious than oral presentations. Also, please remember you are only eligible for this award once during your graduate career at Stony Brook.

4. Can it be used to present work that does not relate to my field of study?

No, the main purpose of this award is to increase the prestige of your department and the University. In addition to your written statement, you must provide two letters of support- one from your advisor and one from the Graduate Program Director. Students whose work is the result of collaboration amongst multiple departments are eligible to apply.

5. How is this award different from RAP?

All graduate students with GSO representation are eligible for RAP funding. The only requirement for RAP is that you present your work at a professional activity. RAP funding is not a competitive award, thus as long as you meet the application requirements you will receive RAP. The Distinguished Travel Award is designed to increase the prestige of your department and the University. It is a competitive award and only a limited number will be granted University-wide.

6. Can the letters of support be emailed separately?

Yes, as long as the letter specifies the applicant's name and is received before the application deadline. However, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials are received by the relevant deadline.

4. Changes to the ICP relating to the Budget Committee/Allocation of Funds

A. 6.3.2 General Cultural and Social Events

H. If approved by the Senate, the money allocated for an event will be released only after the GSO Treasurer receives the following documentation.

- i. Original receipts of the expenses for the event. Expenses for which receipts are not available will not be reimbursed.
- ii. A summary evaluation of the event that includes a narrative description of the event, the total number of people in attendance, the number of graduate students in attendance, the actual costs and the original W-9's for the people who are receiving reimbursement for their services.

Suggested Revision:

H. If approved by the Senate, the money allocated for an event will be released only after the GSO Treasurer receives the following documentation.

- i. Original receipts of the expenses for the event. Expenses for which receipts are not available will not be reimbursed. **All documentation must be in English in order to receive reimbursement.**
- ii. A summary evaluation of the event that includes a narrative description of the event, the total number of people in attendance, the number of graduate students in attendance, the actual costs and the original W-9's for the people who are receiving reimbursement for their services.

Suggested Revision: To correct a misprint in the current ICP. General Social and Cultural Events cannot be funded for multiple days.

K. No budget request may allocate more than \$300 toward the purchase of food. ~~The total amount reimbursed for food will not exceed \$300 for a one-day event. In the case of an event spanning multiple days, a Senator may motion to amend the proposed budget request to provide an additional \$100 per day for a maximum of two (2) additional days, totaling \$500.~~

L. No single prize or giveaway item may exceed \$50.

Suggested Revision:

L. No single prize or giveaway item may exceed **\$25. No budget request may be allocated more than \$100 towards the purchase of prizes or giveaway items.**

B. 3 Disbursement of GSO Funds

Add a new section:

H. GSO funds allocated for events from the General Cultural and Social Events, Speaker Series and Conferences, EPIC lines, as well as, Club Allocations, or Departmental Allocations may not be used in the form of donations to or compensation for organizations such as, but not limited to charities, spiritual/religious institutions, and/or foundations.

Suggested to now read:

3 Disbursement of the GSO Funds

The GSO employs a C&D Agent to manage the GSO bank accounts, disburse funds for payment in accordance with the GSO Constitution, ICP, and the current approved budget; and maintain financial records for and in conjunction with the GSO.

A. Upon receipt of a properly endorsed financial payment voucher, the GSO's C&D Agent debits the appropriate funds from an operating account maintained by the C&D agent and prepares a check payable to the individual listed on the payment voucher, with the exception of the payroll expenses which are specifically drawn from a payroll account.

B. Policies regarding vouchers will be devised by the EC in conjunction with the BC and RCC, and are stipulated in the annual GSO/C&D Agent Agreement.

C. All vouchers require the signature of the GSO Treasurer, an officer other than the Treasurer and the C&D Agent. An executive officer cannot sign their own voucher, except the Treasurer who must sign all vouchers. In the case where the Treasurer needs to be reimbursed, two officers beside the Treasurer, the Treasurer and the C&D Agent need to approve the payment voucher. The GSO executive committee should provide the C&D agent with specimen signatures for easy verification.

D. In the situation that an expenditure is not approved, an appeal may be brought to the Board of Appeals for recommendation to the full Senate during a regularly scheduled Senate meeting at the request of the petitioning party. The Senate shall have the final authority to override the executive officers' decision and approve any unapproved expenditure. In such an instance, the Speaker, Treasurer, C&D agent and the requisite number of officers shall sign the voucher and attach a copy of the Senate meeting minutes where the allocation was overrode and approved. The payment voucher will then be presented to the C&D agent after which time a check shall be drawn and money will be debited from the appropriate account. If the C&D Agent fails to approve the transaction, the procedure outlined in the C&D Agent's contract and the ICP will be followed.

