FY 2015-2016

Activities Funding Board

Compiled by Sarim Qureshi, Chair of the Activities Funding Board

[STUDENT FEE ADVISORYCOMMITTEE REPORT]

The purpose of the Activities Funding Board (AFB) shall be to administer the 1% mandatory Student Service Fee allocation under SFAC bylaws. The AFB allocates funding to registered student organizations (RSO) for the purposes of maximizing programming at University of Houston (UH).

Activities Funding Board essentially is an agency of SFAC that gives every student organization the opportunity to direct events on campus, as well as represent the University of Houston at regional, state, and national conferences.

Here at AFB, we strive to allocate our portion of the student service fee into the hands of registered student organizations that have shown proper planning, innovative ideas, and a desire to benefit the University of Houston campus. We want to see organization success not only for the general populace but any and all sub-divisions according to major, interests, and cultures. Our vision is to better campus life, and to encourage human investment in the University by promotion of our vast student organizations.

In order to give all parts of the University a fair chance at funding, we vigorously market ourselves in mediums visible to registered student organizations and students at large. Aside from giving presentations at RSO meetings, we encourage all student organizations to contact us personally and advertise workshops detailing the funding process along with sessions that model the characteristics of a successful and beneficial RSO event.

A clear distinction we make is that our funding is not for the benefit of an organizations general budget, but instead for the support of general on campus programming or the attendance at RSO related conferences. In addition, we fund under SFAC guidelines along with other constraints as depicted in our bylaws, to ensure that the money is utilized to benefit the student body and campus. However, we have recognized that many new organizations need support in their initial inception this is why we are proposing the AFB New Organization Startup Kit.

AFB's funding process is optimized to be as smooth and quick as possible, with safeguards installed to ensure the campus benefits from all expenditures. By supporting extra and co-curricular events we spur the growth of all communities within the college. In addition we approve conference attendance so that our students can receive leadership development from their regional and state chapters. Each RSO on campus can request a maximum of $2,500 per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer). $1,000 of this maximum can be used on attending conferences, and is taken out of the maximum allocation (ex. If $1,000 is used for conferences, then the RSO still has $1,500 to utilize for Programming). It is important to note that RSO's do not automatically receive $2,500, but it is the maximum amount they can request and the maximum amount we can allocate to them. When requesting funds, the said program must take place during that semester. There is a $400 cap for advertising (Daily Cougar ads, flyers, banners, etc.) again, included within the maximum $2500 that may be approved.

Maximizing the amount of funds given to RSOs requires the top officers to navigate through the AFB website, which contains all of our contact information, a concise but detailed account of the funding process, downloadable copies of the necessary forms, along with scheduled hearings and workshops. To inform people of our services and to direct them to our website, AFB utilizes several sources of advertisement; the Daily Cougar, the Center for Student Involvement listserv, the Get Involved portal, Organization Registration Orientations , attending Frontier Fiesta Connection meetings and Homecoming Informational Meetings as well as social media outlets to promote AFB and its purposes. Both AFB student chairs are ready to provide one-on-one assistance to student leaders in order to ease them through the reimbursement process without delays. Additional information about the funding process and our contact information can be obtained from our website at www.uh.edu/afb

AFB prioritizes and structures our workshops and hearings to meet the needs of organizations at the beginning of the semester. We schedule our hearings on Wednesdays for the first five weeks of the academic semester, then as the flow of requests slow down mid semester, hearings are held every other week. At these hearings are used to review and evaluate the allocation requests made by the RSOs. One of the top three officers of the RSO must attend to represent their organization and make a presentation to us. The AFB board in attendance consists of three SGA-Appointed committee members and both the Chair and Vice Chair. After the presentation the committee members vote whether to approve or deny, it is only when committee members are absent that AFB chairs can step in to vote. This is to uphold separation of powers between branches. During the hearings the AFB members consider cost, overall impact on the UH community, target audience, event preparation, the organization's past programming success, scope of the event, timing, ability to carry out the program, and mission of the organization. In order to be eligible for funding from AFB, a student organization's program must be open to all UH students, staff and faculty, and must benefit the UH community as a whole. The registered student organizations provide a program outline to detail the general event or conference information, such as who, what, when and where the event will be.

