Black Student Union
January 24, 2014

Student Services Fee Request for 2013 - 2014 Academic Year

300 Washington Avenue S.E Suite 209, Minneapolis 55455

Address

N/A N/A

Phone Fax

“We acknowledge that the Fees 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 Fees Committee.”

Jenessa White
Preparer’s Name

whit1346@umn.edu
Preparer’s Email

Yes No
Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? X

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

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

General Operating Support: X
Start-Up Costs: Capital:

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

Budget

Dollar Amount Requested $32,967.00
Total Annual Organization Budget $57,502.23
Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $44,290.00
Section 1: Narrative

History

The Black Student Union, formally known as the Africana Student Cultural Center, has existed through various names since 1969. Originally founded via informal meetings led by African and African-American students in Coffman Memorial Union, the Black Student Union’s beginnings stemmed from the need to have a voice for students of color on a predominately-Caucasian campus. As these issues became the focus of the informal meetings, the students began bringing in Black leaders such as Stokely Carmichael, to address the student body directly. The Black Student Union became a campus-unifying effort when word of Martin Luther King Jr’s death spread across the university grounds. In the spirit of social justice, students organized a march to downtown Minneapolis, demanded that more Black scholars be offered faculty positions at the University, and that a University wide program be held honoring the late Martin Luther King Jr. These decisions were made to positively affect the Black student population and in turn the community.

The University of Minnesota’s Administration made promises to improve the lives of Black students on campus. The promises that were made also guaranteed grants to students of color: this promise was soon to be broken. Students came to realize that the grants that they were promised were no more than federal subsidized loans. Therefore, a broken promise was one of many inciting incidents that led to the students taking over Morrill Hall and demanding more to be done.

The Black Student Union has been an extensive advocate and a vital resource for Black students on the University of Minnesota campus; an entity, which has always been in pursuit of social justice. Through the BSU, Black students at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, came to realize that there was a need for them to come together as a group to discuss several issues faced by Black college students. Some of these issues are to:

- Further Black awareness at University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- Advocate for Black students on and off campus
- Create successful communication with Black student organizations on and off campus
- Make significant contributions in the community
- Help ensure a successful academic and social college experience for Black students
- Interact with different student groups and provide useful services to all University of Minnesota students

The Black Student Union has been housed in such places as the Dinky Dome, Appleby Hall, Pillsbury, and Coffman Memorial Union. Regardless of where the Black Student Union has been housed, it has always celebrated the culture and the achievements of African and African-American people within our campus community and within society as a whole. Black students only account for a small percentage of the total University of Minnesota student population. In light of this, the Black Student Union understands its duty to serve as a tool that advances and celebrates Black student culture on campus and in the surrounding community while remaining an impetus for the advancement of diversity at the University of Minnesota. This is an obligation that our organization takes personally. We find that it is our duty to improve the spirit of the University at large by sharing knowledge and wisdom gained from our experiences and culture amongst the campus. This point alone proves that the Black Student Union is an integral component of the University of Minnesota in order to continue supporting the campus’s patrons. (Guidelines 1, 4, 5)
Mission Statement

In August 2013 at our new board retreat we examined our mission statement. We decided we want our mission statement to promote greater inclusivity as well as provide a clear distinction between the History of our organization and the Mission of our organization. While History is unchanging, the Mission morphs and takes new forms as new eras arise. Therefore, with this in mind, we present our newly revised Mission Statement:

The Black Student Union exists to embrace Blackness in all its forms, with the intent to support its members in achieving their educational and personal goals by creating an intellectual, cultural, and social environment for students of the University of Minnesota and beyond.

