

# **How to be a Good Vice-President for Finance**

**Summer 2007**

# Deciding to Run

Before deciding on running for the position, you need to decide whether you can fulfill the commitment carrying out the duties and services for holding this position. The Student Body Vice-President for Finance position is one of the most strenuous and time-consuming positions within Student Government. The time commitment can vary from 5 to over 20 hours a week. This position is prone to facing unexpected challenges, surprises, and conflicts. The Student Body Vice-President for Finance needs to be organized, must be able to plan months ahead in advance, and must understand the consequences of actions and words that he or she communicates to people. The VP-F must be open to hearing and understanding various different perspectives, but must be decisive, firm, and resilient in the choices that he or she makes. The VP-F should take note of small details but always respond to problems conscious of the Big Picture and how the Student Body will perceive those decisions.

The Student Body Vice-President for Finance must work independently and also provide leadership and expertise to large group of people. The Student Body Vice-President for Finance **MUST** be proactive and resolute in requesting the necessary information required to carry out his responsibilities. The VP-F must be considerate and respectful of other people's boundaries when confronting them. Most importantly, the VP-Finance **MUST** be fully committed in upholding the Student Body's confidence, trust, and respect in the Student Government processes, in particular, the recognition and the funding process for student organizations.

Serving as the VP-F can be a very exciting and rewarding experience. The decisions you make will have a great impact on the social development of the campus community! Below is a summary of the responsibilities of the Vice-President for Finance. This link provides an outline of the specific responsibilities of this position.

[www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/duties.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/duties.html)

Read over the responsibilities and powers of the Student Body Vice-President for Finance within the Constitution of the Student Body.

<https://senate.web.cmu.edu/policies/constitution>

# Transitioning after Election

This report serves to be a guide of recommendations only for carrying out the main responsibilities of the Student Body Vice-President for Finance as informed and as efficiently as possible. You need not limit your vision and your goals to this document and you should consider any other financial initiatives, programs, and projects you feel are worthwhile to explore on behalf of the Student Body. It's possible due to unexpected circumstances you may need to improvise in carrying out these responsibilities. It is recommended you read through this entire report at the start of your term and also to reread future months ahead in advance. You've won your election! Congratulations! The summer is now the time to start transitioning and setting up for the VP-Finance position.

## May

### Immediate Tasks

- I. Congratulate and introduce yourself to the incoming Student Body President and Vice-President.
- II. Introduce yourself to the Director of Office of Student Activities and the Account Administrator. View Student Activities website here (<http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/StudentActivities/>)
- III. Introduce yourself to the Dean of Student Affairs. View Dean of Student Affairs website here (<http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/dean.cfm>)
- III. Schedule to meet with your VP-F predecessor and discuss the transition.
- IV. Request the following resources.
  - A. All available copies of the final balances of student organization from current and previous years.
  - B. Oracle code for the Vice-President for Finance and Joint Funding Committee accounts (\*these are two separate accounts). Keep this Oracle codes private and concealed.
  - C. Password to the Vice-President for Finance Andrew space (the JFC and VP-Finance Andrew space are the same. The jfunding email is simply a folder under the VP-Finance e-mail address). Keep this password concealed. You may change it if you need to.
  - D. Ask for a copy of the most recent Student Activities Flow Chart and have your predecessor explain it to you.
  - E. Ask the VP-Finance to list you as systems administrator on the Student Senate website.

### Main Responsibilities

***This is the start of your first major responsibility as VP-Finance!*** When transitioning occurs, you will already be in the middle of the "Summer

Rollover” process. The Summer Rollover process is when the Account Administrator for Student Activities starts closing the accounts for all student organizations for the fiscal year. The Fiscal Year starts and ends early July. Basically, the Vice-President for Finance and Student Activities must make decisions regarding any deficits and surpluses that occur within JFC-funded groups. Your predecessor should have announced the rollover process to student organizations already. However, you should be prepared to answer any questions about the rollover process. If groups ask you how to make a request during the rollover process, direct them to this website [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/forms.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/forms.html).