Summed up in one sentence, AFB uses its funds to make things happen on campus. More and more organizations are taking advantage of our available funds and directing events on campus which draw in our student population, encouraging interaction, the diffusion of knowledge and culture and most of all Cougar Pride.

With an increase in the amount of students living on campus, on campus programming is a necessity to keep students invested. AFB makes that happen.

Question # 2
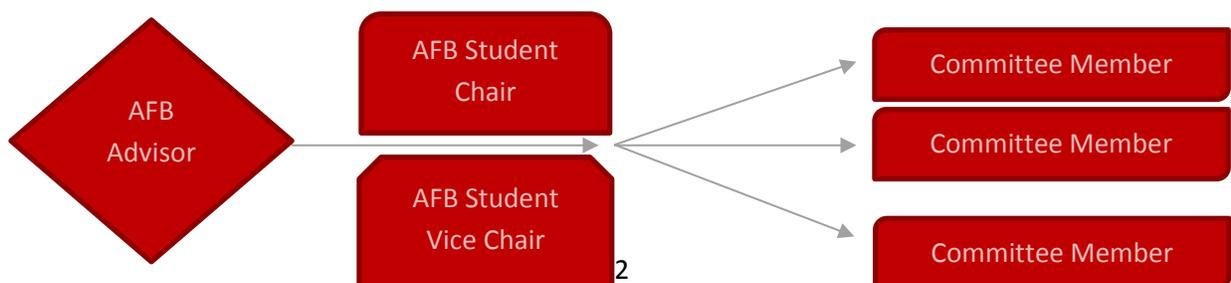
AFB Advisor – Donielle Miller

The AFB Advisor is responsible for;

a) Approving Notice of Awards and Expenditure Requests with a signature
b) Assisting with purchasing decisions and operations
c) Consulting on day-to-day operations
d) Mediating with RSO complaint meetings
e) Working with the Chair on budget plans and budget management
f) Providing oversight and advice at AFB hearings
g) Ensuring that AFB operates within bylaws and follows SFAC recommendations

AFB Chair – Student Stipend Position Sarim Qureshi

The Chair is responsible for:

a. Consult with RSO about AFB policies, procedures, and processes.
b. Be the presiding officer of the hearing committee meetings and coordinate the hearing committee dates.
c. Train the hearing committee members.
d. Maintain and update AFB committee training manual.
e. Maintain and update AFB Chair training manual.
f. Provide explanation of reimbursement procedures.
g. Compile paperwork to complete expenditure request forms to turn into Student Life Business Office.
h. Maintain financial records along with case file management for all allocation requests.
i. Collaborate with the CSI Financial Coordinator and student life business office to effectively reimburse the RSOs.
j. Assist RSOs with financial documents.
k. Stay up-to-date with most current finance policies and procedures.
l. Represent AFB and report to SFAC committee.
m. Maintain financial records and data for SFAC presentation and questionnaire.
n. Answer and respond to correspondence from RSOs
o. Provide customer service and problem resolution for RSOs with reimbursement process and or payment of on campus entities through AFB.
p. Work with financial entities from on-campus departments.
q. Effectively condense allocation and reimbursement information into one ledger, assuring that all money is spent according to the SFAC guidelines.

Vice Chair – **Student Stipend Position** - Cynthia Orobio

The Vice Chair is responsible for:

a) Answer and respond to correspondence from RSOs.

b) Assist in coordinating workshops for RSOs to learn and answer general questions about policies and procedures.
c) Coordinate and market AFB to all the RSOs through social and advertising media.
d) Update the AFB forms and content on the AFB website.
e) Attend and present at organizational fairs to market AFB to the RSO representatives.
f) Plan, execute, and manage the marketing plan for the current school year.
g) Organize an internal volunteer structure to help with operations.

