Minnesota Student Association

January 24, 2014

Student Services Fee Request for the 2014 - 2015 Academic Year

Address
202 Coffman Memorial Union, 300 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone
Fax
Email
612-807-4225
612-625-3749
cummi367@umn.edu

“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.”

Fiona Cummings
Quinn Jurgens

Preparer’s Name
Co-Preparer’s Name

cummi367@umn.edu
jurge058@umn.edu

Preparer’s Email
Co-Preparer’s Email

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

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

- SSF Dollar Amount Requested $ 177,878
- Total Annual Organization Budget $ 193,680
- Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $ 131,538
Section 1: Narrative

Brief History of the Minnesota Student Association

The Undergraduate Student Government has existed since the formation of the All University Student Council in 1911. In 1959, student government was reorganized into the Minnesota Student Association (“MSA”). Our current system includes a system-wide "Student Senate" populated by academic senators and an "MSA Forum" composed of student group representatives and representatives of the student body as a whole. In the 1970s, during national student upheaval, MSA changed names three times and disbanded twice. However, in the 1980s, the students reunited as the Minnesota Student Association and the Senate was incorporated into the University Senate. In 1990, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (“GAPSA”) was born out of the Minnesota Student Association as a distinctly separate organization. As a result of the reorganization, MSA’s efforts became focused primarily on undergraduate issues.

In the last decade, MSA has been the driving force behind many prominent initiatives on campus such as the creation of the MSA Express (now Gopher Chauffeur), the expansion of library hours, and recently campus safety. In 2011, MSA and GAPSA created the Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition, a University of Minnesota system-wide student advocacy coalition that successfully lobbied for a tuition freeze and Medical Amnesty in the Minnesota State Legislature’s 2013 legislative session.

Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission/Vision

The formal mission statement of our organization is as follows:

1. To effectively advocate for the needs of the undergraduate students on the Twin Cities Campus to all stakeholders of the University of Minnesota;
2. To facilitate communication and cooperation between all student groups;
3. To provide an accessible Forum for the discussion of issues affecting undergraduate students;
4. To present an environment that substantially contributes towards the education of students through active participation;
5. To inspire school spirit, campus community and a great pride for a student’s affiliation with the University of Minnesota.

Goals

The Minnesota Student Association works to create programs and services that enrich the lives of University of Minnesota students in accordance with the MSA mission statement. By representing the undergraduate student body on relevant issues at the campus, local, state, and federal levels, MSA aims to create a stronger and more unified University of Minnesota community. In addition, MSA seeks to benefit its members by developing leadership, teamwork, and communication skills through real world experience in areas such as public policy and business (Guideline 1). The following outlines the specific goals of MSA.
Maintain the Minnesota Student Association’s position as a professionally-run and well-organized student advocacy organization, and strive to be a model for student governments at other campuses.

- Encourage members of Forum to be active in debate, discussion, committees and projects.
- Foster healthy working relationships between MSA leaders, staff and constituents.
- Conduct regular meetings with the University administration.
- Retain current Forum members and attract new members by maintaining interest and fostering relevant discussion.
- Maintain consistent internal office policy.
- Enforce effective transitions between outgoing and incoming Executive Board and Steering Committee members in April and May.
- Model our most successful and visible programs (e.g. TEDx and Volunteer Tax Assistance Program) for other University of Minnesota coordinate campuses.
- Serve as an umbrella organization for student groups.

Make the Minnesota Student Association and its resources more visible to students.

- Increase student group participation by providing information on how to become an active member of MSA.
- Be transparent by making all meeting minutes, position statements, and resolutions available on the MSA website.
- Require office hours of MSA leaders and staff that are able to answer to questions of any student who visits the office.
- Partner with other student groups to host major events such as the Feast of Nations.
- Create and publish promotional resources that expand MSA’s reach and inform the campus community about MSA’s mission, programs, and involvement opportunities.
- Host a networking and round table event called the “Leadership Reception” for all current student group officers.
- Maintain a welcoming atmosphere and open door policy.

Continue to represent a unified student voice through strong advocacy efforts at the University, state, and federal levels.

