



PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors

Effective June 20, 1983

Board of Governors Policy 1983-03-A: *Student Activity Fees*

See Also:

Rescinds: BSCUD Policy 153.21

Adopted: June 20, 1983

Amended: January 8, 1998, and July 12, 2018

A. Definition

- **Student association**—the student organization recognized as having the authority to recommend the allocation of the activity fee to the president under the provisions of Act 188.

B. Authority to Collect Fees

Subject to policies of the Board of Governors, the authority to set and collect student activity fees rests with the presidents of the various universities in consultation with the student associations.

C. Collection

University collection. The collection of student activity fees is to be made and included in the semester or session billing, or in such other manner, including a separate and discrete billing and collection procedure as authorized by the president.

Mandatory activity fees. Payment of the student activity fee may be mandatory, dependent upon the fee schedule approved by the president in cooperation with the student association.

The university may exercise its normal collection and penalty policies in enforcing payment of the activity fee.

D. Security of Funds

Interest. All interest, other than nominal amounts, from student activity funds invested shall be retained by the respective student association.

Security. The student association has the responsibility to assure that the deposits are properly secured and to receive such assurance from the depository in writing. Investment of funds will be made in accordance with Board of Governors Policy 1986-02-A, *Investments*.

E. Allocation of Student Activity Funds

Budget process. The student activity fee budget and allocations process at each campus as adopted by the student association with the approval of the president shall be published annually. It is the responsibility of the budget committee to inform student organizations with reasonable advance notice of policies and procedures of budget requests, hearings, and appeals in writing.

Budget committee. Each campus shall have a student activity fee budget or allocations committee chosen in a manner decided upon by the student association. Members of the faculty and administrative staff may serve on this committee at the discretion of the student association, but students shall comprise at least a majority of the committee.

Budget requests. The association shall give due consideration to budget requests from organizations and activities which are officially recognized or in the process of being recognized by the student association but shall not entertain requests from other organizations.

The president may also present budget requests and recommendations to the student association.

Budget committee meetings and hearings. The privilege of attending budget committee meetings and hearings shall be granted at the discretion of the committee provided meetings at which final budget decisions are reached are open to interested students and faculty. (Sunshine Law)

Presidential veto. The president shall have the right to veto with written explanation the total budget or any line-item expenditure he/she considers to be an improper use of student activity funds. The final decision on the allocation of student activity funds rests with the president (24 P.S. § 20-2004.1-12).

F. Guidelines for Expenditures

Partisan political activity. Student activity fee monies shall not be used for any type of partisan political endorsement nor for contributions to the campaign fund of any candidate for elective office. Nothing in the foregoing shall prohibit the payment of fees to political speakers.

Noncampus and nonstudent activities. Expenditures shall be made only for university sponsored or related activities, which involve the students, faculty, or staff of the university.

Not-for-profit organizations and local governmental units. No direct contributions may be made from student activity fees for charities, not-for-profit organizations, or local governments and their units. Nothing in the foregoing shall prohibit a student association or student organizations from engaging in fund raising activities to benefit these entities.

G. Purchases

Student association purchases. A student association shall establish competitive purchasing procedures as deemed appropriate by the individual universities, which provide for a system of checks and balances and are subject to an annual audit.

Purchase approval. The governing board of the student association shall designate officers or other parties to be responsible for signing procurement authorizations and the authorization of payments in accordance with a system of appropriate internal controls. In addition, the university president may designate an individual to provide administrative review and endorse such documents without actually committing the student association or disbursing funds. Neither the university president nor any university or Commonwealth officer or employee may sign checks, notes, purchase orders, other obligations, or contracts for or on behalf of the student association.

H. Internal Control

Subject to the approval of the president, an accounting system that provides for sound internal control and a detailed audit trail shall be established.

Accounting criteria. Except as otherwise provided, the criteria and principles of the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as prescribed by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) shall be used.

Oversight. If, in the opinion of the university president, the student association's administration of activity fee revenue is conducted in a manner contrary to this policy, or in other inappropriate way, the president may appoint a university administrator to act temporarily in a direct oversight capacity to restore proper administration.

I. External Control

Student association audit. Each student association shall provide for an annual audit of its accounts by an independent certified public accountant, a copy of which, along with internal control reviews and management letters, shall be provided to the president.

The president may require that a special audit of the activity fee accounts be performed by an independent certified public accountant, internal auditor, or other university employees (24 P.S. § 20-2004.1-12).

J. Summer Sessions

Summer session activity fees. Summer session activity fees may be administered jointly with the fees from the regular school year; or they may be budgeted and administered separately in a manner agreeable to the president and the student association.