

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Funding of Student Organizations

NUMBER: 3:18

1. Statement of Purpose

Each institution is entrusted with the responsibility of fostering an educational environment for its students. To achieve this educational mission, each institution must promote extracurricular activities, encourage development of civic skills and responsibilities, and stimulate uninhibited and vigorous debate and discussion. Each institution may assess such mandatory student activity fees as the Board has approved and distribute these fees to recognized student organizations to support activities that further the institution's educational mission.

2. Recognition of Student Organizations

Each institution should develop and publish criteria for recognition of student organizations. Such criteria should require student organizations to operate in a nondiscriminatory manner as provided in Board Policy 1:18.

3. Funding of Student Organizations

Only recognized student organizations may receive disbursements from the fund to finance the organizations' general operational expenses and to subsidize cultural, social, recreational and informational activities and events sponsored by the organizations.

Student activity fee proceeds shall be allocated consistently with the institution's interests as outlined in Section 1 above; provided that:

- A. The institution may only distribute funds to support the general operational expenses of a recognized student organization if the organization's activities
- 1) have a valid secular purpose;
 - 2) do not have the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion; and
 - 3) do not foster excessive entanglement between the state institution and religion.

If a funding request by a registered or recognized student organization fails to meet any of these requirements as determined by the institution, until circumstances

warrant otherwise, that particular organization shall not be eligible for funding of its general operational expenses.

- B. The institution may not distribute student activity fee proceeds to support the general operational expenses of a recognized student organization affiliated with a political party or of other recognized student organizations if such organizations use the funding to:
1. advance any candidate or ballot issue in an off-campus election; or
 2. finance off-campus lobbying or political activities of non-students.

This section does not prohibit a student governance body, recognized by the institution, whose leadership is popularly elected by the students, from using student fees to communicate its position on behalf of all students, either through lobbying efforts before legislative bodies or through publicity communicating its positions on initiated or referred measures.

- C. The institution may distribute student activity fee proceeds to support on-campus cultural, social, recreational and informational activities and events that are open to all members of the campus community and that are sponsored by a recognized student organization, even if the organization would not be eligible for fees to support general operational expenses, but only if the activity or event has a valid secular purpose and does not have the primary effect of supporting a religious ceremony. For purposes of this section, the incidental or passing invocation of deities shall not be deemed to require that an otherwise secular student organization sponsored activity be deemed a religious ceremony.
- D. Each institution that elects to provide activity fee support pursuant to section 3(C), above, shall develop a procedure that will distribute monies without regard to the content of a proposed activity or to the positions advocated. Such content-neutral mechanisms may include, without limitation, random selection from among student proposals or prioritization based upon frequency of funding or other objective factors unrelated to the content or purpose of proposed events or activities.

4. Procedure for Requesting Funding

Each institution should develop and publish instructions outlining the procedure for requesting disbursements from the general activities fund and file same with the Board office.

SOURCE: BOR, October 1994; BOR, October 1996; BOR, December 2000.