- Continue to develop and empower the Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition.
- Maintain a strong relationship with the University of Minnesota Office for Government and Community Relations.
- Regularly meet with relevant elected and appointed officials, including representatives of the University of Minnesota area and members of Higher Education committees at the State Legislature.
- Regularly communicate with Minnesota’s federal congressional delegation on issues affecting University of Minnesota students.
• Clarify, for interested students, the University’s budget process and funding requests to the State Legislature.
• Maintain a constant presence at the Minnesota State Legislature during discussion of critical measures related to the University and higher education.
• Organize student participation in advocacy efforts through annual events such as Support the U Day, Voterpalooza (voter registration/education event), Candidate Debates, and advocacy awareness and action campaigns.
• Administer surveys/polls on important, relevant student issues to gain increased understanding of student opinion.
• Communicate with the Minnesota Office for Higher Education to influence state policy and programs affecting University of Minnesota students, including participation on the Student Advisory Council.
• Collaborate with student governments from the Big Ten conference through the Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) to advocate for students at the federal level.

Create a stronger campus community
• Continue to administer and advertise the MSA Grants Program, with an emphasis on student group partnerships.
• Promote the formation of new student groups through the “Operational Budget Grants (OBG). This semester alone MSA has given out 57 OBGs, an increase from the same point last year.
• Increase campus pride and communication through events that bring campus together such as the Leadership Reception, the Spring Jam Talent Show, the Feast of Nations, and Game Day Tailgates.

Relationships with Similar Organizations
It is the goal of the Minnesota Student Association to be a campus-wide partner with similar organizations. MSA is in constant communication with the Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC), which elects a member to serve on the MSA Executive Board. Furthermore, students who serve on Student Senate are mandated to serve on MSA in order to further organizational relations.

MSA also works with the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) on various projects. Together, the groups continue to advocate for students in discussions concerning tuition, student services, campus safety, and other issues. To accomplish these goals, MSA and GAPSA typically hold joint Forums each semester and conduct meetings when issue arise that affect both constituencies. MSA and GAPSA often collaborate to co-sponsor events relevant to undergraduate and graduate and professional students. One example is the GAPSA-led Forum on the Sustainability of Higher Education, a Fall 2013 event that MSA co-sponsored, helped plan, and participated in. Additionally, MSA and GAPSA now share an office on the second floor of Coffman Memorial Union.

Value Provided/University Need
The Minnesota Student Association is a major benefit to the undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities campus for several reasons. MSA offers an
avenue through which students concerns are brought forward and discussed. MSA gives students a place where they can have their ideas heard, and can implement changes in policy that benefit the undergraduate student body. Although only elected members may vote during forum, all undergraduates are members of MSA and may attend Forum, committee meetings, MSA Executive Board meetings, Steering Committee meetings, and all MSA programs and events (Guideline 5). Any student may be yielded time to speak at these meetings, and thus can directly impact the deliberative process. MSA is equipped with the personal relationships with upper-level University staff, faculty, other student groups, and various local and state legislators and needs to maintain resources sufficient to coordinate large-scale events, educational programming and to facilitate discussions and cooperation (Guideline 1).

Undergraduate students on the Twin Cities Campus benefit from the Minnesota Student Association in several areas: advocacy, programming and educational and leadership development.

**Advocacy**

The Minnesota Student Association is the undergraduate voice to the University administration, the Board of Regents and the city, state, and federal government (Guideline 1).

Members of MSA represent and act on behalf of the student body, as empowered by the MSA Constitution, Bylaws, and MSA Forum. Members in leadership positions regularly give the student perspective to dozens of University departments and programs including University Student Legal Services, the Office of Student Affairs, University Services (Parking and Transportation), the Alumni Association, University Recreation and Wellness, Boynton Health Service, Student Unions and Activities, and as student representatives to the Board of Regents. These MSA leaders use their roles to effectively advocate for policies that are favorable to students, and assist University departments in executing programs effectively.

Additionally, MSA actively advocates for students in the community, making sure that students are represented on issues such as housing, renter's rights, and renter application fees. This is accomplished through MSA's "Renter's Survey" issued each year, representation on various neighborhood associations, and representation at City Council meetings.

MSA leads student advocacy efforts at the state and federal level with its trained group of student lobbyists - the Twin Cities Advocacy Corps - and its primary stake in the Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition, a lobbying coalition of all University of Minnesota campus student associations.
Programming

The largest portion of MSA's budget goes to programming, including $67,000 in grants that are given back to student groups (usually non-fees receiving groups) for events and operations. For the sake of brevity, please see the program breakdowns in the budget sheets to learn how MSA provides over $100,000 total in grants, events, and other services to University students each year (Guideline 1).

