

USG Tier II Funding Policies

The mission of the Undergraduate Student Government is to enrich the lives of the Undergraduate Student Body through advocacy for its interests to the administration and all other appropriate bodies. We strive to help student groups reach their fullest potential through new and continuing initiatives, programs, and resources. The Undergraduate Student Government aims to foster an inclusive and collaborative community that works together effectively.



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1. Funding Eligibility:

- 1.1. The RSO must be an active Tier-II Registered Student Organization when submitting a Funding Request. An RSO is considered active after satisfying all Tier-II SOLID requirements.
- 1.2. The RSO must satisfy all USG Inventory Requirements, as written in these policies and/or set by the Comptroller.
- 1.3. The RSO official who submits the Funding Request must complete USG Funding Training, in addition to SOLID workshops. Access to the Funding System is granted after training is complete.
- 1.4. Funding Requests must be submitted within the timeframe set by the Comptroller and Funding Supervisor.
 - 1.4.1. Requests may be prioritized based on the date funds are needed, at the discretion of the Funding Supervisor.
- 1.5. Funding Requests must fall into at least one of the permitted categories and not contain any prohibited expenditures.

2. General Policies:

- 2.1. RSOs may be funded up to \$15,000 per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) for eligible Requests.
- 2.2. RSOs may not submit a Funding Request for less than \$100.
- 2.3. Funding Requests must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the date that funds will be needed, which will be no later than the starting date of a service or event, with the following exceptions:
 - 2.3.1. Travel reimbursement requests, which do not include car or bus rentals, have a five week deadline.
 - 2.3.2. Requests for contractual services with a cost greater than or equal to \$2,500 have a seven week deadline.
- 2.4. Funding Requests must relate to the RSO's primary mission on record with the Department of Student Activities.
- 2.5. Funding request guidelines must be complete and accurate in accordance with the procedures outlined in The USG Funding Handbook for Tier II RSOs or the funding requests will be denied and/or rescinded.
- 2.6. Payment for expenses will be paid directly to the vendor (with the exception of certain travel expenses or unless directed by the funding staff in writing).
- 2.7. All eligible Requests tied to a specific event can be funded up to 100% of the requested amount unless otherwise stated in these policies.
- 2.8. All Requests for amounts less than \$5,000 will only require one quote to be eligible. All Requests greater than or equal to \$5,000 will require quotes from

three different vendors, or one vendor with justification when applicable. (Certain exceptions apply for travel.)

- 2.9. All Funding Requests are subject to approval by the Funding Supervisor, Comptroller, and President or their designees. Trustee Student Organization Support (TSOS) will verify that Funding Requests comply with relevant policy and laws.
- 2.10. Only undergraduate, fee-paying students at the Storrs campus may benefit from USG funding. The Funding Staff has the discretion to reduce funding for RSOs based on the percentage of non-student attendance.
- 2.11. Events funded by USG must be open, advertised, and accessible to all Storrs undergraduate students.
- 2.12. Payments to individual vendors will be capped at \$9,999.99 per vendor in each fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).
- 2.13. RSOs must provide reasonable accommodations that would enable a student with a disability to access full RSO membership and participation, to any Student that requests such accommodation. Reasonable accommodations are those that do not place undue hardship or threat to an organization.
- 2.14. Funding Requests that are returned to the RSO by Funding Staff must be corrected and resubmitted to USG by 11:59 PM on the second full business day after being returned, or be subject to denial. The Funding Staff will specify the day upon which this deadline will pass along with each return. A Funding Request is subject to denial when three returns are exceeded (exemptions may be made if the funding staff did not request the same information for each request).
 - 2.14.1. The Funding Supervisor may waive this policy 2.14 for extenuating circumstances.
 - 2.14.2. Shorter deadlines may be set in the case that giving the full amount of time may put the organization's funding in jeopardy.
 - 2.14.3. If a request has been returned to the RSO and has not been returned to the Funding Staff for longer than 9 business days without explicit permission given, the Funding Supervisor may delete the request.
- 2.15. Organizations have significant post-funding responsibilities that are outlined in the USG Funding Handbook for Tier II RSOs. Failure to fulfill their responsibilities by communicated deadlines may put the organization's current and future funding at risk.
- 2.16. RSOs may be provided with up to 200 free print advertisements per event from the USG Student Organization Center (SOC).
- 2.17. Damage done during travel, or done to any rented space or equipment will be the responsibility of the RSO.
- 2.18. RSO must submit their organization's funding requests through the Funding System. Funding requests cannot be submitted through email.

