# MERCYHURST STUDENT GOVERNMENT FINANCE CODE

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Article I. Purpose

The Finance Code of Mercyhurst Student Government, herein referred to as MSG, shall have the purpose to govern the financial system of MSG.

Article II. Authority

No part of this Finance Code may supersede any part of the MSG Constitution. If any part of this Finance Code is found to be in conflict with the MSG Constitution, the pertinent Finance Code shall be suspended until such time as that part is amended in such a fashion that it is no longer in conflict with the MSG Constitution.

It is the MSG Treasurer’s responsibility, along with assistance from the President and Advisor, to ensure the Finance Code’s accuracy and practicality in relation to the evolution of funding and fiscal practices.

**Article III. Mercyhurst Student Government Funding**

The purpose of funding is to provide the opportunity for MSG, its committees, Senators, Student Activities Council herein referred to as SAC, and Recognized Student Clubs/Organizations, herein referred to as RSCOs, to enhance the overall experience of the traditional, undergraduate, full-time students at Mercyhurst College Erie campus.

For RSCO Funding, please refer to Article IV Section 4.

Section 1. Income

The primary source of income for the MSG shall be in the form of the Student Activities Fee, commonly referred to as the FTE Allotment.

This amount shall be set by the MSG.

1. The current fee shall be slated at fifty-five dollars ($55) per Academic Term and is paid by all traditional, regular, full-time, undergraduate students.
2. Any change of the Student Activities Fee must be proposed by the MSG Executive Board or Senate and approved by both a majority of the Budget and Finance Committee and two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate. The change must be made during the Fall Term and submitted to the College Controller no later than Dec. 1.

Section 2. Funding Procedures

1. Any purchase made with MSG funds must be made through one of two methods:
   1. Internal purchase: Bookstore, Dining facilities, One Card Office, and DocuCenter.
   2. External purchase: through a vendor, contractual agreement, credit card, or other negotiated purchase requiring a check to be issued.
      1. For all external purchases, payment must be requisitioned through the MSG Treasurer in a timely manner.
         * If an item is to be paid in advance, a check requisition should be submitted two weeks prior to the date when that check is needed.
         * If an item is to be paid ex post facto, a check requisition should be submitted immediately upon receipt of an invoice.
2. The MSG Treasurer shall establish a deadline for check requisitions and shall make that date known to all parties involved with MSG funding.
   1. All check requisitions must be accompanied by the proper documentation which includes a receipt, contract, invoice, or some other document clearly indicating the amount, service performed, and the party the check should be made out to.
      1. All receipts submitted to the MSG Treasurer must be original and itemized, clearly indicating items purchased, the costs, and the vendor purchased from.
3. MSG is tax-exempt in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All purchases shall be made with a tax-exempt form available from the MSG Treasurer or with other appropriate documentation from the College’s Business Office.
4. In the case of a reimbursement, MSG will not be responsible for paying the tax on the purchase; all purchasers are advised that tax exempt forms must always be used.
5. The MSG Treasurer shall be responsible for informing the MSG senate of the state of the budget and at the first meeting of each month the senate shall be given a copy of the budget, as well as an oral report of the state of the finances.
6. Any movement of funds from or within the budget exceeding five hundred dollars ($500) must be submitted to the entire Senate and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present.

**Section 3. College Accounts**

1. Investment Account
   1. On August 1st of each year, the MSG Treasurer will be responsible for making a deposit into the Investment Account.
      1. All funds unspent during the previous fiscal year shall be deposited into the Investment Account once funds for the following fiscal year have been secured and deposited into the MSG checking account.
      2. The purpose of the Investment Account is three-fold. First, it gives the MSG Treasurer and Budget & Finance Committee a better idea of budgeting figures. Second, it allows for the purchase of large special projects and/or increased funding for large events. Lastly, it provides MSG with financial support when student enrollment numbers do not meet the expectations.
   2. In order to withdraw from the Investment Account, a motion must be made from the MSG Senate and passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority.
   3. At any given time, there must be a five thousand dollar ($5,000) minimum in the Investment Account.
   4. The MSG Treasurer is responsible for reporting the total invested amount and the total yield from said investment at the beginning of each Fiscal Year, Academic Year, and per request of the Senate.
2. FTE Account
   1. The MSG President and Treasurer must meet once per academic term, preferably in the last week of the term, with a representative of the Business Office to reconcile the FTE account and address any issues that may have occurred during the previous term.

