The West Coast Swing Club (#2966)

01/24/2014

Student Services Fee Request for the 2014 - 2015 Academic Year

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

(507) 261-5810                      N/A                      wcsc@umn.edu
Phone                               Fax                           Email

“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.”

Luke Rosedahl                      Sophia Gutterman
Preparer’s Name                    Co-Preparer’s Name
rosed012@umn.edu                    gutte009@umn.edu
Preparer’s Email                    Co-Preparer’s Email

Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit?       Yes [ ]          No [ X ]
If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Operating Support: X</th>
<th>Start-Up Costs:</th>
<th>Capital:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project / Program Support: X</td>
<td>Technical Assistance:</td>
<td>Other (List):</td>
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Budget

- SSF Dollar Amount Requested $3,500
- Total Annual Organization Budget $4,450
- Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $1,340

Important Note: All Student Services Fee applications will be evaluated using the Guidelines for Decision-Making found on pages 20-21 of the Student Services Fee Handbook. It is critical for your application to address these guidelines in your written application. Please reference/describe how your organization meets particular/applicable guidelines in Section 1, Section 3 and/or Section 5 of the written portion of your application and in your program breakdown included in the SSF budget worksheet.
Section 1: Narrative

Please use the following guidelines to provide a description of your organization:

- Brief summary of organization history, including date of establishment
- Organization mission/vision statements, inclusive of organizational goals
- Describe your organization’s relationship with organizations of like mission
- Illustrate the need for your organization within the University community, inclusive of how your organization meets this need
- Detail the student benefit derived from your organization, whether or not students utilize services
- Describe student involvement within your organization

The West Coast Swing Club (WCSC) was founded in September of 2012. West Coast Swing (WCS) is a partner dance that originated in the 1940’s in California and has since evolved to become an international dance with competitors of all backgrounds around the world. The WCSC was started in order to build a community at the U of M which would inspire new dancers and spread the passion of WCS. The founders of the club collaborated with local swing instructor and U of M graduate, Niko Salgado, to provide instruction and social dancing opportunities to students.

The mission of the WCSC is to promote learning and appreciation of WCS in U of M students as well as grow the local dance community. In order to achieve this goal, the club strives to create a safe and positive environment for students of all backgrounds, academic and personal interests, and levels of dance experience (Guideline 4: Breadth of service across departments/units/etc.). Club members are also encouraged to further their dance by traveling to various competitions within the Midwest.

The WCSC is the first and only WCS group on campus. There are various other partner dance groups at UMN such as salsa, ballroom, and Argentine tango. Thus far, dance clubs have functioned independently of one another. It is the hope of the WCSC that in the future, dance clubs can provide support for each other and that the U of M dance community become a more cohesive unit. This February, the WCSC is hosting a cross-club dance event called U Can Dance. The goal of the program is to bring together dance groups to recruit potential members from the student body and provide a fun, safe environment for students to step out of their comfort zones as they experience the joys of dance. Currently the clubs participating include the WCSC, MinnesoTap, the Minnesota Dance Club, U-Tango, and Minnesota Kpop Dance Crew. This will grow the UMN dance community and encourage people of various dance backgrounds to share their experiences with each other (Guideline 1: Helping to foster a sense of community/Providing a service to the student body. Guideline 2: Programs provided to the student body).

The WCSC plays an important and positive role for students at the U of M. Through dance, students are able to express their creativity and spontaneity. This is very beneficial for young people under the pressures of school and living on their own. Dance can provide an outlet for many forms of stress as well as connecting students to peers who may be dealing with the same issues. Often times it is easy to feel lost at a school as large as the U of M. Within the WCSC, members have built a close and supportive community full of people from all backgrounds and areas of interest. As a club, members have traveled together all over the Midwest as well as to social dancing around the twin cities. The club also has outings such as the yearly MN State Fair outing (at which the club dances in a public performance) and the yearly Como Zoo outing (which provides a great group bonding experience) to help its members feel like part of a community (Guideline 1).
The WCSC also helps its members by providing them with a fun and unique form of exercise. Many times it is difficult to find a way to exercise during the semester, especially when the blustery Minnesota weather eliminates outdoor exercise options for all but the most dedicated. WCS provides a great chance to participate in fun exercise that varies with every dance while not feeling like exercise. The opportunity to get healthier from fun exercise, release stress through movement to music, and feel like part of a community is something that WCS provides that is hard to find elsewhere.

The WCSC also provides students the opportunity to continue developing a skill that they learned through U of M courses. Each fall, a swing class is offered to students (DNCE 1323) that teaches West Coast Swing. Previously, after the course there were no options for students to continue learning WCS on campus. The club gives students the chance to continue to progress in WCS and take their dancing to another level (Guideline 1: Supplementing the academic curriculum).

