

# URI

## Student Senate

# Finance Handbook



2009-2010

Finance Chairman: Allen D. Petit

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## I. Administrative Matters

### *A. Duties of the President and Treasurer*

Your organization's President and Treasurer are the financial signatories for your club. This means that they are the only club members who can spend money in the club's name by signing Senate paperwork, or get reimbursement from small purchases out-of-pocket. The President and Treasurer will also be held personally liable for the club's money and inventory, and for missing or misused equipment or money not immediately reported to the Finance Committee.

In the event that new officers are elected for any reason, the responsibility for money and inventory passes when new signature cards are signed. It is also the responsibility of the President and Treasurer to make sure that this handbook is passed to new officers, or that the new officers know they need to get a copy from the Senate Office. When officers are replaced, the following people must be notified in writing as soon as possible:

- 1) Finance Committee Chair: [Allen D. Petit](#)
- 2) Student Organization Advisory and Review (SOARC) Committee  
Chair: [Katherine Holland](#)
- 3) Senate Accounts Clerk: Lorrie Olson

When you meet with the Finance Chair, you will fill out a blank set of signature cards, which are not valid until they are initialed by the Finance Chair. This card must be filled out with the Finance Chair present. (NO financial transactions will take place until this is done.) Signature cards will only be filled out at the beginning of the Weekly Finance meeting or by appointment!

#### **1. Duties of the President:**

1. Co-sign all Purchase Requisitions and Payment Orders, and ensure that money exists in the budget to pay for anything you sign;
2. Communicate regularly with your Treasurer about the status of all paperwork;
3. Jointly with the Treasurer, represent the organization at Finance Committee and Senate meetings;
4. Attend the Finance 101 meeting held by the Finance Committee;
5. Check your mailbox at least three times per week, for mail, bills and notices. Forward all financial material promptly to your Treasurer.
6. DO NOT SIGN THINGS BEFORE READING THEM, OR SIGN BLANK FORMS!

## 2. Duties of the Treasurer

1. Know what has been ordered, what bills have been paid, what bills are being paid, and what bills are to be paid;
2. Inform your executive board members monthly of the following month's estimated expenses;
3. Keep track of all petty cash reimbursements, office supply charges and copying charges. Monthly, the Senate Accounts Clerk will notify you of these charges via a notice in your mailbox;
4. Review monthly Budget v. Actual statement from Senate Accounts, which will be put in your mailbox monthly;
5. Submit Payment Orders to pay bills within 30 days. Failure to do this will result in a 25% financial penalty. The bill will then be paid after budget suspension and the levying of penalties;
6. Attend the Finance 101 meeting held by the Finance Committee;
7. DO NOT SIGN THINGS BEFORE READING THEM, OR SIGN BLANK FORMS!

*IMPORTANT:* The treasurer must know what is currently in the account during the month, but organizations will only receive budget vs. actual reports at the end of each month. Having a negative balance at any point will result in penalties, a SOARC complaint, and/or a frozen budget.

### *B. Signature Cards*

Signature cards are filled out by the President and Treasurer with contact information and a sample signature. One card each is filed with the Finance chair and the Senate Accounts office. If paperwork is filed with signatures that do not match the cards, the paperwork will be held and the group contacted. If inquiry leads to the determination of inappropriate action on the part of a club officer, the club's account will be frozen and action taken.

Before a group's account can be opened for the school year signature cards must be signed by both the president and treasurer of the group and witnessed and initialed by the Finance Chair. (Special exceptions can be made by the Finance Chair in the case of extenuating circumstances.)

*NOTE:* Only the Finance Chair can distribute, witness, and initial signature cards.

## II. Event Planning

### *A. The Student Programming Office*

The Student Programming Office (SPO) is a joint venture of the Senate, Memorial Union Student Involvement, and Memorial Union Building Services. The purpose of SPO is not to “supervise” groups putting on events, but only to consolidate expertise. If a group only puts on a particular kind of event (e.g., a dance, a workshop) once a year, there’s not a lot of learning time about *how* to put on such an event. SPO, by contrast, has probably already helped a number of groups put on similar events and can make helpful suggestions that may improve your event.

What SPO actually does is to help set timelines, like when to start advertising, when posters can be put up in the Union, when rooms can be scheduled, and if/when Senate and Finance need to know about the event. They can also contact Building Services or other offices to resolve questions.

The best use your group can make of SPO is to contact them as soon as you are certain that you want to put on an event. They maintain a calendar that may help you choose a date by letting you see what you’re up against, or when certain rooms like the ballroom are in use. You should then make sure to keep in touch with SPO so that they can continue to assist you.

Problems with SPO, should they occur, can be addressed to the SOARC committee. Unwillingness to work with SPO will be seen as a sign of poor planning. The Finance and SOARC Committees feel that groups should work with SPO, as SPO’s ability to help groups is very dependant on how many groups they’re helping.

### *B. Charting Your Year*

It always helps to plan ahead. It allows your group to begin working with the Student Programming Office early to plan a successful event, it allows your group to come early to the Finance Committee to avoid surprises, and it allows your group to generally be better prepared.

To achieve that level of preparation, and put on the best events possible, your group’s executive board should begin planning your year as soon as possible. By knowing what your big events are, and roughly when you want to have them, and also what kinds of smaller events you want to have, you can get an early start on everything and avoid problems caused by class crunch times or last-minute planning.

### III. Operating Money

Senate-recognized groups can apply to the Senate for money to pay the bills, run events, or travel for group-enhancing events. This section tells you how to get that money. Spending it is covered in Section IV-C and V.

#### *A. Your Group's Budget*

Category M and S recognized groups may apply for operating budgets from the Senate. These operating budgets are assigned in the spring semester for the following year. In addition, a financial benefits package will be given. Category R groups may request a financial benefits package to cover basic costs, and are eligible to receive contingency grants, but no more money will be budgeted.

A group's operating budget is the day-to-day money it needs during the year for phone bills and such, money allocated for the purchase of group-enhancing items or media (books, magazines, etc) and generally available money for advertising. Items typically not included in a group's budget include security for events, travel money, gas reimbursement, and programming money beyond a modest sum of "startup capital" for early Fall Semester programs. More money may be included if you have specific ideas and budgets for early fall programs or travel, at the discretion of the Finance Committee and Senate. Groups will only receive budgets to buy items (e.g., books, office supplies, lawn gnomes) if they have a location to keep these items which is both securely lockable and accessible to group members – usually this means an office in the Union, though other arrangements have been proven sufficient.

It is the responsibility of the President and Treasurer to make sure they understand the needs of the club in the coming year, to do the necessary research into costs so that they can explain the requests they make, and to ensure that their club is represented at Finance and Senate meetings. The President and Treasurer do not necessarily have to attend the meetings, especially if another group member who better understands the costs is planning a major project in the coming year, but they do have to make sure that someone from their group is present for Finance or Senate to consider the group's request.

#### **1. Senate Accounts**

The Senate Accounts Office, located in Room 211 of the Memorial Union, is your organization's bank. The Accounts Office accepts deposits, withdrawals and transfers of money. Senate Accounts is your first step in making any transaction.

Lorrie Olson is the Senate Accounts Clerk; you will be interacting with her regularly

(in MU 211) as an organization president or treasurer. Ron Barlow in Room 203 is the Purchasing Agent; he handles purchasing and processes Purchase Requisitions. During the academic year, Lorrie is available in the Senate Accounts office Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., a student assistant is available for petty cash requests and to accept forms that need processing, e.g., Payment Orders and Purchase Requisitions. The student assistant will process no other paperwork.

All Student Senate checks, which are picked up from this office, must be signed for. Stipend checks are available in the Accounts office after 2:00 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month, or the last Tuesday during final exams in December.

All new employees are required to complete the W-4 form and I-9 form; no checks will be made out to students who have not completed these forms. These forms are available in the Senate Accounts Office. If your employment at with the Senate ends and you return to collect your pay, you must complete a new W-4 form before you will be paid.

## **2. The Budget Process**

You will receive a budget request form early in the spring semester. Your budget request must be completed by the deadline in order to be considered. Your request must be broken down into categories. (See the appendix for a list of line-item categories and their numbers.) Your request should be detailed enough for the Finance committee to evaluate the request without input from your group.

Following the submission of your budget request, the Finance Committee will make a recommendation.

You will receive this recommendation via your mailbox in the Senate office.

- If your organization is satisfied with the Finance Committee's recommendation you may fill out a "satisfied" form and your organization will be placed among those to be considered first.
- If your organization is not satisfied with the recommendation, you are strongly encouraged to attend the budget appeals meeting. This is not a negotiation; you shall receive 15 minutes to present your arguments. After attending the appeals meeting you will receive the committee's response and the second recommendation via your mailbox.
- If you are still unhappy, your organization may appeal the second recommendation to the full Senate during the annual Budget Meeting.