**Article IV. Mercyhurst Student Government Budget**

**Section 1. Budget Description**

MSG shall follow a budget established in the spring of the previous fiscal year.

The budget shall be prepared by the MSG Treasurer and facilitated through the Budget & Finance Committee following the process outlined in Article IV.

**Section 2. Budgeting Process**

1. In order to obtain a proper perspective of budgetary needs, the MSG Treasurer shall prepare Budget Application packets and distribute them to the proper constituencies per the process listed below:
   1. Budget Applications distributed to RSCOs – *second week in January*
   2. Budget Applications distributed to line items – *last week in January*
   3. Budget Application Workshops facilitated by MSG Treasurer – *last week in January into the first week of February.*
   4. All Budget Applications due to MSG Treasurer – *by last day of regular classes of winter term.*
   5. Initial Budget & Finance Committee meetings – *first two weeks in March.*
   6. Budget & Finance Hearings with RSCOs – *third week in March, as applicable.*
   7. Budget presented by MSG Treasurer to MSG Senate – *last week in March.*
      1. The budget shall be presented no later than the next to last meeting of the body prior to Executive Board elections.
      2. The budget will be either voted upon that meeting or tabled for further discussion and adjustments with a vote taking place at the next meeting.
2. The following line items will have budgetary request forms distributed to their designees, herein referred to as Budget Line Directors:
   1. Committee Expenditures – *President*
   2. Committee Projects – *President*
   3. Government Awards - *President*
   4. MSG Events – *Event Coordinator*
   5. MSG/SAC Co-Sponsored Events – *Event Coordinator/SAC Chair*
   6. President’s Fund – *President*
   7. Public Relations – *Public Relations Coordinator*
   8. To SAC – *SAC Chair*
   9. Christmas on Campus – *Director of the Student Union & Student Activities*
   10. Transportation Services – *Secretary, Director of the Student Union & Student Activities*
3. The Budget Line Directors of the above mentioned budget lines shall provide the Budget & Finance Committee a thorough description of their funding for the past year, how they feel that amount worked out over the past year, and what the need will be the following year.
   1. If need be, a person who is chosen or elected for the position the following year feels the amount is not enough in the budget line which they are responsible (non RSCO Funding), they can submit an appeal during the first two weeks of the Fall Term to the Budget & Finance Committee following the procedures outlined in Article IV, Section 5.
4. There shall be a minimum established for the SAC budget, which shall be no less than twenty percent (20%) of the total MSG Operating Budget.
   1. The Laker Spirit Club, herein referred to as LSC, shall have a minimum established budget, which shall be no less than ten percent (10%) of the total SAC Operating Budget.

**Section 3. Policies and Regulations on Specific Line Items**

1. The “Presidents Fund” is a line item for use at the discretion of the MSG President which may not be used for personal gain and it may not exceed the amount of five hundred dollars ($500.00).
2. The “Officer Travel” line item is intended to off-set travel expenses incurred by MSG Executive Board members after graduation and before the start of fall classes.
   1. There will be a maximum reimbursement of one hundred dollars ($100.00) available to each of the seven (7) executive board members when traveling to the college for MSG related business.
   2. Valid travel expenses will only include the cost of gas which will be decided by the number of miles driven. A Travel Log Form must be filled out and attached with original receipts in order to receive reimbursement. Reimbursement per mile will be set at the College rate and shall not exceed total spent.
   3. Reimbursement will not be given for travel when the intent of the trip is for personal purposes or moving back to campus.
3. The “Philanthropy” line item is designed to match monetary requests put forth by RSCOs and sent to non-profit organizations.
   1. RSCOs may request up to three hundred and fifty dollars ($350.00) to be matched throughout the course of one (1) academic year. The amount of philanthropy available will be allocated per term, by taking the total amount of money in the philanthropy line item and divided evenly among the three terms.
   2. Any left over Philanthropy funds not used in a given term will roll over to the next term.
   3. Philanthropy requests will first be reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee after which a recommendation will be presented to the MSG Senate for approval by a majority of the members present.
   4. Upon the approval of the request, the RSCO will need to deposit the money into their account with the Business Office. A check requisition must also be filled out for the deposited amount, made out to the charity, and turned into the Business Office. After the check has been cut, the RSCO must then deliver the college check to the MSG Treasurer and a matching check will be cut. Both will be sent out by the MSG Treasurer with a letter of explanation.
   5. College employees, offices, and departments not falling in the category of RSCOs will not be permitted to request philanthropy.
   6. A RSCO must actively participate in the event/fundraiser to request philanthropy. Money must be deposited in their College Account and not another RSCO’s Account.
   7. A RSCO may not solicit any other RSCO for money to give to or to use as philanthropy.
   8. A RSCO may request additional philanthropy after April 1st and no later than 1 week prior to the last MSG meeting of the year.
      1. The 2nd request may not exceed three hundred and fifty dollars ($350) and will be reviewed on a case by case basis by Budget and Finance Committee.
      2. The request will no longer be accepted once the Philanthropy Line Item has been exhausted for the Fiscal Year.

