Grants Chair’s Report: Sydney Heiss

October 7th

Executive Summary: All summer grants recipients have been mailed their checks except for in the case of extenuating circumstances or withdrawal. All fall grants have been submitted and are under review by the grants committee. Grants guideline document has been updated and is proposed for change (attached below).

Oversight
- Tracking of grants funding line

Meetings
- Met with Executive Board members to discuss updating grants documents
- Weekly office hours set for Tuesday 11-1.
- Met with numerous students in regards to grants process.

Information Management
- All grants documents have been updated to the GSA share page
- Committee member tracked on GSA share page

Financial Activity
- Fall rewards have not yet been allocated
In the event that any portion of the Grant Guidelines conflict(s) with either the intent or the language of the GSA Constitution or the GSA Bylaws, the Grant Guidelines should will be considered inferior.

GRANTS

UA-GSA offers two types of grants:

1- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS intended to pay for or offset travel and other costs related to conference/exhibition/seminar participation.
2- RESEARCH GRANTS intended to pay for or offset costs incurred while conducting sanctioned research.

Both types of grants are for amounts up to $650.00. Grant funds are currently generated entirely from graduate student activity fees.

FUNDED ACTIVITIES

For Research
- Travel to research facilities
- Purchase of equipment and supplies (non-durable)
- Remuneration of human subjects
- Costs associated with specialized research training, including travel to obtain such training
- Room and board expenses at research facilities or field sites.

For Approved PD activities include such as:
- Presentation of a paper, poster, literary piece, or artwork
- Serving as a discussant or panelist
- Chairing of a session or panel
- Attending a workshop

Sanctioned PD expenses include:
- Room and board expenses incurred while participating in an event and/or room and board expenses incurred on the day immediately preceding or following an event (i.e. while in transit to or from Albany).
- Registration fees for academic conferences, symposia, literary readings, exhibitions, and other academic meetings.

Sanctioned Research expenses include:
- Travel to and from research facilities
- Purchase of equipment and supplies (non-durable)
- Remuneration of human subjects
- Costs associated with specialized research training, including travel to obtain such training (not including credit-bearing courses)
- Room and board expenses at research facilities or field sites (not including research in Albany, NY).

We will NOT FUND:
- Purchase of books or supplies for classes
- Computer or any other hardware, or durable good
- Any publication cost
- Living expenses while a student is in the writing stages of master’s thesis, dissertation, or other research or academic papers or work

DEADLINES
The deadline to apply for a UA-GSA grant for Fall and Spring semesters shall be the second Friday after classes commence in the applicable semester. The deadline for Summer semester shall be June 1 each year.

Application deadlines are:

- **Fall:** September 1<sup>st</sup>
- **Spring:** January 31st
- **Summer:** June 1<sup>st</sup>

*If the deadline falls on a weekend day, the deadline will default to the following Monday.

ELIGIBILITY
- Students are limited to one travel or one research grant per funding period and are limited to a max of 1,000 dollars throughout their graduate career at the University at Albany.
- You must be a matriculated University at Albany Graduate Student (full or part-time)
- You must show proof of paid mandatory graduate activity fee for current semester.
- UA-GSA officers are NOT eligible for grants while in office.
- Students serving on the UA-GSA Grants Review Committee are NOT eligible to apply for UA-GSA grants in the category they are evaluating.
- First-time applicants will be given preference in terms of funding.
(If fees are not collected during the summer semester, proof of paid mandatory graduate activity fee for preceding Spring – or OR – pre-registration and pre-payment of mandatory graduate activity fee for the subsequent Fall are required.)

Students on the Grants Review Committee will be asked to recuse themselves from evaluating applications from people they know to ameliorate bias.

**APPLYING**

- All applications must be written for layperson comprehension. Reviewers of your application may include persons unfamiliar with your academic specialty. Please keep this in mind when preparing your application materials.

  - *For the RESEARCH PROJECT APPLICATION* you must complete the GSA Research Grant Application Packet on MyInvolvement with your CV included, a print screen capture of your GSA bill paid, and a copy of IRB paperwork (if applicable) on MyInvolvement. You must also have, and a letter of recommendation from emailed from ONE faculty member to gsagrant@albany.edu. Please also submit a copy of IRB paperwork, if applicable.

  - *For the PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION* you must complete the GSA Professional Development Grant Application Packet on MyInvolvement with your CV attached, and a print screen capture of your GSA bill paid on MyInvolvement.

  - To do a screen capture of your bill on a PC, call-pull up your student bill on myualbany MyUAlbany and press control + PrntSc on your computer. For Macs, pressing command + shift + 3 will save a copy of the screenshot on your desktop, and pPaste the picture into a word document, save as “GSA bill paid”-Send and upload this word document document titled “GSA billed paid” to the grants chair email. For Macs, pressing command + shift + 3 will save a copy of the screenshot on your desktop. You can then upload that file into the application.