The club provides benefits to all students, regardless of whether or not they choose to attend club meetings, lessons, or hosted events. By decreasing the stress on its members and increasing their overall mood and happiness in life, the club affects the overall mood of the campus. The increase in community felt by those who join dance gives them a support network that in turn allows them to reach out to others who are not in the dance community and support them and invite them to join the community. Also, the club’s public performances of West Coast in the mall area throughout the semester (5 of which were held in the fall 2013 semester) increases the mood of the passerby’s even if they have no further interest in dance (Guideline 6: Benefits to students who do not attend the programs). Overall, there are a number of benefits to students that the WCSC provides both to its members and the campus as a whole.

As a new group, the board and members of the WCSC have been working hard to grow the club while maintaining its familiar and laid back environment. Over the past year and a half that the club has been active, the group has had a 60% increase in active members, even after the graduation of all first-year board members. At the internationally attended WCS competition, Swing Dance America in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, the club had 13 members in attendance. Throughout the year, members who travel regionally have made finals and placed well at every competition. These achievements are a direct result of having a paid professional instructor for the club (Guideline 10: Justified use of paid staff). However, along with a certified instructor comes the responsibility of paying him/her for lessons. Currently, the club charges $35 per student per semester for unlimited classes. The board believes that this cost, although very low for the resources being offered, is a major deterrent for students interested in the club. The club has explored various ways to be self-sustaining through fundraising and membership fees, but with the current number of members in attendance, it is unrealistic to continue charging so little for lessons. With additional funds from Student Services Fees, the WCSC would be able to provide professional lessons at little cost and in turn be able to reach a larger portion of the student body (Guideline 5: Targeting largest number of students).
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.

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President
  Sophia Gutterman

Advisor
  Niko Salgado

Treasurer
  Luke Rosedahl

Secretary
  Kristen Wunderlich

Outreach and Publicity Manager
  Sarah Snapp

Fundraising Coordinator
  Melissa Baddin
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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 of undergraduate, graduate and professional students. Consider the following details:
  - Participation/attendance figures
  - Survey results
  - Number of students served

As a relatively new club, the WCSC has been laying the groundwork for future growth and developing its system of procedures for facilitating club growth. After the first year, all club founders and board members graduated leaving very few guidelines, concrete documentations, and explanation for methods of operation. As such, the current group of officers has begun building the club from the ground up, seeking to set up a system that can continue once they leave and that will provide future officers with the ability to continue where the previous officers left off instead of starting over.

The current officers have worked hard to make their new approach a success. The club went from being a loose group of members without a cohesive officer group or public face to an organized and close community with a tangible chain of command and communication flow. The club now officially has a panel on the bridge, a budget, attendance records, an active Facebook page with over 140 likes, a group website, biweekly board meetings, an email list with over 50 emails from students who attended a meeting at some point this last semester, and is currently involved in the process of planning a multi-club dance event as well as several fundraising events. While the WCSC continues to grow and find more sustainable and efficient ways to operate, the group has made leaps and bounds in its progress.

There are no records of attendance from the 2012-2013 academic year, but attendance grew from 10 consistent members at the beginning of the fall 2013 semester to 16 by the end of the semester. This 60% increase shows that the outreach attempts of the club were successful in recruitment. In addition, there were a large number of students who attended several meetings or stopped by one of our various contact tables but didn’t have the time or financial resources to commit for this semester but who, in the future, hope to become active members of the club. Our club also presented itself to the West Coast class offered by the U last fall, and there was a lot of interest, with over 25 students opting to take a flier (Guideline 3: Demand for services provided).

Overall, the WCSC has performed very well and has made much progress in its development as a club. Membership has grown, procedures have been developed and put in place, and official records are now being kept. With this solid groundwork in place, the club can now move on to more complicated matters such as fundraising, event hosting, and other “extracurricular” activities.
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

The West Coast Swing Club does not currently possess a reserve account. An account will be created in the future, but currently the resources possessed by the WCSC are in a single TCF Checking Account that includes a $50 operational reserve buffer. This $50 is considered to be the reserve account of the WCSC and is kept in place to provide a buffer in case of unforeseen expenses. This upcoming academic year (Fall 2014/Spring 2015), the club will increase that buffer to $150 dollars (approximately 5% of the total operating budget) as that is a more reasonable amount to have for a reserve.

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 Fee Committee will be particularly interested in the reasoning behind a fee increase.
- Regarding compensation for student employees, student group officers and/or professional staff; please include the number of compensated individuals, type of compensation (salary, hourly wage and/or stipend), compensation levels, approximate number of work hours (either per week or per semester) and general responsibilities/duties of compensated individuals.
- Please provide additional detail if you are requesting one-time, special or a significant funding increase as part of your SSF request. Include plausible/realistic plans, evidence that the applicant has thought through the facility, security, permitting and/or other requirements for putting on significant events, and demonstrate an understanding of the true full cost of the events or other applicant requests (where one-time, special or significant funding increases are included in the SSF application). The SSF Advisor is available to consult with applicants who wish to request one-time, special or significant funding increases.
- For groups requesting more than $15,000 in annual SSF support, indicate if your organization will be either 0%, 50% or 100% operational in the summer of 2015.
  - If your organization has an office, will it be open in the summer?
  - What programs and services will your student group offer in the summer?
  - How will students who pay Student Services Fees in the summer benefit from your organization?

