Students for a Conservative Voice

January 24, 2014

Student Services Fee Request for 2014 - 2015 Academic Year

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“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.”

Allison Maass  
Preparer’s Name  
Co-Preparer’s Name

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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):

General Operating Support:  
X

Start-Up Costs:  
Capital:

Project / Program Support:  
X

Technical Assistance:  
Other (List):

Budget

Dollar Amount Requested  
$ 137,189.35

Total Annual Organization Budget  
$ 103,632.15

Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating)  
$ 119,000.00
Section 1: Narrative

History
Students for a Conservative Voice was founded in the spring of 2004 by a group of students who were concerned about the lack of a political discourse on campus. They felt the creation of an alternative media source would be the best way to counter the liberal bias of The Minnesota Daily and The Wake and enhance the marketplace of ideas on campus. That spring and fall they produced two issues of The Minnesota Patriot, a conservative paper. However, after money dried up, a third issue could not be produced.

In the spring of 2005, the leadership of Students for a Conservative Voice felt that the political discourse on campus was still lacking, so they put together a few issues of a broadsheet newsletter, The Conservative Journal, which was e-mailed and given to conservative activists around campus. The Conservative Journal was a humble production, but its distribution sowed the seeds of larger implications, mainly the desire to once again try to produce a monthly conservative newspaper on campus.

Thus, in the fall of 2005, a group of ten University of Minnesota Students got together to produce The Minnesota Republic under the umbrella of Students for a Conservative Voice. They spent the first two months of the school year raising money, acquiring publishing equipment, talking to national organizations, and looking at other successful conservative publications, both within the U of M and at other campuses. The fruits of their labor were successful when they published their first issue at the end of January 2006, and published monthly for the rest of the 2005-2006 academic year.

In September 2006, The Minnesota Republic continued to publish. This was a milestone since this was the first time a conservative publication spanned a school year since the Minnesota Spectator last published in 1991. The Minnesota Republic has continued to contribute to the political discourse and the marketplace of ideas by both informing students on events at the University of Minnesota, but also by staking out positions on controversial issues that we feel do not receive a fair airing among faculty, other campus publications, and students.

Since receiving student services fees, we have been able to afford office space with another conservative group and have been able to increase our distribution and presence on campus. With the continued successes, Students for a Conservative Voice has continued to contribute to the political discourse and the marketplace of ideas by both informing students of events at the U and also by staking out positions on controversial issues that we feel do not receive a fair airing among faculty, other campus publications, and students.

The Mission of Students for a Conservative Voice
The mission of Students for a Conservative Voice is to help create an alternative media on the U of M campus, with the intent to express a conservative ideology and philosophy. Our publication, The Minnesota Republic, seeks to reach several goals on campus in terms of its content, including but not limited to:
Students for a Conservative Voice

- Cover topics and news that we feel interests conservatives
- Provide conservative commentary on campus, state, and national issues
- Allow for a free debate of ideas and ideologies to take place within our pages, including focusing on pro-con issues that divide conservatives and America at large (i.e. a pro-con on intelligent design, or stadium funding)
- Allow a place for conservative journalists to explore longer pieces that wouldn’t be published in The Minnesota Daily
- Serve as a conservative cultural center, acting as a repository for conservative resources and ambassadors to the university community by conveying conservative philosophy regarding issues relevant to students.

We have strived for this mission in The Patriot, The Conservative Journal, and we believe we are finally achieving it with The Minnesota Republic.

One only needs to pick up a copy of The Minnesota Daily to understand that conservatives are not given a proper venue of expression at the University of Minnesota. If the University is truly committed to a marketplace of ideas, and if students are here to be exposed to a variety of ideas, Students for a Conservative Voice, and our publication The Minnesota Republic, is clearly needed.

