The Ohio State University – Council on Student Affairs

2022-2025 Student Activity Fee Review

Approved May 2022 by the Student Activity Fee Committee and the Council on Student Affairs

# Executive Summary

The Chair of the Council on Student Affairs (CSA), Caroline Karwisch, established the Student Activity Fee Committee (SAFC) during the Fall Semester of 2022 to distribute the Student Activity Fee (SAF) amongst its beneficiaries. Care was taken to gather a broad and diverse group of students, faculty, and staff members within the committee makeup restrictions of CSA’s operations procedures. The SAFC members were:

Peter Carrera (Chair, CGS)

Dr. Matt Couch (Student Life)

Dr. Nate Craig (Faculty)

Brittany Crall (Student Activities – SAF Business Manager)

Kelsey Lowman (USG)

Emily Montenegro (General Student Body) – 1x alternate Casey Petrae

Brooke Olson (Student Activities)

Amanya Paige (USG)

Josh Parker (USG)

Elizabeth Rowles (Fiscal Officer)

Dr. Janna Stephens (Faculty)

Will Vu (IPC)

Yuan Zou (General Student Body) – 1x alternate Jingjing Zhou, 8x alternate Jacob Chang

The SAFC met 10 times for a total of 11 hours throughout the Fall and Spring semesters to review the allocation of the SAF.

CSA’s SAF review was originally meant to be completed during the 2020-2021 academic year, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was pushed to this year. Over the past 2 years, most beneficiaries were unable to spend their allocated budgets due to university guidelines that restricted spending and thus carried forward a significant amount of funds which CSA voted to not pull back. Going into the 2022-2023 year an estimated ~$2.2 million is projected to be carried forward across all beneficiaries entering the 2022-2023 school year. This is equivalent to ~$750,000 annually across beneficiaries over the three-year, 2022-2025, review period. The estimated revenue collected by the SAF for 2022-2023 is ~$4.8 million (the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 years are expected to be similar). This projects to around an average of ~$5.5 million annually when carryforward is split across all three years.

To best spend these additional funds, the SAFC collaborated closely with each beneficiary to ensure that their budgets allowed a full return to pre-COVID operations and to identify ***sustainable*** expansions of services and events for students. In addition to providing summaries of their operations/budgets for the past three years, each beneficiary was asked to specifically detail how they would utilize additional funding if they received any. The SAFC reviewed these Targeted Beneficiary Funding requests and decided which ones to fund. These decisions are summarized in Section V and in the paired SAF Review Workbook. The SAFC then considered broad ways to distribute funding across all beneficiaries. These included: bringing all SAF-paid student positions to a living wage, offsetting revenue generated by beneficiaries that were charged to students and student organizations, and full-time staffing positions to benefit SAF beneficiaries. The committee focused on the first and third of these broad goals. These broad decisions and the targeted beneficiary funding are detailed in Section V.

**Highlights of Beneficiary Specific Funding**:

* Bringing all ~70 SAF-paid student positions to a living wage, these positions represent around 27,595 hours annually
	+ Student Assistant 1 (S01) positions were brought to a wage of $14.17 (maximum wage allowed for S01 students to receive financial aid work-study). All Student Assistant 2 (SO 2) positions were increased above the S01 wage to maintain pre-change pay differentials
* The following existing positions were raised to $14.17:
	+ - D-Tix Info Center Assistants
		- Resource Room Assistants
		- Student Video Employees
		- Buck-I-SERV Student Assistant
* The following existing positions were raised to $15.17 or higher:
	+ - D-Tix Info Center Lead
		- Resource Room Managers/Project Managers
		- Student Graphic Employees
		- Buck-I-Serv Student Manager
* Establishing 2 new OUAB grad/prof events student positions ($14.17/hr)
* Establishing 1 new full-time employee to support all 3 student governments
* Establishing 1 new full-time Resource Room student organizations coordinator position
* Establishing 5 (growth to 10 in 3 years) new Student Organization Success Coaches to support student organizations ($15.17/hr)
* Significant investments in USG and IPC to increase resources and programs that benefit OSU’s student populations:
	+ **USG**: Expansion of access to news sources, subsidization for GRE, LSAT, and MCAT test prep services, a mental health emergency fund, and more
	+ **IPC**: An additional LGBTQ+ centered event, expansion of student organization funding requests, increased funding for Mental Health Series Events, and more
* Investment in Pay It Forward to improve service initiatives through the inclusion of internal and external speakers

# Background

The Student Activity Fee was established in 2003. The implementation of the fee was supported by the three student governments with oversight of the fee delegated to the Council on Student Affairs. At that time, the student governments agreed on specific provisions for the implementation of the fee. However, that agreement was only established for the first five years of the fee with the expectation that CSA would undertake a review of the fee to make any necessary adjustments. Currently, the SAF review is conducted by the CSA every three years. The [2008 SAF review](https://studentlife.osu.edu/documents/csa_shared_2008_saf_final_report_01-11-16.pdf) has a few more details on the history of the SAF and its review.

