A Caucus Handbook

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Chapter 1
Caucus Funding

FUNDING

The GSS distributes funds to the departmental Caucuses in two central ways. The first is the **Core Caucus Funding** and the second is **Caucus Grants**.

- The **Core Caucus Funding** is allocated to Caucuses based on when they hold their first meeting of each semester based on the following template:

Time of First Meeting	Funding
1st month of semester	100%
2nd month of semester	75%
3rd month of semester	50%
4th month of semester	25%

- Core Caucus funding can be spent at the Caucus' discretion (with expenditures being voted on at quorate Caucus meetings).
- The total funding available to Caucuses varies based on the number of graduate students in the department.
- Core Caucus Funding and expenditures are documented by the GSS and can be monitored by access the following spreadsheet: https://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=tEuxPVZ8r1bsviPkAp4E2PA&output=html (This spreadsheet is also available on the GSS website, "news" page under "quick links")
- Please ensure that your Caucus Treasurer is also tracking caucus expenditures!!
- **Caucus Grants:** In addition to the Core Caucus Funding, Caucuses can apply to the GSS for Caucus Grants. Caucus Grants are allocated to Caucuses so that they can plan events or undertake expenditures that might otherwise be beyond their means. For instance, Caucuses often receive grants to help pay for orientation or conference events. Caucus Grants must be applied for and are adjudicated by the Grants Allocation Committee of the GSS and approved by Council. More information about Caucus Grants can be found on the GSS website at: http://www.sfugradsociety.ca/Caucus-Funding.html
  - If your Caucus is approved for a Caucus Grant, you can access these funds the same way that you access Core Caucus Funding. That is, when you fill out a cheque requisition form, you need only check off "Caucus Grant" as opposed to Caucus Funding.
- **Trust Accounts**: Sometimes Caucuses receive donations or fundraise money that they would like to keep separate from their Core Caucus Funding and/or designate for specific expenses. These funds can be placed in the GSS Trust Fund and the GSS will keep a record of the designated expenses for the funding. What's more, Core Caucus Funding that is not used during any given fiscal year can be carried over to the following year by moving it from the Core Caucus Account to the Trust Account. The process is automatically done.

- o Your Caucus can access funds in your Trust Account the same way that you access Core Caucus Funding. That is, when you fill out a cheque requisition form, you need only check off "Trust Account Access" as opposed to Caucus Funding.
  - o Note that amounts in the Trust Accounts are not published on the Caucus Funding spreadsheet. In order to find out about the balance of your Caucus Trust Account please contact the GSS office administrator, at help@sfugradsociety.ca
  - o Your Caucus treasurer should maintain an accurate record of the balance of your Trust Account and any expenditures made.
- **Satellite Campus Space Grants**: These are available to Caucuses at the Surrey and downtown Vancouver campuses. They are intended to allow Caucuses at these campuses to receive funding to make improvements to graduate spaces (for example, student lounges or lunch rooms). Applications are accepted once in the fall and once in the spring semester. Grants will be awarded in three categories: under $1000, $1000-5000, and over $5000. Applications must include a proposal detailing how the money will be spent, the reason(s) why the applicants feel that the funding is necessary, a description of how this funding will improve social community on campus, and a budget including relevant quotes.
  - o More information about the Satellite Campus Space Grants is available on the GSS website at: http://www.sfugradsociety.ca/Caucus-Funding.html (in the sidebar under "forms").

EVENT INSURANCE

The GSS is able to extend their insurance coverage to Caucuses for events that they hold off campus, that are sports related, and/or where alcohol is served. Caucuses must submit an "Event Information for Insurance Clearance" form **at least two weeks in advance of an event** in order to ensure sufficient time to approval. For more information about event insurance please contact office administrator, at help@sfugradsociety.ca

Chapter 2
Minutes Template

Full Name of Caucus -- *please spell out your acronym for us!*
Meeting Minutes (draft until approved)   Page 1 of 3
(Date, Location)

Attendance

Present: list first and last names **and positions** of people present.
NOTE: In your first meeting of the year, and after any elections/by-elections occur, the minutes should also reflect a correct e-mail address for each executive member.

Absent: list first and last names **and positions** of people absent (can indicate if regrets were received prior to meeting)

Minutes
1. **Call to Order**
   The meeting was called to order at (time) (place).