The West Coast Swing Club requests a total amount of $3500 for the 2014-2015 Academic Year; this is a first time request.

Until recently, the WCSC has operated on a combination of member dues and a reduced rate charged by the instructor for new clubs. Now that the club is established, and can start pursuing the expansion of the dance community at the U of M, our future expenses have grown beyond what we can provide through membership dues or fundraising opportunities. To truly provide the opportunity to dance to all students, regardless of their economic status, the club seeks to lower the semester dues to $10. While this would reduce the club’s income, there is currently no other club that provides professional instruction at as low a cost. The board members feels as though the reduction in income is worthwhile to provide the opportunity to dance to as many students as possible (Guideline 5).
The salary paid to the instructor will also increase from the previous year. As a new club, the board and instructor agreed on a reduced rate for lessons depending on the income for the year. This year, as an established and growing club, the instructor must now be paid his regular rate of $40 an hour (for 2 hours per meeting 13 meetings per semester for 2 semesters). The instructor is responsible for planning lessons, teaching lessons, providing feedback to students on their progress, and taking feedback to tailor the lessons to the club’s needs.

The enjoyment of dance is a mixture of the joy of moving to music, the social interaction, and the ability to progress and watch yourself improve in a no-pressure environment. This improvement is a main part of what causes WCS to be such a big confidence booster for its dancers, and the best way to facilitate this improvement is by providing instruction from a paid professional. And as can be seen by the advancement of club members and the club as a whole, with members making finals at all attended competitions (most recently a couple from the club placed 5th out of 65 couples at a national competition over New Year’s), this professional instruction works. To pursue the club’s goals, it is apparent that a paid instructor is a necessity (Guideline 10: Justification of paid staff).

The other operational expense that the WCSC seeks SSF assistance with is the cost of advertising printing and copying. As the club grows and seeks to reach out to the student body, it needs to be able to afford costs such as fliers, posters, and other promotional materials to hand out. By providing such materials, the club can increase its reach to a larger portion of the student body and by doing so can have a greater positive impact on the community as a whole. (Guideline 9: Justification of fees request)

The club also requests SSF assistance for some of its programming expenses. Once per semester, the club seeks to offset the cost of travel to a major national WCS competition and provide a pizza dinner to its members in attendance. These competitions will be a mixture of a bonding retreat, a chance to learn what dance is like around the world (due to the competition’s international attendees), and a showcasing of the U of M’s WCS talents. By traveling to a national event, members develop a deeper sense of the community of dance; by dancing with and meeting fellow dancers from across the world, the members are given the chance to see the true extent of the community they are in. This inspires them to a deeper love of their home dancing community at the U of M, a renewed passion for the dance, and a more relaxed state of mind throughout their day-to-day life as they feel like their connections expand far beyond the reaches of the U. The community that dance provides is one of its major draws, and the knowledge that you have friends in major cities across the U.S. and world that would house you and help you in a time of need is an incredibly valuable thing. This programming, therefore, provides a wonderful service to the student, increases their sense of community, and provides benefits that reach far beyond dance (Guidelines 1 & 9).
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.

The West Coast Swing Club seeks funding through two main sources besides student services fees (Guideline 7: Efforts to secure funding in addition to the student services fees). The first of these sources is pursued through participating in fundraisers at eateries around campus such as Chilly Billy’s and Potbelly’s as well as at local dance venues. This is a wonderful chance for the club to work together while raising funds. With the newness of the club and the busy schedules of the officers, the club is hesitant to overestimate the amount of money that can be raised in such a manner, so there is an estimated $300 income from fundraising. If more is raised, the excess will be applied to future years and future budgets updated accordingly.

The second source of income is club dues. As described earlier, the club seeks to reduce its dues from $35 to $10 per semester in order to be more accessible to the student body as a whole. This is vital to the success of the club, will greatly increase the percentage of students that can take advantage of the WCSC by providing the opportunity to a wider economic spectrum, and will increase the dance community at the U of M (Guidelines 1 & 5). Currently, there are many students who have expressed interest in joining the club but are unable to afford the membership dues. By lowering the dues to $10, such students will be provided an opportunity to dance that they otherwise will not be given. With a conservative projected club membership of 30 members at a rate of $10 for next year, this would lead to a yearly income of $600.

With those funding and estimated expenses, there is a $3500 that must be covered by Student Services Fee support. This is a reasonable percentage (approximately 80%) of the clubs total income and compares with the approximately 5% provided by fundraising and 15% provided by membership dues (Guideline 8: Demonstration of financial need that cannot be fulfilled with alternative sources of income).

If the club does not receive the amount requested, membership dues would need to be increased to make up for the budget deficit. This change would greatly hurt the club’s current members and reduce its reach to new members across the UMN student body.