**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

*The Budget Policy Book Fall 2019*

This Budget Policy Book is written in accordance with the Bylaws of Student Government to provide regulations for how Student Government creates its annual budget and stipends. As an organization entrusted with large amounts of student money every year, it is imperative that Student Government allocates this money in a way that is transparent, fair, and aimed at the best results for the student body. It is the purpose of this policy book to provide rules to those ends. As per the Bylaws, these rules are binding on Student Government members.

**ARTICLE I. JURISDICTION**

**Section 1. Matters within the jurisdiction of this policy book**

This jurisdiction of this policy book extends to all matters involved in the creation of the yearly budget and stipends of Student Government. Such jurisdiction includes the following matters:

1. The process used by the Undergraduate Senate Finance Committee in producing the legislation that establishes the budget and stipends
2. The solicitation of budget proposals from interested parties by the Finance Committee
3. The conduct of Student Government regarding the Budget Advisory Committee
4. The production and publication of budget and stipend justifications by the Finance Committee

**Section 2. Matters outside the jurisdiction of this policy book**

This jurisdiction of this policy book does not extend to any matter concerning the administration Student Government finances after they have been allocated by the Undergraduate Senate. These activities, which are performed by the Comptroller, are the jurisdiction of the Finance Policy Book.

**ARTICLE II. THE BUDGET PROCESS**

**Section 1. Overview**

The budget and stipend creation process shall consist of the following events: the establishment of the Finance Committee, budget information sessions, proposals and hearings, public input, Finance Committee deliberation, presentation of Finance Committee proposals to the Undergraduate Senate, adoption of the budget and stipends, and publication of budget and stipend justifications by the Finance Committee. The Chair of the Finance of the Finance Committee shall hold primary responsibility for ensuring that the budget process operates properly.

**Section 2. Establishment of the Finance Committee**

At the beginning of each Undergraduate Senate term, the Finance Committee shall meet at least once within two weeks of its selection by Senate members in order to elect a Vice Chair and briefly discuss its activities for the year. At or before this meeting, the Chair shall provide the other Committee members with introductory information on Student Government finances and their role as Committee members.

**Section 3. Budget information sessions**

The Chair shall hold at least two information sessions for any member of Student Government to learn about the budget and stipend creation process. The Chair must publicly announce the time of these sessions at least one week prior to the first session. The Chair may hold additional information sessions and they should be as accommodating as possible with Student Government members who request information. The Chair shall present to all of Student Government before the BAC meeting what the budget process is during a regularly scheduled meeting.

**Section 4. Proposals and hearings**

Subsection i. Purpose

The Finance Committee shall entertain proposals regarding the next year’s budget and stipends from organizational stakeholders at hearings in which Committee members can discuss the proposals with their respective stakeholders in order to be better informed when creating the budget and stipends.

Subsection ii. Stakeholders

Any member of Student Government who receives a stipend shall be considered a stakeholder regarding the creation of the next year’s stipends, invited to provide their input to the Committee on the stipend creation process. Executives, executives-elect, directors of departments with budgets, and official directors-designate of departments with budgets shall be considered budget stakeholders, invited to provide their input to the Committee on the budget creation process. The purpose of enumerating stakeholders in this policy book is to ensure that relevant interests are included, not to exclude any individuals who are not specifically listed.

Subsection iii. Preliminary proposals

When the Chair announces the time of the budget information sessions, they shall invite stakeholders, as defined in this section, to submit optional, preliminary proposals. If stakeholders submit preliminary proposals, the Committee shall consider them and provide their feedback to the to the submitting stakeholders in anticipation of the later, final proposal. The purpose of preliminary proposals is to allow Committee members and stakeholders to have a more developed conversation about the relevant proposals. When soliciting preliminary proposals, the Chair shall inform stakeholders that submitting a preliminary proposal would allow them to more effectively communicate their interests to the Committee. Preliminary proposals may be accompanied by a hearing, but a hearing is not required.