2. **Appointment of Chair** - Include the first name and last initial of the person who will be acting as chair for the meeting. This is often the President/Vice President/Co-President/Chair of the caucus, however, it does not necessarily have to be. If the President (etc.) has many items to discuss on the agenda (and motions to bring forward) it is sometimes best *not* have this person chair the meeting.

3. **Appointment of Secretary** - Include the first name and last initial of the person who will be acting as secretary for the meeting. Many caucuses include a position of secretary/communications officer, however, this person may not always be the person taking minutes (if they need to miss a meeting, etc.). The person who takes minutes at the meeting cannot sign cheque requisition forms (even if this person is generally a signing authority) for motions passed at the meeting for which they acted as secretary. This is a safeguard against someone producing minutes and signing cheques without having the proper caucus consultation. If you would like more information about this, please contact the AIRO at airo@sfugradsociety.ca

4. **Approval of Agenda**
   Moved to adopt the agenda (you can also move to adopt the agenda as amended if an agenda was circulated and then changed by the caucus at the time of the meeting).
   Moved by:
   Seconded by:
   Decision: (motion *carries/passes*, motion *fails*, motion *carries/passes* unanimously, motion *carries/passes* with the following objections/abstentions)

   The above is the general format for anything that is motioned and voted on during your meeting. You can also include discussion after the motion is moved and seconded.

5. **Approval of Minutes**
   Moved to approve the minutes from our last meeting.
   If committee members have changes that they have not yet suggested for the minutes (or that have not been reflected in the minutes as they are presented at the meeting), these should be presented at this time and the motion should read that the minutes are being approved *as amended*.
   (Mover/Seconder/Decision).

6. **Items to be discussed at your meeting can be divided into "New Business" and "Old Business."**
   Items which have previously been discussed and/or approved at caucus meetings and items which are being carried over from previous meetings (for example, items which were not discussed or were "tabled" at a previous meeting or items which are subject to long term discussion) would be considered "old business." Items being brought to the caucus for the first time are considered "new business."

7. **Committee Reports**
   Your caucus may have a variety of different "committee reps." (for example, you should have rep(s) on the GSS Council). Asking your reps to report at your meetings helps to ensure that your caucus is kept informed about items arising on these different committees. This can also be a time for your caucus to highlight items that you want to ensure are raised at other committee meetings where you are represented. If you have reps on more than one committee, it can be a good idea to list them all individually on the agenda (i.e., GSS Reps Report, TSSU Rep Report, Faculty Council Rep Report, etc.) to ensure that all reps are provided with time to report (and are aware that they are expected to report!) If the agenda for a meeting is particularly long, reps can be asked to circulate written reports before or after the meeting so that meeting time is not taken up with oral reports. The written reports can be attached to the minutes.

8. **Financial Motions**

   See the motions cheat sheet for a template on how to make motions (with all the proper info. included!) These motions can relate to discussions had in other places in your minutes, however, it is useful for the GSS to have the motions listed separately at the end of the minutes. This also alleviates the process of attaching minutes to cheque requisition forms for reimbursement.

9. **Other Business**

   If something is raised that falls outside of the agenda as circulated or amended, it can be held to the end of the meeting and discussed/minuted here, time permitting.

10. **Next Meeting Time**

    Some caucuses will set the time of their next meeting during their meetings. If you do not do this, you can minute that the meeting will be "next month, date and time to be determined via doodle," etc. If you are unfamiliar with doodle, I highly recommend looking into it for scheduling meetings. www.doodle.com

11. **Adjournment**

    Note the time at which the chair calls the meeting "adjourned"

Note that minutes should be regularly sent to airo@sfugradosciety.ca AND help@sfugradsociety.ca

Chapter 3
Motions: When and How

The following is a list of sample motions to be used at your caucus meetings. They will likely not cover all instances for which your caucus might need to make and vote on motions. However, the principles can be translated to other circumstances as well.

As a general rule, caucuses need to motion and vote on anything, which involves:
1. An expenditure of money or a transfer of money from one account to another;
2. A position that the caucus as a whole wishes to take a make public (i.e., the caucus taking a position to either support or denounce a university/departmental policy, etc.);
3. An action that caucus as a whole wishes to make or wishes another organization (for example, the GSS) to make on their behalf (for example, a caucus may wish to appoint new or interim members or may wish to involve the GSS (most likely the AIRO) in advocacy actions);
4. A task that the caucus wishes to set for a specific caucus member that does not fall within their usual duties;
 5. Anything that the caucus considers to be particularly worthy of transparent documentation.

