MDRF Policy Committee Members

Chair

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Member

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Michelle Scotland  mkscotla@buffalo.edu  Biochemistry, PhD

Ex Officio

Sierra Adare-Tasiwoopa Api  ssa3@buffalo.edu  MDRF Director (6 years)

MDRF Policy Committee Charge

This committee is charged with developing a comprehensive set of policy recommendations for operation of the Mark Diamond Research Fund. The task is broadly construed and meant to encourage this committee to assess all guidelines and procedures in the day-to-day operation of the MDRF program. While no aspect of the MDRF program should be considered beyond analysis and reform, the committee must respect certain constraints when making their formal recommendations to the GSA Senate.

All Committee Members must adhere to the following:

1. There are certain New York and UB laws and regulations relating to the use of MDRF funds that are beyond the control of the committee and must be respected.
2. The budget for the program will already be set for the coming year and must be respected. Make recommendations that fit within the GSA budget.
3. The MDRF program does have substantial reserves that the committee can consider when making their recommendations. However, the committee shall keep in reserve one year’s
operating expenses so that the program could continue if a mandatory fee referendum were to fail.

4. The purpose of the MDRF program shall not be altered. The program is meant to support students in completing projects required to meet graduation requirements.

5. You must respect the diversity of the graduate student body and work to develop rules and regulations that do not unduly favor any academic discipline over another or any group of graduate students over others.

6. The MDRF Program has a history that can help guide your review. Determine what policies have worked or are currently working and then identify the areas for improvement.


Duties of the Committee Chair

1. Responsible for presenting the final committee recommendations to the GSA Senate at the September 2016 meeting. The final committee recommendations should also be typed and delivered to Stephanie for dispersal to senators prior to the Sept. 2016 senate meeting.

2. Responsible for scheduling committee meetings as needed.

3. Responsible for contacting parties of interest to testify before the committee as needed.

4. Responsible for maintaining order and civility among the committee members.

5. Responsible for assigning committee tasks to committee members.

6. Observe Robert’s Rules to keep committee meetings orderly.

7. The chair is responsible for ensuring that meeting minutes are taken – this task can be assigned to another committee member.

8. Maintain communication with the GSA office managers so that they can provide advice concerning the development of policy proposals. They have seen it all and can be a great help in developing viable MDRF policy.

9. * The Committee Chair only votes when there is an opportunity to get to six votes to achieve an official committee recommendation. The Chair can break a tie among the other eleven permanent voting members of the MDRF Policy Committee. (For example, five for a proposal, five against, one abstention – the Chair can vote to give the proposal the six votes needed to become an official recommendation.)

Duties of Committee Members

1. Responsible for actively participating in all committee activities.

2. Responsible for communicating any and all time constraints or conflicts that inhibit active committee participation with the Committee Chair.

3. Responsible for equitably sharing the committee workload with their fellow committee members.

4. Responsible as a permanently voting committee member to determine the official committee recommendations.
Duties of Ex Officio Members

1. Responsible for using their expertise to assist committee work.
2. Responsible for attending and contributing to committee meetings.
3. Ex Officio Members are non-voting committee participants.
4. Additional Ex Officio Members can be named by the MDRF Policy Committee Chair.
5. Ex Officio Members can be excluded from discussion if a majority of the committee votes to go into executive session.

Benchmarks/Process

1. Assess how the program is currently working. What aspects of the program should be preserved? Call current GSA Treasurer, Karl Sarvestani, before the committee to present his ideas for MDRF policy.
2. Assess how the program has worked in the past. What past policies, if any, should be studied in more detail to determine the development of your policy recommendations?
3. Develop a list of themes or specific policy choices that deserve more study. Organize how you intend to tackle this project.
4. Develop a plan to involve as many grad students as possible in the review process. Perhaps developing a survey would be appropriate. We had a number of volunteers that I could not place on the MDRF Policy Committee. Please work to involve them in the process if possible. Perhaps a focus group with these students would be helpful prior to making your final recommendations.
5. Split into subcommittees to divide problem areas/themes into manageable projects for committee members. The subcommittees should investigate the issue and then return with options for the whole MDRF Policy Committee to discuss.
6. When appropriate, a motion should be made to vote on the policy options presented to the committee so that your official committee recommendation can be organized as a comprehensive MDRF policy. A majority of permanently voting committee members (6 members) need to vote for a policy proposal for it to be an official committee recommendation. In the case that a majority cannot be reached, viable options should be developed so that they can be clearly and efficiently presented to the GSA Senate for a vote.
7. The Committee Chair, with the assistance of the committee members, will develop a presentation for the September 2016 GSA Senate Meeting. The presentation should be summarized in a typed document that the whole Senate can vote on.
8. Present the committee findings to the Executive Committee (GSA officers) at least two weeks prior to the September 2016 GSA Senate meeting. This gives them a chance to identify areas of concern that they would like to bring up with the Senate. It also allows the GSA officers the time to develop alternative proposals for these problem areas.
9. The Committee Chair will make the presentation to the Senate at the September 2016 GSA Senate meeting. The Committee Members should plan to attend the Senate meeting if possible.