To receive a budget you must come to the Budget meeting. All Student Organizations must attend the Budget meeting of the full senate, regardless of

whether you are happy or not, or you will be penalized. No bill will be voted on without the group being present.

As previously stated, if a group fails to submit their budget request by the deadline set by the finance chairman a group's budget will not be considered. However, the group may request a budget in the fall of the next year out of contingency, but a group will not be granted a full request and will receive a minimum of a 50% penalty.

*Note:* Failure to attend the Senate Budget Meeting for which you are scheduled will be taken to mean that you are no longer interested in pursuing a budget, and so your organization will not have one. Your organization may request consideration for a budget from remaining funds in September.

### **3. Budget Request Tips**

- Provide a comprehensive rationale for each request. Relate this to the purpose of your organization. The more detail you provide, the better.
- You will not receive funds for Office Supplies, Books & Magazines, Capital Improvements, or other lines which are intended to provide a group with physical things unless you also have a secure place to keep those things which still allows group members easy access to them, e.g., an office in the Union.
- Do not simply increase your allocated amount from the previous year. Your budget is allocated based on expenses, and should be requested as such.
- During the year try to build membership and conduct successful activities. Successful groups with large memberships are likely to receive better funding than groups that have not effectively used their funds. It is also advisable to keep a record of all events put on by your organization.
- Fund raise! Fund raising shows enthusiasm, community support and good organizational skills.

### **4. Financial Benefits Package**

- The financial benefits package (FBP) is a base budget for account categories that will be essential for a group to fulfill its goals. The breakdown for each category is as follows:

#### **Category R**

<b>Cat.#</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
110	Copying/Printing	\$10.00
127	Co-Sponsorship	\$50.00
222	Advertising	\$50.00
312	Recruitment	\$100.00

**Category A**

<b>Cat.#</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
110	Copying/Printing	\$10.00

**Category M**

<b>Cat.#</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
110	Copying/Printing	\$100.00
127	Co-Sponsorship	\$200.00
222	Advertising	\$250.00
312	Recruitment	\$350.00

**Category S**

<b>Cat.#</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
110	Copying/Printing	\$75.00
127	Co-Sponsorship	\$100.00
222	Advertising	\$150.00
312	Recruitment	\$200.00

***B. Outside Accounts***

Ordinarily, your organization must maintain all of its funds within the Student Senate accounting system. However, the structure of some organizations makes it necessary to hold outside accounts. Here are the rules:

All organizations may have outside bank accounts only when Finance Committee has granted special permission. All organizations granted this permission must provide quarterly bank statements to the Finance Committee, listing balances and transactions for any and all outside accounts. Talk to the Finance Chair if you have any questions about this policy. The Student Senate strongly recommends that all Student groups maintain their funds within the Senate accounting system.

If a group receives approval for an outside account and removes all their money from the Senate accounting system, that group will not be able to use the Senate accounting system again in the future.

***C. Senate Services***

The Student Senate provides some services that are linked to your budget. If you have

an office in the Union (or other qualifying space) you can have a telephone activated in your office by University Telecommunications, and pick up or order office supplies through the Senate office. Any group with the proper budget line item can also use the Senate photocopier.

There are also some free services available through the Senate. Members of any Senate-recognized group can use the two Senate office computers, the software on them, and (for small, group-related jobs) the printer. The Senate office is also a good place to connect with Senators, to ask questions or get advice from a member of a committee, or to find out how to do something without sitting through a meeting.

### **1. Making Copies for your Organization**

A copy machine in the Student Senate office is available for use by organizations. Copies cost \$.05 per copy. In order to use this machine, your budget must have a Category 110 – Copying/Printing – line item. If you do have this line item, see The Senate Coordinator for an account number. Organizations will be billed monthly for copies made in the Senate office at the aforementioned prices. The Accounts Clerk will make internal transfers from your copy account to the Senate copy account and you will be notified of this transfer via your mailbox. Any organization that wishes to have a copy account other than one in the Senate office must establish a blanket purchase order with the outside business.

*IMPORTANT:* Anyone found making personal copies using an organization account, or making copies on an account other than their own will be personally charged and copying privileges will be suspended indefinitely. Absolutely no exceptions will be made!

### **2. Office Supplies**

Office supplies are available through the Senate office. See the Senate Coordinator in the Senate office for supplies you may wish to purchase. Please note that funds must be available in Category 109 – Office Supplies – in your budget in order to make purchases.

### **3. Telephones and Telephone Bills**

The Senate provides telephones for use by clubs. Clubs with an office may have a phone in that office paid for through their budget, and clubs that don't have a phone may use the public phone in the Senate office for club business.

No abuses will be allowed. For example, there are to be no third-party calls, no collect calls accepted, and no personal long distance calls. These all constitute fraudulent use of Student Activities Tax funds and violations are subject to Senate

action, including *billing the responsible individuals*.

*NOTE:* The Student Senate office phone is there for organizations that do not have a phone available to them.

In general, use of the Senate organization phone is for organization business only. Organizations that have telephones in their offices are required to use those phones for calls, unless your phone is limited to local calls only. If that is the case, you may use the Student Senate phone for long distance calls. If you need to use the organization phone in the Student Senate office, you must sign in on the phone log, which will be on the Senate Coordinator's desk. Failure to sign in and complete the required information may result in your phone privileges being revoked.

The Student Senate organization phone ONLY is available for your use. Other phones in the office are assigned to Senate Chairpersons who are responsible for the recorded billing for those phones. Please wait for, and use, the organization phone. If the organization phone is in use and you wish to make a phone call, you are asked to return at another time when that phone is free. Failure to comply with this policy will result in Senate action against your organization and, in addition, your phone privileges may be revoked.

The Student Senate will not reimburse student organizations or individual members of student organizations for phone calls made from telephones other than student organization office phones.

*Paying for telephone bills:* If your organization has been approved to have a phone, the money will be automatically deducted from your account. You may not order additional services (e.g., call waiting) without written authorization by the Finance Chair.

#### **4. Security**

The following is an excerpt from the Student Handbook:

##### 5.13 Registration of On-Campus Social Events.

a. Events scheduled through the Memorial Union are automatically registered. All other on-campus social events including [50] or more in attendance, whether open to the public or private, must be registered through the Scheduling Office of the Memorial Union three full business days before the event. Exceptions to the three-day advance notice may be granted for extraordinary circumstances (e.g., staff unavailability, confusion caused by holidays, etc.).

b. In the case of Student Senate organizations or fraternities and

sororities, events may be registered only by the organization's president or social chairperson who will oversee the organization's responsibility for compliance with community standards during the event. A designated responsible member of the University community who will be present at the event must register social events for all other non-residence hall groups. No student organization may register a social function that is sanctioned for a public health or safety code violation.

c. If more than [50] people show up and the event is not registered, notify the campus police immediately. If the event is registered, but attendance is greater than indicated on the event registration, notify the campus police immediately.

#### 5.14 Security for On-campus Social Events.

Social events for more than 100 individuals may require security coverage that will be arranged through the Scheduling Office.

#### 5.15 Guests at Social Events.

Students are responsible for the conduct of their guests at all on-campus social events. Guests are subject to the social regulations and other rules of the University while on campus. The student(s) and/or the sponsoring organization may face disciplinary action for the behavior of their guest(s). The party registrant may be responsible for the conduct of all uninvited visitors at all on-campus social events.

#### 5.16 Guest Registration.

Social events on campus are organized primarily for URI students and their guests. Guest registration described here is required to enhance security during events. The sponsoring group or the individual who hosts guests may be held responsible for guest misconduct occurring during or outside the function.

This registration policy applies to social events such as dances, parties, etc., which include between [50] and 450 people and occur in locations such as the Memorial Union, Multicultural Center, and Roger Williams Dining Hall. (Events held in Edwards or Keaney are excluded from this guest registration policy.) Appeals for exceptions to this policy should be addressed to the Director of the Memorial Union.

- Advertising for all social events described in 5.13 above must state **“Dance Party Guest Policy”** in all Promotional Materials: *“Open to all currently enrolled*

*college students with valid college IDs; photo identification required. No ID(s), No Entry.” AND “Doors Close at 12:00 AM.”*

- Target all forms of all advertising to college students *ONLY* (i.e. posting exclusively on campuses, etc.).

For all events, you must speak to the coordinator in the Scheduling Office to determine whether police officers, fire marshals, or other personnel are required. There may also be building/custodial fees for a number of venues. Be sure to speak to Scheduling at least three weeks prior to your event.

Security services for Senate-sponsored events (including events sponsored by Senate-recognized groups) are paid for by a special contingency fund. Unlike other contingencies (see III.D.2), a group does not need to come to the Finance Committee or the Senate to get the funds.

