

To Dean Bonner and the Division of Student Affairs:

The 2016-2017 University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board would like to formally recommend that the student organization Student Government Board (SGB) receives Formula Group status.

SGB is a Student Affairs Affiliated Group (SAAG) that promotes the needs, concerns, and welfare of the non-CGS undergraduate student population at the University. The organization provides a multitude of services to its constituents (e.g. legal services, funding to attend research conferences, and crisis relief funds), in addition to allocating approximately \$1 million to undergraduate student organizations. SGB has offered numerous programs over the past years including Mind Body Peace Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, and Safety Fair to educate our students on their own well-being, in addition to events such as Panthers and Politics and the TEDx lectures to help our students become better-informed on the issues surrounding them. The SGB Board Members and Committees also pursue several initiatives throughout the year to ensure the concerns and needs of students are being met, but have been met with several obstacles over the years as the organization is held to the SAAG allocations process.

Each spring semester, the outgoing Board is tasked with developing a budget for the upcoming semester of programming. This is often done without consulting the new Board Members and Committee Chairs, and it forces the new members to adapt their initiatives to whatever was budgeted for in the previous year. The needs of the undergraduate student population are constantly evolving, and by being constrained by funding for specific events and initiatives approved 6 months prior, it makes it very difficult to meet these needs. Additionally, each semester it has felt uncomfortable that SGB is allowed to approve its own budget, and the policies laid out in the Allocations Manual make it difficult to represent and engage the undergraduate student body as SGB cannot advertise their services to the same extent as other formula groups with purchased giveaways, apparel, and advertising. In previous years SGB members have personally paid for these items, which places a financial strain on our members.

If Student Government Board were to become a Formula Group, the recommended yearly allocation from the Student Activities Fee would be 2.0%. Since Fiscal Year 12, the amount of money received by SGB through the Allocations Process has declined from \$76,217.62 (2.95% of the Student Activities Fund) to \$32,327.69 in Fiscal Year 16 (1.21%). Based on the average allocated amount for the past five years and rising programming costs, this 2.0% funding request would not significantly increase our funding but rather would lessen restrictions in terms of how our funds are spent. Additionally, SGB will not carry over more than 10% of the annual allocation into the next fiscal year, a policy already implemented in the formula group funding structures for Pitt Program Council and WPTS Radio.

Typical SGB expenses over the past few years have included various committee expenses, funding our student services, programs such as the above-mentioned TEDx and Panthers and Politics, Board expenses for lobbying conferences, and other operating expenses such as supplies and our administrative budget. To ensure that the Student Activities Fund is being spent appropriately, a general yearly budget will be assembled by the SGB President and Vice President and Chief of Finance, and then presented to the SGB Advisor. As more specific

expenses arise throughout the year, the SGB President shall present these to the advisor for approval, and all purchases will be made public on the SGB website through semesterly financial reports. These will be compiled by the Vice President and Chief of Finance.

To summarize, transitioning SGB to a Formula Group status will alleviate several frustrations and difficulties in supporting campus initiatives and programming. Having a constant stream of funding will allow SGB to budget themselves more efficiently with each year, and will relieve some restrictions that have kept SGB from effectively engaging and interacting with the undergraduate student population. SGB would maintain transparency by publishing spending reports after each semester, and would be able to turn to their advisor for all spending approvals instead of approving their own expenditures. Becoming a Formula Group would give SGB more liberty in their operations, and will help to make the organization more visible on campus and empower them to reach more students. This initiative has been supported by and pushed forward by the 2015-2016 Board and Allocations Committee in addition to the current Board and Committee, and the entirety of SGB would benefit greatly if awarded Formula Group status. If you have any questions about this recommendation, please feel free to contact me at SGBPres@pitt.edu. I thank you in advance for your time.

Best regards,

Natalie Dall
President | Student Government Board