- 2.19. USG shall only pay for the benefit provided to undergraduate students and will not provide funding for canceled or poorly attended events at the discretion of the USG Comptroller or Vice President.
- 2.20. The Funding Staff may require the use of specific vendors in order to comply with University contracts.
- 2.21. If a specific vendor has repeatedly caused issues with the timely processing of payments or requests, the Funding Supervisor and Comptroller may jointly prohibit the use of that vendor. A list of such prohibited vendors shall be made publicly available on the USG website. Vendors shall be removed from the list upon demonstrating that the issue is resolved.
- 2.22. Funding requests which are delayed due to unresponsiveness or incorrect information from the RSO or vendor may be rescinded if the Funding Student Staff cannot reasonably fund the request given the timeline.
- 2.23. USG retains the right to any intangible or intellectual property it funds (e.g., audio recordings, video recordings). Any RSO that requests funding that will result in the creation of revenue-generating intellectual property must execute a Memorandum of Understanding with USG. RSOs are advised that the execution of an MOU often takes weeks before a funding request can be submitted.
- 2.24. RSOs must demonstrate that the benefit to Storrs undergraduate students from the Funding Request exceeds the cost.
- 2.25. Under no circumstances may the Funding Staff approve more than the funding cap set by the Student Senate. If the Funding Staff approves money that reaches the cap, all further funding requests may not be approved.
 - 2.25.1. The Funding Staff may not approve more than half the amount appropriated by the Senate for requests with a payment date in the Fall semester.
 - 2.25.2. Requests will be processed on a first come, first serve basis if the cap is reached.

3. Prohibited Expenditures:

- 3.1. Retroactive Funding Requests. A Funding Request is considered retroactive when funds are committed before USG's approval.
- 3.2. Advance payments, such as deposits. An exception to this can be made for registrations purchased with a University credit card at the direction of the Funding Staff.
- 3.3. Reimbursements, except when directed by the Funding Staff in writing (e.g., some travel expenses). Payment made with the expectation of reimbursement is done by an RSO at its own risk.

- 3.4. Taxes, penalties, late fees, cancellation fees, rush fees, and non-refundable application fees (e.g., cost associated for an organization to review an RSO's application to participate).
- 3.5. Activities to earn, or closely affiliated with the earning of, course credit from any institution.
- 3.6. Funding related to department expenses and expenses that would otherwise be part of a university department's budget.
- 3.7. Gift cards, raffle supplies, or other prize giveaways (e.g., merchandise).
- 3.8. Strictly social events not related to the mission of the RSO (e.g., formals, proms).
- 3.9. Vehicles, trailers, or anything regulated to require insurance, registration, and/or property tax.
- 3.10. Payment in advance of or at the time of the rendering of a contractual service. All payments will be made afterward and through HuskyBuy, unless stated in writing by the Funding Staff in advance.
- 3.11. Potentially dangerous equipment including, but not limited to, firearms, and explosives.
- 3.12. Recreational or illegal substances including but not limited to, alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis products.
- 3.13. Events outside the fall and spring academic calendar, including Fall and Spring Break. While all other funding policies still apply, discretion may be used by the Funding Student Staff and Comptroller for the following:
 - 3.13.1. Dates that are outside the control of the RSO for league-set competitions, advanced level competitions or annually attended conferences except for summer break.
- 3.14. Requests requiring the use of an international vendor.
- 3.15. Subscriptions, online or in print (e.g. magazines, newsletters, software).
- 3.16. Direct charitable donations and support, including fundraisers and expenses related to fundraising activities (e.g., donations being sought for admission to an event, a request for donations at or near the point of entry at an event, selling a product or food that has been funded directly or indirectly by USG).
- 3.17. Any event in which student groups are earning revenue by charging admission to an event or participation in an activity or competition.
- 3.18. Requests submitted prior to SOLID Workshop completion or USG training.
- 3.19. Any expense that would violate the law, the State Comptroller's Manual, USG Bylaws, or University policy.
- 3.20. Direct payments to students or RSOs, except as pre-authorized reimbursements.