For all URI dances and certain other functions (ex. Edwards Auditorium concerts) determined by the Director Memorial Union, the Innovative Criminal Justice & Security Concepts firm must be used. The Student Senate will cover the security costs for all Senate recognized groups (except Category A).

*IMPORTANT:* The costs of providing security will be paid automatically, but security cost is still considered a contingency grant, and will still be deducted from any income your group gets from the event.

Payment will require the submission of a Payment Order to the Union Scheduling Office within one week before the event. Failure to submit this payment order will result in your group’s account being frozen, and a review being conducted. Possible penalties include not being permitted to hold events that require spending money, or even loss of your group’s budget.

*NOTE:* Category A groups do not qualify for security contingency. Be sure to take this into account when planning your event.

### ***D. Fund Raising***

What do you do when you’re planning an event, and you look at your budget but don’t see the money you need? Find more money! There are several places you can look to when you need something extra, including group members (e.g., some clubs charge yearly dues), other groups’ Co-sponsorship budget lines, Senate contingency money, and getting donations or door charges. If you accept checks for donations or charges, be sure you’re familiar with the returned check fee from section IV.D.7.

#### **1. Other Groups (Co-sponsorship)**

Co-sponsorship allows one organization to contribute towards another organization's expenses for a specific event or project. Talking to other groups about cosponsoring your events is a good way to establish contacts with them, but also to create awareness of the event with the other group (and maybe get more people to come).

Here is a step-by-step summary of how to co-sponsor an event:

1. Pick up a Co-sponsorship Request Form in the Senate office.

There are several co-sponsorship options; choose the one that is right for you!

- 2a. If your request for co-sponsorship is \$500 or less AND is with a Senate-recognized group, fill out the form and make an appointment to meet with the Finance Chair. Only the Finance Chair needs to sign the form in this case.
- 2b. If your request for co-sponsorship is more than \$500 AND is with a Senate-recognized group, leave the form in the Completed Finance Paperwork box on the Senate Coordinator's desk and sign up to attend the next Finance Meeting. You must be present at the meeting for your request to be considered, and approval by the Finance Committee is all that is needed; you do not need to go to a Senate meeting for this request.
- 2c. If your request for co-sponsorship is with a Non-Senate Recognized Organization, you must apply at least one month prior to the date of the event. Co-sponsorships will not be accepted after the one-month date. You must sign up to attend the next Finance meeting and submit the form as above, and if it is passed in committee, you will have to sign up for the appropriate Senate Meeting. If the full Senate passes the co-sponsorship request, you will then have to fill out a payment order to a business, with the appropriate paperwork, e.g. a DJ with contract, a store with an invoice, etc. and this must be given to the Senate Accounting office. The accounting office will then cut you a check.

3. Turn the signed paperwork into the Senate Accounting office.

Note: You can only co-sponsor out of your Co-sponsorship line in your budget, or from a 900 account. Co-sponsorships will never be approved if the Finance Chair receives the request after the event in question has occurred.

## **2. Student Senate Contingency Grants**

*IMPORTANT: ORGANIZATIONS NOT RECOGNIZED BY STUDENT SENATE AND CATEGORY A GROUPS CANNOT APPLY FOR A CONTINGENCY GRANT.*

Any Student Senate recognized organization can apply for contingency. If there is a specific event you want to put on, item you want to buy, trip you want to take, or generally any mission-appropriate money you want to spend, and you do not already have it in your budget, you can request Senate contingency funds. The Senate sets aside money for these grants in certain categories every year, but the money doesn't always last to the end of the year, so plan ahead!

Contingency Grants are classified as follows:

Programming (Cat. 130)	Talent-oriented events, e.g., speakers, concerts, movie showings, etc.;
Capital Improvements (Cat. 400)	Updating or replacing faulty equipment;
Travel/Lodging (Cat. 700)	Registering for events, traveling to them, and staying at them;
General Contingency (Cat. 000)	General operational costs, whatever isn't another category.

You must use the money from the contingency grant for the purpose for which it was granted, and spend it according to all the rules for spending Student Activities Tax dollars. If you violate any of these rules, your organization's account will be charged double the amount of the grant and that money will be placed in the contingency accounts.

*The following is a step-by-step process for requesting a Contingency Grant:*

Plan ahead; the process takes a minimum of two (2) full weeks.

1. Stop by the Senate office and pick up a Contingency Request Form, these can be obtained from the wall between the doors, or just ask the Senate Coordinator or Finance Chair.
2. Fill out the form completely and sign up to be on the agenda for the next available Finance meeting.
3. Leave the completed form in the Completed Finance Paperwork box on the Senate Coordinator's desk. This must also be done by no later than noon of the day of the finance meeting.
4. Come to the Finance meeting on the date for which you have signed up. Be prepared to answer questions about your request. When attending the meetings have an itemized list of the cost and breakdown of the event, and documentation of having received quotes (e.g., print-outs of web pages or e-mails, copies of faxes, etc.).

If the Finance Committee recommends a smaller grant your organization has the

option to accept the grant and bring the request to full Senate or reject the recommendation and bring the original request to full Senate.

5. Most Contingency Grants must go before the full Senate. You will be heard 9 days after you appear before the Finance Committee, or when the Finance Chair tells you to appear if different arrangements are made (e.g., immediate consideration)

*IMPORTANT:* Immediately following the result of the bill for the Contingency grant, the Finance Chair will hand you a carbon copy of your request. It is now your responsibility to drop this completed form off at the Accounts Office. Loss of this form will result in a 10% penalty to the granted request on the first offense, and 25% on the second offense. The resulting loss cannot be covered by budgeted money, and if the event can no longer occur, the granted money will be returned to the fund it was taken from. All penalized money will be returned to the account from which it was allocated.

*IMPORTANT:* DO NOT LOSE THE FORM!!!

6. If money remains after all bills for the event or project have been paid for, the remaining funds will be returned to contingency. Checks take two days to process, and are only printed Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; *plan accordingly.*

Note: The Finance Committee may approve Programming, Capital Improvement, and General Contingency grants for \$500 or less. These requests are not subject to approval by the full Senate. All the same paperwork must be filled out. Decisions may be appealed to the full Senate. It is the duty of the Finance Chairman to report to the Senate any distribution from the Finance Committee.

### **3. Funding from Outside Senate**

Organizations are strongly encouraged to fund raise at least 15% of their budgets. This fund-raising can either be through raising cash from events (covered in the next section), through donations of goods or money, or through support funding from non-Senate sources.

Donations to Student Senate organizations are tax deductible. This will often help if you're looking for office equipment, discounted materials or services, or even corporate sponsorship. Organizations may need to provide a receipt valuing the donation. If you cannot accurately value the object yourself, contact the Finance Chair to have it valued (someone, somewhere, should be able to do it).

Support funding is available from many sources, including various administrative

departments on campus. The Finance Committee will maintain a list over the year of administrative groups (e.g., departments, vice presidents, etc.).

*IMPORTANT:* In all cases donated funds must be deposited into your account within 24 hours of receipt. Violation of this rule will result in a frozen budget and/or fines.

All fund raising will be deposited into a Cat. 900 line in your organization's account.

*NOTE:* If money is granted from college departments, it is the organization's responsibility to obtain the granted money from the school accounting.

The following is a list of ideas to keep in mind when raising money:

- Think about any surrounding companies in the area that benefit from the URI community and see if they would be willing to give back to the community through your organizations events.
- Many corporations donate a certain amount of money or goods a year to non-profit groups by policy. Pepsi, for instance, will often donate some drinks.
- What department on Campus may share your interests? Let them know how their co-sponsorship can help them and you. If you're drawing a blank at this stage, the Finance Committee may be able to help.
- Remind everyone you are soliciting for money that you are a non-profit organization, so donations are tax write-offs.
- Anything you need to buy can be donated for free. Go to the source and ask.
- The Student Senate Coordinator has a list of fundraising ideas to help your group.

#### **4. Alcohol Free Event Grants (AFEG)**

The Alcohol Free Events Grant fund is an account funded by the Office of Student Life and allocated in part by the Student Senate. The funds in the account are derived from alcohol fines; the goal of the fund is to enhance alcohol-alternative programming at URI. Applicants for AFEG grants do not need to be Senate-recognized groups. This account cannot fund entire events, but merely helps cover costs.

Several special rules apply to the AFEG fund:

- The event must be held on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday evening.
- The events must present a legitimate, realistic alternative to alcohol consumption.
- *The Event must take place on the URI Kingston campus.*

Here are the step-by-step procedures for applying for AFEG funding:

1. Plan ahead; the process takes two (2) weeks.
2. Stop by the Senate office and pick up an AFEG request forms from the wall across from the student senator's mailboxes.
3. Fill out the form completely and sign up to be on the agenda for the next available Finance meeting, by no later than noon of that day.
4. Leave the form in the Completed Finance Paperwork box on the Senate Coordinator's desk by no later than noon of the meeting day.
5. Come to the Finance meeting on the date for which you have signed up. If the Committee recommends that a grant be made, you will be asked to send a representative to a Senate meeting, where the full Senate will act on your request.