The general principles of motions are that they should include:
1. A clear statement about what is being presented and agreed upon by the committee (note that sometimes motions become complicated when there are several components to what is being presented. often such motions can be split into two, which can help to clarify what is being communicated);
2. The names of all caucuses, organizations and people relevant to the motion;
3. Any relevant details such as dates, locations, rationale, etc. Err to the side of including more details, rather than less, while always aiming for clear communication. Some contextual information related to the motion can also be included in the discussion in the minutes, so long as the key pieces of information are also reflected in the motion itself.
4. Note that committee members should not Move, Second or vote on motions for which they could be perceived as having a conflict of interest (such a motions where they will receive money or be elected to a position). **They should abstain from these motions and have their abstentions noted in the minutes.**

Motions related to Expenditure:
1. To allocate money for a future expenditure
"Moved that (caucus name) designate (person[1]s FULL name, as it should appear on a cheque) to spend (amount) from (which GSS account? Core Caucus Funds, Caucus Grant, or Trust Account) for (reason for expense) incurred on (date)."
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

2. To reimburse money after an expenditure
"Moved that (caucus name) reimburse (person[1]s FULL name, as it should appear on a cheque) (amount) from (indicate Core funds, Caucus Grant, or Trust Account) for (expenditure, reason for expenditure and date of expenditure). "
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

4. Some Caucuses offer support to their membership in the form of conference/travel funding. Several people can be awarded money in a single motion, so long as they are all being awarded the same amount of money.
"Motion to grant [all the names of people being awarded funding] [amount] for conference/travel funding during the [specific term or date range]."
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

Notes related specifically to expenditure motions:
- The motion must include the name of the caucus, the full, "official" name of the person to whom the cheque will be written, the amount for the cheque (*double check your receipts - clerical errors can slow down the process!*), the reason for and date of the expenditure.
- Caucuses with multiple GSS accounts must specify the account from which the money is to be taken (Caucus Funding, Caucus Grant or Trust Account).
- The minutes should indicate the names of the people putting forth and seconding the motion and whether or not it is approved. Caucus members who are seeking reimbursement **CANNOT** put forward a motion for their own reimbursement. They should also abstain from voting on the motion. Such abstentions should be noted in the minutes.
- Only the person specified in the motion may collect a cheque from the GSS.

5. Sometimes your Caucus may need to make motions that are not related to financial decisions. Such motions are often made in order to task a specific person on the committee with an action. For example:

"Motion to task [name of person] with researching the cost of promotional materials, to be reported on at the next meeting"
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

Voting on these kinds of motions ensures that Caucus members use their time in ways that are supported by the Caucus and therefore do not put a lot of effort into initiatives that will not ultimately be supported by the Caucus.

6. Caucuses may also craft motions when they are interested in presenting a unified decision from the Caucus on an issue at the departmental or university level. For instance:

"Motion to support the departmental decision to create new entrance scholarships for graduate students"
"Motion to denounce the University's decision to cut funding to graduate student scholarships"
(Note that these are examples and do not necessarily reflect actual decisions currently being made at SFU)
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

7. Caucuses should also be voting on elections and by-elections. Depending on the rules of your Caucus, students may nominate themselves or be nominated by others.

See the Elections section of the handbook for more details.

There are likely many other instances that your Caucus will find to make and vote on motions in the course of your regular functioning as a Caucus. If you encounter issues in making these motions or are unsure about the kinds of things that you should be formally voting on at your meetings, please do not hesitate to contact the Academic and Internal Relations Officer of the GSS at airo@sfugradsociety.ca

Chapter 4
Chairing a Meeting: Presenting Motions

General Chairing Info: The chair of the meeting is responsible for ensuring that meetings are run smoothly, items on the agenda are discussed, procedures are followed and people are heard at the meeting. To this end the chair can encourage that debate about an issue be tabled until a future meeting (or conducted outside the meeting) so that all items on the agenda are discussed.
The chair may also consider keeping a speaker's list (particularly in large caucuses or for particularly contentious issues) to make sure that everyone is heard.
More information about chairing a meeting can be found in Robert's Rules of Order (copies available at the GSS) or by contacting the AIRO (airo@sfugradsociety.ca)

