Black Graduate and Professional Student Association

January 24, 2014

Student Services Fee Request for the 2014 - 2015 Academic Year

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Address

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“We acknowledge that the Fee Committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any differences between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not of the Fee Committee.”

Evetta Inman Alissa Grier

Preparer’s Name Co-Preparer’s Name

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Preparer’s Email Co-Preparer’s Email

Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes________ No _______ X____

If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):


Project / Program Support: X Technical Assistance: X Other (List):

Budget

- SSF Dollar Amount Requested $13,340.00
- Total Annual Organization Budget $15,465.36
- Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $8,770.00
Section I: Narrative

History

BGAPSA was founded at the University of Minnesota in 2003, and remains the only student-run graduate organization that represents the needs and concerns of all Black graduate and professional students across the entire spectrum of the African Diaspora.

After remaining largely dormant for nearly five years, BGAPSA was revitalized in 2008 by a concerned cadre of students. To initiate and facilitate this revitalization, BGAPSA began a range of ambitious and proactive projects to address areas of social networking, community outreach, and service. Efforts are also continually being made to actively recruit members through coordination with the Graduate Diversity Office as well as a gradual increase in the type and breadth of BGAPSA programming, for example, beginning the year with a welcome barbecue. As a result, interest in BGAPSA has grown substantially from this initial group of four enrolled students and two alumni who sought to revive the program in 2008 and currently boasts an email listserv of over 400 subscribers.

During the 2010-2011 school year, thanks in no small part to Student Services Fees funding, BGAPSA's growth has developed an even greater support system to aid in the academic excellence and professional success of Black graduate students on the University of Minnesota campus and better serve the surrounding Twin Cities communities. Both the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years brought about many transitions for the organization. In an effort to once again breathe fresh air into and revitalize the organization, the executive board implemented social activities and fostered relationships between graduate and undergraduate students that would increase participation and relevance of the organization. BGAPSA is greatly anticipating even more new and exciting activities for the 2014-2015 school year, and believe that the operations and programs of the organization could greatly benefit from the support of SSF funding.

Mission

BGAPSA exists to combat isolation, engage, and support graduate and professional students of African descent in their pursuit to graduation by building a community where they might express their successes and stresses, participate in social events and educational experiences, and engage in the broader community through service. As an organization, BGAPSA endeavors to ensure that as we grow we continue to keep this central purpose in mind. In order to ensure that we have a variety of meaningful opportunities to engage our membership, the organization is striving to host more academic forums and community involvement projects than in past years.

While focused on Black graduate and professional students across all programs and from all backgrounds, BGAPSA welcomes all students who are dedicated to its vision and its goals.
Moreover, BGAPSA’s unique emphasis on community and service translates into a close and collaborative relationship with numerous organizations at the University and outside the University.

**Relationship with organizations of like mission**

BGAPSA’s mission is closely related to that of GAPSA’s, an organization whose main focus is to provide a supportive and nurturing atmosphere for all graduate and professional students on campus. Both GAPSA and BGAPSA work to encourage the efforts and interests of graduate and professional students in various departments, programs, schools and offices.

However, BGAPSA is different, in that the organization more closely focuses on the specific needs and interests of students of color, specifically students of African descent. BGAPSA also provides identity resources, programs, and activities that might be useful to this particular cross-section of graduate and professional students.

Furthermore, community engagement and service are essential to the mission of BGAPSA. Hence, BGAPSA works closely with sister organizations such as the Black Law Students Association, the Humphrey Students of Color Association, and the Black Student Union.

This past year, during the Fall 2012 semester, BGAPSA was able to partner with the Multicultural and Academic Excellence Ambassadors for our Each One, Reach One event, which assisted in facilitating conversations about graduate school from the perspectives of graduate students. This event also included a panel of staff from various graduate programs, and equity and diversity offices across campus. Through this conversation, undergraduate students of color were able to receive pertinent information that would inform their decisions about options post-graduation.

It bears noting that, in spite of the specificity of its mission and agenda, BGAPSA is open to all graduate and professional students and works to create a positive, community-oriented environment that is accepting and accommodating to students needs, as well as being socially and/or academically beneficial to all that participate in the organization. This point is being stressed here because, as the only ethnic organization that spans across all graduate and professional schools, our membership is understandably quite diverse.

**Need assessment and relevance**

According to the Office for Diversity in Graduate Education, over 6,047 students of color (U.S. Citizens and permanent residents), or approximately 13 percent of the student body population, are pursuing degrees on the Twin Cities campus. Of these students, over 750 are enrolled in graduate programs. It is important for BGAPSA and similar organizations that are dedicated to the support of various minority groups to serve as forum, haven, and collective voice for students who are not of the majority.
Organizations such as BGAPSA provide students with the opportunity to interact with individuals with similar backgrounds and interests who, because of what could be perceived as the “compartmentalized” nature of the various colleges and departments at the University, they might not have previously had the chance to meet if the organization did not exist.