### **5. Cash Income for Your Group**

Cash Box orders must be placed 24 hours PRIOR to any scheduled event for which one is needed. You may request an empty cash box when one is ordered later than that (less than 24 hours). All Cash Boxes must be returned and funds deposited within 24 hours following the event. For programs held in the Union, a Building Services Event Manager should be available until the end of the event, and can put the cash box directly into the Accounting Office safe to be counted the following day. If your organization does not deposit all funds within 24 hours, your organization will be faced with extreme penalties, including total suspension of all signatory privileges and fines.

***IMPORTANT:*** Money from cashboxes cannot be removed during an event for any reason (e.g., paying for DJ, paying for food, etc.) (Note: Any of the revenue from an event will be allotted to the group who registered the event with the scheduling office.) If the policy is not followed penalties will be enacted at the discretion of the Finance Chair.

In order for the revenue from an event to be deposited in your 900 account or any other account, you must cover all costs of the event first. Costs that will be deducted from money deposited include:

- Money equal to what was in the cash box at checkout
- An amount equal to all contingency grants to the organization for the event
- The cost of security for the event, replaced in the Security Contingency
- Replacement funds for budget expenses for the event (e.g., DJ, advertising, etc.)
- Enough to cover any damages resulting from the event

Money remaining from the cash box will be deposited into your group's 900 account. It is especially important that the purpose of expenses be marked on purchase orders so that the proper amount will be deducted for event costs.

Note: Fund-raised dollars are the profit after all expenses have been paid.

## **6. Cash Income for Charity**

Some groups will want to run events for the purpose of donating money to charity. There are two ways in which this may be done.

The easier way is to charge admission at the door, and solicit donations for the charity inside the event. The money in the first cash box will be used to cover costs, and the money in the second (which must be clearly marked) will be issued in a check to the charity.

If the group wishes the door proceeds to be the source of the contribution check, arrangements must be made with the Finance Committee – the amount deducted will be dependant on the amount of Student Activities Tax money being spent. In any case, what will be exempted from reclamation will be entire line items, e.g., Security, Advertising, etc.

NOTE: A group which holds an event/drive for charity must have all funds taken in for charity out of they accounts within one (1) month of the end of the event/drive.

### ***E. Your 900 Budget Line***

Your 900 account operates under different rules than the rest of your budget because the money in it is not Student Activities Tax money; the money in your group's 900 account is the profit from past fundraising efforts. While the money cannot be spent on alcohol or anything illegal, some restrictions don't apply, allowing the purchase of food and t-shirts, among other things.

Money left over in this account at the end of the year will be transferred into your account the next year. You may transfer money out of a 900 line but you cannot transfer student tax money into a 900 line.

*IMPORTANT:* If at anytime you have bills that need to be paid and cannot be done so out of your budget, such deductions will be made from your 900 account.

Fines may also be collected from your group's 900 account, if the money is not available in an appropriate line item elsewhere in your group's budget. While this sounds harsh, it is actually less than the penalties imposed when no money exists in

the budget or 900 account to pay bills or fines; those penalties include percentages cut from future Finance requests, ineligibility for a budget the coming year, or a SOARC complaint.

## **IV. The Senate Process**

This handbook is a guide to Senate policies, and many of the sections will eventually lead to this one, which explains how Senate expects certain common actions to be taken. This includes attending meetings of the Finance Committee or the full Senate and the entire process of purchasing, travel is also included in this section. The best use that can be made of this section is to become so familiar with it that you have nearly memorized it – since almost everything you do involving money will require attending a meeting, filling out paperwork, or both, your life will be a lot easier if you don't have to look up how to do that every time.

### ***A. The Finance Committee***

The first step for every penny spent (except for your 900 account) is the Finance Committee, either for the annual budgeting process, for specific money for an event, or just for information to help you plan (e.g., whether you can get money for some event).

Meeting with the Finance Committee should not be painful or confrontational – the Senate is charged with promoting responsible participation and the Committee encourages meeting that goal with Tax money. The Senate and the Committee want you to put on the best programs you can manage and we can afford. That said, only so much money is available and we also have to make sure that it makes it to the end of the year, so be ready to show us why your event is worth the cost.

There will be a signup sheet on the bulletin board between the group mailboxes and the Senate Coordinator's desk in the Senate office every week. The meeting time of the next Finance meeting will be posted on the signup sheet, and you can sign up until noon the day of the meeting. Putting your group's name on the signup sheet is all it takes to be on the agenda, although a subject may help the Chair to speed up the meeting by hearing the quick items first. In other words, do you really want to wait through a whole meeting just to sign a new signature card?

Any member of your group may represent your group at the Finance Committee meeting, but they will be expected to be familiar with both the issue at hand and your group's finances, so make sure to brief them before they come.

*IMPORTANT:* Your request will not be considered, unless a representative is

present when you are called. If your representative is not present when your group is called, your name will be called a second time at the end of the agenda.

If you're signing up to have paperwork dealt with (e.g., a contingency request) make sure that the appropriate paperwork and copies of all necessary documentation, like bids, are stapled or paper clipped together and in the Completed Finance Paperwork box on the Senate Coordinator's desk before noon the day of the meeting. Also, if you have more supporting documentation (e.g., extra bids to show alternatives considered detailed information on a conference, etc.) bring it with you; it could be important.

### ***B. Senate Meetings***

Because the Senate understands that time is valuable to students, the reports of the Finance and SOARC committees, who usually have students waiting on bills, are the first and second committee reports heard in the meeting. If you have to come to a Senate meeting for something from Finance, during the Finance report is when you will be heard.

The same representation rule applies to the Senate meeting as the Finance meeting. Any member of your group may represent the group at the meeting, though the Senate may well have questions. If no representative is present, your bill will not be heard.

*IMPORTANT:* In cases where Senate attendance is an extreme hardship, a Senator (excluding Finance Committee members) may be willing to represent your group.

When the Finance Chair calls your bill, the Chair will summarize the main points of your bill and any relevant Senate policy or practice. At that point the floor is opened to questions, which either the questioning Senator or the Finance Chair may refer to you. Like in the Finance Committee, hard questions aren't meant as an attack; Senators just want to make sure that the money is being spent correctly and wisely. Remember that the more information you bring to the Senate meeting, the better you look.

### ***C. Travel***

For any number of reasons related to the mission of your group, you may need or want to travel. The Senate can pay for part of the cost of travel, lodging, and registration fees for trips meeting the guidelines below.

All purchasing paperwork for trips, including proof of payment for conference fees, must be submitted two full weeks prior to departure, or moneys allocated to you for the trip will be revoked, and you will be unable to access your account for that trip. Any deposits lost due to failure to proceed on time will be deducted from another

category in your budget; this includes any money received from other school departments, outside donations, or administrative offices.

*IMPORTANT:* This means that your group must begin requesting money no less than 5 weeks before your trip. See the travel timetable in Appendix A.

Trips will not be paid for when the dorms are not open, i.e., Spring Break, Winter Break, (Winter break is defined as the day after the last day of classes in the fall semester, aka the first reading day, and continues until the first day of class in the spring semester) and over the summer. (The summer is defined as the day after the last day of classes, aka the first reading day, in the spring semester; summer then runs until the first day of classes in the fall semester.) National conferences and CSIC travel policies represent exceptions to this rule.

Misconduct during a trip reported to the Senate may result in the loss of travel privileges for the remainder of the year, and heavy fines may also be imposed.

## **1. Guidelines**

The purpose of sending group members on travel is for those group students to attend educational and networking sessions, gain valuable outside experiences, or to participate in activities not available on campus.

The Senate will pay for at most 50% of the total cost of travel, lodging, and registration fees for up to six people on any trip. The senate will not cover the cost of travel to conferences for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester graduating seniors and those seniors cannot be included in the six people being sent on a trip. If your group wishes to send more than six people, Senate money may be divided up to offset costs any way your group sees fit, but no more will be made available. (When booking for travel accommodations for more than four people it is required to use a travel agent (e.g. Donovan Travel, Liberty). Group members going on travel are expected to make a financial contribution. The remaining 50% of the cost must be in your 900 account before any Requisitions will be approved for the trip.

*IMPORTANT:* A Purchase Order will not be created, and purchases will not be made, unless the Senate grant paperwork has been given to the Accounts Office, and the remaining funds are in your 900 account.