Education and Leadership Development

The MSA office provides educational tools for all students to use. Examples include: minutes from the Board of Regents meetings, outlines of the University bonding and biennial budget requests, information about political and student government campaigning on campus, information on registering to vote in elections, information regarding the student services fees process, information on renting and renter's rights, information about volunteering and campus involvement, and much more. MSA strives to educate students about issues affecting University of Minnesota undergraduate students, including campus and college policies and proposed changes to University or governmental policy.

In a joint educational and leadership development initiative, MSA sponsors the Volunteer Tax Assistance Program that provides over $140,000 in free tax services to students and trains over fifty student volunteers to teach their peers how to file their state and federal taxes. MSA also facilitates the Twin Cities Advocacy Corps (formerly called the Legislative Certificate Program), which trains student volunteers to advocate for their peers in government, and has helped many undergraduate students develop the skills and network to secure post-graduation employment in public policy, government, and lobbying.

As an entirely student-run and student-driven organization, the Minnesota Student Association offers many educational and leadership opportunities (Guideline 1). Through the various positions that are up for re-election every year, students can easily step into positions and begin to gain valuable leadership experience. MSA also provides students with leadership opportunities through appointments to various boards, committees, and neighborhood associations. Additionally, MSA often organizes/sponsors programs and events to promote leadership development and civic education. For example, MSA hosted non-partisan Presidential campaign debate watch parties in fall 2012 with discussion led by the University of Minnesota debate team, which were attended by hundreds of students.

Last year, MSA created a very successful freshman internship program and has continued to build the program this year in order to provide an exceptional leadership experience for freshman students. This program is heavily marketed to incoming freshmen during Welcome Week, and is designed to help freshmen become deeply involved in MSA very quickly. The program gives freshmen a chance to engage in leadership activities, learn
how to organize events such as the Leadership Reception, and learn how to use MSA as a platform for voicing concerns and building ideas. This year, the freshman interns helped organize many events, assisted with the polling task force, created and ran marketing campaigns and worked closely with various administrators and committees to create a positive impact on campus.

**Student Involvement in MSA**

**Students Governing Students**
The Minnesota Student Association is a 100% student-run organization that is directly accountable to all undergraduate students. The structure benefits students by maximizing the availability of compensated and volunteer positions to students while achieving the similar results as a professionally run non-profit organization. There are several different membership classifications as detailed in the following paragraphs; all members of MSA are a part of both the Forum and a committee. Position descriptions for all stipend positions are included in the supplementary materials.

**Student Employment Opportunities and the Need for Stipends**
The use of stipends for student employment is a critical tool utilized by MSA to ensure the continuation of valuable programming and reliable operational functions of the organization. Much of the value of MSA is created by the people who run the organization. For less than the cost of a single part-time administrator, MSA engages more than 20 highly motivated, talented student leaders in maximizing the return on our program investment. The hours that these students put in far exceed a typical volunteer activity due in part to the responsibility implied by taking a stipend.

Additionally, stipends allow students who would not otherwise be able to commit the necessary time the opportunity to hold leadership positions. Paid leadership positions in MSA often take the place of a part-time job for students. In order to make these leadership opportunities accessible to students of all economic backgrounds, stipends are necessary. Finally, the use of stipends allows an increased level of accountability to the outlined position duties and a clear consequence of failing to perform these duties effectively.

**General Membership**
General membership in MSA is the most basic level of membership and is open to any undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Although general members do not carry a vote in Forum, they still can actively participate in MSA projects and initiatives as well as attend Forum, committee meetings, MSA Executive Board meetings, and Steering Committee meetings. Any student may be yielded time to speak at these meetings, and thus can directly impact the deliberative process. Currently there are two hundred and three (203) registered general members of MSA who receive regular communication from MSA leadership and actively participate in MSA meetings and initiatives.
Elected and Appointed Positions
At-Large Representatives (20) are members of Forum with full voting rights that are elected by the undergraduate student body in the All Campus Elections that take place during the spring semester. Student Senators (24), also elected during the All Campus Elections are members of forum in addition to their duties in the Student Senate. One of these senators is a Representative to the Student Senate Consultative Committee (non-ranking). All registered student groups may appoint one member to be a voting member of MSA Forum. There are currently 83 student group representatives, although that number fluctuates frequently.