BGAPSA looks to meet the needs of students of African descent by hosting both academic and social events, as well as volunteering opportunities and by providing access to an array of other resources, programs and activities that might be beneficial to minority students. In the meantime, BGAPSA’s mission transcends its core membership. Hence, BGAPSA enables its members to fully enrich the diverse fabric of our University community.

**Student involvement**

BGAPSA members primarily participate through academic and social events, such as on-campus conferences, presentations, cookouts and celebrations, community service, and informal outings to Black theater companies and other venues, both black-owned and otherwise. The BGAPSA Facebook group and listserv (2,031 members as of January 20, 2014) function as a means of keeping members abreast of all events as well as other information on campus and community activities that members might find useful.

BGAPSA has an active executive board of eight members who coordinate the organization’s activities with the help of numerous active members. Members also are actively encouraged to take part and get involved in planning and decision-making efforts to ensure that there are always exciting and edifying undertakings in the works. This proposal, which builds on the outcomes from last year’s SSF proposal, constitutes a critical step in guaranteeing a strong and sustainable student involvement.
Section II: Organizational Chart

BGAPSA Executive Board

President
Evetta Inman

Vice - President
Abel Demisse

Secretary
Shari Dade

Treasurer
Alissa Grier

Events Coordinator
Robert Smith III

Community and Business Relations Chair
Luqman Luwal

Community and Social Engagement Chair
Aasim Shabazz

Undergraduate Outreach Chair
Roberto De Freitas

Ad hoc committees
(Ad hoc committees are setup for specific purposes under the co-chairmanship of two board members. Typically, these committees are event- or project-focused.)

General membership

All students and alumni are welcome to all our student body and events. However, voting is reserved to currently enrolled students who have participated in a BGAPSA event and expressly their desire to join in ways such as but not limited to filling a membership form, emailing the board, joining the listserv.
BGAPSA Organizational Chart

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Events Coordinator
Undergraduate Outreach
Community and Business Relations Chair
Community & Social Engagement Chair

General Membership
Who We Serve

How We Serve

Greater Community

• "Black Males in Education" Public Forum

Undergraduates

• Each One, Reach One (Post Grad Options)

Black Grads

• Monthly Social Hour
Section III: Performance Report

In order to fulfill its vision, BGAPSA routinely debriefs after each event in order to assess what aspects of the event worked well, which aspects could be improved upon, the attendance rate and general satisfaction of its members. These assessment meetings help BGAPSA plan more effectively for the future in terms of logistics, budgeting, and partnerships. During and after events, BGAPSA routinely receives verbal feedback from general members and faculty. This feedback helps determine whether BGAPSA’s programming is effectively accomplishing its objectives and what other measures need to be taken. In the future, BGAPSA plans to have a more formal assessment through members’ written feedback at the end of the year.

Currently, BGAPSA evaluates its performance at the event-level using the following tools and methods:

- Objective attendance counts during the events
- Formal and informal feedback surveys
- Debriefing sessions with written minutes including a thorough financial review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Program Frequency</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
<th>PROJECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each One, Reach One Panel Discussion</td>
<td>These events reflect BGAPSA's commitment to black undergraduate student mentoring.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGAPSA Movie Night</td>
<td>The BGAPSA movie night serves as a space for conversations on the nuanced nature of blackness as it pertains to the content of the film chosen for the night</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Day of Month</td>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>BGAPSA Spring Reception</td>
<td>The spring reception serves as a formal culmination of BGAPSA programming for the academic year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Back/Kick-Off BBQ</td>
<td>An academic year kick-off mixer geared toward allowing Black students from across the university to meet and establish the foundation for friendly or professional supportive relationships before academic coursework becomes too overwhelming.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGAPSA’s Monthly Social Networking Event “First Thursdays”</td>
<td>This monthly event is held at a social venue with music and horsedouvers to encourage networking, socializing, and celebrating.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Low Expectations: Myths &amp; Truths about Black Males in Education</td>
<td>The purpose of this forum is to create an open space for professionals in the community and students to interact and discuss ways to get involved in our communities' affairs within the Twin Cities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Section IV: Reserve Accounts

Reserve Account (Savings): $1,010

We currently have a total of $1,010 in our savings account that can be used to assist with funding Summer 2014 events and early events during the following academic year (Fall 2014). For example, the BGAPSA’s Annual Fall BBQ is usually hosted in late September before Student Service Fee Funds are disbursed to student groups. The funds in our savings account could be used to pay for food, grill rental and transportation, entertainment, and other expenses related to planning the event. The Fall BBQ has proved to be a significant event for new and returning graduate and professional students and faculty. The funds in our savings account will allow BGAPSA to effectively fulfill the needs of our student body through continued programming during the summer and fall.