Communications Chair – Position not filled

The Communications Chair is responsible for:

a.) Create new files for incoming applications
b.) Email organizations and board members on hearing confirmations
c.) Manage the volunteer roster and sending out news
d.) Update our social media pages
e.) Contact marketing resources
f.) Organize and archive operational receipts
g.) Compile survey results and workshop RSVPs
h.) Compile measurement data from post-event surveys

Committee Members – SFAC Appointed: Jordan Coleman, Stephen Cunningham, Zainab Siddiqui

a) Attend AFB hearings and hear funding request presentations from RSOs
b) Address questions to RSOs at the hearing to understand the program/conference's benefit
c) Deliberate after discussion with the Chair, Vice Chair and Advisor
d) Lead and train AFB Volunteer Operations

Question # 3

Goal 1: Increased efficiency in AFB Processes

Objective 1: Process mapping the complete AFB process for workflow (DSA 4.2 Establish and implement a series of reporting procedures for the purpose of demonstrating measurable outcomes and data to demonstrate a collective contribution to student success.

Status: Completed/Ongoing

Actions taken to complete Objective 1:

- The previous Chair, Taylor Vigil had been working on a process map for the 2014 year, with my help we were able to put the finishing touches and complete the process map.

- Significance: The process map can be used to assist AFB in strategizing. However, the process map for our organization even at its most condensed form could barely fit on three pages. It is included with this report.

Objective 2: Work closely with university departments to cut down on time taken to reimburse organizations and to smoothen the reimbursement process. (DSA 5.4 Expand the opportunities for staff involvement in division-wide initiatives, programs and services.)

Status: In Progress/Ongoing

Actions taken to complete Objective 2:

- The AFB Chairs have been working with our advisors to arrange meetings with business office staff, to coordinate the processes of AFB with the rules and regulations of the business office.
- **Significance:** This cooperation is vital to the speed and efficiency of AFB, as the business office completes the last steps of the AFB process and deposits money into the organizations accounts. There are still many meetings to go before we make progress in the congruence of AFB and university policies.

Objective 3: Move application process online. (DSA 4.2 Determine how/when to optimize human interaction between Division staff, students and University partners while employing technology to enable the time retrieval and use of accurate information to address routine inquiries.)

Status: Completed/ Currently Operating

Actions taken to complete Objective 3:

- In my Vice-Chair term, I worked on the online applications for both the program and conference requests, which have since been in full use; hard copies of the application have been discontinued – as of now we only use the online submission system. Our current Vice Chair Cynthia is constantly updating the application with fields that improve our understanding of the events.
- **Significance:** The online application system has been a great use of our Get Involved portal, as it provides us with an accurate submission system to the minute, which prevents any miscommunication from organizations or loss of applications as they can be accessed at any time. In the future we hope to be able to extrapolate data from these forms to automatically create necessary documents for the AFB process.

Objective 4: Survey student organizations on how to make the AFB process more accessible upon completion of reimbursement (DSA 4.3 Establish and implement a series of reporting procedures for the purpose of demonstrating measurable outcomes and data to demonstrate a collective contribution to student success.)

Status: Completed / Ready for Use

Actions taken to complete Objective 4:

- To have consistent survey results a post-process survey was created this semester (Fall 2014) and will be distributed upon completion to RSOs for this year.
- **Significance:** This survey will give AFB direct access to feedback about the scope and scale of the events it is funding, as well as the speed, communication, and efficiency of the AFB process, and how easy RSOs find the process.

Goal 2: Improve Marketing

Objective 1: Host more workshops on how to use our funding with more example programs that were funded in the previous years.

Status: Scheduled/In Progress

Actions taken to complete Objective 1:

- AFB held a Spring Funding Seminar last semester with over 20 organizations in attendance. This seminar not only covered the Activities Funding Board process but presented materials in collaboration with CEO and SPB that gave the organizations a comprehensive overview of types of events, proper planning, university procedures, a long term marketing plan, and an operational guide for throwing quality events on campus.
- AFB plans to have three workshops/seminars this semester, one comprehensive seminar similar to the one held last spring, and two normal workshops on the AFB process, strategically planned in parts of the year which have a slower number of applications submitted.
- **Significance:** Workshops are a key tool to improve the communication to organizations and have an extreme impact on the cases of any organization that attends; having knowledgeable organizations not only successfully navigate the AFB process but are able to spread the word to organizations they collaborate or are close with.

Objective 2: Co-host events with newer student organizations with AFB advertisement who do not have initial funds to allow them to get reimbursement.