A maximum of two regional trips may be attended in a year, at the discretion of the Senate. A regional trip is defined as travel within 400 miles of URI. Exceptions to this policy may be made for competitions at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

A group may only use Student Activities Tax money for one national trip per year,

defined as an event hosted by a larger organization of which the URI group is affiliated. National trips that take place when the Senate would not normally pay for travel (see above) may be approved at the discretion of the Finance Committee upon seeing documentation about the conference. Other restrictions still apply to such a trip.

*NOTE:* A group must be recognized for a time period of one (1) month and hold at least one (1) meeting with members before becoming eligible for travel contingency. Minutes and attendance sheet from the meeting must be provided to the Finance Committee in order to be considered for the 1<sup>st</sup> (first) travel contingency request. **This does not apply to groups that go through the re-recognition process.**

## 2. Contingency Procedures

When applying for contingency grants for travel, student organizations follow special guidelines that are different from the normal procedure. Depending on the amount being requested, the approval can come from the Finance Chair, the Committee, or the full Senate. To be eligible for approval from the Chair or Committee, organizations must hold accounts based from the Senate Accounting Office.

The Finance Chair may approve travel contingency grants for \$500 or less. In addition, the group may only be attending a regional trip for this approval. All the same paperwork must be filled out. Meet with the Chair during office hours, or by appointment. Decisions may be appealed to the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee may approve travel contingency grants for \$1000 or less. The travel may be regional or national, but may only occur when dorms are open. All the same paperwork must be filled out. Sign up for the meeting. Decisions may be appealed to the full Senate.

All other travel requests still need the approval of the full senate, and will follow the travel timeline outlined in IV.A

## 3. Gas Reimbursement

Student Organizations may be entitled to mileage reimbursement for private automobiles when an organization takes a mission-related trip, providing the group obtains approval before the trip from the Finance Chair. The Finance Chair will calculate the mileage used from maps; the actual mileage traveled will not be used and need not be kept.

For all travel, a rate of \$.20 per mile will be paid when students return. Some type of proof of being at the destination must be furnished with the final paperwork.

The initial paperwork for any reimbursement must be filed at least one week before the trip.

*IMPORTANT:* The final paperwork must be done within one week of returning from the conference/trip. No reimbursements will be approved for paperwork *started* after-the-fact.

Here is the process for applying for gas reimbursement:

1. Pick up a Private Automobile Gas Reimbursement Form in the Senate office in the boxes between the doors in the Senate office. Unless one has already been submitted for each driver, you must also pick up a Driver's Form that is located in the same place.
2. Fill out the forms. Both the President and the Treasurer of the organization must sign them.
3. Meet with the Finance Chair. Bring the forms, a copy of a valid driver's license for the driver and proof of insurance to the meeting, and make sure your group's representative is prepared to answer any questions about the logistics of the trip. Mileage reimbursement only needs approval of the Finance Chairman.
4. Upon returning from the trip the required proof must be submitted (conference paperwork or receipt) to the Finance Chair for approval.

*IMPORTANT:* No organization will receive more than \$300 per semester.

### ***D. Purchasing & Contracts***

There are three ways to make purchases, all explained in more detail below:

- Petty Cash (\$0 - \$15), money only issued for 5 days after date on receipt.
- Check Reimbursements (\$15 - \$50), only issued for 5 days after date on receipt.
- Purchase Requisitions/Purchase Orders or Contracts (more than \$15), only way to spend more than \$50.

*IMPORTANT:* A single bill may not be split between different organizations!

*IMPORTANT:* All Student Organization financial documents, except contracts, must have the signature of at least one valid club officer (i.e. Organization President, Organization Treasurer) in order to be processed. During the school year, two signatures are required, though when necessary certain others may sign for the

second officer, i.e., Finance Chair, Student Senate President, Bruce Hamilton, Susan Brush, Maureen McDermott, or Tom Dugan.

*IMPORTANT:* All items being reimbursed for must be on a separate receipt from any other items which are not being reimbursed; if this procedure is not followed no reimbursement will be made.

Submitting paperwork in a timely manner is critical. After-the-fact Purchase Requisitions and contracts will be penalized as follows:

- First time: 25%
- Second time 50%
- Third time 150%.

To prevent unnecessary charges for your organization, submit all paperwork ahead of time.

### **1. Petty Cash**

There are times when your group will need some small item (e.g., batteries) that isn't worth doing a Purchase Requisition. The petty cash policy is meant to allow the purchase of such small necessities without hardship for the purchaser. Only the President or Treasurer of organizations may submit receipts for petty cash. The Senate Accounts clerk will not accept receipts that are separated for a total over \$15.

*IMPORTANT:* No receipt will be accepted without a date on it.

Here is the process:

1. For items under \$15, the President, Treasurer or their authorized purchaser, may pay out of his/her own pocket, provided the organization has money budgeted for that specific purpose. No organization will be reimbursed for any sales tax. In order to avoid paying a sales tax, pick up a tax-exempt form in the Student Senate office, located to the right of the mailboxes. If a company/store does not accept our tax-exempt form please report it to the Finance Chair. Most likely they are in violation and will be reported to the Department of Taxation.
2. Either the President or Treasurer must submit a valid, dated receipt to the Senate Accounts Clerk within five (5) business days. Bring the receipt to Student Senate Accounts office. You will be given a petty cash slip to fill out and cash will be reimbursed.
3. The limit on petty cash reimbursement is \$30 total per week per organization. Records are kept of previous reimbursements and any

organization found to be abusing the process would find its petty cash privileges suspended.

*IMPORTANT:* Abuse includes splitting receipts for similar objects to meet the \$15 rule. This will not be tolerated. Penalties include fines of up to 100% of the money remaining in the budget line abused this way.

*NOTE:* When using line 312 of your budget, for petty cash, to buy food there must be a flier of the event attached and have finance chair approval before you will be reimbursed.

## **2. Check Reimbursement**

This is an optional procedure to be used for purchases of \$50 or less. Note that it will take a week or more to receive the check, and plan accordingly (don't spend money you can't spare).

*IMPORTANT:* This does not apply to several purchases under \$50 bought for the same function. You must use a blanket Purchase Order when doing that.

1. The President, Treasurer or their authorized purchaser may buy an item for which there is money in the budget. The receipt/invoice must be saved. No organization will be reimbursed for any sales tax. In order to avoid paying a sales tax, pick up a tax-exempt form in the Student Senate office, located to the right of the mailboxes. If a company/store does not accept our tax-exempt form please report it to the Finance Chair. Most likely they are in violation and will be reported to the Department of Taxation.
2. The President or Treasurer must bring the receipt within five (5) business days to the Senate Accounts Clerk. All receipts must be itemized, must show that the bill was paid in full, and must include the date and the name of the vendor.
3. Complete a check-reimbursement request form, which is available in the Senate office; attach the receipt and request form to a completed Payment Order. Complete the Payment Order in the name of the person to be reimbursed. Your check will be available in a few days.

If you use this procedure to buy something that your budget does not have the money to pay for, you will not be reimbursed.

Records are kept of previous reimbursements and any organization found to be abusing the process will find its check reimbursement privileges suspended. Fines may follow.

*IMPORTANT:* Abuse includes splitting receipts for similar objects to meet the \$50

check reimbursement rule. This will not be tolerated. Penalties include fines of up to 100% of the money remaining in the budget line abused this way.

*NOTE:* When using line 312 of your budget, for check reimbursement, to buy food there must be a flier of the event attached and have finance chair approval before you will be reimbursed.

### **3. The Purchase Requisition**

Purchase Requisitions are the first step in most purchases your group will make. The form is available in the Senate office with the other Finance forms, on the wall between the doors in the Senate office.

Make sure you fill out all the fields titled in red. The fields titled in black are for office use, and you can safely ignore them. (The “Item No.” field is just for you to list items as 1, 2, 3, etc. when you’re using more than one line per item.) Once the form is filled out and signed by both the President and Treasurer (or an accepted alternate), you can turn it in at the Accounts Office.

When you submit a purchase requisition to Lorrie Olson, the Senate accounts clerk, please understand that it will take up to two (2) days for processing before it is sent to Ron Barlow at the Purchasing Office. Purchasing will then complete the paperwork by issuing a Purchase Order, which can take up to two (2) more days. Never assume your paperwork has been processed just because you have delivered it to the accounts office. Your paperwork may be rejected if it is incomplete, improperly filled out, improperly signed, or if your account does not have enough money in the proper line item(s), just to name the most common reasons. If it is rejected, it will be returned to you via your mailbox in the Senate office.

*NOTE:* You should submit paperwork at least two (2) weeks before an order is needed; in some cases it may take longer.

*NOTE:* Your purchase order will be refused if there is not enough money in the proper budget lines when it is submitted. If you deposit money after submitting the form, you will probably have to resubmit the form.