**Section 4. RSCO Funding**

1. Beginning Spring Term Two Thousand and Six (2006), all RSCOs must have obtained a copy of the Finance Code, read it, and have signed a “Statement of Understanding” provided by the MSG Treasurer.
   1. Each RSCO must also have at least one representative attend training sessions offered by the MSG Treasurer.
      1. Sessions shall be offered in the winter term explaining the Budget Application process and in the fall explaining the spending procedures for RSCOs.
2. Each RSCO in good standing with MSG and the Office of the Student Union & Student Activities is eligible to apply for RSCO Funding.
   1. Good standing shall be defined as:
      1. Having resubmitted a current constitution
      2. Having resubmitted their Year-end Re-application Form.
      3. Having resubmitted their member roster.
3. The Budget & Finance Committee will evaluate each RSCO Budget Application on the individual merits of that request. The Committee will determine the appropriation of the RSCO’s budget by including all but not limited to the:
   1. Degree of positive promotion and reflection of the mission of both Mercyhurst College and MSG.
   2. Appeal of the appropriation to the student body through activities and programs.
   3. Expected student participation in planned programs, with particular attention to the dollars-per-student ratio.
   4. Appropriate historical budget expenditures and uses.
   5. Overall benefits offered to the students.
4. Following the purchase of any supplies, services, and/or other merchandise, original receipts must be turned into the MSG Treasurer no later than seventy-two (72) hours following the purchase. The only exception to this rule is circumstances where the RSCO representative has gained approval prior to the purchase that allows that representative to present the receipts at a later, agreed upon time.
   1. The following items are prohibited from being purchased with MSG funds:
      1. Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, their paraphernalia, and any items promoting these products.
      2. Philanthropic gifts.
      3. Political contributions.
      4. Anything violating the Mercyhurst College Student Conduct Code.
      5. Personal items.
      6. Expenses for meetings not open to the college community.
      7. Membership, conference, or competitions fees.
5. Travel
   1. Any RSCO planning to include travel expenses in their RSCO Budget Application shall include a Travel Authorization Form (TAF).
      1. The form must be completed in its entirety, with the best estimate for fields in which definite answers are unavailable (i.e. dates, exact amounts, etcetera).
   2. MSG will provide limited funding for RSCO travel, with travel expenses in an RSCO’s Budget Application not to exceed forty percent (40%) of total amount requested.
   3. Priority consideration will be given to on-campus events. RSCOs are encouraged to keep this in mind when planning their overall budgets.
6. Due to the nature of the large amount of money being budgeted, an “Interim Break Reduction” policy will be in effect unless waived by the Budget & Finance Committee.
   1. In effect, if a RSCO has not used forty percent (40%) of its funding by the second Friday in December, the RSCOs MSG allocated budget will be adjusted to sixty percent (60%) of its original amount.
      1. If a RSCO were to, for example, plan a majority of its programming in the spring due to the weather and/or other factors, an application may be submitted to waive the Interim Break Reduction.
         * The Budget & Finance Committee will evaluate the application, which must be submitted before the second Friday in December and promptly determine if the RSCO will be granted the waiver.
7. The Budget & Finance Committee shall also determine an amount in the RSCO Funding line item each spring during the budgeting process to leave unbudgeted for funds available as “Startup Funds” for newly recognized RSCOs.
8. RSCOs have one academic term from their date of recognition to request the funds of up to two hundred dollars ($200), but may not be requested if the RSCO receives a general budget allotment.
9. Each RSCO will have the option of applying for and maintaining an account within the college Business Office.
   1. The RSCO advisor must email the Business Office to begin the process of establishing the RSCO account. College procedures for that account will be in effect.
10. Any RSCO not adhering to the rules outlined in the Finance Code shall be held responsible for the following penalties should they occur in an academic year:
    1. First Offense – a freeze will be placed on the RSCO for 60 days, a period in which the RSCO will not be able to utilize monies allocated by MSG.
    2. Second Offense – a freeze will be placed on the RSCO budget for the remainder of the academic year. In addition, this will be a consideration when the RSCO submits a Budget Application the following spring.
    3. Third Offense – the RSCO will lose their recognition from both MSG and the Office of Student Union & Student Activities for the period of three full Academic Terms. This RSCO shall also receive no start-up funds upon renewed recognition.