The Black Student Union strives to:
- Promote a culture of Unity
- Cultivate young Leaders
- Extend a hand of Service
- Set the standard of Excellence in all of its endeavors

(Guidelines 1, 2, 4, 5)

Describe your organization’s relationship with organizations of like mission

The Black Student Union is the largest organization representing undergraduate students of African descent on the Twin Cities campus. As such, not only do we go forth in our mission as an organization, but we also serve as a crucial umbrella unit for other student organizations with like mission. We also heavily interact organize with organizations representing University members of African descent across different levels, from graduate and professional students, to faculty and staff members, and more. Beginning this year, the Black Student Union has reinstated its Unity Council, which welcomes member organizations on a rolling basis that agree with the collective mission of supporting the Black community on campus. The current members of the council are listed below:

- African Student Association (ASA)
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA)
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (AΦA)
- Black Faculty & Staff Association (BFSA)
- Black Graduate & Professional Student Association (BGAPSA)
- Black Men’s Forum (BMF)
- Black Motivated Women (BMW)
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (ΔΣΘ)
- Department of African-American & African Studies (AAAS)
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. (KAΨ)
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS)
- National Association of Black Accountants (NABA)
- National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCCHE)
- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
The Black Student Union is a vital entity in the diversity community on the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota. We are strongly bonded with other student groups within the diversity community that serve similar purposes in varying cultural communities on campus. The Black Student Union currently serves on the Second Floor Advisory Committee (SFAC), which represents all cultural centers currently present on the second floor of Coffman Memorial Union and is purposed to bring about an overall sense of unity and cohesiveness among student cultural centers, and within the diversity community as a whole.

The Black Student Union also seeks representation on a University-wide scale as to integrate our mission into the vision of our University as a whole. We currently have representation in the Minnesota Student Association as a student organization, as well as on the Student Affairs Student Advisory Board. (Guidelines 1, 2, 4, 5)

*Illustrate the need for your organization within the University community, inclusive of how your organization meets these needs.*

As a predominately-Caucasian institution, the University of Minnesota campus community is continuously challenged with embracing the historical and cultural legacy of Black American and African students in its collective direction as an institution. Being that the University of Minnesota Twin-Cities is such a large institution, the culture of Black American and African students is often overshadowed or not evident at first glance. Today, more than ever, this revelation is pungent in our society. The Black Student Union at the University of Minnesota serves the university and community as the voice for the 3.8% of the university population, whom before the existence of the Black Student Union had virtually no voice. In light of this, there is a need to connect students of African descent in a place of cultural familiarity where programming focuses on their culture, history and identity. We also strive to extend efforts to other organizations to integrate our focus with theirs and mutually learn and grow from each other. It is only by housing firmly based cultural organizations at the University of Minnesota that diversity can truly flourish.

The Black Student Union seeks to be the foundation for Black American and African students through which diversity amongst all is promoted at the University.

As an organization, we provide educational, social, and cultural events throughout the academic year to showcase Black American and African culture, community uplift, and academic excellence. Most of our events are annual and are sought out yearly by the campus, alumni and the community. Some of these events include:

- Back to School Month
- Homecoming
- Unity Dinner
- College Day
- Black Student Leadership Conference
- Black History Month
Host of Political and Business Related Events
Host of Community Service Related Events
Ebony Ball

The Black Student Union also supports several University departments on a regular basis. We support The Multicultural Center on Academic Excellence (MCAE) through promotion, collaboration, and encouraging students to attend AFAM and the MCAE Instructional Center. We support the Office of Admissions with diversity outreach to prospective students and how they generally assist us with our College Day. We also support the Department of African-American & African Studies with increasing enrollment in courses as well as attendance of events that come from the department. (Guidelines 1, 4, 5)

Detail the student benefit derived from your organization; whether or not students utilize services.

There are multiple benefits within this organization that students have the opportunity to take part in and utilize. Students have the opportunity to network and build connections that are vital to their success in education. There are many educational opportunities involved such as monthly educational forums and other programs, which are poised to bring about enlightenment and growth in our community of students. The Black Student Union also provides various leadership opportunities to students within the organization and within the community. The Black Student Union provides volunteer opportunities that students are encouraged to take part in, in the communities surrounding the University of Minnesota’s Twin-Cities campus. The Black Student Union also provides a positive social atmosphere. Being at a prominently white institution, it is easy to get lost in the crowd, and the Black Student Union provides a home for our members. We are a close-knit family and we help our members in any way possible. We have also taken it upon ourselves to help our members identify and cultivate their skills and interests as we work hard to help them achieve their post-graduate goals.