# Special Note Regarding Carryforward, Pullback, and Variable Percentage Allocations

Given the large amount of carryforward going into the next three-year period, our distribution was not based on assigning percentages to beneficiaries as has been done in the past. Rather we started by determining the minimum dollar amount each beneficiary required to *fully return to their pre-COVID levels of services/offerings/programs*. This was set by taking the average of each beneficiary’s spending in 2018 and 2019 and ensuring it would be reached in 2022-2025 between each beneficiary’s baseline allocation and split carryforward (1/3 of their carryforward for each year in the period). After this baseline was met, the committee then provided additional funding through targeted beneficiary funding or broad funding goals.

*It is imperative that the following beneficiaries’ carryforwards are not pulled back over the 2022-2025 period:* ***Signature Events, OUAB, D-Tix, Buck-I-SERV, Pay It Forward, USG, CGS, IPC****. Their budgets necessitate them using their carryforward over these three years. The beneficiaries listed above can keep any funds over 10% of their budget without having to submit justification to CSA for this period.*

Lastly, many of the previous fixed annual allocations did not accurately represent the costs they were meant to cover. For example, Staffing’s allocation has been set at $545,000 for many years when the 9 positions covered through it cost more (on average $593,986 for 2022-2025) to fully fund. The following beneficiaries’ fixed allocation budgets have been adjusted to properly account for their expenses: Staffing, Resource Room, and Graphics/Video/Photo. Their new allocations fully cover their primary expenses. These beneficiaries should not build up carryforward in-between years and any carryforward that is generated should be pulled back by CSA and distributed via the SAF variable beneficiary percentages unless they have specific requests to keep funds for non-fixed cost expenses (e.g., operational costs, paying off encumbered expenses, renovations, etc.). During any year where SAF-covered Staffing positions are unfilled then Student Life should charge the Staffing line the cost being incurred to fill-in/cover unfilled positions’ responsibilities, up to the cost of having the position filled full-time. During every subsequent SAF review the budgets for Staffing, Resource Room, and Graphics/Video/Photo should be updated to reflect changes in the cost of the positions/operations they cover (e.g., merit increases, salary changes, etc.).

# Future 2022-2025 CSA Decisions and the 2025-2028 SAF Review

Due to the changes in Staffing, Resource Room, and Graphics/Videos/Photo, CSA should be able to pull back $445,964 in carryforward in 2022-2023. Graphics/Video/Photo is requesting to keep $75,000 of their expected $157,810 carryforward to complete a renovation of their student office space and the purchase of new graphics and video stations. The Resource Room is requesting to keep $15,000 of their expected $157,810 carryforward in 2022-2023 to partially maintain their Member Development Grant (started during COVID) as they phase it out.



The most important priority for this pulled back $445,964 is to ensure that the Student Organizations line item/beneficiary has sufficient funding for the next three years. We are making significant investments (Resource Room Coaches, Resource Room Coordinator) in improving the availability and accessibility of programming and operating funds and expect to see a significant increase in fundable requests by OSU’s 1400+ student organizations. The $445,964 would allow $148,654 worth of programming and operating fund requests to be approved annually for three years. Our 2022-2025 distributions allow Student Organizations an annual budget of $500,825. To put this in perspective: view below the budgets and utilization of the Student Organizations line for the past several years. Pre COVID-19, OSU’s organizations spent over $500,000 regularly. We expect to return to these numbers. Preliminary analysis of operating and programming requests from 2019-2021 shows between 414-893 programming requests being submitted with an average request of $470 per request (they can request up to either $2000 or $3000 annually). Operating funds requests are between 323-508 with an average request of $118.80. If 70% of student organizations put in programming requests for $800 each there would be $784,000 worth of programming requests. Additional analysis can be found in the Student Organizations worksheet in the paired SAF Review Workbook.

