Student Government Comparative Budget Report

The University of California, Berkeley
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Purpose

The *Student Government Comparative Budget Report* is designed gather information about the conduct of various student governments across the country in order to improve the space and budget allocation procedures of the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC). We do not speak on behalf of any of the institutions mentioned in this report, including UC Berkeley. The purpose of this report is simply to gather and compile information into a single document and to analyze what we understand to be the functioning of these different student governments.

Currently, the ASUC completes space and budget allocations through the *Annual Space and Budgeting Allocation* (ABSA) application that is released and reviewed in the Spring semester of the academic year annually by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the ASUC with the help of the Spaces Department. The ABSA released in the spring semester is for organizations to apply for sponsorship, funding, and spaces for the following academic year. To improve the efficiency of funding allocations, the Finance Analytics Department conducted this comparative report to identify how other student governments run their allocation operations and where the ASUC can revise its current procedures to improve the application experience for both the officials and registered student organizations.

To begin the comparative analysis, the Finance Analytics Department had to select several universities and their student governments to compare. The focus is to generate a general metric of how the student government at UC Berkeley compares to other schools regarding the ways in which student organizations are funded. We selected institutions with whom to compare our process by choosing public schools of various sizes. While this metric was not all-encompassing, we believe that it is a sufficient place to begin for this report.

The **University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)** and the **University of Michigan (UMICH)** were selected because of their similar size to UC Berkeley and due to the fact that they are also public institutions. In contrast, the **University of Virginia (UVA)** was selected to establish a comprehensive comparison against a smaller public university, and **Texas A&M University (TAMU)** was similarly chosen to establish a comparison against a larger public university. It should be noted that the size and demographics of a university were not necessarily indicative

of a direct correlation to how the student government was staffed and run. In the future, more detailed metrics and analyses into other universities will help establish a more comprehensive understanding of the university and how student organization funding varies between student governments.

Summary of Findings

School	Fund Allocations Procedure	Number of Student Organizations (not necessarily sponsored or registered)	Sponsorship Requirement to Receive Funding	Fund Allocation Timeline	Space Allocations Procedure
UC Berkeley	Based on organization type	Over 1,200	Requires student government sponsorship	Annually	Annual Budget and Spaces Allocation Application
UCLA	Based on events	N/A	Does not require student government sponsorship	Continuously and/or quarterly	Priority system, where faculty get space first
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Based on organization needs	N/A	Does not require student government sponsorship	Weekly	Google Form open to those requesting space
University of Virginia	Based on organization type and activities	Over 700	Does not require student government sponsorship	Semesterly or in three intervals of rolling rounds	Must meet certain guidelines and fill out space request form
Texas A&M University	Based on event type	1,359	Does not require student government sponsorship	Continuously	Need to fill out request for space application and include specification of space desired in this form.

I. Funding Infrastructure

University of California, Berkeley

Student organizations file applications for funding through ABSA for an academic year during the Spring semester of the previous academic year. Additionally, student organizations may apply for additional funding throughout the year on a week-to-week basis. Funds are distributed based on the type of organizations and the length of sponsorship with the ASUC.

ASUC *Registered Student Organizations* are split into three categories: Publications, Student Activity Groups, and Student Initiated Service Groups. Student groups that fall under Publication are student groups that create media for the public, such as through a newspaper, newsletter, journal, or magazine. Student Initiated Service Groups engage in social impact work through activities such as volunteering, creating solutions to problems, and organizing donations. Most student groups on campus fall under Student Activity Groups, which encompasses all student groups that have their own purpose on campus with exception to publications and service.

University of California, Los Angeles

When registered student organizations are planning different events, they can apply for the SUE fund. The SUE fund is distributed as a package which includes a $500 monetary fund, space, equipment, and other logistics. Specific requirements might include additional charges.

While UCLA has many categories for organizations, funding is allocated based on event type as opposed to organization classification. However, there are categories called Programming Funds for which some maximum funding limits apply (though not every maximum funding is found):

1. ASUCLA BOD
2. USA Programming Fund
3. Contingency
4. ASUCLA Student Union Event Fund
5. Student Wellness Programming Fund *$500*
6. AAC Mini-Grant *max $1,000*
7. Academic Success Referendum Fund *max $2,000*
8. Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Activity Fund

9. Community Service Mini Fund *max $3,500 per group*
10. Community Activities Committee General *max $10,000*
11. CAC Mini Fund *max $1,800*
12. Campus Programming Committee Regular Fund *$1000-$8500*
13. CPC Mini-fund *$1,000*
14. EVP Grant *max $500*
15. Cultural Affair Mini-fund *max $1000*
16. Student Initiated Access Committee Mini-fund *max $500*
17. The Green Initiative Fund *No Max, Mini-fund $500 max*
18. Money for Supplies
19. Contingency
20. Capital Contingency *max $1500*
21. Student Risk Management Fund

University of Michigan

Student organizations can apply for funding multiple times during the school year based on their needs and activities. There is not a segmentation for funding by organization or event.