Students take advantage of the programming and the services we are able to provide through our space in Coffman Union such as free Internet access and free printing. This is supported by our numbers in the random room checks executed by the Student Activities Office.

Whether or not one steps foot in our space or attends one of our events, our presence is felt across campus. Through our partnerships with professional organizations such as the National Association of Black Accountants or the National Society of Black Engineers, we are able to impact students across different colleges. Student organizations are welcome to seek out the Black Student Union as a venue to host its events, and this is a service that our affiliate organizations utilize regularly. Also, through our connections with other cultural centers through SFAC, we can cross cultural boundaries and be of support to each other’s constituents. Finally, through partnership with University-wide entities such as the Minnesota Student Association, we are able to infuse our perspective and work collaboratively with organizations that have a strong impact on the campus as a whole. (Guidelines 1, 4, 6)

Describe student involvement within your organization

Since the Black Student Union is a registered student organization (RSO), it is solely a student-run organization, in which you must be registered at least part-time (6 credits) as an undergraduate student pursuing a bachelor’s degree to hold any level of leadership. We have seen that, although we have this
requirement, our board hosts a variety of perspectives and experiences, from traditional to non-traditional, which we warmly embrace. Students gain valuable leadership experience through serving as a Black Student Union Executive Committee Member, which consists of 12 student officers. Within this committee, there is the Executive Board, which consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and these four officers work together to supervise the development of the Executive Committee and the overall direction of the organization for the academic year.

There is also a larger participation among general members and event attendees. Committee chairs that plan, develop, and execute our programming seek out interested general members to assist in the planning logistics of their events, thereby encouraging these members to seek leadership positions on the Executive Committee for the upcoming academic year.

In addition to this, the Black Student Union has highlighted a need to promote leadership in first-year students at the University of Minnesota. This year, we reinstated our PUSH Freshman Action Team. Led by the University Awareness Chair, this group of first-year students regularly convenes to support each other through their first year, obtain mentorship from Executive Committee members, and plan events as a collective. Through this initiative, we hope that we are doing our part to dismantle the startling low retention rate of Black students while creating a strong knowledge of our organization in hopes that these students will seek leadership in their upcoming years.

Involvement of students in leadership, event planning or execution is flexible, based on their level of commitment. Every spring, general members are able to run for our executive board and committee positions. We also recruit students for our various events throughout the year to assist the event chairs in planning and execution. Becoming involved with the Black Student Union on a leadership level is a great opportunity and good Segway into the real cooperate world. Handling finances, maintaining/establishing relationships with others on behalf of the organization, as well planning and executing major events all serve as beneficial learning experiences to participating on a higher level. (Guidelines 1, 2, 5)
Section 2: Organizational Chart
Section 3: Performance Report

The Performance Report fulfills Guidelines 1-6.

Black to School Month

At the beginning of every school year, the Black Student Union holds a host of exciting and informative events targeted at new freshman students as well as returning underclassmen. This year, we hosted four events. The first was our Annual Back to School BBQ, hosted in the Superblock on Labor Day in collaboration with Minnesota Student Association, Black Motivated Women (BMW), and National Society of Black Engineers. We provided free food, music from a local Twin Cities DJ, and an exciting Boys vs. Girls competition that BMW hosts annually. This year, we were able to promote this event in the Welcome Week guide for all first-year students. We continued our month with our First Day of School Breakfast with Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., where we provided a hot Back-To-School breakfast on the first day to ensure that each student begins their day and semester with a warm and healthy diet. Our third event was our Room Rededication Ceremony, where we invited students, faculty, and staff to formally introduce our newly redesigned room as well as reflect on our history and legacy as the Black Student Union. Our final event was our annual Back to School Kickoff, which notably possessed the largest attendance of any of our Kickoffs in past years. Hosted on Northrop Plaza, this is where we formally introduce the Black Student Union to campus, provide space for other organizations to present themselves, host a community showcase featuring local Twin Cities artists, and most notably, our annual Greek Stroll-Off, featuring our Multicultural Greek community.

