

FSU Congress of Graduate Students  
Internal Affairs Committee Meeting  
August 26, 2022

Start Time: 3:05 pm

Attendance: Sara Collins, Nella Delva, Rachel Neale, Ethan Vouzas

Special Guests: Ariana Genovese (President, Medical Student Council), Joshua Davis (Treasurer, Medical Student Council)

Introductions:

Dep. Speaker Delva:

- Today, we are going to discuss the financial changes we are making to the code. These will be approved at our next assembly meeting. Our second goal, is to discuss clarification for the travel application for MSC. This concerns clarification and interpretation. The details of what we will be making today are from Chapter 207 in the Code, in addition to 208 and 209.

New Business:

*Changing COGS Code to reflect budget changes for conference attendance/presentation:*

- Delva reviews that presentation grants (domestic) are increasing to \$250.
- Vouzas: Section 205 outlines what students can get within a specific time point = \$500 a year for 5 years. This is reflected in the second sentence in 207.5. The proposed change here is \$600 instead of \$500, so we increase presentation at international conferences from \$500 to \$600. The other change would be \$3,000 in 5 years, to reflect the increase in domestic presentation/attendance grants.
- Vouzas: In 208, the change reflects a change from \$200 to \$250, which is what we voted on from this fiscal year. This would yield a \$100 increase for international travel, a \$50 increase for presentation and attendance grants.
- Vouzas: My proposal is we would eliminate 208d, since this provision is concerned with the time period that extended to June 11, 2011.
- Vouzas: Concerning 209, we realize there is no language that dictates attendance grants. I propose adding language that indicates how much money will be awarded for attendance grants. I propose we copy paste this language from 208, and show this \$50 increase but for attendance grants rather than presentation grants for 209. So now we will have language that reflects that attendance grants can be up to \$150 each and presentation grants up to \$250 per grant.
- Neale: So, should we indicate that conference attendance is eligible for up to \$150.00 in attendance grants. This change is reflected in 209.1 D.
- Neale: Did we adjust the pool of funds that will be dedicated to each funding period?
- Vouzas: It will not matter, since the resolution already passed.
- Neale: I was just wondering. Students might be more vigilant about applying now.

- Vouzas: At the moment, I see that we did increase the amount dedicated toward grants. We had \$160,000 in the last funding period (split within three funding periods). For this fiscal year, we have over \$66,000 per funding period, which is a total of about \$200,000.
- Neale: Now will this go on the budget packet under New Business?
- Collins: Yes, and we will vote on it with pros and cons. And the item we are voting on is just the language we used to describe these changes.
- Neale: I saw another line that might need adjusting, it's Chapter 108.3 F and E.
- Neale: This concerns information about committees. This line includes a date that has already expired (February 5, 2018). I propose to remove E and F given this language has expired and the tasks there mentioned have already been completed.
- Delva: I move to call to question the vote for budget changes.
- Collins: Second.
- Chapter 207 changes
  - Vote: 4-0-0
- Chapter 208 changes (208.2A, 208.2B)
  - Vouzas objects to call to question for Chapter 208. Proposes to remove the language "(outside 100 miles)" in 208.2A.
  - Adjustment is made to 208.8A.
- Delva: I motion to call to question.
- Collins: Second
- Chapter 208 changes
  - Vote: 4-0-0
- Chapter 209 changes
  - Vote: 4-0-0
- Delva: I motion to call to question the vote for Chapter 108.
- Collins: Second
- Chapter 108 changes
  - Vote: 4-0-0

*Clarification with Travel Application Funding / Re: MSC Individual Grant Funds:*

- Neale: I was reading Chapter 202 on travel, particularly 202.5. It notes that no RSO shall receive COGS travel funds as a group more than twice in a fiscal year. Also, B discusses provisions on tabling. Therefore, allocating group travel funds to RSOs would not be appropriate.
- Vouzas: This makes it very clear that when it comes to group travel, group travel cannot be defined as a set number of individuals as a set number applying together and traveling for a conference. I think that it makes it clear that it has to be a tabling event to promote a single group entity.
- Ariana Genovese (President of MSC):
  - A huge portion of this is to promote student presentations, and we get a very large number of students who need to present research. So I think this should be a promotional movement.

- Neale: I believe you will need to be limited to tabling for a promotional movement.
- Genovese: So how would you like us to go about processing grants? Because I get a lot of students from different schools.
- Vouzas: I am responsible for processing all of these requests. I can assure you that it will not add more to my plate to process requests from students in the medical school because I am already processing the requests of every other graduate student at the university.
- Davis: We've seen the requests increase, so we can help our students go forth and present this research. Conferences are also not intended for only research purposes. We had 21 students from the COM travel to a conference that supports minority students – it is great for networking. Every member of the COM is a member of every RSO. There must be a way where suballocation can be changed.
- Vouzas: Tabling and conference travel are very different processes. There are different components that must be considered. Every graduate student at FSU pays the same A&S fees. The second part is that almost definitionally, MSC is COGS. Even though it is a separate entity that can allocate funds within that umbrella, so it cannot operate separately from that part of COGS. Third, every travel to a conference, at the end of the day, it is travel to attend or present. Within the COGS code, they all need to be treated the same way. So when a person from the math department comes to COGS to ask to present, it is treated the same as an individual person in MSC. They are each presenting at a conference in the continental US. At the end of the day, COGS code is the principal document that overshadows everything else in COGS. This is the way I view things because I also think it's a matter of fairness. If you look at the amount of money that we have, we have to understand how it trickles down to each student individually. Unfortunately, this pool includes all the A&S funds grad students pay. Then SGA is responsible for giving COGS its own funding. At the moment, the amount of money we get is 50% of A&S fees graduate students pay. The previous fiscal year, a few people worked together to increase our pool of funding. A small percentage of A&S fees actually goes to presentation/attendance grants. So subsequent to that, our job as funding boards is to ensure that that money is distributed equitably across every graduate student at the university.
- Genovese: When you speak about students from different departments, something really resonated with other members. Some students range in where they're traveling. We take into account every single thing, and the things you don't have time to do, we do this for you. We only provide money to each student only what they need. So if you add up and take the average of what each student gets, it's still the full amount of what we can allocate. I think this is a lot for COGS to handle themselves, especially since we've been doing the heavy lifting for you guys over the last few years.

