RSO Budget Hearing Presentation Guidelines and Tips

This document will provide a rough outline of what makes up an ideal presentation to the Congress of Graduate Students (COGS) during the annual Budget Hearing process. These guidelines will make sure that your Recognized Student Organization (RSO) is represented well during the process, ensuring that there will be minimal questions, and that you are following Student Government Association (SGA) code. By having these materials ready and questions answered during the 15-minute presentation, you can rest assured that the meeting will run smoothly. As you prepare for your presentation, make sure to consult the SGA Recognized Student Organization Financial Manual 2022 - 2023 for specific information.

Basic Guidelines

1. Make sure you have gone through the Recognition Process to become an RSO.
2. Your RSO must make up over 50% graduate students.
3. Look over the contents of the SGA Accounting page.
4. The RSO Director/President, financial officer, another executive board member, and advisor complete an SGA Statement of Understanding Signer Form, and that these individuals be financially certified (becoming financially certified).
6. When presenting, provide clear information of your request with supporting evidence.

Building Trust

1. If COGS has funded your RSO in the past, it is imperative that you keep updated accounts of your funds and events (i.e., receipts, how many people attended these events, outreach, promotional efforts, how many are expected to show up to future events, and so on). The more data and information you present to the Budget Committee, the better.
2. If you are a new RSO, some of the best ways for you to build trust with COGS is to:
   a. Request smaller amounts in order for your RSO to get used to the process of Nole Central, submitting purchase requests, and so on.
   b. Keep in close contact with the COGS executive board each step of the way, whether it be preparing your presentation, grants, or other matters.
Typical Outline of a Presentation

1. Brief introduction of the presenter and others joining them (e.g., name, year in the program, and title/role within the RSO).
2. Mission Statement of the RSO (what the organization provides to graduate students, aim of the organization, goals, benefits, events, and so on).
3. Amount you are asking for and what the money will be going toward (see Budgetary Categories and Tips to Developing a Budget Plan below).
4. Other important points:
   a. Fundraisers and other Self-Generated Funds.
      i. Fundraisers not only help your RSO financially, but it informs COGS that your RSO is making extra efforts to obtain funds (rather than just relying on outside sources like COGS to fund your financial needs).
   b. Dues (COGS will not fund any RSO that require dues)
5. Questions from the COGS Budget Committee members (leave about 3-5 minutes for this).
6. Questions from the RSO to COGS.

Budgetary Categories

When submitting purchase requests and spending money, it is important to ensure you have money available in the category you want to use and what you are purchasing follows the guidelines of that category. There are additional steps to follow in order to move money between categories, as described in the “Submitting Requests” sections of this financial manual.

**Contractual Services**: This category is used to pay a person or company for a service rendered instead of a commodity (physical item), such as a speaker, entertainer, band, DJ, or security. RSOs cannot authorize any contract or agreement with an artist, performer, DJ or company. Submit the Contract Information Form and any documents provided in a Nole Central Purchase Request at least 30 business days prior to the proposed event for review by the University’s Legal Services. **Contractual services over $3,000 require Student Senate approval via Resolution.**

**Expense**: This category covers the costs of expendable items such as facility rentals, printing, office supplies, maintenance, inflatable/carnival equipment rentals, or decorations for events. Submit Nole Central requests at least 15 business days prior to the event or purchase.

**Food**: The food category covers the purchase of edible items or supplies in relations to food (e.g. cups, napkins, plates), and catered events. No plated dinners are allowed. If your organization is having food at an event, you MUST complete an EP through Nole Central. Submit Nole Central requests at least 15 business days prior to the event or purchase.
**Clothing/Awards:** This category is used to pay for clothing (t-shirts, hats, and tank tops) for the purpose of promoting an SGA-funded entity or event, and affordable trophies, plaques and certificates. All items should have the SGA/COGS logo or “Paid for by SGA/COGS” and be reasonably priced per item.

**Self-Generated Funds:** Self-generated funds are non-A&S funds. Non-A&S funds are raised by an organization which are generated from dues, fundraisers not utilizing A&S funds, and donations. Please submit a request in Nole Central to pay for something with Self-Generated Funds. Any new Self-generated funds should be deposited in your off-campus bank account.

**Foundation Funds:** If you receive funds from a company (through fundraising or donation) or a monetary gift from an individual and want to deposit those funds in your SGA/COGS self-generated account, they will be collected through the FSU Foundation. The FSU Foundation will keep track of your donor’s gift to the University for tax purposes, and SGA Accounting will be able to support you in spending these forms through a reimbursement process. If you receive a donation or any funds from a company, be sure to take their full name and address and bring it to SGA Accounting. If you believe a donor has made a donation to your organization through the FSU Foundation already, visit SGA Accounting for more information and how to access your funds.

**Tips to Developing a Budget Plan**

- Review organization’s available funds and reasonable projections for the upcoming year.
- Prepare an outline of organizational annual events and planned or goal activities for the upcoming year.
- Rank events and programs in order by their relative importance.
- Collect price quotes for big expenditures.
- Set up categories for expenses and outline projected numbers per category. Be sure to include some flexibility. For SGA/COGS funded groups, it might be useful to use the same categories of funding, such as Food, Expense, and Clothing & Awards.
- Keep an accurate log of all transactions.
- Share the balance of each budget category at organizational meetings.
- Assess the budget regularly and adjust when necessary.