-Participation: 500

Homecoming Week

Annually, the BSU hosts Homecoming Week events that, along with the University arranged events create a feeling of school spirit and camaraderie among BSU members and also the entire University community. This year the BSU shared some of that appreciation by holding an Ice Cream Social on the St. Paul campus. We also collaborated with Voices Merging on a Homecoming Open Mic event which brought awareness to sickle cell anemia and its effects on the Black community as well as welcomed the Be the Match organization to sign guests up to be on the bone marrow registry. We also participated in the Flag Football tournament with members from other student groups. We closed Homecoming Week off by showing spirit with our Homecoming Parade delegation and cosponsoring the Midwest Greek Step Show with FaceTime Entertainment, which is the largest Greek step show in the state of Minnesota.

-Participation: 300

Unity Dinner

The Black Student Union hosts Unity Dinner annually in November to promote service, leadership, diversity, and cultural awareness. Unity Dinner provides the space for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community leaders to come together to network, enjoy dynamic speakers and performances, and leave with inspiration to contribute to the campus and community. Various scholars and community members are
invited to enjoy a night of academic and social excellence as we present motivational speakers unique to the years’ event theme. This year, we collaborated with the Department of African-American & African Studies and the National Association of Black Accountants to put forth Unity Dinner at McNamara Alumni Center. Dinner was catered by University Dining Services. We welcomed Regent Abdul Omari and Professor Nekima-Levy Pounds as speakers, various artists, both students and community members, as performers, and we presented our first take action panel discussion with community leaders. We saw a full house at this year’s Unity Dinner.

-Participation: 200

College Day

College Day is an annual initiative of the Black Student Union where we welcome a number of students of color from surrounding area high schools, to give them a glimpse into college life. This year, college day was attended by over 250 students and staff from over 10 different high schools in the Minneapolis St. Paul area. Participants received two meals, engaged in a mock college class with a professor from the Department of African-American & African Studies, received important information from the Office of Admissions, and completed a college tour highlighting prominent sites such as the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence and our cultural center housed in Coffman Memorial Union. In addition to those activities, current University students of color participated in a panel answering specific questions for students that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to answer. This year the Black Student Union collaborated with the National Society of Black Engineers along with the Office of Admissions and the Office for Equity & Diversity. This event is beneficial for not only the high school students involved but it gives the University greater exposure to students of color and contributes to increasing recruitment and retention of students of color at our University.

-Participation: 250 high school students & staff, 30 college student volunteers

Big XII Conference on Black Student Leadership Conference

Annually, the Black Student Union provides the opportunity for general members to travel to the Big XII Conference on Black Student Leadership. This trip takes place during the last weekend of February during spring semester. Students that attend this trip are afforded the opportunity to engage with students from campuses from across the country, share ideas of how to increase cultural awareness on their campuses, attend workshops that develop them in various professional and educational areas, network with graduate schools, career and internship recruiters, and many other professionals. Attendees are required to bring back what we learn from the conference and share it with our campus and community later in the semester. Students are required to submit an application to the Committee detailing their desires for attending the conference and how they will implement the knowledge they receive from the conference into their activities back at our campus. From there, the Committee selects students to attend. Students are required to pay their conference registration fee, while the Black Student Union provides transportation and lodging.