Status: Proposing

Actions taken to complete objective 2:

- AFB staff has not been trained to expend student organizations directly or been trained on the process of co-hosting an event in terms of the application, deliberation, and acceptance of such co-hosted events.
- In addition, student organizations haven't showed interest in programming for the student body enough for AFB to co-host an event together.
- **Significance:** AFB is proposing changes to its Bylaws to be considered by SFAC to allow the organization to sponsor registered student organization events. These changes would allow AFB to pay up front costs pertaining to food (Catering on Cullen), reservations (Conference and Reservation Services) as well as marketing (Creation Station).

Objective 3: Get more data on the effectiveness of current marketing strategies. (DSA 5.1 Collaborate with the Division of University Advancement and UH Marketing & communication to develop and implement a division-wide integrated branding and marketing plan.)

Status: Completed/Improvement in Progress

Actions taken to complete objective 3:

- AFB's post-process survey has questions that detail how organizations found out about our services.
- AFB's marketing plan has been planned by both chairs and executed by the Vice-Chair in previous years, one of our goals this year will be to progress our marketing procedures by working with the DUA and UH Marketing.
- **Significance:** Marketing measures are extremely important to understand the impact of AFB's advertising and outreach. It is vital AFB is marketed properly to receive the amount of applications that expend the entire AFB allocation.

Objective 4: Disperse promotional items at the beginning of the fiscal year through on campus programs to entice more student organizations to apply for funding (DSA 5.3 Develop a comprehensive and integrated communications plan to increase awareness and understanding among the Division, the campus community and the surrounding environments about who we are, what we do, and who we serve.)

Status: Completed/Improvement in Progress

Actions taken to complete objective 4:

- AFB attends all University sponsored events such as CatsBack and SOLC, talks to all student organizations there, passes out promotional items (padfolios and pens most recently) and gives the organizations informational pamphlets and business cards.
- AFBs effort at University events has given it countless applications and successful funding to student organization.
- **Significance:** University events give AFB the opportunity to meet student leaders where they are and provide information about the AFB process. These events allow us to reach student organizations who may have never heard about us or visited the CSI office.

Goal 3: Increased AFB Support

Objective 1: Increase organization in AFB to allow more student participation in RSO programming (DSA 5.1 Collaborate with the Division of University Advancement and UH Marketing & communication to develop and implement a division-wide integrated branding and marketing plan.)

Status: In Progress

Actions taken to complete objective 1:

- AFB started marketing a volunteer group this previous year but received low interest from the student body. This volunteer group would be used to attend events, provide feedback about the success of the funding, and serve as a potential choice for the AFB committee member pool.
- We have created event evaluation forms for our volunteers, but still need to organize volunteer meetings and a roster. We plan to have the volunteer group ready sometime this year.
- **Significance:** Volunteer groups for fee-funded organization serve as great support for some of the operations that are difficult to do with limited staff and time. They also provide a great line of experienced individuals for future leadership roles.

Objective 2: Assist in RSO programming to bring attention to all future RSO programming. (DSA 5.3 Develop a comprehensive and integrated communications plan to increase awareness and understanding among the Division, the campus community and the surrounding environments about who we are, what we do, and who we serve.)

Status: In Progress

Actions taken to complete objective 2:

- AFB is unable to have a physical support role with organizational programming without a volunteer structure, as far as bringing attention to future programming, our logo and tagline appears on all marketing materials for programs that AFB funds.
- **Significance:** AFB helping organizations and setting up an event requires manpower, and the benefit to campus vibrancy with AFB's objectives is minimal. We would like to remove this objective or word it better for next year.

Objective 3: Assist in RSO advertising strategies. (DSA 5.1 Collaborate with the Division of University Advancement and UH Marketing & communication to develop and implement a division-wide integrated branding and marketing plan.)

Status: Completed/In Progress

Actions taken to complete objective 3:

- With the Spring Funding Seminar we were able to deliver in depth marketing information that other fee funded groups use for reference to registered student organizations. We plan to continue this seminar every year.
- **Significance:** With proper marketing AFB funded events have the chance to bring a greater return on investment with the turnout and total impact of the event on the student body.

Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs, the satisfaction level of those served, and/or any other assessment measures evaluated. Please provide the method for collecting this data.

Here at Activities Funding Board, our main priority is to distribute our entire allocation to quality programming at the University of Houston, and all our other objectives support the scope and management of our main priority. We can measure our success with the amount of programs approved by our board and the money that was given to them; we have established post-process surveys and are beginning to organize AFB volunteers that can give us a better idea of the student body impact by attending the events and reporting back to AFB.

The data we have on hand encompasses the approval and expenditure amounts for the totality of AFB funded events, we have compiled some relevant statistics about FY 13 and FY 14 below to give an idea of the growth of our organization.

FY 13:

Number of Approved Programs: 49
Number of Approved Conferences: 45

Total Approved Allocation Requests: 94

Approved Monies for Programming: $67,962
Approved Monies for Conferences: $42,889

Total Approved Monies: $110,851 (Avg. Program Approved: $1,386 – Conf. Approved $953)

Expended Monies for Programming: $53,066
Expended Monies for Conferences: $39,634

Total Expended Monies: $92,700(Avg. Program Expense: $1089.99 – Conf Expense: $880)

Programming Usage Ratio: 78%
Conference Usage Ratio: 92%
Average Usage: 84%

FY 14:

Number of Approved Programs: 56
Number of Approved Conferences: 39

Total Approved Allocation Requests: 95

Approved Monies for Programming: $92,366
Approved Monies for Conferences: $36,190

Total Approved Monies: $128,566 (Avg. Program Approved: $1649 – Conf. Approved $928)

Expended Monies for Programming: $64,847
Expended Monies for Conferences: $25,786

Total Expended Monies: $90,633(Avg. Program Expense: $1157 – Conf. Expense: $661)

Programming Usage Ratio: 78%
Conference Usage Ratio: 71%
Average Usage: 70%

Performance Statements

As reported in our data, in FY 14 AFB has:

- Funded 7 more programs than FY 13, but funded 6 less conferences.

However, AFB has been working with organizations to plan and encourage larger events which take advantage of the other categories that AFB can approve; the most used categories would be food and advertising, this year we encouraged organizations to request funding for facility and equipment rental, performance fees, and supplies.

One major discrepancy between the amount of approved funds and the actual amount expended to student organization remains, which is unused approved funding:

Unused approved funding is a standard funding gap that has existed every year, for the following reasons:

- Organizations are approved for funds in slight excess, to provide cushion in case there are unexpected increases in the price of programming operations.
- AFB continues to have issues with student organizations turning in valid receipts and spending the entire allotted award. AFB has submitted bylaw changes and will revamp the information given to organizations to help them successfully plan their programs and utilize all of their allotment.

AFB has not been impacted by any budget changes in the last two years. The main cause of the fund equity for fiscal year 14 is unused (but approved funding) Unused approved funding is normal and has existed every year, FY 14 unused approved funding
is broken down below.

FY 14 Unused Funding (The difference of Approved & Expended Monies)   **$35,855**

-   Student Organization failed to host event / no submission of any receipts**:**   *$19,400* +
-   Funding Cushion + Missing Receipts + Program Limitations: *~ $16,455*

    o   Funding Cushion: Funding approval given in excess of adequate to address unexpected costs in various programming categories.

    o   Missing Receipts: Receipts for approved categories that were not turned in.

    o   Program Limitations: Program was approved for a larger amount in additional categories but use was not attempted due to the organizations lack of time, connections or monetary resources.

This particular performance data gives AFB some focus points:
-   AFB should strive to retain organizations in the funding process, minimize failed events with knowledge support such as contacts to University resources, and proper organizational practices as well as a successful programming guide.
-   Expand on or reengineer the consultation process with organizations to better assess their programming needs and resources on hand – this ensures the organization requests the correct amount of money to continuously improve their events while having the organizational planning to carry out the event.