The important thing to understand is that when JFC groups end the fiscal year, any surpluses roll back to the Joint Funding Committee and any deficits are covered by the Joint Funding Committee, unless the incoming VP-Finance objects. It will be **YOUR** decision whether to allow JFC-funded groups to gain summer access, to keep any surpluses in their account, or to forgive groups that accumulate a significant deficit. You do not need to worry about non-JFC funded groups. How much deficit you forgive and how much surpluses you let groups keep will impact the amount rolled back to the Joint Funding Committee. This amount will be added to next year’s JFC budget which will be distributed to all JFC funded eligible groups. The decisions you make now will have long-term impact on the funding process and the message you send to student organizations. ***You will be making these decisions in early July while meeting with Student Activities!***

For the rest of the summer, start reading and responding e-mails in the VP-Finance (sbt) and Joint Funding (jfunding) accounts. Both e-mails are accessed under the same account. Keep in mind these are professional e-mail accounts and old e-mails may be read by future VP-Finance holders. You should start reading any submitted rollover request forms and going through old Final Balance spreadsheets. Familiarize yourself with Budgettracker (<http://senate.web.cmu.edu/sunsine/budgettracker/browser>)

## June and July

### Main Responsibilities

In the meanwhile, you can start looking at the content and layout of the VP-Finance and Joint Funding Committee websites. You should take the time to make sure all links work and that all the information seems accurate to you. You should familiarize yourself with html and using ftp software in case you feel you need to update the websites. This can be done using ftp software, such as SSH File Transfer Client, which you can download here <https://www.cmu.edu/myandrew/auth/q?doc=software/alphalist.html>.

You can access the JFC folder by replacing ‘sbt’, with ‘jfunding’ in the address bar. Read through **all** the policies available on this page

<https://senate.web.cmu.edu/policies>. You should peruse through all documents listed on [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/forms.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/forms.html) and [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html) website.

***Now is the start for your second major responsibility.*** Get access to a calendar for the upcoming academic school year that includes school holidays and major programming (i.e. Spring Carnival). ***Start planning*** out a timeline for the CoSO student government recognition and the JFC funding process for the rest of the academic school year. You **DON'T** want to start planning this during the school year! First read through the rest of this report to get an understanding of the entire CoSO/JFC process for student organizations. Important events will be in red.

You may use last year's timeline as a guide:

[www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/schedule.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/schedule.html) and

Ideally, the dates should not differ significantly from last year's dates.

Your timeline should have all these parts:

- CoSO Fall Renewal Recognition Process
- JFC Fall Funding Eligibility Process
- Date of the Fall Joint JFC Senate/GSA Meeting
- JFC Spring Subsidy Allocation Process
- JFC Spring Appeals Process
- Date of the Fall Joint JFC Senate/GSA Meeting

Take time to view the timeline from your perspective and the perspective of student organizations and the Office of Student Activities. E-mail your draft timeline to the Director of Student Activities, the Account Administrator, and the CoSO Advisor and ask for their opinions. The timeline you set out is your decision to make, but it is good if you can get all these individuals to agree upon it.

You should start getting ready for Rollover Decision Meeting you will have in early July. Sometime during the first two weeks of July, you will have either a face-to-face or a phone conversation with the Director of Student Activities to make these all these decisions. After this meeting, you may receive messages or calls from Student Activities with follow-up questions or new information.