4. Policies relating to specific Funding Categories:

4.1. Catering and Refreshments.

- 4.1.1. USG does not fund food for general body meetings or organizational meetings not related to an event.
- 4.1.2. UConn Catering has the right of first refusal when an event is on campus.
- 4.1.3. After refusal by UConn Catering, the group will be eligible to find an outside vendor to provide catering.
- 4.1.4. The RSO will be responsible for the cost of the meals of any "no shows" or Non-Student meals. (e.g., Requested catering for 60 students and only 30 students attended).
- 4.1.5. Eligible Funding Requests for catering will be capped at [current local meal per diem rates](#) as set by the General Services Administration Contractual Services.

4.2. Contractual Services

- 4.2.1. Contractual Services are subject to caps depending on the category of the service:
 - 4.2.1.1. Requests where a group is being coached, instructed, taught, or directed regularly and continuously by a specific person, people, or company are capped at \$40/hour of professional time per group.
 - 4.2.1.2. Requests where a group is being instructed or taught by a specific person no more than once per semester are capped at \$300/hour.
 - 4.2.1.3. Requests for speakers are capped at \$1,000/hour.
 - 4.2.1.4. Requests for performers and event staff, including DJs, models, and dancers are capped at \$600/hour. Event staff will only be funded if their presence is essential to the mission of the RSO and the goals of the event.
 - 4.2.1.5. Requests for the creation of intellectual property, including photographers, videographers, and music arrangers, will be governed by the MOU executed with USG.
 - 4.2.1.6. All requests for contractual services, including contractual services categorized and not categorized above, are capped at prevailing market rates. If the Funding Staff doubts that a price is reasonable, they may request three quotes from the RSO, regardless of the total dollar amount.
- 4.2.2. Caps on Contractual Services will also apply to companies with which a coach, instructor, or service provider is affiliated.

4.3. Events.

- 4.3.1. Events held by RSOs must be open, advertised, and accessible to Storrs students.

- 4.3.2. Events must be held on the Storrs campus or in space directly adjacent to and accessible from the Storrs campus.
- 4.3.3. Space (e.g., room, facility, venue) and equipment (e.g., One Card swipe, sound system, stage) rental expenses for RSO events are eligible for funding. This does not include vehicle rentals for travel addressed elsewhere in the policies.
- 4.3.4. RSOs must post their event on UConntact in a manner visible to USG,
- 4.3.5. RSOs must collect RSVPs on UConntact and submit them upon request to the Funding Student Staff two weeks prior to any event for which Catering is requested, the Funding Student Staff will check the RSVP list for any event and may cap USG funding for catering at 150% the number of RSVPs.
- 4.3.6. RSOs must additionally track actual attendance at their event and submit that attendance to USG after the event concludes.
- 4.3.7. USG reserves the right to table at events funded through Tier-II Funding. USG must provide notification to the RSO prior to tabling.

4.4. Travel and Lodging.

- 4.4.1. All travel expenses except for Bus and Car Rental will be processed as a reimbursement.
- 4.4.2. RSOs must demonstrate in their Funding Request that their chosen method of travel is reasonable and cost-effective.
 - 4.4.2.1. USG may require an RSO to take an alternate form of transportation if the difference in cost is significant, or may otherwise partially fund a group only to the cost of a less expensive form of transportation.
- 4.4.3. USG will only fund travel within the continental United States.
- 4.4.4. USG caps funding for travel reimbursement at a set number of people per trip:
 - 4.4.4.1. Travel for conferences and meetings will be funded at no more than four people per trip.
 - 4.4.4.2. Travel for competitions will be funded at the number of people required to compete, which will not be more than sixteen.
- 4.4.5. RSOs must submit a Department of Student Activities Off-Campus Activity Advising Process to be eligible for funding.
- 4.4.6. Funding Requests for airfare will be capped at \$300 per round trip ticket, and are subject to the following limitations:
 - 4.4.6.1. Flight departures and arrivals must be within a 150-mile radius of the Storrs campus.
 - 4.4.6.2. Additional fees such as baggage fees, extra foot space, priority boarding, and trip insurance will not be funded.

- 4.4.7. Funding Requests for mileage reimbursement will be funded at the IRS standard business mileage rate. Mileage reimbursement can only be Requested when driving a personal vehicle.
- 4.4.8. Funding Requests for lodging will be capped at the current lodging per diem rates as set by the General Services Administration, and will not require any quotes. USG requires that a minimum of four undergraduate students stay in each room. Exceptions to this rooming requirement must be included in the Funding Request and will be granted at the discretion of the Funding Staff.
 - 4.4.8.1. USG will not pay for lodging at any hotel within a fifty mile radius of the UConn Storrs campus. RSOs are encouraged to drive to and from events that are close by each day of the event.
- 4.4.9. Meals and gas during travel will not be funded.
- 4.4.10. RSOs are required to have an RSO bank account for reimbursement prior to filling out their request. (This is not required to be a SABS account, but it has to be an account that can be accessed by authorized club members.)
- 4.4.11. Add-on expenses for car rentals, including refueling charges, will not be paid by USG. Any add-on expenses will result in an invoice to the RSO or a reduction in other reimbursements.
- 4.4.12. For travel reimbursements, organizations are expected to provide, as appropriate:
 - 4.4.12.1. Boarding passes
 - 4.4.12.2. Receipts
 - 4.4.12.3. Card and payment information
 - 4.4.12.4. Lists of attendees, broken down by car and by room
 - 4.4.12.5. Updated SOLID rosters

4.5. Equipment and Supplies.

- 4.5.1. Equipment will be defined as products having a useful life of over one equipment year.
- 4.5.2. Requests for replacement equipment may only be made if the previous inventory has outlived its expected lifespan and has not been subjected to misuse, neglect, or poor stewardship.
- 4.5.3. USG does not fund equipment that is personalized, intended for personal use, or used for a single event.
- 4.5.4. All equipment funded by USG will remain the property of the USG.
- 4.5.5. Proper storage is required for all equipment funded by USG to ensure RSO access and oversight, and to protect against theft, loss, or damage.
- 4.5.6. No equipment may be disposed of, transferred, gifted, or sold without proper authorization from USG. Upon notification, the RSO will be provided with instructions for proper disposal. The Undergraduate Student

Government reserves the right to require of RSOs that items be returned or accounted for at any time.

- 4.5.7. Missing equipment must be reported to the USG Comptroller, and the student organization must file a police report immediately upon detection.
- 4.5.8. Loss, damage, or theft of any USG purchased equipment will be the responsibility of the RSO.
- 4.5.9. Supplies will be defined as products having a useful life of under one year.
- 4.5.10. Uniforms and costumes are eligible for funding if standardized wear is required to compete, or specialized wear is required to perform.
- 4.5.11. If an RSO plans to brand uniforms or costumes, the Request is subject to additional University policies and procedures regarding [Logo Usage](#).
- 4.5.12. RSOs must justify the quantity and the requested supplies must be exhausted within the year.
- 4.5.13. Failure to abide by USG inventory policies, either stated in this document or otherwise promulgated by Bylaw or Executive action, will result in sanctions being sought against the group and could jeopardize future funding.

4.6. Dues

- 4.6.1. Group dues that primarily benefit the RSO as a whole are eligible for USG funding.
- 4.6.2. USG will not fund memberships, dues, certifications, permits, or licenses that:
 - 4.6.2.1. Primarily benefit individuals instead of the fee-paying undergraduate population as a whole, or
 - 4.6.2.2. Are transferable beyond graduation or withdrawal from UConn.

5. Exemptions:

- 5.1. An Exemption, also known as a Variance, is an exemption from a specific policy and is not a decision on funding eligibility. Requests that receive an Exemption may still be denied for violations of any other policy.
- 5.2. Prior to a decision of the Funding Staff, any RSO may request an Exemption from the Comptroller. Exemptions may not be issued to funding policies that are delegated from higher authority.
- 5.3. To qualify for an Exemption, the RSO must demonstrate to the Comptroller that their request is in violation of these policies, and that the Exemption was requested during submission of the funding request.
- 5.4. Issuance of an Exemption is a discretionary power of the Comptroller.
- 5.5. To qualify for an Exemption, the RSO must demonstrate to the Comptroller that the funding request is essential to the mission of the RSO, that the benefit exceeds

- the cost, and that it is in the best interest of the Student Body that the funding request move forward.
- 5.6. The Comptroller must consult the Funding Supervisor prior to making any decision regarding Exemptions.
 - 5.7. Exemptions to Funding Policy 2.3, 2.14, and 3.14 will be made only after the Funding Supervisor confirms that the Funding Staff has the capacity to process the request.
 - 5.8. All Variances shall be issued in writing by the Comptroller or designee to both the RSO and the Funding Supervisor no more than three academic days after the RSO requested the Exemption, and must include the following.
 - 5.8.1. RSO name and Request ID.
 - 5.8.2. Specific policy or policies ID's and verbiage for which the Exemption was issued.
 - 5.8.3. Reason for issuing the Exemption.
 - 5.9. The Comptroller must notify a group that their variance was rejected no more than three business days after the RSO requested the Exemption.
 - 5.10. When issuing Exemptions, the Comptroller may, at their discretion, specify a funding eligibility rate that will override but not increase any other eligibility rate described in these policies.
 - 5.11. A Memorandum of Understanding, duly ratified by the Undergraduate Student Government and signed by the Comptroller, may override any of these Funding Policies.
 - 5.12. After the Funding Staff has rejected a funding request, the Comptroller may issue a Second Chance Exemption at the request of the RSO no more than one week after the Staff's decision, overriding the specific policies that the Funding Staff used to deny the request.
 - 5.12.1. Such a Second Chance Exemption may only be issued after the Funding Supervisor confirms in writing that the Funding Staff has the necessary capacity to process the request.
 - 5.12.2. A Second Chance Exemption may not be issued in place of an appeal. If the Comptroller disagrees with the Funding Staff's interpretation of a policy and believes it to be incorrect, any funding must come as the result of a procedural appeal.
 - 5.12.3. The Second Chance Exemption shall be a direction to the Funding Staff to re-vote on the request.

6. Appeals:

- 6.1. The purpose of the appeals hearing is to determine if the Funding Staff arrived at the correct decision. Any decision of the Funding Staff may be appealed by the RSO by submitting an Appeal within five business days of the decision.
- 6.2. The Judiciary will notify the RSO, Funding Staff, and Office of the Comptroller of the decision to hear or dismiss the appeal no later than the third full business day after receiving the Request.
- 6.3. The Funding Staff, Office of the Comptroller, and RSO will have until 11:59 p.m. on the second full business day after receiving the notification to provide any written arguments they wish to present. Failure to meet this deadline will constitute a waiver of this opportunity.
- 6.4. Appeals can only be made based on the following grounds:
 - 6.4.1. Procedural: The RSO alleges the Funding Staff did not follow applicable policies or USG Governing Documents in arriving at their decision.
 - 6.4.2. Interpretive: The RSO wishes to challenge the Funding Staff's interpretation of a given policy.
 - 6.4.2.1. Except in the case of bad-faith actions by the Funding Staff, the Judiciary will assess an interpretive appeal based on only the information that the Funding Staff was given at the time of the vote.
 - 6.4.3. Discriminative: The RSO claims a violation of viewpoint neutrality.
- 6.5. If all parties including the Funding Supervisors, Comptroller, and RSO representative agree to terms in writing prior to a hearing, the hearing may be waived. This agreement must be confirmed by the Judiciary.

7. Sanctions:

- 7.1. RSOs and/or their representatives can be referred to the USG Judiciary for sanction by anyone with knowledge of inappropriate conduct related to USG funding.
- 7.2. Inappropriate conduct could occur at a meeting, event, or through an organizational communication or process and may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 7.2.1. Intentional violation of these funding policies or any inventory policy, in letter or spirit, through action or inaction.
 - 7.2.2. Deception through providing or allowing another to provide incomplete or misleading information.
 - 7.2.3. Inappropriate behavior in person, by phone or email.
 - 7.2.4. Maintenance of a debt to USG, despite repeated attempts at collection.

- 7.2.5. Actions or inactions that allow or encourage discrimination, bias, exclusion, or violence based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or ability, religion, spirituality, nationality, and socioeconomic status, or any other identity.
- 7.3. The Judiciary will adjudicate referrals, and should it reach a finding of inappropriate conduct, it may penalize RSOs and/or their student representatives, in line with the offending conduct. Penalties could include one or any combination of the following:
 - 7.3.1. Verbal and/or written warning.
 - 7.3.2. Partial or full loss of funding on current or future application Requests.
 - 7.3.3. Partial or full loss of funding opportunities for future periods.
 - 7.3.4. Recall of all USG-funded equipment held by the RSO.
 - 7.3.5. Referral of the issue to the Office of Community Standards if there has been a possible violation of the Student Code.
 - 7.3.6. Referral of the issue to Law Enforcement if there has been a possible breach of the law.
- 7.4. The Comptroller may suspend an RSO from funding for maintenance of debt or violation of funding or inventory policies. This suspension is subject to appeal to the Judiciary and the Comptroller will notify the RSO accordingly at the time of suspension.

DEFINITIONS

Academic week: Any week classes are held during the fall and spring semesters.

Active Tier II Organizations: Active organizations have met all SOLID requirements and are listed on UConntact, eligible to apply for USG funding.

Competition: Act or process of attempting to acquire a ranking through a title or award

Conference: Meeting where attendees receive information about a particular issue or topic in which students can bring that information back to campus

Discretionary: left to individual choice or judgment

Equipment: Products having a useful life of over one year which requires specific record keeping (inventory) and significant post-purchase responsibilities.

Event: A special activity above and beyond day-to-day activities with a short and well-defined start and end time.

Fee-paying student: University of Connecticut undergraduate student who pays an activity fee to USG.

Funding Student Staff: Paid students engaged by USG to evaluate and process funding requests.

Giveaways: Products that are given away as a way to promote an RSO or secure attention or attendance for an activity or event

Inventory: List of equipment and relevant details.

Off-campus: Any space not specifically defined as “On-Campus”

On-campus: space owned and operated by the University of Connecticut and part of the core campus area at Storrs

Personalize: To customize a produce in such a way as to relate to a specific person

Promotional Items: Items that are customized or branded such as uniforms or costumes

Reimbursement: To make an RSO whole financially for an expense incurred by one of its representatives. USG endeavors to minimize a student being out of pocket as they do so at their own risk. All USG reimbursements for Tier-II expenses will be returned to the respective RSO’s SABS account unless otherwise agreed to, in writing, between the RSO and the Funding Student Staff.

Registered Student Organization (RSO): An RSO is a group of students joined together by a common cause, interest, or purpose. While the general membership of a student organization may include faculty, staff, or community members, the control, operation, and responsibility of a student organization must reside with the students. These organizations are categorized by their level of involvement on campus and access to university resources in a

‘Tiered’ system. All RSOs seeking USG funding are designated as Tier II. All RSOs must submit and keep up-to-date records and roster as prescribed by the Department of Student Activities and must maintain adherence to all policies outlined in BLUEPRINTS (Manual for RSOs) to maintain their registration.

Retroactive Funding Request: any request for USG funds when purchase or agreements have been made prior to the request and/or completion of USG funding process.

SOLID (Student Organization Leaders Intentional Development): A Department of Student Activities Program intended to ensure that student organization leaders are properly equipped to lead groups successfully and utilize all of the resources available.

Supplies: Product(s) purchased with a life span less than a year and in such quantities that they will be exhausted during the event or within the academic year for which they were procured.

Tier III: A University designation for fee-funded organizations at UConn Storrs. Most are also called Trustee Organizations due to the approval by the State of Connecticut.

Travel: Expenses for RSOs associated with students leaving campus for a specific event in the continental U.S. such as airfare, train, ferry, vehicle rental, bus, cab fare, and mileage payment for personal vehicles and lodging.

TSOS: Trustee Student Organization Financial Support, area within the Department of Student Activities in place to advise fee-funded organizations such as USG.

Vendor: Vendor that is part of a written agreement to be a sole supplier or among a group of vendors that are the only suppliers that can be used for a certain product or service e.g., bus transportation, promotional items.

Undergraduate Student Government (USG): USG is the body that represents undergraduate students at Storrs. USG is recognized by the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees as one of the five governing bodies on campus (along with the Board of Trustees, The University Senate, The Graduate Faculty Senate, and the Graduate Student Senate). USG is the primary recognized voice of undergraduate students to all audiences and actively partakes in the university-wide decision-making process through representation and advocacy. USG also manages a very large budget in student fees.