It is imperative that you check your mail AT LEAST three times per week; more often would be wiser. Failure to respond in a timely manner to communications from the Finance Committee, Accounts, or Purchasing in your mailbox will result in penalties appropriate to the negligence.

Here is the Purchase Requisition Process:

1. If necessary, solicit bids for the item you wish to purchase from vendors. Documentation of bids, including criteria for acceptable bids, is required as follows and must accompany a Purchase Requisition:
  - \$250 to \$999.99 Three (3) Verbal bids  
Verbal bids must be listed on the Purchase Requisition or it will not be accepted
  - \$1000 to \$4999.99 Three (3) Written bids  
Written quotes must be attached to the Purchase Requisition or it will not be accepted
  - \$5000 up Five (5) Written bids  
Written quotes must be attached to the Purchase Requisition or it will not be accepted.
2. Once you have received bids, obtain a Purchase Requisition form from the Student Senate office across from the Senators' mailboxes.
3. Fill out all information marked in red on the form. Consult your budget for your category number—these must be complete and legible before a requisition will be accepted. Incomplete forms will be returned to your mailbox, which will cause the process to be delayed. In the space for the vendor, fill in the necessary information for the lowest bid that meets the bidding criteria.
4. The President and Treasurer must sign the form in the space provided.
5. Take the completed Purchase Requisition form, with bids attached, to the Senate Accounts Clerk to be processed.

*NOTE:* Any Purchase Requisition that is questionable will be brought to the attention of the Finance Chair!

*IMPORTANT:* Purchase Requisitions that are late by more than 30 days after the date of purchase will not be accepted. Purchase Requisitions that are late at all will be penalized as listed at the beginning of IV.D. (this section).

#### **4. The Purchase Order**

Once you have turned in the Purchase Requisition, just keep checking your group's mailbox in the Senate office. If all goes smoothly, a Purchase Order will be generated and the item ordered.

Once authorized, the Purchase Requisition will be sent to the Purchasing Department and they will:

1. Assign a Purchase Order Number after the requisition has all the authorized signatures and the Student Senate Accounts Clerk's approval.
2. Create a Purchase Order.
3. Place the order.
4. Deliver a blue copy of the Purchase Order in your mailbox after your order is sent to the vendor by the Purchasing office. Review this blue copy to make sure all the information is correct.
5. Once the order has been received, the Purchasing Department will notify you via your mailbox.

*IMPORTANT:* Organizations must place orders through the Purchasing Department only. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in your organization's funds being frozen and the loss of any purchased equipment.

When ordering specialty items such as key chains, cups, and other such things you can set designs with companies, however you may not place the order or make a promise of payment.

*IMPORTANT:* The Student Senate will only pay for standard (e.g., ground) shipping rates. If your order is placed late and a more expensive shipping option must be used, the difference in shipping cost will be taken from your 900 account. If there is not sufficient money in the 900 account, the item will not be ordered.

When the order is delivered, it will be delivered to the Purchasing Department, and then checked against the Purchase Order. You should still double-check the invoice against the Purchase Order and the items that arrive to make sure that you have received just what was ordered and that you have not been over-charged. Report any problems IMMEDIATELY to the Purchasing Department and they will handle them for you. Your group will be held responsible for unreported discrepancies. The next step is the submission of a Payment Order (see 6, this section).

In certain cases, specifically making hotel reservations, the purchase of airplane tickets, and the purchase of items ordered over the internet, purchases may be made using the Senate credit card instead of a Purchase Order. In those cases, after the order arrives, the payment order will not be made out to the vendor, but to the Senate for payment of the credit card bill.

## **5. Contracts**

*IMPORTANT:* Allow for a two-week minimum for all contracts! (This time starts after money is granted.)

Contracts play the same role for services as Purchase Orders play for purchasing

items. Contracts are used for quality services provided by experienced vendors such as DJ's, speakers, caterers, labor, etc. Contracts may be reviewed by the Finance Committee, and signing or payment may be withheld if requirements are not met.

Individual students cannot personally sign contracts. Bruce Hamilton, Director of the Memorial Union and Student Involvement, and the Student Senate Advisor must review and sign all contracts for Student Senate recognized organizations. Speak to Michael Nolfé or Maureen McDermott in the Union main office when you need advice related to contracts.

*NOTE:* Do not sign contracts!

When you decide to contract for a service, the bidding rules listed in the Purchase Requisition section (3, this section) still apply. After collecting bids, contact the person or agency you plan to contract with and find out if they have a standard contract, and how flexible it is. Have this contract reviewed by Bruce Hamilton, Michael Nolfé, or Maureen McDermott. If no such standard contract exists, the Senate has its own standard contract you can use; contact Bruce, Michael, or Maureen for a copy, or ask in the Union Main Office.

For purposes of payment, a signed authorized contract from Bruce Hamilton will be accepted as an invoice. (See 6, below)

## **6. The Payment Order**

After you have received the goods or services you ordered or contracted for, and all requirements have been met (e.g., entire order is filled), you must then pay the vendor.

After you have checked your order, make sure that you get the invoice and Payment Order and take it to the Student Senate Accounts office immediately. Otherwise your bill will not be paid.

*NOTE:* Only sheets marked “invoice” or contracts will be accepted with Payment Orders – statements or other billing paperwork lack the information on the invoice.

*IMPORTANT:* Failure to pay for items you have ordered is a severe violation, and can result in substantial fines, penalties to future requests, or even the loss of your group's budget for the next year. Pay your bills!

## **7. Checks**

Checks are written on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday only. It takes a minimum of two (2) business days to process a check. This means you must submit your request for payment at least two business days before you need your check.

If you do not want the check to be mailed to the vendor by Accounts when it is printed, please write "HOLD CHECK" on the payment order when you submit it.

Checks may not be issued by the Student Senate to individual persons without an IRS Form W-9 on file for that person. This form is available online from the IRS web site. This rule does not apply to checks made out to businesses, or to check reimbursement.

*Lost Check Fee:* If you lose or misplace a Student Senate check and you request a duplicate, a bank stop payment order must be made on the lost check. You will be responsible for the bank's stop payment charge of \$25. This will be deducted from the total amount of the duplicate check.

*Returned Check Fee:* If a check that you deposit into your account is returned for insufficient funds or any other reason, you will be charged a fee equal to the amount of the bank penalty, which is \$4. Lorrie Olson, Senate Accounts Clerk, will notify you of all charges.

## V. Special Circumstances

### *A. Purchasing Exceptions*

#### 1. Food

Money in your 900 account may be spent on food, subject to University rules.

Organizations are allowed to purchase food using the recruitment/retention line in their budget. You may only use Cat. 312 (Recruitment/Retention)) for this expense. When a request for food is made to the Finance Committee, some form of advertisement for the upcoming meeting must be presented to the Finance Committee for the request to be considered. A form of advertisement must also be turned in with any purchase requisition for food items.

For purchases of food out of Cat. 312 (Recruitment/Retention) already budgeted to your group, a purchase requisition must be submitted to the Finance Chairman with a copy of a form of advertisement for the recruitment event. The requisition will then be passed in by the Finance Chairman to the Student Senate Accounts Office.

Organizations may come to the Finance Committee with requests to purchase food

for events with Student Activities Tax dollars. The Finance Committee will only approve such requests if it is deemed crucial and necessary to the purpose of the event. Approval must be by a three-fourths vote of the Committee.

Because we deal with numerous and varied contracts with talent being brought to the University, we realize that meals must be provided in some cases under specific circumstances. If circumstances require us to reimburse a performer for a restaurant-served meal, the performer must be made aware, when his or her contract is signed, that a maximum gratuity (tip) that will be paid by the Student Senate is 20%. The Student Senate Accounts Clerk will not pay for any gratuity over 20%.

## **2. Food at on-Campus Events**

In order to be able to prepare and serve food for an event, a caterer must have a Food Handler's License. The caterer must also have a Certificate of Insurance listing the University Of Rhode Island Board Of Governors for Higher Education and the State of Rhode Island as additional insured. Copies of both the License and Certificate must be on file with the Accounting Office before the event. This is true of all on-campus meetings and events that are sponsored by a Student Senate organization.

## **3. Promotional Items**

Promotional items costing less than \$5 are not considered gifts, provided they are made available to the general public and the general membership of the organization making the purchase.

## **4. Gifts**

No gifts shall be purchased with Student Activities tax funds. A gift is defined as any money or material that is given to an individual/organization, excluding minor items, which are necessary for the conduct of organization business. This includes but is not limited to funds for Scholarships, Charities, and Donations.

## **5. T-Shirts**

T-shirts may not be purchased from your budget without consent from the Finance Chair. In general, you must make a case for how the shirts will significantly enhance your organization's ability to fulfill its mission. This rule does not apply to purchases made entirely from your 900 account.