Presenting a Motion:
- The presenter of the motion speaks the motion as they wish it to be minuted (in less formal meetings the motion is often crafted by those in attendance to ensure that it contains all the proper information and reflects the spirit of the motion. Please see the GSS motion template for more information on this).
- The chair calls for a seconder for the motion.
- Once a motion receives a seconder, it is opened up to discussion by the chair.
- Once discussion is complete (or when a committee member "calls the question," i.e., requests that the discussion be ended in order to hold the vote), a vote is held.
- The chair will ask "All those in favour [of approving the motion as worded/amended/presented]" and count the votes. Then "Anyone opposed [to approving the motion as worded/amended/presented]" and "Any abstentions".
- The last two questions do not need to be posed if it is clear that everyone in the meeting has voted in favour of the motion. At this point the motion can be noted as carrying unanimously.
- Committee members can chose to abstain on motions which they do not feel that they are prepared to vote on or for motions on which they do not have an opinion. An abstention is **not** an objection and should not be noted or counted as such.
- Committee members should abstain from motions for which they may be considered to have a conflict of interest (such a motions where they are being given money, or reimbursed, or motions that elect them to a position, etc.) These abstentions should be noted in the minutes for the sake of transparency.
- The chair can ask committee members who object or abstain whether they would like their objection/abstention to be noted in the minutes. If they say yes then the minutes will reflect that that particular committee member voted against or abstained from voting on the motion.

Chapter 5
Holding (and Minuting) Elections

Your Caucus constitution will dictate when during the year you should hold elections. The GSS recommends that elections be held in the early fall semester (September or early October) each year as this allows for incoming students to become involved after they encounter your Caucus at orientation. Generally, notice of elections must be circulated in the agenda of the meeting with due notice provided to membership. Once again, your Caucus' particular rules about this will be found in your constitution document (archived at the GSS!). Depending on the rules of your Caucus, students may nominate themselves for positions or be nominated by others (from the floor or "by proxy" - meaning that students may be nominated, if they have expressed an interest to be nominated previously, even if they are not present).

Nominated students can be elected using the following motions:

"Motion to elect [student's name] to the position of [position title] on the [name of your Caucus] for the [years] academic term."
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion *carries/passes*, motion *fails*, motion *carries/passes* unanimously, motion *carries/passes* with the following objections/abstentions)
*Note that even if students *nominate* themselves for a position, they should not move or second the motion for their election. They should abstain from the vote and have their abstention noted in the minutes.

If there is only one student nominated for a position, this student can be considered to have "won" the election by acclamation. This motion should read:
"Motion to approve [student's name] as the acclaimed [position title] for the [name of your Caucus] for the [years] academic term"
Moved by:
Seconded by:
Decision: (motion *carries/passes*, motion *fails*, motion *carries/passes* unanimously, motion *carries/passes* with the following objections/abstentions)
*Note that even if students are *acclaimed*, they should not move or second the motion for their election. They should abstain from the vote and have their abstention noted in the minutes.

The above process also holds in cases where positions are filled on a by-election (in the case where a previous executive member resigned, graduated, etc. etc.) Note that your constitution may have rules stipulating how long a notice of election needs to be posted before an election can occur. Please consult your constitution before holding an election or by-election. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the GSS.

Chapter 6
Caucus Contact Sheet

After you hold an election, please update the GSS ASAP about your new Caucus Executive (and provide their contact information) so that we can ensure that we are communicating with the proper people! Note that the GSS does not require phone numbers but that this information may be useful for your executive internally.

CAUCUS NAME (not just acronym): _____

Full Name	Position on Caucus	E-mail Address	Phone Number
e.g. Rocky Masterson	Chair	rockym@sfu.ca	X21111 or 604-555-1234

Positions to include:
Chair/President
Co-Chair/Vice-Chair/Vice President
Secretary/Minute-taker
Treasurer
GSS Councillor
Social Organizer

You may also include the above information in an email to the GSS rather than filling out this table (send to airo@sfugradsociety.ca and cc help@sfugradsociety.ca).