# August

- I. Introduce yourself to the Graduate Student Assembly President and Vice- President for Finance (<http://senate.web.cmu.edu/gsa>). Try to obtain a schedule of GSA meetings for the rest of the year.
- II. Introduce yourself to the Student Senate Chair and Senate Finance Committee Chair (<http://senate.web.cmu.edu>). Try to obtain a schedule of Student Senate meetings and Finance Committee meetings for the rest of the year.
- III. Request a key card from Officer Coordinator of Student Activities to access your office UC 318G, Office Suite UC 318F, and UC 306. Request the combination lock for the VP-Finance and the JFC UC mailboxes.
- IV. Buy supplies for your office. Make sure you have enough pens, pencils, scissors, stapler, staples, glue, tape, markers, printing paper, and printer ink. Use your SBT Oracle code at the UC Bookstore.
- V. Consider how you want to manage weekly office hours.
- VI. Consider how you want to manage meetings with the Director/Coordinator of Student Activities and the Dean of Student Affairs.
- VII. Write an e-mail introducing yourself to all student organization leaders and send it to Director or Coordinator of Student Activities to proofread before sending. It should include the following:
  - A. Explanation of your objectives and vision for the school year
  - B. How you can be contacted (office hours, e-mail, phone number)
  - C. Link to the Campus Funding Sources ([www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/fundingsources.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/sbt/fundingsources.html))
  - D. Announcement that the CoSO Renewal Recognition Process and the Renewal Funding Eligibility Process has started and the dates for their deadlines.

## Fall CoSO Renewal Recognition Process

Convene the Fall Committee on Student Organizations Process the first week of classes. You will serve as Chair-Pro-Tempore and as an advisor. You are not a voting member. During this meeting, you should encourage CoSO to agree upon a weekly or biweekly meeting time. CoSO should schedule a meeting to elect its own chair. You should also plan out the CoSO Renewal Recognition Process. Ideally, the Renewal Recognition Process should **only** consist of groups updating their Orgtracker account. You don't want to inconvenience student organizations with an overly bureaucratic recognition process.

CoSO will vote on approve renewal recognition and should be *finished by last week of September*. CoSO should have the list of renewed recognized

groups. You should generally treat every organization that applied for renewal recognition as recognized unless CoSO openly declares that the organization was denied recognition. Ask CoSO why, if any, groups were denied recognition.

## September

You should start wrapping up on the CoSO Renewal Recognition Process and start getting ready for the JFC Funding Eligibility Process. During this month, you should notify Graduate Student Assembly and the Undergraduate Student Senate that they need to choose a slate of representatives for the Fall JFC **by the end of the month**.

Graduate Student Assembly need to approve 1 graduate representative in addition to the GSA President and GSA Vice-President for Finance who are given seats. Student Senate must approve five undergraduate representatives in addition to the Student Senate Chair and Finance Committee Chair who are given seats. You should work with GSA President and Senate Finance Chair in choosing a slate of responsible individuals. It is ultimately GSA's and Senate's decision whom they will nominate, but you should try to take an active role in the decision-making, if possible. However, be respectful of comfort zones and checks and balances between the Executive and Legislative Branch. The slate **does not have** to consist entirely of members of Student Government.

Insist on making sure Senate and GSA let you be aware of who they are considering well in advance of the nomination and vote. You should feel comfortable suggesting ideas of senators, representatives, and student organization leaders you feel will do a good job and seek out people you think will do a good job. You can work with Student Activities in obtaining good suggestions.

### A. JFC Slate

- I. Members of CoSO cannot serve on JFC.
- II. You should encourage them to choose representatives who are leaders from a diverse category of student organizations (academic, cultural, special interest, social, athletic, media, performance, technological, community service, etc...).
- III. You should encourage them to choose a good balance of men and women on the committee, nearly half-and-half as possible. Historically, women have been severely underrepresented on the Joint Funding Committee.
- IV. I would recommend considering at least one representative very knowledgeable of Activities Board ([www.activitiesboard.org](http://www.activitiesboard.org)). Activities Board members are knowledgeable of cost of technological equipment and the availability of campus facilities. I would also recommend **one or two** social/cultural/performance student organizations leaders who

- are **not** members of student government. Members who have a non-student government perspective on JFC are usually very quite helpful.
- V. I would **strongly discourage** choosing of any first-year undergraduate students and limit the number of sophomore undergraduate students if possible. JFC should consist of members who are very knowledgeable of campus affairs and who are both emotionally and professionally mature enough to serve on the JFC.
  - VI. I would encourage the GSA President to nominate a graduate student who is active in a graduate cultural organization. Cultural organizations are often the biggest outlet for graduate students to be active on-campus.
  - VII. Consider whether there is an individual on the slate other than you capable of being the JFC Chair or Vice Chair.