## **6. Tech Pro**

When using tech pro for an event there is no purchase order necessary, instead there will be a signed contract, before a tech pro contract can be processed it must be submitted to and signed off on by Lorrie Olson in the accounts office.

## ***B. Computers***

Under no circumstances will money be budgeted to groups for the purchase of computers or peripherals. Contingency money will also not be used for this purpose. The Senate will purchase at least one computer every October, which the Finance Committee will be charged with distributing. Groups with offices may submit bids for computers, citing the reasons why they need it. Notifications will be made as to when bids are to be submitted; remember to check your mailbox.

If the group determined to receive a computer already has a computer, that machine will be returned to the Finance Committee, who will redistribute it to a different group.

## ***C. Inventory***

Every year the Senate takes an inventory of all assets. Each group will be responsible in aiding the Senate in tracking their respective assets. As previously mentioned, it is the duty of the president and treasurer of each group to keep track of their group's assets. In the event that items are missing without being disposed of properly, the president and treasurer will be held personally financially responsible.

## ***D. Category Transfers***

The fact that money is in your account does not mean that you can use it for anything. It has been budgeted into categories for specific reasons based on what your group's executives presented during the budgeting process, and having excess money in your account shows that you have not spent it on what it was requested for. Do not attempt to liquidate your account at the end of the fiscal year.

Your account is broken down into a number of categories, (See Appendix B for a list of the category line items with their numbers.) You must have enough funds in the appropriate category in order to spend money. If you want to transfer money between categories, follow the procedure below.

Remember that your original budget requests should be adhered to; transferring from one category to another requires a justifiable rationale and approval is not guaranteed. Generally, if the money to be transferred is a result of good planning, the request will be viewed more favorably than if it is the result of bad planning.

Absolutely no category transfers are allowed from:

- Cat. 222 Advertising unless it is into Cat. 110 Copying/Printing
- Cat. 127 Co-Sponsorship

- Cat. 133 Specific Categories
- Cat. 112 Telephone
- Cat. 134 Stipends
- Cat. 312 Recruitment
- Cat. 433 Secretary/worker
- Cat. 123 First Night
- Cat. 805 Freak Day

Absolutely no category transfers are allowed into:

- Cat. 805 Student affairs committee work
- Cat. 312 Recruitment
- Cat. 134 Stipends
- Cat. 133 Specific
- Cat. 127 Co-sponsorship

Waivers to this may be granted under extreme circumstances with approval of the Finance Committee.

Here is a step-by-step list of procedures for a category transfer:

1. Obtain a Category Transfer Request form in the Senate office across from the senator's mailboxes.
2. Complete all information on the form; the President and Treasurer must sign the form.
3. The approval process for your Category Transfer depends on its size:
  - Transfers up to \$100 need approval of the Finance Chair only. Meet with the chair during his posted office hours.
  - Transfers between \$100 and \$1000 require the approval of the Finance Committee. Sign up for the Committee meeting.
  - Transfers over \$1000 require the review of the Finance Committee and the approval of the Full Senate. Sign up for the Finance Committee meeting.

If your transfer requires Committee or Senate approval, drop the form in the Completed Finance Paperwork box on the Senate Coordinator's desk and sign up for the next Finance meeting by no later than noon of the day of the meeting.

### ***E. Immediate Consideration***

According to its bylaws, the Senate is supposed to introduce bills one meeting before they are voted upon; this is to allow Senators to make informed decisions, and to allow the public to attend the meeting if they are interested in a bill. In the event that your paperwork is not filed in a timely fashion, your organization may request "immediate consideration" – a vote the same week the bill is introduced – from the

Finance Committee. There will be a levying of penalties if this occurs and the penalties are as follows:

- First Time: Warning
- Second Time: Fine, 10% of the request.
- Third Time and Thereafter: Fine, 25% of the request

### ***F. Blanket Purchase Orders***

Some organizations will want to frequently use the same vendor for routine tasks, e.g., Campus Copy, or the University mailing service. Blanket Purchase Orders authorize up to a certain amount to be spent with a single vendor for a single general purpose (e.g., educational flyers). Each time a purchase is actually made, a payment order and invoice must be submitted to the Accounting Office. This lifts the burden of using petty cash or filing a separate Purchase Requisition for each (small) purchase when your organization knows that it will make several such purchases, but not specifically what they will be.

### ***G. Events with Multiple Sponsors***

Senate-recognized groups can sponsor events with other Senate-recognized groups, or with unrecognized groups. While bills cannot be split for the purposes of the Senate accounting systems, different groups may pay for different parts of an event. In very limited cases, with the approval of the Finance Committee, a group may also contract with an unrecognized group to put on an event.

Certain rules do apply to these events, however. Most important is that the group informs the Finance Committee when they begin working with another group. If the other group is Senate recognized, the Finance Committee will simply make sure that the plans do not violate Finance policy and make recommendations on how to avoid violations. If the other group is not Senate recognized, the Finance committee will need information about the group and event to make sure that it meets Senate spending rules, and reserves the right to refuse to allow Student Activities Tax money to be spent on the event. In this case, 900 account funds may still be usable, unless the event violates Senate recognition policy, e.g., involves political party or religious organization affiliation.

Another rule is that if a Senate group schedules the space for the event, then any money collected must be placed in a cashbox checked out by that same group. Deductions will be made as described in section III.D.4. Failure to follow this policy will result, at a minimum, in your group's budget being fined for the full amount of the costs regardless of how much money was taken in by the event. Other sanctions may include loss of the group's budget or a SOARC complaint.

IMPORTANT: Sponsoring an event with another group is not a technique to get around Senate rules, or funnel Senate money to unrecognized groups. Doing so will result in severe penalties.

### ***H. Event-Related Damage***

Your organization must take all possible steps to avoid damage to organization or University property at your events. Both security and maintenance will notify the Senate of any damage to property, out of the ordinary clean-up expenses, or security breaches. If any of these occurs, your organization will be required to meet with the appropriate Student Senate Committees to discuss the problem. If abuses occur a second time within the same academic year, the Finance Committee will levy a penalty equal to the cost of the abuse and this money will be placed in Contingency. This money may be required to come from your Category 900 account.

### ***I. Tickets***

When a limited number of tickets are available for a Senate-sponsored event, URI undergraduate students have first priority. There must be a period, minimum four (4) hours long, at the beginning of ticket sales that is open to undergraduates only. Any Student Senate Organization must also offer a lower price for Students when holding an event involving ticket prices. All student-recognized organizations must use the Box Office to sell tickets for events. For exemptions, see the Finance Committee.

*IMPORTANT:* Violations of sales policy may result in the immediate termination of ticket sales.

When your tickets are printed, simply take them to the Memorial Union Student Involvement Intern (Union main office, M.U. 210) and sign a form that transfers the responsibility of tickets. After sales are over, the Box Office will put any remaining tickets in the safe. You must contact the Building Manager to release these tickets during the weekend or evenings. Ticket revenue will automatically be placed in your account and you will receive a receipt via your mailbox.

All tickets must be numbered consecutively. In the case of reserved seating, seat location acts as a substitute for the consecutive numbers. The Finance Chair must approve ticket designs; bring a proof sheet (a printout of the design on regular paper) to the Chair, who will sign the proof sheet if it is approved. Save this proof, as it will be necessary to resolve any later disputes about unauthorized designs.

If an organization does not wish to use the Box Office to sell tickets for an event, it

may sell tickets with a cash box at a booth in the Union with approval of the Finance Committee. Any other attempt to sell tickets will result in termination of the organization's planned event and possibly those planned for the remainder of the semester.

*NOTE:* The Student Senate Box Office is for the use of Student Senate recognized undergraduate organizations; however non-Student Senate groups will be allowed to use the Box Office in special cases. These groups will be charged a 5% service charge and will be responsible for picking up their ticket revenue at the end of ticket sales. No monies will be deposited into the Senate Accounting system. The Senate Accounts office will hold the money from sales in the safe, but only during the time that tickets are being sold.

The service charge will go towards the Box Office and the Senate Accounts Office for labor involved.

### *J. Variances*

Variances of Memorial Union policy are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If you wish to do something that is against the rules (e.g., scheduling a lounge, using more rooms than policy allows) and you have a compelling reason for wanting to do it (e.g., planning an event further ahead to book a popular speaker), you can request a variance.

Variance request forms are available in the Scheduling Office. Return the completed form at least two (2) weeks in advance of what you need varied. The Memorial Union Board of Directors will make a recommendation and will forward the variance request to the Director for final approval. Variance requests will be returned to the Scheduling Office and the organization must contact the Scheduling Office for the decision.