Chapter 7
Caucus Funds Tracking Template

Caucus funding information can be found here:
https://spreadsheets.google.com/a/sfugradsociety.ca/pub?key=tEuxPVZ8r1bsviPkAp4E2PA&output=html

CAUCUS FUNDS TRACKING TEMPLATE

Y O U R   C A U C U S   N A M E

CURRENT CORE FUNDS	$1,072.33
CURRENT TRUST FUNDS	$3,047.24

CORE FUNDS

	Opening Balance September 1, 2011	$2,000.00	

Approved Expenses

Date Approved	Details		
29-Sep	Student X for food for the BBQ on Sept. 21/11	$102.67	
29-Sep	Student Z Up to $50 for refreshments for next meeting, October 24*	$50.00	
24-Oct	Student Y travel grant for conference October 23/11	$75.00	*Note: for approved expenses where the total amount is NOT known, you must remember to make these corrections when the expenses are made!

Total Approved Expenses		**$227.67**	

Balance	Opening Balance - Approved Expenses	$1,772.33	This amount represents core funds (cash) **currently** on hand.

Proposed Expenses			
	Mini-Conference in February, up to $400	$300.00	*Planned expenses that are not yet assigned in detail. When the actual expense is decided on, it should be approved and included in the "Approved Expenses" and deleted from "Proposed Expenses".*
	Bowling event (maybe this can happen in November?)	$400.00	
Total Proposed Expenses		$700.00	

TOTAL CORE FUNDS	Opening Balance - (Approved + Proposed Expenses)	**$1,072.33**	*The amount of core funds available to be spent if ALL proposed activities happen.*

TRUST ACCOUNT FUNDS			
	Opening Balance September 1, 2011	**$2,450.10**	*If you do not know this amount, you can obtain it from the GSS.*
Trust Account Activity			
Date	*Details*		
31-Aug	Transfer of remaining funds from last year	$300.26	
03-Oct	Orientation T-shirt sales	$276.88	
24-Oct	Student K reimbursement for Serving It Right (Expense Approved at meeting October 24)	($35.00)	
05-Nov	Halloween Party Raffle Ticket Sales	$55.00	

TOTAL TRUST ACCOUNT FUNDS	**$3,047.24**

Chapter 8
Sample Cheque Requisition Form

The Graduate Student Society at Simon Fraser University

Cheque Requisition Form – Graduate Caucuses

RECIPIENT INFORMATION

Name: *(First Last)* Suzie Student

Department/Caucus: *(Full Name, No Acronyms)* Education Graduate Student Association

Email: SStudent@sfu.ca   Phone#: 778-782-3899

Address: 888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6

Date(mm/dd/yy): October 28th 2011

Delivery Preference: ☒ Please **email** me to pick up the cheque.   ☐ Please **mail** the cheque to **the address** *above*.

REQUEST INFORMATION

Request for: ☒ Caucus Funding
☐ GSS Grant (Approved by Council for your Caucus)
☐ Trust Account Access

Amount requested: $ 200.00

Details: *(please include a brief description of the request)* $200 Spent for the EGSA orientation event on Sept. 30th '11 approved by the Caucus on Oct. 15th 2011.

ATTACHMENTS

Please provide the following documents, *in this order* (stapled behind this form):

☒ **Minutes of meeting** describing expense request
Please **highlight** *the relevant section.*

AND

☒ **Receipts for expenses** or **Invoice**
(not required for honoraria)
Legible copies are allowed.

Please allow **2 weeks** *(minimum) for processing.*

Incomplete forms **will not** *be processed.*

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE

To be authorized by an Executive from the Caucus.
If the cheque is for an Executive, please have another Executive complete this section.

Name: *(First Last)* Julia Lane

Position: ☒ Caucus President or Chair ☐ Vice President ☐ Treasurer

Email: ljhlane@sfu.ca   Signature: *Julia Lane*

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Approved By Name: _____ Signature: _____
Position: _____ Date: _____

Account Code: _____ Amount: _____ Note: _____
Account Code: _____ Amount: _____ Note: _____
Account Code: _____ Amount: _____ Note: _____
Cheque Number: _____ Cheque Date: _____
Mailed/Picked up by: _____ Mail/Pick up Date: _____
Notes regarding payment: _____