Relationships and Benefits

Our relationship with other conservative groups on campus is defined by the fact that we hold some common traits and even some overlapping membership. However, other organizations that are conservative have different missions from ours (i.e. we are not meant to be a solely pro-life publication, or a free-market environmental group, nor are we associated with any political or religious group). We work to stay independent from these organizations, but do support the common cause of the propagation of conservative ideas and philosophy on campus. We have also worked with the other groups directly, such as Collegians for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), the Minnesota Association of Scholars, Young Americans for Liberty, and participating in Conservative Awareness Week, an event that drew attention from many parts of campus. Students for a Conservative Voice is able to advance and support a growing conservative culture on campus through direct assistance with and coverage of conservative events on campus.

There are a number of benefits that Students for a Conservative Voice and The Minnesota Republic provide. Students who work on The Minnesota Republic are given a chance to express conservative ideas in a comfortable working environment and to have their voice heard among the general university population. Conservative journalists are given a quick way to publish clips and build their resume. Besides writing for the paper, these journalists are given the chance to learn other facets of the journalistic industry - namely the hard work and dedication required to sustain a monthly publication. Our layout, distribution, and design effort is all done in-house by our editors/staff writers, and has quickly taught our staff how to properly work layout and design programs such as Adobe InDesign, and Photoshop. Working for Students for a Conservative Voice on The Minnesota Republic is an educational experience. Additionally, the programming that SCV offers provides a great opportunity to get to know other campus conservatives, building a campus community as well as learn more about conservative principles.
Finally, students who do not necessarily come to our meetings, or even read our publication gain a benefit from those who do. Undoubtedly, a conservative publication on campus creates a bit of a stir – thus students are exposed to and hear about points of view or ideas that may otherwise be ignored, because they are not provided in the classroom or in other publications at the U.

As outlined in the mission of Students for a Conservative Voice, we strive to provide a balance of viewpoints on the University of Minnesota campus. We accomplish this goal by distributing our publication that emphatically stresses the conservative and/or alternative position on crucial issues. In issues we’ve published this school year, The Minnesota Republic has discussed Iran, healthcare reform, and campus issues like the recent crime spike.

It is our fundamental belief that the liberal education offered at the University of Minnesota can only be enhanced by furthering the marketplace of ideas and promoting diversity of thought. Such diversity should be encouraged in academia. Students for a Conservative Voice was founded because there was little diversity of thought, and academia failed to challenge students to question everything they read or heard. Students for a Conservative Voice is contributing to the political discourse on campus, challenging the beliefs of students, and in doing so, making the education of students at the University of Minnesota even more well-rounded.

**Student Involvement**
Students for a Conservative Voice involves students with two layers. The first are the editors who design, produce, and promote the monthly publication. The second layer is comprised of the contributors whose work is published in The Minnesota Republic. Contributors are all former readers, and many are future editors. The students benefit from the work that our dedicated staff do every month and those students have every opportunity to join and advance in the organization by being engaged and contributing to the paper.

Our advisor is a professor of Journalism and Public Relations. He provides mentorship, helps guide story selection, and offers professional advice to the student journalists. Recent alumni outreach has led to the informal board of alumni advisors. SCV plans to formalize the alumni board to help SCV attract advertisers, provide career opportunities, and support the student publication.

**Section 2: Organizational Chart**
- Provide a block diagram that supplements the narrative section and details more clearly the structure of the student group. The organizational chart should provide a clear picture of the reporting structure, student involvement and programmatic areas.
Job Descriptions

Editor-in-Chief
The editor in chief oversees all the operations of The Minnesota Republic. They ensure that the other editors do a quality job, on time. They are also responsible for making the final touches to the issue and ensure it gets printed and distributed. Finally, the Editor in Chief is the primary contact of The Minnesota Republic, will work with the advisor on business issues, and will pursue advertisers. (Stipend of $250 per month; approximately 30 hours of work per month).

Managing Editor
The Managing Editor is responsible for making sure that The Minnesota Republic has a visually appealing layout. They will design all of the pages, and use the content received from the Editor-at-Large. They will be responsible for all of the pictures and the cover graphics. (Stipend of $250 per month; approximately 25 hours of work per month).