Section V: Fees Request

Amount requested in this proposal: $13,340

Last year’s request: $13,503.00
2011 request: $8,661.00 (Forfeited)

BGAPSA is requesting less funds than last year’s (2013-2014) requested amount. After much needed thought and reconceptualization throughout the 2013-2014 academic year, BGAPSA had reevaluated our programming and attempted to make the most of a concentrated deployment of our efforts, specifically as it relates to retention of executive board members and development of the leadership team.

We believe that providing stipends to active executive board members would permit BGAPSA to plan a number of quality events that will meet the needs of the students and faculty we serve (Guideline for Decision-Making (GDM) No. 2). Overtime it has become apparent that executive board members of BGAPSA find it difficult to balance graduate coursework, part-time and full-time jobs, and their roles as board members in the organization. This often leads to fewer board members taking on the tasks of others who experience burn-out midway through the academic year. Officer stipends would not only provide incentive for board members to fulfill the duties related to their position, but it will also reward members for their continued support of our mission to support graduate and professional students of African descent in their pursuit to graduation through our events and activities. This financial need cannot be fulfilled with alternative sources of income, such as the Coca Cola grant which only provides funding for events hosted by the organization (GDM No. 8).

Overall, the funds being requested through this application will be utilized to host annual, monthly, and one-time events throughout the academic school year (and sometimes over the summer). Each event we host offers opportunities for community building through social events, intellectual forums, and engagement with the broader community through service, as stated in our mission. For instance, the monthly social networking event (also known as First Thursdays) creates an atmosphere that provides black graduate students and faculty a sense of belonging on a predominately white campus. Often times black graduate and professional students (particularly international students) experience the shock of being the only black student in their class and/or
department. The monthly social networking event encourages networking and socializing among black graduate and professional students and all other individuals interested in attending so that students gain new relationships that can make the graduate school experience one to cherish. In this way, BGAPSA is providing a service to the majority of black graduate students who are a minority on the campus (GDM No. 1, parts 1and 3).

The funds requested in this application will also allow BGAPSA to meet guideline number 1(part 2) of supplementing the academic curriculum through events such as the annual Each One, Reach One panel discussion. Each One, Reach One is designed to reflect BGAPSA's commitment to Black undergraduate student mentoring. The main objective of the program is to help understand the needs of Black undergraduate students in order to assist in their academic, personal, and professional development. This event will take the form of a panel discussion that will introduce post-graduation opportunities with an emphasis on graduate school preparation. The meeting will have speakers (including BGAPSA members) who will engage the students on important issues such as advice for looking for jobs, graduate school, financial responsibility or entrepreneurship etc. This event will catalyze mentor-mentee relations between undergraduate and graduate students.

Finally, it is important to understand that other existing organizations are not centered on the full range of Black graduate student life, services and programming. It is also worth noting that numerous research universities across the country, such as Princeton University, Carnegie Mellon University, and Purdue University, have institutionally supported organizations that build the social capital of their Black graduate students. As many campuses provide these essential services and have pledged their support of Black graduate students, it is necessary for the University of Minnesota to grant institutional support in order to better recruit and retain Black graduate students. To remain institutionally competitive, and to continue expanding on current efforts to reach the capacities of Black graduate students at comparable Big Ten and research institutions, BGAPSA needs increased financial support and resources.

Section VI: External Funding

During Fall 2013 semester, BGAPSA partnered with the African American Leadership Forum (AALF) to co-host a public forum, titled Beyond Low Expectations: Myths & Truths about Black Males in Education. AALF contributed to the success of the event by paying a room reservation and audio visual equipment fees, totaling in $150. BGAPSA was only left to pay for food and advertising. This led to an additional collaboration with AALF for our monthly Social Networking Event in the month of December, where they handled the cost of advertising and shared the cost of food.

BGAPSA will co-host events with campus organizations in the near future in order to create strong partnerships and share resources. We also plan to apply for grants internal to the U of M, starting this upcoming Spring semester (2014) with the Coca Cola Grant. If this grant is awarded, we use these funds toward the Annual End of the Year Celebration to contribute to the cost of food, room rental, advertising, and/or gifts for graduates and speakers. BGAPSA intends to take advantage of external funding opportunities in the near future and going forth.