**You need to make sure GSA and Student Senate nominate this slate of JFC representatives by the first week of October!!!!!!**

#### **Should the Vice-President for Finance serve as the JFC Chair?**

Based on the accounts of two former Vice-Presidents for Finance, it is **strongly discouraged** for the Vice-President for Finance to serve as the Joint Funding Committee Chair. The burden of having to fulfill the responsibilities of both positions can have a significant strain on one's academic and social life. Since the responsibilities of the Joint Funding Committee are more pressing and urgent, other important responsibilities of the Vice-President for Finance such as auditing or serving as financial advisor for the legislative branch and student organization leaders tend to be neglected when one person holds both positions.

Furthermore, it is generally more appropriate and comforting for the Vice-President for Finance to have a student government companion to share ideas and perspectives regarding the funding process and finances of student government. The Joint Funding Committee Chair have a discussion and share ideas and perspectives with each other on how to distribute the Student Activities and manage the funding process as opposed to just simply going at it alone. Keeping the two positions separate allows the JFC Chair to manage the process while VP-Finance serves as a watchdog and advisor for student organizations.

#### **B. Auditing Student Organizations**

Your major responsibility outside of the annual recognition-funding process is to audit student organizations. The Office of Student Activities publishes Activity Reports of all student groups each month and distributes them to the group's mailbox. You can request the Account Administrator release an Activity Report of a student organization at any time. You should not share Activity Reports with anyone other than the student organization leaders and staff at Student Activities. Activity Reports contains student club's income and



spending in an accounting format (Debit/Credit). This is one way you can track student organization spending.

However, in the past, relying solely on Activity Reports to track organization spending has not been very successful. It is difficult for Office of Student Activities to keep a present-time update on the financial status of every organization at all times, due to a flux of transfers, purchases, and reimbursements often occurring a month before Spring Carnival. Thus, in many instances, signs that an organization will end the year in a huge deficit will not show up until near the end of the year, despite the fact that the purchase that caused the deficit may have occurred months earlier. Furthermore, groups may not even submit these reimbursements, purchase, and transfer requests to Student Activities until the last minute.

Thus, it is strongly recommended that you contact student organization leadership directly when performing thorough audits. At the beginning of September, I would recommend choosing 10 student organizations to audit thoroughly throughout the entire year. Choose these 10 organizations wisely based on past history (groups that notoriously spend over budget, groups that were cut in their budget, first-year groups given large budgets, groups that go on expensive trips or serve lots of food, etc..). I would refrain from choosing Activities Board or Spring Carnival. Choose from a wide variety of group categories and sizes. Inform the entire Executive Board of these groups that they have been chosen to be audited and will be audited thoroughly through the rest of the year.

Explain to them why they were chosen to be audited and what these audits will entail. Include a link to the Auditing Form here [www.andrew.cmu.edu/~sbt/forms.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/~sbt/forms.html).

Divide these 10 organizations into two groups of five, Group A and Group B. Insist all audited organizations fill out the Auditing Form once during these months: **October, November, January, February, and March**. Then alternate in attending the Executive Board meetings of organizations within these chosen groups during these months. Raise any questions you have from the most recently submitted auditing form.

## October

I. Start the process for hiring an Executive Assistant. Ask Student Activities to post an employment ad on TartanTrak. A good Executive Assistant should be well-rounded: organized, articulate, detail-orientated individual who is competent at programming, website development, database development (if necessary) and writing formal reports. Try to hire someone by end of November.

### **Convene the JFC Funding Eligibility Process**

Clearly review the criteria for an organization to obtain funding eligibility.