Elected/Appointed Leadership Positions (with stipend)
The President and Vice President are both non-voting, stipend receiving members of Forum that are elected during the All Campus Elections. They currently receive stipends of $5,000 and $4,000 per year, respectively. The Speaker of the Forum is a non-voting, stipend receiving member of Forum that is elected by forum. The Speaker’s stipend is currently set at $3,000 per year. Committee Directors (4) are voting members elected by forum that receive stipends of $1,500 per year. The Representatives to the Board of Regents are selected by a selection committee and are voting members in forum. They receive stipends of $1,000 (ranking) and $750 per year. The City Council and UDA Representative is selected by the MSA Executive Board and receives a stipend of $750 per year. The Ranking SSCC is elected by senators in the MSA forum and they have a vote in the MSA forum as well as in the Student Senate Consultative Committee. The Ranking SSCC receives a stipend of $1,000 per year. The Ranking At-Large Representative is an At-Large Representative who is elected to the position of “Ranking” by the 19 other At-Large Representatives. The Ranking At-Large Representative receives a $1,000 stipend. The Twin Cities Advocacy Corps Director is selected by the MSA Executive Board and receives a $3,000 stipend.

Staff (with stipend)
All MSA staff members are full time undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities that are hired by the MSA Executive Board to fulfill largely administrative roles within the organization. All stipend receiving staff members are paid monthly in equal portions. While the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) receives a $3,000 per year stipend, all other paid staff positions receive $1,000 per year. MSA Staff positions are the CFO, Treasurer, Chief of Staff, Executive Administrative Assistant, Marketing Director, Communications Director, Government Relations Officer, and Civic Engagement Assistant.

Committees
Currently, there are four (4) standing committees in MSA, not including the Executive Board and Steering Committee. These four committees are (1) University Policies and Student Concerns, (2) Student Outreach and Engagement, (3) Grants, and (4) Facilities, Housing, and Transit. Every member of Forum is required to serve on a committee, and the committee meetings are open to all undergraduates. The organizational structure of the Executive Board and the Steering Committee can be found on the Organizational
Chart in Section 2. Additional information on each committee is available in the supplementary materials of this request.
Section 2: Organizational Charts

Operating Units

Minnesota Student Association

The Forum

Executive Board

Steering Committee

Ad Hoc Committees

University Policy and Student Concerns

Student Outreach and Engagement

Grants

Facilities, Housing and Transit
Section 3: Performance Report

The Minnesota Student Association is the Undergraduate Student Body Government on the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus and unlike any other student group on campus. Forum is comprised of Senators from all fourteen (14) colleges, residence halls, Greek chapters, dozens of student groups, and at-large representatives (Guideline 4). Along with members of MSA forum, students involved with MSA-sponsored programs such as the Volunteer Tax Assistance Program, TEDx, and the Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition/Twin Cities Advocacy Corps gain valuable leadership experience while serving the student body.

MSA has continued to grow as an organization with membership at an all-time high of three hundred thirty-six 336 total members, up from two hundred thirty-seven 237 last year. The number of student group representatives increased from twenty (20) to eighty-two (82) and the Freshman Intern Program increased from eight (8) to twenty-one (21) members. These increases resulted from improved recruiting efforts during Welcome Week, strengthened partnerships and outreach with other student groups, as well as increased visibility and accessibility of MSA projects, leadership and resources (Guideline 5).

MSA strives to make the largest impact possible with its available resources. Through efforts to effectively advocate for the student voice, create valuable and accessible programming, and provide exceptional educational and leadership development opportunities for students, the number of University students impacted by MSA services and programs is impressive (Guideline 2). The following is a review of MSA's performance on key projects, events and initiatives in the past year.

Grants Program
This year, the MSA Grants program continued to provide opportunities for student groups to grow and host events that enrich the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities community. MSA gives out both operational and event grants to student groups. The following table and graph depict the growth of the grants program over the last five years.
The Grants Program has grown significantly in the past two years. Operational Budget Grants (OBGs) are unique to MSA and give students the opportunity to create and build new student groups, further enriching the educational experience at the University of Minnesota. The demand for these grants usually exceeds the supply of funding, resulting in many student groups that are unable to obtain funding to cover necessary operations. This year is no exception; at the time that funding for operational budget grants runs out, there will still be 60 operational budget grants waiting to be processed (Guideline 3). MSA plans to continue the expansion of the Grants Program in order to allow more student groups the opportunity to flourish at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. This request includes an increase in funding for the Grants Program, specifically OBGs in order to meet the demonstrated demand.

