

GSS Enhancement Award Process Documentation

The following procedures and criteria for awarding stipend enhancement awards were decided upon by the GSS Enhancement Committee and ratified by the Graduate Student Senate.

1. All applications will be reviewed by the GSS Staff Assistant (if applicable) and the GSS President or a member of the committee for completeness according to the requirements listed on the application. Applications should be reviewed no fewer times than twice and/or by no fewer than two people. Those applications deemed incomplete will be removed from consideration.
 - a. Applicant must have 12 graduate level credits that can be counted toward a cumulative GPA. Credits that have not been awarded a grade are not eligible.
 - b. Grades for undergraduate courses may be discounted in the calculation of Graduate GPA.
 - c. Absence of the Estimated Family Contribution score obtained by completing the FAFSA will be considered grounds for disqualification. Scores will be verified with the financial aid office.
 - i. For International students who cannot submit a FAFSA, the supplemental EFC must be completed with the application. International students are also required to submit a copy of their previous year's tax return, if applicable. Scores will be verified with the International Student Office. This supplemental sheet is not required for non-international students.
 - ii. No applicant is required to accept any Federal Aid and/or loans offered once they complete the FAFSA.
 - d. Any award recipient must be working as a GGA, GTA, GRA, or GI at the time of application.
 - i. Once the award is given, it cannot be rescinded due to unexpected loss of designation and/or other qualifications.
 - e. Should a recipient be unable/refuse to accept the award, it will be awarded to the next individual on the Senate approved list of top twenty-five applicants.
 - f. Letters of recommendation arriving after the application deadline will be grounds for disqualification as the application will be considered incomplete.

2. Once ineligible applications are removed, all applications will be reviewed no fewer than three times and by no fewer than three committee members. Each application will be scored according to criteria approved by the Senate body, with a highest possible total of 100, and the three scores will be average for a final combined score.
 - a. Any Senator or Department Representative may review any of the applications (except those where there would arise a conflict of interest,

- i.e. their own, their spouse's, etc.) at any time throughout the selection process and direct questions or concerns to the Committee.
 - b. Criteria are weighted such that Financial Need and USU Involvement/Academic Service are each 50% of the final score.
 - i. Financial Need shall be assessed primarily through the use of a FAFSA score obtained by the financial aid office.
 - ii. International students' financial need will be determined based on guidelines established by the International Student Office, including but not limited to information provided by the applicant on the supplemental income sheet.
 - iii. USU Involvement should be constrained to clubs, associations, and organizations that are registered with the Council of Student Clubs and Organizations and/or the Student Involvement Office. Service that is not affiliated with USU (i.e. religious service) cannot be considered.
 - c. Committee members are not allowed to review applications from within their own college, their own applications, or applications submitted by friends or relatives.
 - d. To determine excellence in Academic Service (i.e. Teaching/Research), applicants will be judged relative to their college peers. All other criteria will be judged without regard to college.
 - i. Special care will be taken not to penalize students if their department either specializes or does not require one or the other. I.e. Teaching Assistants will not be penalized if their department/specialization has not provided research opportunities and correspondingly, if Research Assistants have not had the opportunity to teach.
- 3. Once all applications have three scores, the committee will evaluate the scores and determine a logical cut-off point. The applications below the cutoff point will be removed from consideration.
 - a. Remaining applications will be sorted according to score and reviewed a final time by the committee for errors in calculation of need or final score.
 - b. If one application has a score that is significantly different than the other two scores, a fourth committee member will be asked to review the application.
 - i. The four scores may be averaged to get the final score OR
 - ii. If there is one score that deviates significantly (+15 pts) from the other three, that score may be discarded and the average of the remaining three used.
 - c. The Committee will then meet to select no more than twenty-five applications from the top pool of applicants to present to the Senate body for final evaluation.
 - d. GPA may be used as a tie-breaker in the case of identical scores for two or more applicants.

4. The Committee will present the scores and distribution of the top twenty-five applications to the Senate body, as well as a recommendation for the twenty award recipients.
 - a. A majority vote is needed to give a GSS Enhancement Award.
 - b. The Senate body may vote to give awards according to the recommendation by the committee of twenty individuals. The Senate body may also choose to review the final twenty-five applications independent of the committee.
 - i. Concerns raised by any of the Senators, including but not limited to recalculation of scores and the distribution of top scores, may be addressed at this time.
 - ii. If it is determined that additional time is needed to obtain an appropriate selection, the Committee may withdraw the decision from the Senate and perform another round of evaluations based on concerns of the Senators.
5. The Committee shall have a minimum of one additional meeting to finalize any changes to process or documentation, as well as resolve grievances and concerns that may have arisen following the dispersal of awards.