-Participation: 25 college students
Black History Month

The Black Student Union’s history is largely connected with the historical legacy of African Americans in this country. We do this best during the month of February when we celebrate Black History Month with events that occur throughout the whole month. These events are informative, educational and entertaining as well as open and presented to the entire campus community. Black History Month is our largest event series in the Spring semester, and we see much participation from students, faculty, and staff to present an impactful series of events for our community to participate in during this month.

This month we will honor Black History Month with our annual Kickoff, where we will introduce the theme for the month, along with performances, food, and a keynote speaker. Our next event is Voices of the Past, will consist of students and artists embodying characters/activists of the past, who will give a speech (performance) addressing the social injustices that occur in today’s time to the audience. We are also co-sponsoring the Film Screening for Gideon’s Army with the Department of African-American & African Studies. The film will be served with food and consists of a panel of civil rights lawyers and activists from the Twin Cities communities following the screening. Finally, we close Black History Month with our last major event: Uplifting the Black Family, which is a community discussion with a professor from the Department of African-American & African Studies on this topic.

-Participation: 500

Ebony Ball

The Black Student Union also annually holds a formal ball titled Ebony Ball on campus to celebrate the year-end and various achievements of students throughout the school year. Students are selected to receive awards such as scholar of the year and general member of the year. The new board is also presented as they enjoy their night with family and friends. Dinner is also served and after the awards ceremony is a dance party to close the evening.

-Participation 150

Monthly General Membership Meetings

The Black Student Union hosts open general membership meetings every month to inform students, faculty, and community members about our missions, goals, and accomplishments; the Black Student Union’s and other student group’s upcoming events; as well as the topic of the month. A southern soul food meal is provided at every meeting to give all attendees a taste of African American’s cultural cuisine.

-Participation 50 per meeting

PUSH Freshmen Action Team

The PUSH Freshmen Action Team has been reestablished this year after it was first founded during the 2011-2012 school year. PUSH is designed to connect a diverse group of students with one another, help them get involved on campus, as well as become prominent leaders at the University of Minnesota. PUSH
members meet twice a month with the PUSH Chair and build relationships with PUSH team members. They are also mentored by the rest of the BSU board. In the second semester, they come together to plan and execute events for the entire BSU community, including the Business Week. Through this, we hope to equip PUSH members with the skills necessary to run an organization and encourage them to seek leadership opportunities in and out of the BSU in future years.

- Participation 15 Action Team members

Section 4: Reserve Accounts

The Black Student Union does not have a separate account for reserves. The operational reserves that we have are kept in the group’s checking account and monitored by the Treasurer by making sure we do not fall below a certain amount unless it is a necessity. We do try to give ourselves a fair amount of carryover from year to year to help in the case of a lower budget for the upcoming year, and for emergency unplanned expenses. In the past when events come up and we do not have enough money reserved the event attendees get an experience that we do not feel is up to our mission and standard.

Section 5: Fees Request

The Black Student Union is requesting $32,967 for the school year 2014-2015. This is a decrease from past student service fees requests, and we are requesting less funding from SSF in light of our recent audit cycle. Through this audit cycle, we were able to not only investigate the financial practices in past years, but we were also able to implement stronger financial practices and explore different options for funding outside of student service fees. We are increasing our grants activity, and this year we dedicated an entire position to seeking out grants and fundraising opportunities for the BSU in order to supplement its income. We also, through the audit cycle, were able to remove extemporaneous projected budgets for most of our programming expenses. (Guidelines 9, 11, 12)

The decrease in expenses is most heavily seen in our operational expenses. This year, the majority of our operational budget went to replacing equipment for our space (i.e. computers, software, etc.). This investment will prove to last for multiple years, and because of this, our projected expenses in the upcoming year is lesser. In contrast, our programming expenses are showing an increase in the requested expenses. It is most notably seen in the Food and Room Rental sections. This is consistent with the rising costs of catering for events and because all of our programming expenses have the potential to incur room rental costs, as from the discretion of the committee chair.