**CRITERIA**

Research Grant Proposals (in rough order of importance):

- Clarity of exposition (e.g. are the aims and methodology of the project understandable to lay-persons)?
- Significance of the research the discipline or field?
- A reasonable budget?
- Strength of the Curriculum Vitae (preferred) or Resume?
- Strength of faculty recommendation (only for research grants).

Professional Development Grant Proposals (in rough order of importance):
- Clarity of exposition (e.g. are the aims, methodology and results of the paper/project clearly outlined in the description).
- Significance of the paper or exhibition to the discipline or field.
- Importance of the conference.
- A reasonable budget.
- Strength of the Curriculum Vitae (preferred) or the Resume.

**THE APPLICATION**

Knowledge of and compliance with the GSA Grant Guidelines is the responsibility of the applicant only.

- All applicants will receive and “approved” message on my involvement, when their application has been confirmed by the grants chair. This does not guarantee the applicant will be awarded any funds but simply confirms the application has met the requirements is complete and has been submitted.

- If the project has multiple authors or is a group presentation and all or some members wish to apply for GSA funding, **ONE application must be submitted jointly by those applying for funding.** If applicants do not submit jointly, the application will be considered incomplete/fraudulent and will not be considered for funding, please notify the grants chairperson at gsagrant@albany.edu before submitting the individual applications. Please note that each application must be prepared separately.

- The entire grant review process should not exceed 8 weeks from deadline (except in cases where there is an appeal or other special circumstance).

- All individuals receiving a grant or not receiving a grant will be notified by letter within two weeks from the time final decisions are made.

- Any individual(s) denied grant funding, may request in writing the reasons for denial.

**FUNDING PERIODS**

Grant funds may be used for PD activities or research that fall up to (1) semester past the previous granting period’s deadline. For example, a student may apply for funds in the fall to reimburse an activity which occurred on June 2nd or after. In special circumstances, the Grants Chair may, at their discretion, grant the extension of a grant award into the next funding period. All requests for such an extension must detail the special circumstances surround the request, and must be submitted in writing to the Grants Chair before the end of original award period.

The following are the three UA-GSA Grant funding periods:
Summer Period: June 1st – August 31 (January 30th)
Fall Period: September 1st – January 30th (May 31st)
Spring Period: January 31 – May 31st (August 31st)

Important Note: If the deadline period falls on a weekend, or a holiday, the effective deadline will be the next regularly scheduled UA business day.

CLAIMING YOUR AWARD

To claim a grant award, the award recipient must, by the end of the current semester, submit the following items:

- **All grant recipients** must The original receipts will be scanned, scan original receipts, along with the award letter, summary of expenses, and signed reimbursement form, and proof of attendance, and emailed to the Grants Chair. The original copies of these and items will be submitted to the GSA Grants Chair in an envelope with the purchase order number (see below) and name of the applicant clearly written on the outside of the envelope.

- **Professional Development Grant recipients** must show proof of attendance, including but not limited to: provide a photocopy of the conference/activity program cover page and the relevant page(s) which show the grant recipients participation, a photocopy or hard copy of a nametag, or a certificate of completion.

- **Research Grant recipients** who did not supply proof that they have gained an IRB or IACUC approval, must do so at this point. They must also provide proof of research.

- The reimbursement materials must be first be submitted via email to the Grants Chair, and then a hard copy to the dropped off in the Grant Chair’s mailbox in the GSA office and online, through My Involvement. The UA-GSA Grants Chair shall make sure documents are properly completed, and confirm the purchase order number with the applicant. The President and Treasurer will submit the documents to UAS, which will verify the documents and mail a check to award recipients.

- In extenuating circumstances, extensions beyond the 2-weeks may be filed. Extensions may not exceed the last day of the next funding period. If a research or travel project, or part thereof funded by a UA-GSA grant extends beyond the end of the initial funding period, for which he/she received a grant from the UA-GSA Grants Committee, the grant recipient is required to file an Interim Grant Report to the UA-GSA Grants Committee Chair at the close of that funding period, and submit their receipts/expenses documentation when the project is completed upon completion. The Interim Grant Report will briefly detail progress, and expenses to date, and the work remaining.

- No more than one PD and research grant may be in progress.
The grant recipient is responsible for keeping track of the date for report submission; the UA-GSA Grants Committee will not send out reminders to students.

The UA-GSA Grants Committee is responsible for maintaining complete and current financial records on each grant awarded. Additionally, a running general ledger should be maintained by the UA GSA Grants Committee as a subsection of the GSA General Ledger which is monitored by the GSA Treasurer. These records are for audit purposes as well as general accounting needs.