This year’s SAF review did not result in an increase in the activity fee amount itself due to the large buildup of carryforward. From 2022-2025 that carryforward will be spent by beneficiaries to benefit students. The next SAF review will thus have less money to distribute across all beneficiaries. The major changes (living wage, additional staffing positions, targeted funding) this review has accomplished are meant to be sustainable ones. To maintain them it is possible that the activity fee might have to be increased during the next review and that certain beneficiaries’ average annual budgets will decrease (in particular Signature Events will likely receive a similar allocation amount but have a smaller annual budget). Additionally, the Resource Room’s Coaches budget will need to be enlarged to maintain 10 coaches each year (2022-2025 budget allows for a growth of 5 to 10 coaches (average 7.5) over three years).

# SAF Funded Beneficiaries

Below are summaries of each SAF beneficiary. The summary includes the annual allocation with notes of targeted beneficiary funding the committee approved. In the charts, Y means the funding was approved; N means the funding was not approved. Below, please find our beneficiary variable percentages, this is referred to as the published SAF formula in the SAF guidelines. Note these percentages do not include fixed allocations.



# Buck-I-SERV:

Buck-I-SERV’s baseline allocation is $134,570 with an additional $5,409 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation of $139,979. Their first-year carryforward will be $418,437, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $279,458. BUCK-I-Serv’s existing student assistants and student managers were brought to a living wage.



# Signature Events:

Signature Events’ baseline allocation is $256,712. Their first-year carryforward will be $214,462, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $328,199. Section VI reviews and explains Signature Events in greater detail.

# Staffing:

Staffing’s baseline allocation is $593,986 with an additional $130,000 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation and budget of $723,986. Two coordinator positions are being created to better support the three student governments and all student organizations. A hazing prevention & education position was considered but not funded as the funding for it could come from an external source, unlike the other two. During a year when Staffing positions are unfilled, Student Life should charge the Staffing line the cost being incurred to fill-in/cover unfilled positions’ responsibilities, up to the expense of having the position filled full-time. Carryforward built up in Staffing should generally be pulled back annually and distributed via the SAF variable beneficiary percentages.

The 11 (9 initial and 2 new) positions covered by SAF’s Staffing line are:

* Student Government Office Associate
* Buck-I-SERV Coordinator
* Resource Room Coordinator
* D-Tix Coordinator
* OUAB Program Coordinator (2)
* OUAB Coordinator
* OUAB Assistant Director
* Associate Director – Student Programming
* Student Government Coordinator (New position)
* Resource Room Student Organizations Coordinator (New position)



# Ohio Union Activities Board (OUAB):

OUAB’s baseline allocation is $1,728,992 with an additional $78,853 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation of $1,807,845. Their first-year carryforward will be $405,000, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $1,942,845. OUAB received targeted funding for two student positions paid at a living wage that support graduate/professional events and the remaining balance of available funds ($59,372) after all targeted beneficiary requests were determined. The remaining balance of funds was distributed to OUAB as they have significant flexibility to flex their spending with more funding.



# D-Tix:

D-Tix’s baseline allocation is $493,436 with an additional $35,045 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation of $528,481. Their first-year carryforward will be $30,000, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $538,481. D-Tix’s existing student information center assistants and leads were brought up to a living wage. Attempting to offset some of D-Tix’s revenue was considered but not funded as the discounts provided by D-Tix are already significant and the possibility of giving away tickets for free would cause complications with students’ financial aid.



# Student Organizations:

Student Organizations’ baseline allocation is $310,686. Their first-year carryforward will be $570,416, which split evenly over three years this allows for an average annual budget of $500,825. We expect a significant increase in the number of programming and operating funds requests and approvals, see the Student Organization’s worksheet in the paired SAF Review Workbook.

**Student Governments (USG, CGS, IPC):**

USG

USG’s baseline allocation is $185,442 with an additional $120,000 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation of $305,442. Their first-year carryforward will be $86,210, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $334,179. USG received targeted funds for an expansive array of significant initiatives/events summarized below.



# CGS

CGS’s baseline allocation is $72,753. Their first-year carryforward will be $16,000, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $78,086. CGS did not request additional funding.

# IPC

IPC’s baseline allocation is $40,728 with an additional $26,600 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation of $67,328. Their first-year carryforward will be $8,000, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $69,995. IPC received targeted funds for an array of significant initiatives/events summarized below.

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# Pay It Forward:

Pay It Forward’s baseline allocation is $48,774 with an additional $40,000 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation of $88,774. Their first-year carryforward will be $5,000, which split evenly over three years allows for an average annual budget of $90,440. Pay It Forward received targeted funds to supplement its service-based events with OSU and external speakers. They also received targeted funds to replace an inconsistent external source of funding.