The Black Student Union does provide stipends to the Executive Board officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). Stipends are disbursed on a semester-basis, and they must be approved by the remainder of the Executive Committee through a stipend review where they evaluate the performance of the Executive Board officers in accordance to the duties listed in the Constitution. The justification for stipends per officer are as follows:
**Student President:** The student elected President of the Black Student Union (BSU) is overseer of all aspects of the group and is the face of the group. They have duties which can total up to 25 hours a week worth of BSU related work. They must also plan Unity Dinner, new board retreat in summer, pick the staff and alumni advisor, and work with the vice president on the narrative of the Student Service Fees Request. The President is also the chief officer when it comes to advocating for the BSU and black students on a University-wide level and, when warranted, in the Twin Cities community. The stipend of the president is set in the group's constitution, but previously was $1000 more. The executive four (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) have since decided that a reduced amount is more appropriate for the amount of work done by the president over the entire school year.

**Student Vice President:** The student elected vice president of the Black Student Union is mostly in charge of all things internal for the BSU board. They help plan the weekly board meetings, work closely with all board members and assist in any event planning that needs to be done, and work with the president on the narrative for the Student Service Fees Request. The vice president is also responsible for ensuring that the BSU is represented at any meetings, or events, the president cannot attend. The vice president spends the about 20 hours a week doing BSU related work.

**Student Secretary:** The student elected secretary is in charge of the BSU office (including scheduling office hours), managing BSU e-mails, new general member requests, listserv management, the biweekly newsletter, and planning the Big XII Student Leadership Conference. They spend approximately 15 hours a week doing BSU related work and currently receive a $750 stipend a semester.

**Student Treasurer:** The student elected treasurer is responsible for all of the BSU’s finances. They do weekly budgeting, keep a general ledger of all of the group's transactions, are responsible for creating the Student Services Fees Request, helping plan the new board retreat, creating and help manage each board members' specific event budget and help write grants. They spend up to 15 hours a week dedicated to BSU work and also receive a $750 stipend each semester. (Guideline 10)

In the summer of 2014 our board will be 50% active. We will have meetings every other week starting in June to begin preparing committee members for full activity during the school year as well as planning the Back to School and Homecoming calendars. We also take this time to situate the organization’s overall operations, from finances to any necessary changes to the constitution. The summer gives us an opportunity to bond as a board while impacting our communities through community service projects and volunteering. Our office will not be open during normal business hours, however if an executive board member is present, students and community members are always welcome to visit. Students who pay summer fees are still easily able to use our printing services, general office equipment and supplies. During, before, and after our meeting hours our offices will be available if requested. We also conduct our annual Black Student Union Board retreat.

**Section 6: External Funding**

As noted in Section 5, the Black Student Union is increasing its efforts to obtain funding outside of Student Services Fees. With the addition of our Grants & Fundraising Chair, we are seeing an exponential
increase in our ability to receive grants and explore different fundraising opportunities. We are projecting the organization to have a substantial increase in grant funding, which also explains our decrease in fees request. We are also situating the organization in a stable place financially so that in later years, the Black Student Union will be able to pursue sponsorship from corporations and other institutions that support our mission. With this vision, we hope to not only increase our income, but use that to offer scholarships to students. (Guideline 7)

While we have these goals to increase our external funding sources, our primary funding source will always be Student Services Fees. Our budget projects it to encompass approximately 54.4% of our income, with grants only encompassing just 17.6%, organizational contributions 3.8%, and fundraising income 1.1%. We cannot provide our programming to the quality and reach that we strive towards without it. Because of the monetary constraints on grant funding, it cannot fully support our expenses in comparison to our reach as an organization. Being a student organization with a larger membership as well as a cultural center in Coffman Memorial Union, our expenses are generally quite larger than most student organizations. If we are to provide the services all students at the University of Minnesota are welcome to use, as well as execute programming that engages with students, staff, faculty, and community members, we must continue our relationship with Student Services Fees as a primary funding source. (Guideline 8)