Editor-at-Large
The Editor-at-Large is responsible for finding and copy editing all the content in The Minnesota Republic. They are responsible for ensuring that there will be enough quality content to publish each issue, and is responsible for coordinating with all writers to ensure content is received on time. (Stipend of $250 per month; approximately 25 hours of work per month).

Outreach Director
The Outreach Director is responsible for planning the events that SCV hosts. While all staff members are required to volunteer to help with all events, the Outreach director plans/executes the advertising plan, coordinates with the web editor for an effective internet presence of the event, assigns volunteer duties, works with the UMN to reserve rooms/acquire necessary permits, and plans the logistics of the event (including securing and working with potential speakers, securing
movie rights and or planning travel to each of our events). (Stipend of $250 per month; approximately 25 hours of work per month).

**Staff Writers**
Staff Writers are contributors to *The Minnesota Republic*. They provide content such as news stories, editorial analysis, interviews, and other content. They also are responsible for doing their own research and interviews. (Stipend of $225 per month; approximately 20 hours of work per month).

**Distribution**
These two people are responsible for distributing *The Minnesota Republic* to our stands across campus. These two people also are responsible for counting any leftover issues so that we can distribute more issues to areas with higher demand and fewer to areas with less. They are responsible for any parking/gas expenses that they incur and must have access to an insured vehicle. (Stipend of $225 per month; approximately 15 hours of work per month. Please note: the distribution people are responsible for having a properly licensed and insured vehicle).

**Advisor:**
Our advisor is a professor of Journalism and Public Relations. He provides mentorship, helps guide story selection, and offers professional advice to the student journalists. Recent alumni outreach has led to the informal board of alumni advisors. SCV plans to formalize the alumni board to help SCV attract advertisers, provide career opportunities, and support the student publication. (Stipend of $250 per month; approximately 20 work hours per month)

**Section 3: Performance Report**
- Use quantitative measures to indicate the degree of use and participation of services and programs within the student group. Figures should be used to demonstrate the impact the student group has on campus life and the collegiate experience. Consider the following details:
  - Participation/attendance figures
  - Survey results
  - Number of students served

Students for a Conservative Voice has had varying success in its publication. Our criteria for success is determined by several factors – number of issues published, number of pages in each issue, and covering a broad range of topics in editorial and news stories. We specifically want to educate the U of M population about conservatism, including disagreements between conservatives, through pro-con pieces, op-eds, letters to the editor, and editorials. We occasionally run an alumni column, which serves as a source of participation for alumni and a way for them to impart their wisdom onto readers of the paper. Our organizational goals will be met when every student at the U of M can hear the names “Students for a Conservative Voice” and “*The Minnesota Republic*” and identify them with intellectual conservative writing, as well as a commitment to the market place of ideas.
We evaluate our publication by the email responses we get, our major method of communication. A good issue comes with many comments via email, including several conservatives who show interest in contributing to the publication. In the case where only a few emails are received, The Minnesota Republic uses this to re-target our efforts to draw larger responses. The email responses to our issues have been overwhelming.

Our short-term goals include a consistent publication, growing the group, formulating a fundraising strategy and business plan, as well as a constant improvement of our publication. Our long-term goals include financial stability and becoming the first stable conservative publication since The Minnesota Spectator (1988-1991).

Students for a Conservative Voice has several goals for each of our speaking events. We seek to promote the conservative mission. We wish to challenge the majority opinion around campus. We want to contribute to the political discourse on campus. Success can be measured throughout events in several ways, predominantly either attendance or coverage. Coverage has been hard to get outside of our own newspaper, but attendance figures would suggest success. We were quite pleased with the response received during Welcome Week, and attendance figures at the Jonah Goldberg and Bob Adkinson events this year were strong.