- Vouzas: We award up to \$200. To explain, this is resulted in the accounting department at FSU and SGA so at the end of the day, when the student submits their receipts to their conference, accounting goes in and reimburses the appropriate amount. On paper, it says they were awarded \$200, they will not automatically get \$200. Something that needs to be considered, what you explained about the cost averaging out across all students, this is not something else that is afforded to every student at the university. So, this is a matter of how much each student can receive, regardless of how much money their conference costs. We need to account for how much money students are planning to spend. We are not debating about what the rules should be, we're looking at what COGS code dictates. The entire goal of this is to ensure every member under COGS abides by the COGS code.
- Delva: I want to reinforce what Ethan said. I want this COGS to be more fair and abide the code. Another concern I had was double dipping. How do we know who you're funding is not asking for more funding from COGS directly.
- Neale: There have already been examples of double dipping.
- Vouzas: I had a student ask for conference funding from Canada. The only reason we knew that the student got money from MSC and COGS is because the student told us – otherwise, we would not have known.
- Delva: Maybe they didn't know, but this has happened before and this can continue to happen. In terms of fairness, I think we should stick to the code and reroute everybody to the funding and travel presentation grants.
- Davis: In regards to some of the code, there are some students that present 3 times a year. I think the code should be modified to reflect this challenge. There's a chance that there won't be any funding left.
- Vouzas: The whole first-come-first-served thing comes into play specifically for the submission for the request, not the conference itself. COGS has 3 separate funding periods. If a student knows they are going to a conference October 1<sup>st</sup>, they can submit their request on July 15<sup>th</sup>. It's a matter of when you submit your application. There is flexibility as to where the money comes from. Even though we have three separate windows, the money that is allocated in that window is not always fixed. There have been times where we needed to transfer money to another funding period window. The only time that this can really come into play is the very end of June. And that would only happen if COGS straight up ran out of money.
- Davis: In the instance, should students just be applying through COGS? Will they get turned away?
- Vouzas: No. We do not turn away students unless they cannot provide proof of conference.
- Genovese: So, some students get conference acceptances with short notice. What will happen if that is the case?
- Vouzas: Every student is treated the same and given the same chance to get each grant.

- Davis: So I greatly believe this will decrease the number of students who can attend and showcase their work at MSC, which will decrease match rates, residency networking, etc.
- Collins: I just want to apologize for all of the information you've been given from previous executive committees. We are trying to set a new precedent to make sure we follow COGS code. And that is giving students equitable access to these funds.
- Delva: Yes, I agree. We want to ensure that we are providing each student the same access to these funds.
- Davis: Do you know if individual labs get funding?
- Vouzas: Yes, but however, that does not always fund the student for conference travel.
- Davis: This greatly limits the ability for people to attend and present at conferences.
- Vouzas: We are greatly limited by the university and what they will approve. That's something that is not our role as a body.
- Delva: Unfortunately, there's no money for us to travel, as well. When addressing the generalization of the whole student body, and bring our own experience and access to this, we have to understand privilege as opposed to others who are not given funding at all.
- Genovese: I just want to express why we are all here today. Med students cannot advance to residency, or match, if they do not have a suitable amount of publications. I want to make sure we are following the same rules, I want to make sure we give what we have to COGS students while abiding by COGS code. I would consider amending the code that includes tabling. If we don't spend the money, it will go into sweepings.
- Vouzas: This situation was born from a general lack of understanding of COGS code, including my on misunderstanding. There are many members that are brand new and don't pay too much attention. Honestly, when the budget was approved, the meetings were some of my first in COGS. I think this is something that we can work out for the current fiscal year. I don't think this is something we can work out today. Most likely, we are going to need to come up with some creative solutions to move past this point. I'd like to organize some meetings that include MSC, COGS, and our COGS advisor to discuss alleviating this issue for the future. These meetings can be unofficial, and we can set them up in the next few weeks. Then we can draft something that will help us get through this fiscal year.
- Delva: There is further discussion to be had. It will be an official executive board meeting with the full purpose of how to handle this solution. Hopefully we can come up with an agreement. But, it will not be today.
- Davis: In the meantime, let's say a student wants to present research, is there any way to help them with that funding.
- Neale: They will need to go through the application for attendance and presentation grants. What's black and white in the code is that students will

need to go through COGS for conference funding. I apologize for any miscommunication and errors from the previous executive boards. There's no reason to completely lose hope – there have been students who have come through the entire assembly to decide if we can fairly give them the funds for that life changing experience. But any individual grant requests need to go through the COGS funding committee.

- Genovese: Thank you. I'm glad we are going to reach a compromise, and everyone is getting on the same page.

End time: 5:07 pm