Subsection iv. Final proposals

Shortly after the spring elections, the Chair shall invite all stakeholders to submit their final budget and stipend proposals. In this invitation, the Chair shall explain that budget proposals should include a specific amount of money requested, the spending records of that ongoing year for that department, and an explanation for the amount requested. All proposals should be submitted and hearings held before April 20, but earlier proposals and hearings allow for more extended discussion among Committee members, which is preferable. All final proposals are expected to be accompanied by a hearing, but the Committee shall not refuse to entertain a proposal if the proposing stakeholder does not attend a hearing.

Subsection v. Hearings

Hearings shall be meetings of the Finance Committee attended by stakeholders in which stakeholders present their proposals and field questions from Committee members. In addition to proposing stakeholders, only individuals who have signed financial non-disclosure forms, as provided by the Comptroller, may attend hearings.

**Section 5. Public input**

The Chair shall be responsible for holding at least one open forum in which students can provide their input on the budget and stipends. At this meeting, the Chair shall provide the figures for that year’s budget and stipends and information on their use. The Chair shall work with the Secretary to ensure that this meeting is adequately publicized.

**Section 6. Finance Committee deliberation**

Subsection i. Introduction of legislation

Before the spring elections, the Chair shall submit two empty bills through the Senate to be referred to the Finance Committee for first reading. After the hearings, the Committee shall use these bills to establish the budget and stipends, respectively.

Subsection ii. BAC allocation

After the Budget Advisory Committee determines Student Government’s total budget and stipend allocations, the Chair shall report these figures to the Committee for use in the final budget and stipend creations.

Subsection iii. Internal debate

Neither bill may be discharged unless it is approved by at least four Committee members. Otherwise, debate on the bills may occur in the normal fashion.

**Section 7. Presentation to the Undergraduate Senate**

Once the budget and stipend bills are discharged from the Finance Committee, the Chair shall present on their contents to the Undergraduate Senate at the meeting during which they are considered. The positions presented by the Chair must reflect the will of the Committee as a whole, and the Chair may not insert their personal opinion on the budget and stipends if it differs from that of the Committee. The chair will offer insights on why certain decisions were made by the Committee. This presentation will serve as the explanation to both the Senate and Community at large.

**Section 8. Mid-Year Budget Assessment**

Once the budget is passed by the Undergraduate Senate, the chair shall conduct, with the advisement of the Finance Committee, an Independent Inquiry following up on how the various Student Government organizations are utilizing their funds while also assessing the Committee allocation. This inquiry shall be the sole responsibility of the Chair and shall culminate in a presentation to the Senate. This shall take effect for the next budget cycle in 2020.

**ARTICLE III. THE BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Section 1. Expression of Senate policy**

Pursuant to Article X, section 2(iii) of the Bylaws, this policy book represents the Undergraduate Senate’s policy toward the Budget Advisory Committee and thus the required policy of Student Government.

**Section 2. Student Government representation**

As per the Bylaws, Student Government is represented on BAC by the Chair of the Finance Committee, the President, and the Comptroller. Any of those members may send any other Student Government member to represent them as a proxy, provided that that person does not also fill another position on BAC.

**Section 3. Standing Student Government allocation policy**

It shall be the policy of Student Government to insist on adherence to the 2014 student referendum, whereby Student Government may be allocated between 45 and 55 percent of the total student activity fee revenue, notwithstanding any subsequent, authoritative input from the student body. It shall also be the policy of Student Government not to accept any reduction in its total budget allocation greater than five percent year-to-year as long as the overall parameters for distribution of revenue amongst student groups remains the same.

**Section 4. Pre-BAC meeting**

Subsection i. Executive Conference

Before any BAC meeting, the Finance Committee Chair, President, and Comptroller shall meet to discuss the objectives of Student Government for that BAC meeting.

Subsection ii. Government Notification

The chair shall inform the whole of Student Government when the BAC meeting is