Additionally, our fund equity comes in from the lack of organization applications we receive, which can be attributed to the following reasons:

-   Simply not being advertised to – not knowing about AFB and its services.
-   Organizations being discouraged to apply for the following reasons:
    o   Event is against or discouraged with AFB regulation

- ▪ Wanting to host fundraiser, recruitment events, & philanthropy
- ▪ Would like to charge to attend their events
- ▪ Would like reimbursement on gifts and awards
- ▪ Would like to throw programs off campus
  - o Organization limitations
    - ▪ Unable to fund their events up front
    - ▪ Intimidated by the amount of paperwork and length of process
    - ▪ Do not have a bank account
    - ▪ Difficult to host event ideas under University regulations
    - ▪ Doesn't find importance in advertising to the campus
  - o Organization current support
    - ▪ Organization has fiscal success, doesn't need AFB funds.
    - ▪ Organization has school support, uses free college facilities, equipment to host event, etc; they request AFB for food and items against our bylaws

Internally, our fund equity is broken down:

- Around $8500 of the $10,000 budget remains from FY 14.
  - o Not enough promotional items were bought
  - o Not enough marketing was done

Question # 6

Objective 1: Increased Efficiency in AFB Processes

- Create streamlined workflows as process standard for all integral AFB tasks; (DSA 2.2: Execute an effective operating plan of existing fiscal, human, technological and facility resources in support of student success.)
- Continue working with University departments & organizations to cut down on reimbursement time and achieve smoother reimbursement processes; (DSA 5.4 Expand the opportunities for staff involvement in division-wide initiatives, programs, and services.)
- Establish a communications timeline to have a proactive approach for pertinent information for each organization. (DSA 4.2 Determine how/when to optimize human interaction between Division staff, students and University partners while employing technology to enable the timely retrieval and use of accurate information to address routine inquiries.)
- Create a comprehensive event rubric to reduce subjectivity in AFB decisions (DSA 2.1 Execute an effective operating plan of existing fiscal, human, technological and facility resources in support of human success.)

- Implement AFB post-process and event evaluation measures through volunteers and RSO feedback. (DSA 4.3 Establish and implement a series of reporting procedures for the purpose of demonstrating measurable outcomes and data to demonstrate a collective contribution to student success.)

Objective 2: Improve AFB Marketing

- Utilize the board and volunteer structure to ensure AFB representation and marketing at every large University sanctioned event. (DSA 5.3 Develop a comprehensive and integrated communications plan to increase awareness and understanding among the Division, the campus community and the surrounding environments about who we are, what we do, and who we serve.)
- Research and produce a promotional timeline that best sources and disburses AFB promotional items to achieve the greatest contact with students. (DSA 5.3 Develop a comprehensive and integrated communications plan to increase awareness and understanding among the Division, the campus community and the surrounding environments about who we are, what we do, and who we serve.)
- Increase the number of AFB funding workshops and event planning seminars. (DSA 1.4 Create a greater variety of student involvement activities that focus on the development of a vibrant campus life, including expanded evening and weekend programs.)
- Survey the effectiveness of marketing measures with participating RSOs. (DSA 4.3 Establish and implement a series of reporting procedures for the purpose of demonstrating measurable outcomes and data to demonstrate a collective contribution to student success.)

Objective 3: Increased AFB Support

- Create the sponsorship process, where AFB pays for event invoices before the event, as an alternative to the reimbursement process. (DSA 1.4 Create a greater variety of student involvement activities that focus on the development of a vibrant campus life, including expanded evening and weekend programs.)
- Provide RSOs with complimentary event planning and marketing guides to increase planned campus vibrancy. (DSA 1.4 Create a greater variety of student involvement activities that focus on the development of a vibrant campus life, including expanded evening and weekend programs.)
- Expand on the consultative funding process to encourage collaboration with multiple student groups and the hosting of larger events. (DSA 1.4 Create a greater variety of student involvement activities that focus on the development of a vibrant campus life, including expanded evening and weekend programs.)

Question # 7

Please describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

- The Activities Funding Board is a committee of the Student Fee Advisory Committee. One percent of all SFAC funds are dedicated to the Activities Funding Board each fiscal year. AFB does not have any other possible funding sources available.

Question # 8

Please describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

- Two additional funding sources are currently available to student organizations: Student Program Board (SPB) and Council of Ethnic Organizations (CEO). SPB limits its funding to programs that are sponsored by one of its committees or co-sponsored with another organization. CEO allocates funds for co-sponsorship of programs that are culturally diverse.