Discuss the criteria with Student Activities. Starting during the second week of October, you will convene the Fall JFC Process. You should discuss the objectives during the Fall JFC Process with the committee. You should also schedule the elections of a JFC Chair.

**By first week of October, you should have received all submitted JFC funding eligibility forms within JFC mailbox and/or e-mail** The JFC Chair should schedule meetings (typically in UC 318G or UC 306), **typically once or twice a week until mid-November.** The best strategy is for the JFC Chair to delegate a group of student organizations to each JFC member and ask each JFC representative to review the forms and prepare a recommendation on whether they should be approved for funding eligibility. The JFC Chair should prepare discussing and voting upon renewal funding eligibility applications first and then prepare discussing and voting upon new funding eligible applications.

After decisions are finalized, make a formal official write-up of approved and denied funding eligible groups. This official write-up should be e-mailed to Senate, GSA, and Student Activities.

## November/December

- I. Introduce yourself during the Executive Board meeting of Activities Board ([www.activitiesboard.com](http://www.activitiesboard.com)). Discuss any problems or concerns any of the committees may be having. Discuss any concerns they may have about their current budget and their budgeting process.
- II. Meet with the Office of Student Activities advisor for Activities Board. Ask questions about concerns and accomplishments about each committee of Activities Board. Plan on meeting with this advisor at least once a month. Keep in mind these concerns during the JFC budgeting process.
- III. Choose five other student organizations and request their Activity Report from the Account Administrator. Assign Executive Assistant of auditing these groups by comparing Activity Reports to their budgets on Budgettracker and to provide a report of his or her findings.
- IV. Contact Spring Carnival and Sweepstakes and request that they drafting a JFC budget in Excel format. Their budgets will be due the same time as everyone else's but they need to get a head start. Insist these organizations use past Activity Reports as a guide and that request should be as accurate as possible. Meet with them sporadically until the JFC Subsidy Process starts or assign Executive Assistant to follow up on this if necessary.
- V. Meet with Director of Intramural and Club Sports.  
<http://www.cmu.edu/athletics/university-programs/index.html>.  
Discuss the status of every athletic club that receives JFC funding. You should request the following information for each club:

- a. The number of active, dues-paying members and historical recruiting trends,
- b. The name of leagues and tiers the club participates in, the names of competing universities, and available win-loss record from the past several years,
- c. The names of coaches and their salaries,
- d. Fundraising attempts and successes in the past. What options are available for new athletic clubs that want to fundraise?
- e. The short-term and long-term objectives of the club (i.e. aspire to be in a new league in the near future? Plan to hire another coach or expand membership?)
- f. Are there any plans to buy new equipment? What equipment is necessary to become more competitive in respect to other universities?
- g. About how many spectators at games are CMU students or alumni? How much knowledge and interest is there for this organization on-campus? What avenues are used to advertise these clubs on-campus?
- h. How does the Director feel about the club's leadership structure and how the club compares to their competition and the growth of the organization?

### **Joint Senate/GSA JFC Meeting**

You are required to chair the joint Senate/GSA meeting to approve JFC's funding eligibility recommendations, which should be held the last week of November or first week of December. The joint meeting should be held at least a week after the official email was sent out.

During December, you should start preparing for the Spring JFC Process and planning the first two info sessions. During this info session, the budget submission procedure and the entire JFC Spring timeline should be explained.

You should encourage organizations to do serious research before compiling a budget and have resources available to corroborate the budget they compiled. You and JFC need to discourage groups from submitting an arbitrarily high JFC budget in hopes of getting as much funding as possible.

- I. You should compile a d-list of contacts for student organizations that have just been approved for funding eligibility.
- II. You should also contact GSA President and Student Senate Finance Committee Chair (after their respective session elections) to make sure they start considering appointing a slate for the JFC Spring Session before Winter Break.
- III. You should update the JFC and SBT websites. Make sure all the forms and pages have the proper dates listed. Add any new reports, such as the current Funded Eligible Groups approved during the joint meeting.