DISBURSEMENT

Awards will be disbursed upon receipt of hard copy of original receipts, award letter, summary of expenses, signed reimbursement form, and proof of attendance/research for all grant recipients, and submission of IRB paperwork for research grant recipients, upon receipt of proof of attendance, original receipts, and an itemized budget of expenses.

In very special cases, part or all of an award may be made available prior to the start of the research project. Special cases include individuals unable to finance their research project or part thereof outlined in the grant proposal with their own or other funds. Applicants may petition the Grants Chair in writing for special treatment any time after the grant awards have been announced. The Grants Chair will respond in writing detailing the terms of the agreement. The Grants Chair will place both the request and the response in the applicant’s file.

In special cases a log of expenses may be accepted. Special cases may include, for example, living expenses for individuals conducting extended research in the field or at distant research facilities; or even odometer records when a personal vehicle is used for travel.

Receipts totaling more than an allocated portion of the award will be excluded. For example, if a student wins a grant of $4,300, and if two nights of hotel expenses are authorized and the New York State reimbursement rate for that city is $75 per night, then only $150 of a $362 hotel bill would be paid. The remaining award amount must be claimed with receipts for other expenses (some of which may be governed by similar caps due to New York State per diem regulations). New York State reimbursement rates can be found at: https://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/travel/reimbrate.htm
UA RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

- Approval for research involving human or animal subjects must be included in the application. All research that involves either human or animal subjects must be approved by the appropriate university body. The UA-Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews all research projects which collect information on or about living human subjects. The IRB is also responsible to judge whether a research project will impact human subjects. The University at Albany Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) reviews all research involving animals. Applicants must attach documentation that proves that approval has already been received.

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- During the evaluation period the applicant is responsible for informing the GSA Grants Committee Chair if receive other funding or intend to withdraw from UA-GSA grant competition.

- After the evaluation period and until the close of the funding period, the applicant is responsible for informing the GSA Grants Committee Chair if they were unable to undertake the project as originally planned (e.g., because of a delayed or denied visa) or of the intention to forego a UA-GSA grant award.

- Written notification of the intention or need to forego a grant award shall result in no penalty to the applicant. The Grants Chair will acknowledge any such withdrawal in writing, and the declined award will be treated as over-funded monies.

- Co-authored papers require one application filed jointly by those Co-Authors seeking GSA funding. The Co-Authors will assign one author who will be responsible for the allocation of the GSA travel grant award. For the purposes of proportioning grant monies, co-authored papers will be treated as a single proposal.

REVIEW PROCESS

- Public discussion of any specific information on, or about, current or past UA-GSA graduate student grant proposals is forbidden. All grant proposals are CONFIDENTIAL and should not be discussed with anyone outside the Grants Review Committee. Only information waived by a GSA Grant Consent form signed by the applicant will be eligible for public viewing, at the discretion of the Grants Chair, the day after award notices have been sent. Any information filled out on the Grant Release Form or included in the Final Report will be deemed available for public viewing or transmittal and may be used to promote GSA programs; at the discretion of the Grants Chair, when it is received in the GSA office.
• However, the GSA reserves the right to make a public announcement, if an applicant is notified or sent an award letter, posting their Name, Discipline / Department and brief description of their project / presentation at public forum such as the GSA website. Applying for this grant is consent that the GSA may post the Name, Discipline / Department and brief description of their project / presentation of an awardee, this information at the GSA’s discretion, and will not be liable for ANY damages in posting the general information indicated.

• No member of the UA-GSA Grants Review Committee, other than the Chair, is allowed access to any grant proposals, faculty evaluations, or UA-GSA evaluations from any other funding period.

• The Chair of the Grants Committee is allowed access to all previous grant proposals and evaluations. In the case that the current Chair of the Grants Review Committee submitted a grant proposal in a previous funding period, he/she is not allowed access to their application packet if they waved their right of access to any of the material.

• No one shall have access to grant proposals and evaluations from the current funding period except the UA-GSA Grants Chair, members of the current Grants Review Committee, and the current UA-GSA office manager.

• Both successful and unsuccessful proposals and evaluations are to will be kept on as a digital file to be overseen by the GSA Grants Chair as well as on file in on the MyInvolvement website for a minimum of three years the UA-GSA office, in a locked cabinet, for a minimum of three years.

• Research and Professional Development grants will be evaluated separately.

• The UA-GSA Grants Review Committee will take no longer than nine-eight weeks to evaluate grant proposals and make final decisions regarding PD and research grant awards.

**CRITERIA FOR AWARD AMOUNT**

• The award amounts will be determined by two factors: 1. the average of the applicant’s scores from the individual committee members, and 2. the total amount of available grants resources and the number of applications in the period. Adjusted for insignificant statistical deviation, similar scores will all receive similar funding.