2011-2012 Events:

1. Dinesh D'Souza – SCV hosted author, journalist and former editor of the Dartmouth Review to campus to discuss his history and success as a conservative campus journalist.
2. Conservative Awareness Week – SCV helped organize Conservative Awareness Week in the fall. This was a series of events designed to generate interest in conservative activities on campus and interest students in our organization.
3. SCV will co-sponsor four spring events with conservative groups on campus.
4. CPAC Conference – SCV will send reporters to cover the CPAC conference, the premier annual conservative gathering. The reporters will use the opportunity to network with other campus publications and gather rich content for the publication.

2012-2013 Events:

1. We hosted an MSA candidate debate to help students become more informed about the campus elections.
2. Conservative Awareness Week – SCV again host Conservative Awareness Week in the fall. We hosted two speakers to talk about the proposed MN Constitutional Amendments.
3. Co-sponsorship Grants Program – SCV allocated money for financial and logistical support to a number of programs hosted by similar groups such as CFACfT, Federalist Society, Ayn Rand Study Group, Students for Human Life, and others.
4. CPAC Conference – SCV sent reporters to cover the CPAC conference, the premier annual conservative gathering. The reporters will use the opportunity to network with other campus publications and gather rich content for the publication.

2013-2014 Events

1. Sponsor of Conservative Awareness Week. This year we hosted well known author and columnist Jonah Goldberg.

2. 1st Annual Gun Range Trip – we took a group of students to Bill’s Gun Range to not only take advantage of our second amendment rights but also to demonstrate the importance of knowing how to safely use firearms.

3. “Finding a Company with a Strong Culture”: We invited local businessman Bob Adkinson to share knowledge from his career about how to find companies with strong cultures. This was part of our outreach to business students on campus.

4. CPAC Trip: The Minnesota Republic will once again send students to the annual CPAC conference in Washington DC, where they will be in the “Press Box” and report on the event. Besides gaining reporting experience, students have a great opportunity to network and to represent the University of Minnesota at a national conference.

5. We will be hosting well-known commentator Ann Coulter this spring.

Section 4: Reserve Accounts

- Any student group reserve accounts must be listed and described. Include the following:
  - Name of the account(s)
  - Current amount in the account(s)
  - Purpose of the account(s)
  - Additional information the committee may find helpful

SCV does not maintain a separate reserve account. We strive to maintain a reserve in order to pay for a September issue before the fall fees check arrives in addition to any other unexpected costs. These reserves are held in our checking account.

Section 5: Fees Request

- State the total amount of your student services fees request. Indicate whether this amount is a decrease from last year, an increase from last year, or if this is a first-time request. The Fees committee will be particularly interested in the reasoning behind a fee increase.

SCV is requesting $137,189.35. This is an increase over the previous request. This increase will result in far more events, and a 200% increase in content published. We are working with economies of scale, and with slightly more funding, we are able to dramatically increase our efficiency, especially in regards to the budget to create the Republic.

Listed is a summary of major changes to our request from the current year’s budget:
Expanded Issues:
Our vision for The Minnesota Republic is one where it takes the role of a magazine more than a newspaper, focusing on issues in depth rather than simply summarizing recent news. One cosmetic improvement will be glossy pages, like many other magazines. This would create a more professional looking product and offer the University of Minnesota community to have access to a more professional looking news and commentary magazine to supplement the media experience they already have with The Minnesota Daily, just as readers of a daily newspaper may also choose to read a publication like Time, Newsweek, The Economist, or National Review to enrich their understanding of political issues, culture and news issues. A large percent of our request increase will go to this, but due to economy of scale, we will be able to produce 2x extra content every month.

Adding Staff:
Key to making The Minnesota Republic successful is adding more staff. We intend to hire two new regular staff writers, add 2 people to distribute the republic, and an outreach director. For more information, look 3 pages back for job descriptions as well as approximate pay. The total number of salaries may seem high, but it is because there is an extraordinary amount of work that needs to go into developing a high quality publication. Like The Minnesota Daily and The Wake, we require stipend money in order to pay our staff.