University of Virginia

Student Organizations apply for funding by submitting their planned events and estimated budget; the application will be reviewed by the Board of Audit and Management. When the decisions are released and the student organizations are notified, student organizations can either appeal for another decision or access the fund.

Funding is based on reimbursement requests excluding:

1. Honoraria, gifts for speakers, or similar expense
2. Religious activity
3. Travel to competitions beyond reasonable distance and transporting more members than necessary
4. Awards for members
5. Parking-related expenses
6. Paid wages or salaries
7. Insurance and security fees
8. Social entertainment or related expenses
9. Technical equipment
10. Bank charges

11. T-shirts, uniforms, and clothing that are personalized or kept by individuals
12. Items that can be reserved through the Student Activities Center
13. Postage-related expenses
14. Activities which would jeopardize the University's tax-exempt status
15. Food and food-related expenditures
16. Philanthropic contributions and activities
17. Political Activity

Texas A&M University

Student organizations can apply for different types of funding, including Risk Initiative Funding, or set up online stores on a marketplace website and sell merchandise or collect registration fees in order to raise fund. They can also apply to Student Organization Funding for events.

Concluding Remarks

The schools that we compared against UC Berkeley did not have a one-time budgeting and allocation system; rather, they seemed to disperse funds on an event-by-event basis. Additionally, specific grants may be useful when adopting an event-based funding system since each event qualifies for certain grants, and by asking the registered student organizations to pre-screen what they qualify for, the actual committees will have less work deciding who is eligible for funding.

II. Student Organization Information

University of California, Berkeley

There are over 1,200 student organizations registered on campus and 511 student organizations receiving sponsorship and/or funding through the ABSA system.

Student organizations are required to be sponsored by the ASUC in order to apply for and receive ASUC funding. Being a sponsored organization by its school's student government is different from being a recognized student organization by the school itself. A sponsored student organization needs to apply to their school's student body government in order to be officially financed and/or supported by them. An

organization recognized by the university is simply an group of students that are officially registered with the school to be able to operate organizational activities.

University of California, Los Angeles

The ASUCLA, UCLA's student government, funds student organizations when they host events; they funded 10,775 student-organization events last year.

Organizations do not need to be sponsored by the Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) in order to apply and receive funding. They simply have to be a registered student organization with the Student Organizations, Leadership & Engagement Office (SOLE). After registering with SOLE, organizations can apply to all of the various funds offered by the USAC and other campus entities.

University of Michigan

The specific number of student organizations is not disclosed. Student organizations do not require sponsorship in order to receive funding by the Central Student Government (CSG). One policy that UMich has is that in order for an organization to claim an excess of $1,000 in a given semester, two authorized signers are required to attend the CSG's Bystander Intervention Training session. The Bystander Intervention Training session is required only once per academic year.

University of Virginia

There are over 700 registered student organizations on campus. UVA Student Council does not require Student Council sponsorship to disburse funds to student groups, but only a Contracted Independent Organization (CIO) may apply for and receive funding from the UVA Student Council. A Contracted Independent Organization (CIO) is an student organization officially recognized by the University.

Texas A&M University

There are 1,359 sponsored student organizations on campus. Any recognized student organization will have an SOFC account or a University fiscal account that allows it to apply for and receive funding. A recognized student organization is one that is registered with the school and allowed to operate organizational activities with other students. The SOFC accounts deal with transactions for organization activities while fiscal accounts are used for funding for activities under the name of Texas A&M University.

Concluding Remarks

Based on the situations of each school, governments take into account the number of events or the number of registered organizations. UC Berkeley is the only school out of the ones mentioned in this report that requires a student organization registered with the school to be sponsored by the school's associated student body in order to receive its funding. Additionally, some universities also offer other types of platforms for student organizations to collect or raise funds.