# Resource Room:

Resource Room’s baseline allocation is $193,000 with an additional $116,224 of targeted beneficiary funding for a total annual allocation and budget of $309,224. Resource Room received targeted funds to initiate and grow a cadre of student leaders as Resource Room Coaches. The funding allows for the cadre to grow from 5 to 10 (annual average 7.5) students over the course of 2022-2025. Note the next SAF review will need to expand the Resource Room’s budget to maintain 10 coaches. The coaches and all existing Resource Room Assistants, Managers, and Project Managers were brought to a living wage. A .25% GTA was considered but not funded once the full-time Staffing Resource Room Coordinator was funded. Offsetting revenue the Resource Room generates from OSU students/staff was considered but not funded. Carryforward built up in the Resource Room should generally be pulled back annually and distributed via the SAF variable beneficiary percentages.

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# Graphics/Video/Photo:

Graphics/Video/Photo’s baseline allocation was $75,000 with an additional $18,958 of targeted beneficiary funding. For a total annual allocation and budget of $93,958. All existing Graphic/Video/Photo student employees (video and graphic) were brought to a living wage. Carryforward built up in the Graphics/Video/Photo should generally be pulled back annually and distributed via the SAF variable beneficiary percentages.



# Signature Events

Signature event applications were opened and distributed to student organizations on February 3rd. The applications were due February 25th. We received a total of 26 applications; 17 were repeat applications and 9 were first-time applications. All applications were individually reviewed by SAFC members, and then by the entire committee. The Student Life Associate Director of Campus Events joined meetings as a non-voting member when questions were being formed and Signature Event funding was being distributed to provide additional input. The entire SAFC came up with necessary questions that needed to be answered to fully consider each event. First-time applicants had virtual 15-minute meetings with at least 3 members of the SAFC. The first-time application owners presented their event, its significance, and answered any SAFC-generated questions. Repeat event owners answered all SAFC questions via email. After the meetings with first-time applicants were completed and all application questions answered, the SAFC revisited each event and decided how much funding it would receive.

The primary criteria of importance were the Signature Event Application requirements. The foremost being the ability to attract 1,000 OSU student attendees. The event’s previous years’ OSU student attendance records, amount of external funding raised (% of non-Signature event funding), history of hosting organization in running other Signature Events or large events, projected numbers of attendees, the organization’s requested change in funding (increase Y2Y), and the event’s general cost efficiency in reaching students (cost of event / divided by projected OSU student attendees).

The SAFC decided to fund 20 events (16 repeat, 4 new) annually in the amount of $328,199, a 28% increase since the previous review. 12 repeat events received more funding than they had during the previous review. The 4 that received the same amount received their entire funding request.



# Note regarding Signature Events that receive external funding from Student Activities

Certain Signature Events receive funding through a general expense line item in Student Activities. The above allocation of funding to these events is based on the expected projection that they receive the following funding from Student Activities: Student Involvement Fair ($20,800), Homecoming Parade & Celebration ($11,700), Commencement Week ($12,500), Welcome Week and Welcome Back Week ($11,500), Buckeye Nation Week ($3,500).

# Conclusion

# Our primary goal of the review was to return all beneficiaries to pre-COVID 19 levels of service/offerings. Our secondary goal was to carefully consider sustainable expansions of services/offerings that would most benefit OSU students. The SAFC took advantage of the built-up carryforward to implement both broad and targeted beneficiary funding across all beneficiaries. We prioritized a livable wage for student workers as we believe this is an important goal the university needs to reach for all students. This will significantly influence ~70 student positions. We also increased staffing support for the student governments and all student organizations. We did this to alleviate the administrative burden put on student government leaders and to support the development of all student organizations. This will allow for more space for creativity for these different student organizations to better utilize their funding to put on events and programming that positively influence OSU’s community. This is furthered by the Student Organization Success Coaches, who will be an invaluable resource to assist student organizations in developing their organization’s event-planning and fundraising initiatives. Programming and operating funds are currently being underutilized and serve as a great opportunity for these organizations to put on unique and meaningful events. Overall, the SAFC made strategic decisions that ensure the SAF is prioritizing the reality and needs of students given all the changes the last few years have brought.

**APPENDIX**

**FY 23 Summary**



FY 24 & 25 should have similar SAF Revenue numbers to FY 23. After paying the fixed allocations the SAF variable beneficiary percentages will be utilized, if carryforward is split 1/3rd across each year this will result in very similar budgets Y2Y.

**Beneficiary Contact Information**



**Paired SAF Review Workbook**

Please view the embedded 2022 SAF Review Workbook:

