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Final Vote: 46-0-0

Senate Secretary: Michael Castle

Senate Speaker: Connor Ferguson

A RESOLUTION TO CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF SENATE FINANCING AND BUDGETING

**WHEREAS** The Southern Methodist University Student Senate should promote equitable allocation of student fees to foster engagement in campus and further the academic experience of the university.

**RECOGNIZING** that in the 2023 calendar year over $275,000 was swept from Chartered Organization budget accounts, with $150,000 being swept in the Fall and $125,000 being swept in the Spring.

**RECOGNIZING** the current Senate Financial Structure per the Student Senate Bylaws is significantly overcomplicated for the Finance Chair, Student Body Treasurer, Students’ Association Comptroller, Student Senators, and student organizations.

**RECOGNIZING** the Finance Chair and Finance Committee are overburdened with Weekly requests and are unable to evaluate the efficacy of the Senate Financial Structure as a result.

**RECOGNIZING** the Finance Committee is no longer able to fully fund annual budgets during the Spring Budget Retreat, causing programming organizations to receive funding in Weekly and Summer Senate.

**RECOGNIZING** Summer Senate is intended to help organizations plan events in August, however, in recent years the fund has been used to help annual budget programming organizations as well as organizations planning events in late October.

**RECOGNIZING** the Finance Committee currently has no policies addressing organizations that don’t spend a significant portion of their budget and this has contributed to a significant amount of student fees being trapped in appropriated accounts every year.

**RECOGNIZING** the Finance Committee Weekly Fund and the Endowment Fund currently only receive money when organizations neglect to spend a significant amount of their appropriated allocations.

**RECOGNIZING** the Student Senate used to operate on an annual budget allocation system for its organizations before electing to enact the current overcomplicated structure.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED Article VII. Finances Section 1. Allocation of the Budgets Part 1.** shall be revised to say “authority for allocating the annual chartered organizational budgets shall be vested in the voting members of the Student Senate” and **Part 3.** shall be revised to say “The Finance Chair will work to coordinate the budget process and guide the Finance Committee toward budget allocations. The Comptroller and the Student Body Treasurer shall serve as non-voting consultants to the budget allocation process.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED Article VII. Section 2. The Senate Weekly Fund Part 2.** shall be revised to say, “Senate Weekly Fund requests should be made in the specific names of non-chartered/temporary chartered organizations or departments” and **Part 3.** shall be revised to say, “Chartered Organizations may request funding from the Senate Weekly Fund only if they demonstrate a unique, unforeseen need that wasn't accounted for during the annual distribution. The finance committee can fund these requests on a case-by-case basis, however, the committee should carefully fund these requests in order to preserve funding for non-chartered/temporary chartered organizations.” and **Part 4.** shall be revised to say, “After the Senate has approved a recommendation for funding, the Finance Chair shall notify the relevant organization of the allocated funding decision.” and **Part 5.** shall be deleted.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED Article VII. Section 3. The Chartered Organizations’ Fund** shall be deleted.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 3. Restrictions on All Funding Part 2.** shall be revised to say “No student organization or any of its committees funded by this Senate shall be permitted to solicit any sort of application fee. Application fees shall be defined as any fee that is paid as part of the application process for membership to an organization. This rule does not apply to dues paid after the application process is complete.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 4. Standards for Information Part 3.** shall be revised to say “If a Student Body Officer, Student Senate Officer, Student Senator, Committee Chair, or standing committee member believe an organization, group, or other person requesting money has purposefully provided misleading information in a funding request or has purposefully withheld pertinent information from the Senate or its committees a majority vote will be held by the Student Senate to consider repealing the relevant funding decision. The vote will be held according to a recommendation measure by the Finance Chair and Student Body Treasurer.” and **Part 4.** shall be revised to say “The majority vote considered by the Student Senate can include additional measures such as but not limited to, requiring partial or complete re-payment of funds, reducing a percentage of an organization’s current or future budget, or, in extreme circumstances, recommending that an organization’s charter status be revoked.” and **Part 6.** Shall be deleted.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 5. Breakdown of Student Fee Allocation Part 1a.** shall be revised to say, “The Students’ Association account (1-50-00-01) will maintain a reserve balance of at least $100,000 at the end of the spring semester to cover unexpected expenses and timing differences between fund expenditures and receipts.” And **Part 1b.** shall be revised to say “$40,000 will be allocated to the Student Senate for its operations including annual expenses, one-time initiatives, and stipends. At the beginning of the Spring semester, the Student Body Officers and Finance Chair will meet and consult with the Comptroller about sweeping any remaining portion of the Senate Exec Account that is expected to go unspent that semester into the Senate Weekly Fund Account or Endowment Fund Account.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 5. Breakdown of Student Fee Allocation Part 1c.** shall be revised to say, “Each Graduate School will be allocated 100% of its graduate students’ fee contributions.” and **Part 1d.** shall be revised to say “The Spring annual budget allocations shall be equal to 90% of the anticipated annual student fee allocation remaining after the items in Article VII. Section 6.1a, 6.1b, and 6.1c have been paid.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 5. Breakdown of Student Fee Allocation Part 1d. 1a.** shall be revised to say “Within the spring annual budget allocations, 35% of the anticipated annual student fee allocation will be distributed to the following groups: Student Foundation, Program Council, and Sports/Intramurals Clubs. These groups must exhibit the following criteria (with the exception of sports/intramurals based on their contribution to student body wide sports culture at SMU): a mission statement aimed at unification and inclusion of the entire SMU student body, significant attendance (exceeding 750 attendants for at least one event), dedicated paid Student Affairs staff advisors, and a non-SMU student/faculty impact including populations such as: alumni, Dallas community, and student families.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 5. Breakdown of Student Fee Allocation Part 1d2.** shall be revised to say, “within the spring annual budget allocations, 55% of the anticipated annual student fee allocation will be distributed to the remaining chartered organizational pool. Upon consideration of this funding, the Committee should prioritize cultural status, event size/impact, value added to SMU, value beyond SMU, community service, significance and/or growth of attendance, mission statements, and appropriated spending rates in addition to the Finance Standards.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 5. Breakdown of Student Fee Allocation Part 1e.** shall be revised to say, “The spring annual Chartered Org Fund and Senate Weekly Fund allocations shall be equal to 6% of the anticipated annual student fee allocation remaining after the items in Article VII. Section 6.1a, 6.1b, and 6.1c have been paid. The Endowment Fund allocation shall be equal to 4% of the anticipated annual student fee allocation remaining after the items in Article VII. Section 6.1a, 6.1b, and 6.1c have been paid.” and **Part 1f.** shall be deleted.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 6. Unspent/Unallocated Money Part 1-3.** shall be deleted. **Part 4.** shall be revised to say, “at the end of the spring semester, all unspent and unallocated funds from the Senate Exec Account, the Senate (Weekly Fund), and all organizational annual budgets shall be swept into a clearing account. The Senate Endowment Fund and the Senate Investment Fund will not be included in the annual sweep. The funds in this clearing account will be distributed as follows, to the anticipated annual student fee allocation after ensuring the reserve amount in Article VII Section 6.1 (a) is met.”

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 6. Unspent/Unallocated Money Part 4i.** shall be revised to say, “During Section 7.1 and before the Spring Finance Committee Budget Retreat, the Student Association Comptroller will prepare a list of all chartered organizations and the amounts swept from their appropriated account to present to the Finance Committee. Should any organization fail to spend more than 67% of their annual budget (including any weekly allocations) and leave more than $500 in their appropriated accounts, these chartered organizations shall lose access to their annual budget in the upcoming Spring Budget Retreat. These organizations may submit requests through the Finance Committee Weekly process for the preceding year wherein the Committee can closely assist with advising and budgeting for each organization affected” and **part 4ii.** shall be revised to say, “Upon completion of that probationary year, the Committee may recommend on an individual basis that each organization regains their annual budget or they may recommend to the broader chamber to hold a group through another annual probationary period subject to a majority vote of the chamber. Additional probationary periods would be recommended for organizations that continue to struggle with appropriated spending rates as well as responsible management of their funding.” And **Part 4a, 4b, 4b, and Part 5** shall be deleted.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** **Article VII. Section 7. Projects Funded Via Legislation** and **Article VIII. SUMMER SENATE** shall be deleted.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Student Body Treasurer**

Clayton Meyer

**Student Body Secretary**

Michael Castle