Welcome Week
MSA worked to increase awareness and build school pride through participating in multiple Welcome Week events including the SUA Showcase, Information Sessions during College Day, and the Explore U activity fair. In addition, MSA hosted a volleyball tournament in the superblock during freshman move in, a barbecue with the Black Student Association, and a tailgate for the Saturday Gopher Football game. As a result MSA reached over 1000 students, registered over 200 to become actively involved in MSA and helped instill a sense of school pride for the incoming freshman class (Guideline 1).

Feast of Nations
MSA strengthened its relationship with the Minnesota International Student Association and co-hosted the annual Feast of Nations in the Great Hall in Coffman Memorial Union with attendance of over 500 students who were exposed to many different cultural performances, displays and foods (Guideline 3).

Spring Jam Talent Show
In partnership with the SUA Program Board and student boards from each of the seven undergraduate colleges, MSA hosted the Spring Jam Talent Show last spring. The event brought performers from each of the seven undergraduate colleges at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities to the Coffman Theater to a full house of over 400 attendees. The event built campus pride and community and provided a venue for talented University of Minnesota students to perform in front of a large audience (Guideline 1). Additionally, the planning of the event brought students from all across the University together and helped to build stronger working relationships between student organizations that will carry forward into future initiatives.

Polling
This year, MSA created a new “Polling Taskforce” to better capture student opinion in order to represent the student voice to the best of its ability. MSA has conducted five polls this semester and used the results to create a more credible report to the Board of
Regents and support recommendations on issues such as advising, medical amnesty and campus safety (Guidelines 1 and 6). Example reports can be found in the supplementary materials.

**Medical Amnesty**

MSA successfully advocated for legislation providing Medical Amnesty to anyone in Minnesota that calls 911 in the case of a medical emergency. This law benefits undergraduate students that attend the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and its coordinate campuses (Guideline 6). Additionally, MSA ran an awareness campaign to educate students about the Medical Amnesty Law. A poll conducted by MSA in November 2013 suggested that over 85% of undergraduate students were aware of the new Medical Amnesty Law.

**Support the U Day**

Last February, MSA coordinated and planned the annual Support the U Day at the State Capitol with approximately 300 student attendees (Guideline 3). These students met with state legislators, provided testimony, and showed the importance of student concerns to the Minnesota Legislature (Guideline 1). The event included a presentation by the Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition to the Senate Higher Education Committee and a rally at the Capitol Rotunda including the Higher Education Committee chairs, the Commissioner of Higher Education, President Kaler and student leaders. State legislators and University staff that attended the event noted that it was the most successful Support the U Day in recent history, and the event garnered significant statewide media attention from Minnesota’s largest newspapers and television networks. Support the U Day is the marquee event of MSA’s annual state legislative advocacy campaign, and in 2013 helped lead to passage of the MSA-created Medical Amnesty Law and the most successful University funding appropriation in over a decade.

**Civic Engagement**

This fall, MSA encouraged civic engagement through planning Voterpalooza where over 150 students registered to vote. MSA also hosted a Minneapolis Mayoral Debate in the Coffman Theater with approximately 75 attendees (Guideline 3). MSA partnered with non-partisan, non-profit organizations (i.e. FairVote MN) to educate students on rank choice voting and reached thousands of students with printed materials and through social media. MSA also periodically holds events to encourage student awareness of current civic issues. Examples of events include debate watch parties and State of the Union watch parties.

**Big Ten on the Hill**

Last spring, MSA sent 10 undergraduate student leaders to Washington, DC for five days to personally represent University of Minnesota Students and advocate for relevant student issues (Guideline 1). The students participated in over 35 official delegation meetings (an all-time high), including: meeting with the entire Minnesota Congressional Delegation, the House Education and the Workforce Committee Staff, the Senate HELP Committee Staff, Department of Education, White House, Consumer Financial Protection
Bureau, American Council on Education, US PIRG, Education Trust, National Campus Leadership Council and others. Big Ten on the Hill is the highlight of MSA’s federal advocacy campaign, and is important for developing relationships with DC-based policymakers and lawmakers which can be leveraged after the trip. In the past year, relationships developed at Big Ten on the Hill have proved essential for MSA’s continued success.