III. Funding Allocation Timeline

University of California, Berkeley

Student organizations apply for annual funding in the Spring semester of the previous academic year. The allocations are based on their ABSA application, in which they describe their anticipated events and expenditures for the following school year. For instance, student organizations apply for funding in Spring 2019 and receive their allocation amounts within the same semester. They are allocated these amounts for usage during the following 2019-2020 school year. Additionally, organizations can apply for funding on a weekly basis to supplement their ABSA funds or to serve as their primary source of funding if they did not receive any funds from ABSA.

University of California, Los Angeles

The Student Government Accounting (SGA) office offers different funding bodies for different purposes and at different intervals of time. For instance, some funding sources have specific purposes such as the Student Wellness Programming Fund, which can be applied continuously to a certain time frame before the date of the planned event. Other funding sources such as the Student Organization Operational Fund have a deadline which students must meet in order to apply for funding for that quarter.

University of Michigan

Organizations apply for and receive funding in waves on a weekly basis. These waves exclude extended academic holidays and Spring Recess. Doing so allows for organizations to receive incremental funding for events and activities throughout the semester when needed. For large-scale events, organizations can break up the cost of that event across multiple waves or request to fund its entirety in a single wave. There

is an upper bound of $10,000 that can be claimed by an organization across all waves in a given semester.

University of Virginia

The University of Virginia Student Council disburses funding in Semi-Annual Rounds and in Rolling Rounds. Organizations that apply for funding in a Semi-Annual Round apply once for the semester and forgo their ability to apply for funding in Rolling Rounds. On the other hand, there are three intervals of Rolling Rounds in which student organizations can request funding. Organizations can participate in as many of the three intervals of Rolling Rounds as they choose.

Texas A&M University

Organizations can submit funding requests to the Student Organization Funding Assistance Board on a continuous basis. Generally, it takes around 5-7 business days for the funding to be disbursed.

Concluding Remarks

The ASUC at UC Berkeley has student organizations apply for annual funding to be dispersed at the beginning of every academic school year. Through this system, organizations are able to have access to funds at the beginning of the school year to spend on organization activities and events that they anticipated will occur before the school year begins. However, these other public schools disburse funds throughout the quarter or semester only with the student organizations choosing which funds to apply for and when.

IV. Space Allocation

University of California, Berkeley

Student organizations can apply for space through the annual ABSA application. Spaces are awarded on a year-to-year basis, so organizations must reapply for space each year. Different types of spaces include storage and meeting spaces.

University of California, Los Angeles

Communal areas are first come first serve, while other spaces have to be reserved on a year to year basis. Organizations need to apply for space they do not already have if they wish to use space in university owned buildings. Organizations have to meet certain minimum criteria in order to receive space, such as being affiliated for a certain amount of time with the school's student government or having applied for funding.

University of Michigan

Criteria needs to be met in order for organizations to get space, such as students being directly involved with the organization, a positive social benefit on student livelihood, goals for how the space will be used, and how it has been utilized in the past if applicable. The Office of the Provost oversees space allocation, including research spaces. Space is allocated on a per-term basis.

University of Virginia

There is a space governance committee with representation from different schools and majors so that all voices are heard. The documents online specifically discuss the allocation of office space and how only one office space is typically permitted per student organization. For conference rooms, the recommended utilization time is 20-30 hours per week. Students can apply for this weekly space at the beginning of each academic term for a specified weekly schedule. The space allocation standards are subject to change at least every five years.

Texas A&M University

Organizations are required to have at least ten students in them in order to get storage space. On the space allocation website, student organizations are informed of their responsibility to use space responsibly and leave it sound. Students at Texas A&M University are held to a high standard in this regard. Various measures, such as fees, may be imposed when the demand for space is greater than the supply that the university has at any given time.

Concluding Remarks

All of the schools are similar in that they hold students responsible when they use space and that certain requirements have to be met in an effort to allocate the space most effectively. The main differences in the schools were in UC Berkeley's methods. UC Berkeley has a specific application that the rules are centered around, whereas the

other schools tend to have their application as a second step after making sure organizations would qualify for space.

V. Concluding Remarks

Among the universities discussed in this report, the methods by which student governments allocate funding and spaces varies across a diverse range of options. While the benefit of certain systems over others is debatable, it can be conclusively established that the different means of allocation have inherently different consequences on student organizations. The ASUC hopes to take into consideration these differences when reviewing funding practices in the future to devise the most efficient and practical system for dispersing funds and spaces.

VI. References

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