Compensation:
We pay a total of 15 people. All editors earn $250 a month in a stipend, and all writers (and distribution people) make $225 per month as a stipend. For a more detailed breakdown, please see the organizational diagram in section 3.

Extra Events:
While our flagship operation of SCV is publishing The Minnesota Republic, we also like to be involved with the campus in more ways than simply publishing our paper. As such, we are striving to have more events that attract a larger number of people. Next year, we have at least one event each month of the school year. A description of each event can be found in our budget in the programming section. However, we wish to present another narrative for our largest event next year, welcoming Dr. Ron Paul to campus:

SCV has worked with CFACT and the Young American's for Liberty to form a coalition to host Dr. Ron Paul on campus in the Spring of 2015.

We have reached out to Dr. Paul's speaker's bureau to obtain realistic quotes for honoraria, travel, and other amenities and expenses that are expected. This accounts for the whole of the Entertainment and Travel line items, and $1500 of the Other line item.

Security for the event should be straightforward unless a threat or other heightened tension arises before the event. We would work with the UMPD to provide direct security with uniformed officers, which may require overtime reimbursement payments to the UMPD. Secondary security provided by a security company (ie – the guys in yellow jackets at professional sporting events) may also be required, and we will work with the UMPD to determine security needs. It may also be necessary to have an EMT present if advised by the UMPD. $3000 of the Other line item is dedicated to Security.
The balance of the Other line item will be for ticketing expenses. Ticketing will be needed to control access to Northrop auditorium (2,700 seats) and provide some additional revenue to pay for the event. $14,500 will need to be raised to pay for the event. Three co-sponsors have been identified that will cover half that amount. The balance will be made up by reserving 700 of the 2,700 seats for sale to the public. The first 2,000 seats will be made available for free to UMN students.

Dr. Paul has attracted audiences of 10,000+ in the past. The ticketing process will inform us if we need a bigger venue to accommodate the event. If this occurs, we project that the increased costs to security and venue rental can be offset by ticket sales if demand is closer to 10,000 than 2,700. Possible expanded venues include Mariucci Arena, Williams Arena, or the Field House. We will begin the ticketing process in September of 2014 to ensure as much time as possible to change venues if demand outstrips Northrop’s capacity.

We will work with the University’s Large Event Task Force chaired by Tim Busse to ensure minimal disruption to the University.

- Indicate at what percentage your organization will operate in the summer of 2012.
  - If your organization has an office, will it be open?

Yes, 100%
  - What programs and services will your student group offer?

SCV will publish a single summer issue of The Minnesota Republic, but our office will remain open and our staff will continue to hold meetings to plan events and changes to our operations for the following year.

  - How will students who pay Student Services Fees in the summer benefit from your organization?

The can read the summer issue and contribute to the content as well as join in any event planning for both summer and initial school year events.

Section 6: External Funding

- Describe your organization’s efforts to secure funding in addition to Student Services Fee income.
- Describe your organization’s financial need for Student Services Fee support that cannot be fulfilled with alternative sources of income.
- State the percentage of your budget that comes from Student Services Fee income and any other sources of revenue.

We realistically, perhaps slightly optimistically, feel we could bring in $3000 in FY2014, an increase from the past two years. A significant hindrance in securing ad revenue was the physical quality of the publication. Businesses were reluctant to invest in a low-budget monthly
publication that struggled to be eye-catching on the newsstands. We are making great strides in this regard, and we expect to improve our advertising revenue as the product quality continues to develop.

While obtaining significant advertising revenue is a huge goal for us next year to cover operational expenses, we are currently working to get money for our programming events by partnering with other organizations. Programming is a natural fit to partner with other groups because they can gain publicity as well. Student Services Fees are necessary for the remainder of the programming expenses and the operational expenses, until we develop a revenue stream through advertisements. Assuming our SSF request is granted in full, we are very confident that we can obtain advertisements starting next academic year.

Approximately 62% budget comes from SSF. Again, assuming our request is fully granted so that we can expand the issue and add staff, that percent will drop in years to come as it is replaced by advertising revenue.