• Prevailing NY State per diem Guidelines will be used to determine legitimate GSA travel expenses (including mileage), meal expenses, and lodging expenses.

• The GSA will generally fund lodging only for the night that the student participates in a recognized function. Meals will generally be funded for the day of the function, and depending at the Grants Committee’s discretion, one day of transit.
The Grants Chair may incrementally adjust individual award amounts to reflect extraordinary proposals. Adjusted Grants must be documented in writing by the Grant Chair, with a copy of the Justification for Grant Adjustment 1) placed in the applicant’s Original Application file, 2) circulated to the Assembly at the next meeting after the award, 3) sent to the award winner.

APPEALS

There are two conditions for appeal:

1) Where a faculty evaluator for the applicant has been unfair or biased;
2) Where the Grants Committee has been unfair or biased.

There are two time periods in which an appeal may be initiated:

1) During the review process, while the grant applications are still in committee, during which the Grants Committee will determine the results of the appeal.
2) After the committee reviews and within two weeks of the date that award notices are sent from the GSA office. In this case the appeal must go to the GSA Assembly.

The applicant must submit the appeal in writing to the Grants Chair who will forward the appeal to the Grants Committee or the GSA Assembly.

If the Formal Grant Appeal process results in the awarding of a grant to a student and the grant moneys for the relevant funding period are expended, the money awarded to the student will come from the grant funding cycle next following the Assembly’s decision.

OVER-FUNDING

Students must notify the UA-GSA Grants Chair in the event that a student obtains adequate funding from other sources and chooses to decline a UA-GSA grant award or accept a lesser amount, then the top ranked alternate grant proposal will be funded.

UA-GSA FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCEDURES

The amount of money allocated by the UA-GSA to the total grant fund will be distributed based on the average actual demand of the previous two years. In approximate terms, this amounts to 40% of the annual budget spent in each the Fall and Spring terms, and 20% of the annual budget spent in the Summer term.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF GRANT AWARD

A. Situations Considered Misappropriation of Grant Awards:
1. If a student’s budget or travel plans change and they did not inform the Grants Chair. Such changes are allowed when the student informs the Grants Chair and the change is approved.
2. When the UA-GSA grants are applied to student expenses associated with class work or a project other than that specified in the grant proposal.
3. When a student a) does not complete a research project or part thereof funded by a UA-GSA grant, or does not undertake the travel or conference participation specified in a travel grant proposal, and b) has collected all or part of the award in advance of the travel or research.
4. When original receipts, or adequate documentation of expenses incurred are not submitted and a student has collected all or part of the grant in advance of the travel or research.

B. UA-GSA Procedures for Misappropriated Awards:

1. The student will be contacted and given the opportunity to explain and rectify the situation.
2. If the student does not explain or rectify the situation to the satisfaction of the UA-GSA Grants Committee, the student’s faculty advisor and department chair will be contacted by the UA-GSA Grants Committee Chair.
3. If the situation cannot be adequately resolved by the student or her/his faculty advisor and department chair, then the UA-GSA Grants Committee will notify the University Bursar’s Office, which may then commence collection procedures with the student.

GUIDELINE AMENDMENT

1. The Grants Chair may initiate Grant Guideline amendment at any point during their tenure. To ensure continuity and equity, the normal time for amendment will be after Summer grants have been announced. The amended, but Unratified Grant Guidelines will govern all applicants in the following Fall round of grant competition. Upon ratification and/or revision by the Assembly, the amended Grant Guidelines will take effect immediately and retroactively to the beginning of the current (Fall) round of grant competition. The Unratified Grant Guidelines will be presented to the Assembly at their first meeting in the Fall of the new academic year.
2. In extraordinary circumstances, the Assembly, under the leadership of the Assembly Speaker and with a simple majority vote, may initiate amendment of the Grants Guidelines. Assembly led amendments must be available for implementation by the Grants Chair six weeks before the deadline for the next granting period.

MISCELLANEOUS

NOTE: The awarding of grants is contingent upon the availability of UA-GSA funds. Grant awards also are contingent upon your ability to convince reviewers that your cause is a worthy one—as such, awards do NOT reflect the value of your work.
NOTE: Pending ratification by the UA-GSA Assembly of updated or amended guidelines, the GSA is committed to fulfilling the expressed intent these guidelines wherever the letter of the guidelines is outdated.

NOTE: In the event that any portion of the Grant Guidelines conflict with the either the intent or the language of the GSA Constitution or the GSA Bylaws, the Grant Guidelines should be considered inferior.

If you have any questions, please contact the Grants Committee Chair at the GSA Office in Campus Center 307/308 (442-4178) or via email at gsagrant@albany.edu.

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