### *K. Summer Budgets*

Budgets close on the last day of classes unless a request to keep your budget open during the summer is approved by the Finance Chair. If your organization has a pressing need to operate during the summer, you may submit a request with a detailed explanation of the necessity, to be considered. This letter of request is due by no later than noon on the Friday before the last day of classes, or a date specified by the Finance Chair, whichever occurs first. Requests submitted after this date will not be considered.

If your budget is approved to remain open during the summer, at least one person with signatory power must be available to pay bills. The fiscal year ends June 30. To pay a bill from the previous year's budget you must have a purchase order submitted

during that fiscal year and an invoice, and you must be in receipt of the item prior to the end of the fiscal year.

If your budget is open over the summer you must check your mailbox at least weekly in order to receive bills. Lorrie Olson, Senate Accounts Clerk, will post her availability during the summer. She can admit you to the Senate office to pick up your mail on those days.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring events for First Night and you did not receive money from the “First Night Category”, you must request your budget to be open during the month of August. If you do not place a request in by the deadline you will not be allowed to sponsor events for this date.

### *L. Loans*

Loans can be a good way of funding events that will generate revenue. They can also be appropriate for large capital investments by organizations that have a good fund-raising track record.

A loan from the Student Senate is at no interest, but is a short-term loan; a loan must always be repaid by the end of the fiscal year (June 30). The Finance Committee may consider requests for exceptions to this rule; approval will require a two-thirds vote of the Committee.

Here is the step-by-step process for applying for a loan:

1. Pick up a Loan Application Form in the Senate office.
2. Fill it out completely. Both the President and Treasurer of the organization must sign it.
3. Leave the form in the box on the Finance Chair’s desk by no later than noon of the meeting day.
4. Sign up for the next available Finance meeting by noon of the meeting day.
5. Attend the Finance Meeting. Be prepared to answer any questions about your ability to repay the loan, what the money will be used for, etc. It is important to present a detailed plan for repayment.
6. If the Finance Committee approves the loan, you will be asked to attend the Senate meeting at which the loan will be considered. Loans are not final until approved by the Senate.

*IMPORTANT:* Your loan may be called due at anytime with one-week notice with a 2/3 approval of the Finance Committee if finance policy has been violated or fiscal irresponsibility is shown.

## 1. Delinquent Loans

You will receive a one-month notice prior to your loan's due date. If alternative payment arrangements have not been made and approved by the Finance Committee, the amount due will be deducted from your current fiscal year's budget. If there are insufficient funds in this year's budget, the money will be deducted from your organization's next fiscal year's budget. If this occurs, your organization may not request a (second) loan for one full fiscal year.

### *M. General Penalties*

The following is a list of the kinds of penalties that can be imposed upon organizations for violating finance policy. The general focus of penalties is to safeguard Student Activities Tax money, and also to hold individuals responsible for their actions, rather than penalizing entire organizations.

- Any violations of Finance Policy may result in the Finance Chair, or the Committee by a (3/4) vote, revoking signatory powers of a President/Treasurer of a Student Organization. Such action must be reported to the Senate at the next meeting and may be overridden by a majority vote.
- The Finance Committee may also levy fines, usually to be paid out of the organization's 900 account, if an organization has violated Finance policy.
- If at any time an organization falls below the required membership for their category of funding, that budget may be immediately frozen.
- Any equipment missing or thrown away without consent of the Finance Chair will be personally charged to the President and/or Treasurer of that organization.
- Failure to attend the Presidents meetings will now incur fiscal penalties, starting with a frozen budget, to be determined by the SOARC committee with the approval of the Finance Chair.
- Failure to attend any special finance meeting (such as finance 101 session held in September of each school year) will now incur fiscal penalties, starting with a frozen budget. In order to have your budget unfrozen you must attend an alternative meeting to learn the essentials of the Senate finance system, this meeting's time and place will be decided upon by the Finance Committee.
- Legal Violations will be dealt with to the fullest extent of the law.
- For penalties assigned to specific infringements of policies, see the sections of this handbook about those policies

### *N. Policy Exceptions*

The Finance Committee may make exceptions to policy on a case by case basis.

Decisions contrary to finance policy will require a  $\frac{3}{4}$  in favor for passage in committee and on the senate floor.

## VI. Appendices

### *A. Senate Timelines*

#### ➤ Finance Requests

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Attend Finance Meeting					
			Attend Senate Meeting	Turn in paperwork to Accounts		
		Submit payment order				

#### ➤ Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Meet with SPO					
				Submit Finance paperwork (if any), sign up for meeting		
	(Finance meeting)				(Get contract)	
	(Submit contract to Bruce Hamilton)		(Attend Senate meeting)	Turn in grants To Accounts (have contract Signed)	Submit Purchase Requisitions	
		Check mailbox For paperwork (submit Payment order For contract)		(Pick up check For contract if Weekend event)	First day Your event Can be! Payment Orders day after!	

➤ **Travel**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Get conference paperwork				Collect bids	
	Attend Finance Meeting					
			Attend Senate Meeting	Turn in paperwork to Accounts		
		Check mailbox	Submit Payment Orders			
	ALL paperwork due (final date)					
	Date of Travel					

➤ **Budgets**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Budget memo					
					Submit budget request	
	Finance Committee 1st Recommendation		Recommendations returned			
				Happy/unhappy notices due		
	Finance Committee budget appeals					
			Attend Senate Meeting			

## B. Budget Lines

Category Number	Category	Category Description
109	Office Supplies	Stationary supplies for groups with offices meeting Senate guidelines
110	Copying & Printing	Funds for copying and printing in the Senate office or through services
111	Postage	Funds for buying stamps & mailing supplies or postage through University Mailing
112	Telephone	Funds for telephone charges for groups meeting Senate guidelines
123	First Night	Event funding for First Night to welcome Freshmen to campus and introduce them to Senate and the Groups
124	Instruction	For purchasing the services of an off campus instructor as needed
127	Co-sponsorship	Funds for supporting other groups' activities; not available to the group that has this category
130	Programming	Used to put on events consistent with the mission of the group, for the student community
131	Secretary/Worker	Salary funds for an hourly clerical employee
132	Security	Money allocated to a group to pay for Campus security at events -- this is now generally done through the open Security Contingency Fund
133	Specific	When a group has a particular event during the year with a predictable budget, funds may be allocated to this category for that event
134	Stipends	Funds to be dispersed to group officers on a regular basis as compensation -- not hourly pay
136	Senate Purchasing	Salary funds to be dispersed to Senate purchasing personnel
138	Box Office	Hourly pay funds for Union Box Office employees
170	Gas Reimbursement	Funds to be reimbursed to group members according to Senate policy for gas used on Senate or mission-related club business
211	Maintenance & Repair	For taking care of equipment a group already has. Under special circumstances, can include replacement of minor items (e.g., printer cartridges)
213	Operational Costs	Functions or payments required for groups to continue operating are paid from this account (e.g., FCC license fees)
221	Printing	Large printing contracts are paid out of this line, as for Renaissance or the Good Five Cent Cigar

222	Advertising	Used for both media advertising (e.g., newspaper ads) and on-campus flyers or table tents
225	Speakers & Talent	Engaging speakers or off-campus talent for events such as drummers for Capoiara performances
229	Delivery	Funds to be paid for delivery of services or items
230	Equipment Rental	Either for renting significant amounts of equipment, or for equipment apart from an event (e.g., extra microphones for a recording session)
231	Books & Magazines	Money allocated for purchasing magazines, journals, or reference books or movies related to the mission of the club
232	Photo Supplies	Money for film, development materials, or commercial developing
234	Utilities	For paying monthly utilities (not including telephone) like electric.
235	Insurance & Taxes	Funds for payment of insurance and tax on capital items (e.g., the Sailing Center)
236	Convention /Registration Fees	Fee payment for circuit fees (e.g., URI Winter Guard) or registration for mission-related conventions
312	Recruitment /Retention	Money which can be used by a group to recruit new members; or retain old members
313	Lawyer	Stipend for the Senate lawyer; payment for time made available to students for consultation
400	Capital Improvements	Funds for the purchase of capital items, whose value exceeds \$150
700	Travel & Lodging	Money allocated for travel from & to URI and transportation and lodging while away; used when going to conferences or tournaments, or on off campus activities
720	Awards/Uniforms	Funds for the purchase of awards to be given away, or uniforms to be retained by the club
802	Auditing Expenses	Payment to the accounting firm that audits the Senate's books annually
804	URI Day	Funding for the annual Road to the State House event on Higher Education Day
805	General Committee	Miscellaneous funds for the committees of the Student Senate to do committee-related work
807	Homecoming	Funding for homecoming to help Student Senate sponsor an event
899	Non-Senate Events	Student Tax funds to be distributed to groups not primarily funded by Senate for events
900	Fund-Raising Account	Profits from fund-raising events. To be used as the group sees fit