Appeal to SSF Committee
Cru (#1035)

*In this document ‘Committee’ or ‘Subcommittee’ refers to the SSF Committee/Subcommittee involved in the initial and final deliberations while ‘Appeals Committee’ refers to the SSF Appeals Committee*

We would like to appeal to be reheard by the Appeals Committee because we feel the subcommittee made their decisions based on inaccurate information and were inconsistent in funding events which do not benefit students who do not attend. We were also not able to address the $900 general cut to room rental which we were not able to respond to as the cut was not itemized in the initial recommendation.

We will address the inaccurate information first. During final deliberations one committee member stated that Cru was already receiving more than the previous year. At this time the Committee was recommending $6,775 to Cru while the 2013-2014 SSF Final Funding Recommendations (Post Appeals) document available on the Student Service Fees web page allocates $7,076 and our projected budget lists $6,846.50 from Student Service Fees; both higher than the initial recommendation referred to. Another committee member commented to herself during final deliberations that she thought this was Cru’s first time applying for fees despite two years of receiving funding shown in our budget sheets and references to previous applications in our application and presentation. Because neither of these committee members was corrected it must be assumed that the entire Subcommittee did not know information which should have been apparent from our application.

Furthermore the first comment referenced above shows that the Committee used the 2013-2014 funding as Cru’s normal operating budget. As should have been evident from our budget sheet (which shows $26,755.91 income from Student Service Fees in 2012-2013) and multiple references in the application and presentation, Cru’s 2013-2014 funding was far lower than normal as a result of a poor audit and as an effort to reduce Cru’s reserves. The 2013-2014 Committee’s objectives have been met; our budget sheets show that our operational reserves have decreased and our efforts towards better financial tracking were detailed in our application and presentation. The Committee did not mention that they were continuing these measures in the 2014-2015 in their published rationales or the final deliberations but still justified a cut by comparing funding to 2013-2014 levels. Thus we would like the Appeals Committee to consider our request in light of our history beyond 2013-2014 funding and expressly continue or relax the measures made by the 2013-2014 Committee. It was also never noted by the Committee that were we to continue at current funding that our reserves would decrease another $2000 and we would be forced to reduce programming.

Both the comments made in final deliberations as well as using 2013-2014 funding as a base level without communicating continued financial discipline or reserves decrease indicate the Committee has not upheld Expectation of Student Service Fees Committee Members #4: “Each member will develop a thorough understanding of the budget requests, audit reports and any historical SSF information that may assist the SSF allocation process.” It is unclear how many of the Committee’s decisions may have been affected by these errors so we cannot point to any specific cut. The first comment mentioned above was made during discussion of the $900 property tax cut so we request that the Appeals Committee reconsider that cut. We also
request the Appeals Committee reconsider funding to retreats, conferences, and advertising with the guarantee that they will understand our application, budget sheets, and knowledge that 2013-2014 funding was a unique level of funding. These have been funded for several consecutive years in the past which may indicate the Committee’s decision to cut funding is related to our 2013-2014 SSF allocation rather than the events themselves.

In regards to the SSF Committee’s inconsistency in funding events which do not benefit the wider student body it is our opinion that the Committee violated viewpoint neutrality where “Criteria used to evaluate funding proposals must be consistently applied”. Multiple times during final deliberations the Committee stated their rule of thumb for funding dinners as $10 per head. Some of these dinners were major-specific – by definition exclusive to the majority of the student population – but were still funded. Cru’s retreats and conferences were primarily cut for GDM 4 and 6 despite being open to all students (we feel that student payments serve and our annual fundraising dinner serve as fulfillments for GDM 7,8 where applicable). Averaged over all students attending, we are requesting $10.63 per person for Fall Retreat, $19.25 per person for the Twin Cities X-perience Conference, and $4 per person for Spring Retreat. At a minimum these events should be covered at $10 per head to stay consistent with the Committee’s other rulings. Additionally this funding covers multiple meals, activities, and speaker expenses so the value is much more than the one meal the Committee has funded for other events.

Finally the Committee cut $900 from room rental fees but did not itemize it in their initial recommendation. We could therefore not address it in our follow-up while following the format requested by the Committee. In the final rationales the Committee cut this funding stating that our house property could be used instead. However the events we request room rental funding for have 100-800 attendees while our initial rationale follow-up indicated a capacity of 60 students. Thus the Committee’s recommendation is impossible and we were not given the opportunity to address their decision. We therefore request the $900 in room rental cuts be reinstated.