# January/February

- I. Choose another five random organizations and have the Executive Assistant audit them through comparing Activity Reports to their budgets on Budgettracker.
- II. Meet with the Director of Student Activities to obtain the Projected Master Activity Fee number for the JFC process.

## Spring JFC Subsidy Process

***On the first day of classes***, you need to announce via e-mail that the Spring JFC Process has begun. Within the e-mail include:

- I. A written summary of the timeline for the rest of the semester.
  - II. Explanation of how to submit a JFC Budget through Budgettracker.
- Senate and GSA should try to approve their slate of representatives during the first two weeks of classes. Ideally, it should be the same people as Fall Semester unless that cannot be avoided or unless better candidates become available.

## Two Info Sessions

You should host the two info sessions, preferably one near the end of first week of classes and second during the second week of classes (or both during second week of classes).

You should convene the first JFC meeting for the Spring Semester during the last week of January or first week of February. A JFC Chair should be elected at the start of this first meeting. The JFC Chair should assign each committee member to be a representative for all the funded eligible organizations. For the next few days, the JFC representatives should meet with their organizations in person. JFC Chair and Student Body Vice-President for Finance should generally be assigned media organizations and/or Activities Board.

## JFC Representatives

First, update the JFC representative pairings at [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/pairings.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/pairings.html)

JFC reps should read "*Maintaining Proper JFC Representative and Student Organization Relationship*" Report available at <http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html>

The JFC representatives need to meet with each of their assigned organizations and discuss their submitted budget. For each meeting, the JFC representative should request that their assigned organizations prepare a draft budget in Excel before finally submitting the budget.

When reviewing this budget with their JFC contact, the JFC representative should **literally** question every single line-item and ask them how they arrived at the expense cost listed. The JFC representative should ask if the line-item cost is the cheapest alternative possible. Essentially, JFC representatives should determine if the organization contact did research in arriving at their budget or if

the numbers were arbitrarily chosen. The JFC representative should clearly articulate that arbitrary line-items are guaranteed to be cut. The JFC Representative should remind their organizations contacts to fill out the JFC Budget Addendum, available at [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html)

### **Submission for JFC Budget**

The budget submission *should **be Friday of the second week of February***. Anticipate that several groups will be late and require the weekend. The JFC Chair should e-mail groups that are late. Budgettracker should be closed for review by the following Sunday morning.

### **Budget Review**

The JFC Chair should hold meetings, preferably twice a week ***until the third week of March*** reviewing budgets until all budgets reach the desired Projected Number. At the end of this week, all pre-appeal decisions should be announced.

### **Spring Elections**

You should participate in encouraging students student organization leaders to run for Student Government vacancies and voting in Student Government Election. Send out at one least e-mail to CoSO or JFC funded groups advertising the deadlines for submitting a petition for Student Government Elections and another e-mail encouraging the date of the election. The e-mail should include a link to Student Government Election petitions, which are available on both the JFC and VP-F websites.

## **March/April**

### **JFC Appeals Process**

Student organizations that wish to appeal should submit an appeal using the Appeals Form ([www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jfunding/documents.html)). Student organizations should be given about a week to submit an appeal, which they must complete by *late March or early April*. *The following week*, the JFC Chair should schedule the following week to hear the organization request appeals in person. By the end of this week, all post-appeal decisions should be announced. The final JFC recommendations should be published in The Tartan.

### **Final joint Senate/GSA meeting**

You need to chair the final joint Senate/GSA meeting should be held *by **last week of April***. Organizations that wish to amend the JFC recommendations during this joint meeting need to have an Undergraduate Student Senator or GSA representative sponsor the amendment and e-mail you the amendment 48

hours before the meeting. After the meeting, update the VP-Finance or JFC website with report of JFC Subsidies.

## **May**

Your final task is to e-mail all JFC funded groups letting them know that the summer rollover process has begun. You should also introduce yourself to your successor and let them start the transition process. Revise this report if you feel necessary and personally hand it over to your successor. Congratulate yourself for a job well done!