**Section 5. Appeals to Budget Decisions**

1. Any RSCO or MSG Budget Line Director who believes that the amount allocated to their RSCO or line is insufficient shall be able to submit an Appeals Application.
   1. An Appeals Application must be submitted by the deadline set and announced by the MSG Treasurer, and will be addressed immediately by the Budget & Finance Committee.
      1. The Budget & Finance Committee has one week to debate the application and during that time must set up an Appeals Hearing with the RSCO or MSG Budget Line Director to allow their case to be stated.
2. The Budget & Finance Committee shall provide a final determination, in writing, to the RSCO or MSG Budget Line Director one week following their Application submission.

**Article V. The Budget & Finance Committee**

**Section 1. Consistency**

1. The Budget & Finance Committee shall consist of the following:
   1. MSG Treasurer
   2. MSG President
   3. SAC Chair
   4. SAC Financial Secretary
   5. Three MSG Senators nominated by the Treasurer and approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the MSG Senate.
   6. MSG Advisor (non-voting)
   7. SAC Advisor (non-voting)

**Section 2. Quorum**

The Committee shall have a quorum of five (5) voting members and one (1) non-voting member present for business to be official.

**Section 3. Responsibilities**

The Budget & Finance Committee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Approving the budget as prepared by the Treasurer.
2. Approving all RSCO budget applications during Spring Term.
3. Conducting any research needed to make proper determinations when budgeting RSCO allocations.
4. Approve any further request from RSCOs for funding.
5. Approving line breakdowns, i.e. SAC Budget, Major Events, etcetera.

**Section 4. Meetings**

1. The Budget &Finance Committee shall meet as necessary during the Academic Year, and will meet regularly at specified times during the Budget Application Processes as outlined in Article II, Section 2, Subset A.
2. The Budget & Finance Committee will be available as needed by the MSG Senate, Executive Board, and RSCOs for appeals, hearings, etcetera.
3. The MSG Treasurer and SAC Financial Secretary shall meet weekly to reconcile their respective budgets in regards to SAC, with appropriate documentation kept on file for auditing purposes.
4. The MSG Treasurer, MSG Event Coordinator, SAC Financial Secretary, and SAC Chair shall also meet as needed to reconcile their respective budgets in regards to major events, with appropriate documentation kept on file for auditing purposes.

Article VI. Compliance

All funding procedures facilitated with funds belonging to the MSG shall abide by this code.

All members of MSG serving in any capacity (including those RSCOs who have requested and have been allocated funds) must comply with the Finance Code, unless such compliance is in direct conflict with the MSG Constitution, the Finance Code of Mercyhurst College, or any State or Federal laws and regulations. Willful and/or deliberate disregard of the Finance Code shall be sent to the Judicial Board for review and recommendation.

Article VII. Amendments

It is the MSG Treasurer’s responsibility to update the Finance Code throughout the summer. At all other times, the Budget & Finance Committee shall be responsible for amendments to the Finance Code as needed. The Budget & Finance Committee, in their first meeting of an academic year, shall review the Finance Code and discuss any changes that were proposed by the MSG Treasurer during the summer and determine if any changes should be made.

The MSG Treasurer shall then present the updated Finance Code to the Budget & Finance Committee and the MSG Senate. For any wording or language changes, a simple majority vote shall be needed to pass. For any monetary or number changes, a two-thirds (2/3) vote shall be needed to pass.