Safety
In response to the increase in crime and the growing student concern, MSA took action through collaboration with the University of Minnesota Police Department (“UMPD”), the Minneapolis Police Department, the City of Minneapolis and University administration to address safety on and off campus (Guidelines 1 and 4). MSA planned a safety door knock with UMPD to encourage students to take the “Street Smart Pledge” and raise awareness for current resources the University offers that can reduce the chances of becoming a victim. The initiative resulted in over 2,000 students taking the “Street Smart Pledge” and over 1,000 of those students having the chance to ask questions to UMPD officers one-on-one (Guideline 3).

While the “Street Smart Pledge” addressed an immediate response to the growing safety concern on campus, MSA also worked to address more long-term solutions. MSA’s “Say Something About Safety” event provided an opportunity for students to write letters to legislators, explaining how the increase in crime has affected them personally. The event resulted in over 300 letters and local news coverage by Kare 11 (Guideline 3). Following the event, the letters were hand-delivered to the State Capitol after a hearing held by the Senate Higher Education Committee about safety. MSA provided support and student testimony at the hearing to ensure the student voice was represented. MSA will continue these collaborative efforts to ensure the student voice is heard in the discussions surrounding safety in the near future.

Freshman Intern Program
The Freshman Intern Program is a young and growing initiative within MSA to allow participating freshman to become heavily involved very quickly. The results of the Freshman Intern Program have not only helped the overall external performance the organization, but it has helped internally through boosting retention, and training dynamic leaders. In just one year, the program has more than doubled its membership allowing more freshmen to gain valuable leadership experience (Guideline 1). The freshman interns have proved invaluable to the organization. This is demonstrated through: Providing the support for the MSA polling initiative and carrying out over 1,000 in-person polls; designing the re-launch of WTFUMN to increase accessibility and further facilitate student feedback; playing a very active role in the ongoing safety initiatives, including gathering over 2,000 signatures for the “Street Smart” Pledge, and planning the Leadership Reception to bring student leaders from all across the University together.

As a result of the success of the Freshman Intern Program, and the value that it adds to MSA both internally and externally, this request includes an increase in funding for the
program. This funding will be used to ensure the continued growth of the program by accommodating more members and providing an opportunity for more freshman students to gain valuable leadership experience.

The Volunteer Tax Assistance Program ("VTAP")
Last Tax Season, the Volunteer Tax Assistance Program prepared a record 937 federal tax returns. These returns would conservatively cost roughly $130, meaning that VTAP provided $122,000 in free tax services to students. In addition, VTAP provided over $650,000 in net refunds to students (Guideline 1). VTAP is preparing for another record-breaking year with a goal of preparing 1,100 tax returns this spring, an equivalent of $143,000 in free tax services. VTAP is also an incredible educational opportunity for student volunteers. Every year, 50 students become certified tax preparers through the IRS. Each student has the opportunity to individually prepare tax returns and interact one-on-one with a client. This builds valuable technical and personal skills that will help students in the professional world.

TEDxUMN
TEDxUMN holds both large and small events that bring a diversity of students into a common community to share ideas and help students learn about the incredible work being done across the University of Minnesota. Last spring, TEDxUMN hosted an event with 400 people in attendance and 10 speakers and this November, TEDxUMN hosted a smaller salon with 100 attendees and 3 speakers (Guideline 3). This year, TED instituted new policies requiring all TEDx organizations to hold two additional Salons with attendance of approximately 100. Because of this new policy, and TEDxUMN’s history of high quality, well-attended events, this request includes an increase in funding for TEDx to cover additional costs. TEDxUMN plays an important role in facilitating conversation and the sharing of ideas that has a real impact on the student community (Guideline 1).

Section 4: Reserve Accounts

In September 2012-2013, the Minnesota Student Association cashed out a Certificate of Deposit worth $17,213 that had been mistakenly recorded as a summer student services fees check. In the actuals column for 2012-2013, this income is listed as investment income. The Minnesota Student Association now operates with an operational reserve account of $5,000, which is 9.6% of the requested operating budget, an amount recommended for an organization of MSA’s size (Guideline 9). After a successful office move last year, $5,000 is an appropriate amount to protect against any unforeseen expenses, and allow operations to continue. The reserve will be kept in the MSA checking account.

Section 5: Fees Request

The Minnesota Student Association asks for $177,878 in student services fees. This is a decrease from last year's fees request by approximately $8,498.
While many of MSA’s programs, such as the grants program, have seen substantial growth in the past year, MSA has been able to streamline many of its operations to become more efficient and cost effective. In addition, a portion of expenses in fiscal year 14 were associated with office relocation and the purchase of new office equipment. These costs will not need to be incurred next year, and the MSA request has been adjusted accordingly. A detailed breakdown of MSA’s request may be found in the attached budget sheets.