E. Original receipts are required for all funding requests, unless a provision is made in ICP. If funding is requested to cover partial expenses not paid in full by another primary funding agency, an official written statement of funds provided and a photocopy of all original receipts is required from the agency. Reimbursements for etickets will be made only upon submission of the original boarding pass stub. If the boarding pass stub is unavailable, the funding request needs to be checked and approved by a majority vote of the BC.

F. All supporting documentation should be stamped by the treasurer or designee in order to preclude reuse of the documents.

G. Funding requests for all of the expenses incurred during a particular fiscal year should be submitted and received within a month after the end of a fiscal year. Any exceptions will be discussed by the BC and approved by the EC and/or Senate (when classes are in session).

H. GSO funds allocated for events from the General Cultural and Social Events, Speaker Series and Conferences, EPIC lines, as well as, Club Allocations, or Departmental Allocations may not be used in the form of donations to, but not limited to, charities, spiritual/religious institutions, and/or foundations.

5. Changes to ICP regarding GSELF

Appendix D: Graduate Student Emergency Loan Fund Policies and Procedures.

Current language:

E. Once the loan check has been issued, the amount will automatically be posted as a charge to the applicant's People Soft Student Financial Customer Account, creating a Bursar Service Indicator (herein after BR)3. This will result in an immediate hold on transcripts, diplomas and enrollment, plus the addition of automatic late fees if the loan is not fully repaid after three months. If the applicant is in good standing with the GSELF committee, the service indicator will automatically be changed to BR2 (hold on transcript and diploma only) and all late fees accrued within three months of the loan date will be waived.

F. Application processing should be completed as quickly as possible.

G. In the event that the GS Advocate and/or GSELF Committee Chair declines the loan, the applicant shall then be informed that they can appeal to the GSELF Committee and provided with access to an appeal application and an appeal number, if applicable.

Loan Appeal Procedure – If the GS Advocate and/or GSELF Committee Chair declines the loan application, the applicant may contact the GSELF Committee via the GSELF Committee Chair in writing (e-mail is acceptable) using the appeal application form. The applicant shall provide the committee with supplemental paperwork if applicable. If a minimum of three (3) GSELF Committee members approve the loan application, the Chair will sign the appeal form and follow the loan approval procedure outlined in **Loan Procedure, section C** to grant the loan. If the Committee declines the appeal application, the loan will not be granted. If the Committee requests additional information the applicant will be required to attend a GSELF Committee meeting with all available and pertinent information.

Repayment Procedure –

A. The loan should be fully repaid by the applicant within a period of three (3) months.

B. Two months after the date of the loan, the GSELF committee will send a letter or email to the applicant indicating that full loan repayment is required in one month (see sample two-month letter).

Suggested Revisions:

E. Payments for the GSELF loan are due 3 months after the date of the loan. On the 85th day after the check has been issued, the amount will automatically be posted as a charge to the applicant's People Soft Student Financial Customer Account, creating a Bursar Service Indicator (herein after BR 3). This will result in an immediate hold on transcripts, diplomas and enrollment, plus the addition of automatic late fees if the loan is not fully repaid after three months. ~~If the applicant is in good standing with the GSELF committee, the service indicator will automatically be changed to BR2 (hold on transcript and diploma only) and all late fees accrued within three months of the loan date will be waived.~~

F. Application processing should be completed as quickly as possible.

G. In the event that the GS Advocate and/or GSELF Committee Chair declines the loan, the applicant shall then be informed that they can appeal to the GSELF Committee and provided with access to an appeal application and an appeal number, if applicable.

Loan Appeal Procedure – If the GS Advocate and/or GSELF Committee Chair declines the loan application, the applicant may contact the GSELF Committee via the GSELF Committee Chair in writing (e-mail is acceptable) using the appeal application form. The applicant shall provide the committee with supplemental paperwork if applicable. If a minimum of three (3) GSELF Committee members approve the loan application, the Chair will sign the appeal form and follow the loan approval procedure outlined in **Loan Procedure, section C** to grant the loan. If the Committee declines the appeal application, the loan will not be granted. If the Committee requests additional information the applicant will be required to attend a GSELF Committee meeting with all available and pertinent information.

Repayment Procedure –

- A. The loan should be fully repaid by the applicant within a period of three (3) months.
- B. Two months after the date of the loan, the GSELF committee will send a letter or email to the applicant indicating that full loan repayment is required in one month (see sample two-month letter). **Students must pay the loan between the 85th day and three months; those who wish to pay their early must contact the GSELF committee chair to request that the loan be posted early.**

6. Updated forms

The following forms were updated to reflect changes in the ICP and Budget approved in May 2011: Club Allocation, Departmental Allocation, and Recreation.

7. Meeting adjourned 7:15pm

Respectfully submitted by Catherine L. Salussolia, Speaker of the Senate and Chair of RCC.