Academic Opportunity Fund

1. WHEREAS: The role of the ASUSU Executive Council is to enhance the quality of student life, and
2. WHEREAS: Promoting, improving, and facilitating the academic experience of students is an important role of the ASUSU Executive Council, and
3. WHEREAS: The ASUSU budget does not accurately reflect the varying and diverse interests of students (students who may prefer scholastic interests over traditional college programming), and
4. WHEREAS: Only .543% of the ASUSU budget is used to promote academic opportunities compared to 56.827% of the budget that is used for traditional college programming, a disparity of over $170,000.
5. BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED: that the ASUSU Academic Opportunity Fund be established in the spring semester of 2002 through the allocation of $2,500.00 from the Capital and Support fund to promote, improve, and facilitate the academic experience of students, and
6. BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED: that the Academic Opportunity Fund shall receive permanent funding in the amount of $5,000.00 beginning in fall semester 2002, a line item that shall appear under the section titled 'Legislators' in the ASUSU budget and shall be called 'Academic Opportunity Fund', and
19. BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER ENACTED: that the award criteria, application process, Academic Opportunity Fund committee membership and committee procedures, award amounts, and illegitimate use of funds controls delineated in the associated ASUSU Academic Opportunity Fund policy paper shall govern all processes related to the ASUSU Academic Opportunity Fund.

24. Sponsored by:

25. Andy Haws, Academic Vice President
The ASUUS Academic Opportunity Fund – Policy Paper

Why is it important that undergraduate students receive ASUUS funding for academic pursuits?

The mission of the ASUUS Executive Council is to improve the quality of the experience of students at Utah State University. Given the varying interests and aptitudes of the student body, the ASUUS Executive Council was comprised of officers who specialize in different arenas like Activities, Athletics, and Academics. In the past, the ASUUS Executive Council has overlooked the important role (particularly the financial role) that student government can have in promoting and facilitating the academic pursuits of students, especially undergraduate students.

What criteria must be met by applicants to receive ASUUS funding for academic pursuits?

- Undergraduate students who have been accepted or invited by a reputable organization to present a scholastic achievement.
- Undergraduate students who have received a minimum of $100.00 from a department, college, or university source intended to cover the expenses of attending or traveling to the event at which the presentation will be made.

What is the application process?

Interested parties may contact the Academic Vice President for ASUUS or the Student Activities office for information and applications at any time. Applications must be submitted to the Academic Vice President and will not be considered until the event for which the money is being requested is less than six months away. (See attached application)

Who would select applicants to receive ASUUS funding, and how will that committee function?

A committee comprised of nine students, chaired by Academic Vice President, will determine ASUUS Academic Opportunity Fund awards. Students from each college will be represented on the committee, and appointments to the committee will be made by the ASUUS Senators.

As the chair of the ASUUS Academic Opportunity Fund committee, the Academic Vice President will call committee meetings to consider requests. At least five committee members must be present (including the chair), and all decisions will be made by majority vote of the committee.

What will be the source of the Academic Opportunity Fund?

To begin this program for spring semester 2002, $2,500.00 is being requested from the Capital and Support fund. In following years, a $5,000.00 appropriation per year will be made to the Academic Opportunity Fund from the student activity fee. The Academic Opportunity Fund will appear under the Legislator’s section of the budget. Beginning in
fall semester 2002, the Fund will be sourced by an increase in the ASUSU budget due to an increase in full-time enrollment or the redistribution of present ASUSU student activity funds.

Is there sufficient demand for funding for academic pursuits at an undergraduate level?

After soliciting the opinion of over twenty department heads and deans from all of the university's eight colleges, the response in regard to the need for this program was unquestionable. Department heads and deans alike stated that undergraduate students are precluded from valuable academic opportunities because of lack of funding. The funding that is available is generally awarded to graduate students.

How much money would any one student receive?

The Academic Opportunity Fund will grant students awards of up to $500.00 based on need. In comparison, the School of Graduate Studies awards travel funds up to $300.00 to students presenting at conferences, and a department or other entity on campus must match these funds. This amount, while greatly appreciated by benefactors, is often insufficient.

Would any controls be put in place to guard against the illegitimate use of funds?

Along with a detailed list of registration and travel expenses, each applicant must also include a detailed list of the entities, individuals, or groups and the amount that each is contributing to the student’s experience. Until the donated support (and all additional sources must be verified) is sufficient to cover the detailed expenses, the Academic Opportunity Fund committee will do nothing more than give accepted applicants a conditional promissory note.

If for any reason a student is unable to attend the event for which support was received from the Academic Opportunity Fund, the student will repay the Academic Opportunity Fund in full. Students who fail to do so will have a hold placed on their academic transcripts until payment is remitted.