The Minnesota Student Association is 50% operational during the summer months and traditionally has received a small summer stipend near the end of the spring semester to fund operational expenses that may arise over the three month break. During the summer, the office is open intermittently and MSA leadership meets with stakeholders to plan for the coming academic year.

**Compliance with the SUA Audit**
This year, MSA successfully completed the SUA audit by supplying all necessary financial information and documentation from the past three years. A full copy of the audit report is included in the supplementary materials of this request.

Some notable points in the audit include:
- Adequate primary documentation was provided for 27/28 transactions listed in the audit.
- We were unable to provide primary documentation for one transaction, TEDx Ticket Revenue, because the TEDx checking account was closed and added to the primary MSA account shortly before auditing began. We supplied the auditor with supplemental documentation and were granted an exception for the transaction.

**Section 6: External Funding**

*Describe your organization’s efforts to secure funding in addition to Student Services Fee income.*

In past years, MSA has secured additional funding through internal U of M Coke grants and partnerships with other student groups. MSA also brings in a small amount of ticket sales revenue from TEDxUMN events. This revenue however, is used to cover necessary costs of TEDxUMN events and is not filtered back into the overall MSA budget.

This year, MSA has operated solely off of Student Services Fee income because the nature the events this past year have not required grant or partnership funding. Student Services Fee income is vital to MSA as an organization. As such, MSA strives to use this income to benefit the greatest number of students possible through advocacy,
programming and educational and leadership development initiatives (Guidelines 1, 2, and 8).

Describe your organization’s financial need for Student Services Fee support that cannot be fulfilled with alternative sources of income.

MSA provides many services to the student body that would not be sustainable without Student Services Fee support. The Grants Program alone provides student groups at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities with access to $60,000 in grants annually. This program would not be possible without Student Services Fees support. Additionally, long-term initiatives such as advocacy efforts including medical amnesty, the freshman intern program, safety initiatives, support for VTAP, TEDxUMN and many others totaling well over $100,000 would not be feasible through alternative sources of income (Guideline 8). Additionally, Student Services Fees income allows MSA to partner and co-sponsor various events throughout the year. These opportunities for partnership and the working relationships that emerge between student groups as a result would be severely limited without access to Student Services Fees income.

In addition to monetary infeasibility, MSA already operates on an extremely tight timeline to plan events, create programs and make a significant positive impact on the student experience at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. MSA is a large organization with many leadership positions to fill and transition each year. Between transitioning a new leadership team, planning programs, events and initiatives for the year, executing these plans and maintaining the flexibility to respond to unexpected student concerns (such as campus safety) time is very limited. The time to find additional sources of funding, write the grant proposals and funding requests, and then wait for these requests to be processed simply does not exist if MSA is to maintain the same level of service to students that it currently offers.

State the percentage of your budget that comes from Student Services Fee income and any other sources of revenue

This year, 82% of MSA’s funding comes from Student Services Fees. This year, other sources of income include:

• Organizational Contributions ($3,450) for the co-sponsorship of VTAP with the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)
• Ticket sales revenue ($6,500) from TEDxUMN events.
• Conference Fees Income ($3,500): MSA hosted the bi-annual Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) Conference in January and received conference fees as an additional source of income for that event.
• Carryover from previous year ($21,341.95)

The requested amount shows 92% of MSA’s funding to come from Student Services Fees. Factors affecting this change are explained below:
• Organizational contributions from GAPSA are expected to increase by $50 for a total of $3,500 for the co-sponsorship of VTAP
• Ticket sales revenue from TEDxUMN events is expected remain about constant ($6,500).
• No revenue will be collected from ABTS conference fees because MSA will not host the conference in 2014-2015.
• The projected carryover from 2013-2014 ($802) is significantly less than the carryover from 2012-2013 ($21,341.95)

**Conclusion**

We appreciate your diligence in helping student organizations like the Minnesota Student Association operate effectively. Our request is $177,878 for fiscal year 15, which is an $8,498 decrease from the 2013-2014 request. While many of MSA’s programs, such as the grants program, have seen substantial growth in the past year, MSA has been able to streamline many of its operations to become more efficient and cost effective. MSA has benefitted from strong leadership in the past two years and is expected to continue growing and improving as an organization in the future. Thank you very much for your time.