

2009-2010 Student Organization Student Services Fees Request
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
All-Campus Elections Commission

All-Campus Elections Commission

November 28, 2008

Fees Request for 2008-2009 Academic Year

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“We acknowledge that the fees committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any differences between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not of the fees committee.”

Ed Kim

Preparer's Name Here

Nikki Buckholz

Co-Preparer's Name Here

Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes _____ No X
If yes, please provide proof of your organization's 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):

General Operating Support X Start-Up Costs _____ Capital _____
Project / Program Support X Technical Assistance X Other (List) _____

Budget

Dollar Amount Requested \$13,000.00
Total Annual Organization Budget \$12,880.00
Total Project Budget (Apart from General Operating) \$7,550.00

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NARRATIVE:

The All-Campus Elections Commission (ACEC) is an autonomous student commission under the administration of Student Unions & Activities (SUA) and is responsible for the All-Campus Elections. The express duty of ACEC is to formulate, disseminate, and interpret the Election Rules and to govern the general conduct of the Elections. To that end, ACEC's responsibilities include, but are not limited to: recruiting elections to be held through ACEC, overseeing and interpreting the Election Rules, identifying violations, resolving complaints, overseeing all Elections personnel and increasing voter turn-out.

The Commission has existed in various forms as long as student government has been present on campus. In the past, the Commission has operated as a part of the Minnesota Student Association (MSA), but now conducts itself as a financially independent entity advised by the Student Unions & Activities. The process for electing leadership positions in student government organizations like MSA or the Graduate And Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) must be objective and unbiased. For this reason, it is important that ACEC continues to be its own unique organization, run independently by students who are interested in maintaining the integrity of the process. GAPSA and MSA still provide aid in selecting the commission members, but they conduct themselves as an independent entity. Because they are independent, the Commission is able to provide election assistance to all student organizations on campus, student college boards, student positions on University Senate and other student-run boards. ACEC provides the neutrality of a third party for student groups who want to maintain their credibility through a fair elections process.

The constant challenge for ACEC continues to be apathy among the student population in exercising their constitutional right to vote. ACEC strives to energize and motivate the student population to be more active in student elections, thus give their respective representatives the necessary mandate to advocate on their behalf.

Previously, the All-Campus Elections Commission operated as a Registered Student Organization (RSO), but at the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic school year, the All-Campus Elections Commission transitioned to become a Campus Life Program (CLP), which is a student group that is supported by a University department, in this case Student Activities. Since the Commission was already advised by Student Activities, it was a natural and beneficial transition for the group.

Academic Computing Services (ACS) also worked on several improvements to the online voting system during the 2007-2008 school year. The improvements were based on recommendations and feedback from previous elections, commentary in the media and input from prior commission members. The improvements included a voter confirmation number and vote lookup system designed to increase voter accountability as well as a system-wide "load test," which improved the overall efficiency of the voting website and reduced the amount of time it takes for someone to cast a vote. These improvements were made possible with the aid of Student Unions & Activities, and will keep the voting system a cost-effective tool for many years to come.

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NEED:

The All-Campus Elections Commission has continued to grow out of a need for fair and unbiased elections processes on campus. Starting with MSA, the Commission has grown to include elections for GAPSA, USenate, MPIRG, and various student-run college boards. Now that ACEC has transitioned to a Campus Life Program with support from Student Unions & Activities, ACEC is committed to providing those same services to any and all student groups who wish to have an efficient and fair election process. ACEC's online voting system has been used by several student groups in the past year, particularly those that have recurring elections for their leadership positions.

In looking ahead to the elections that will take place in future years, the Commission has already made improvements to their voting system that will keep the amount requested in student service fees the same as previous year's requests, despite the expansion of services to all student groups. These improvements, along with the transition to a Campus Life Program have enabled the ACEC to be more cost-effective. With these thoughts in mind, the All-Campus Elections Commission is requesting the amount of **\$13,000 for the 2009-2010** fiscal year.

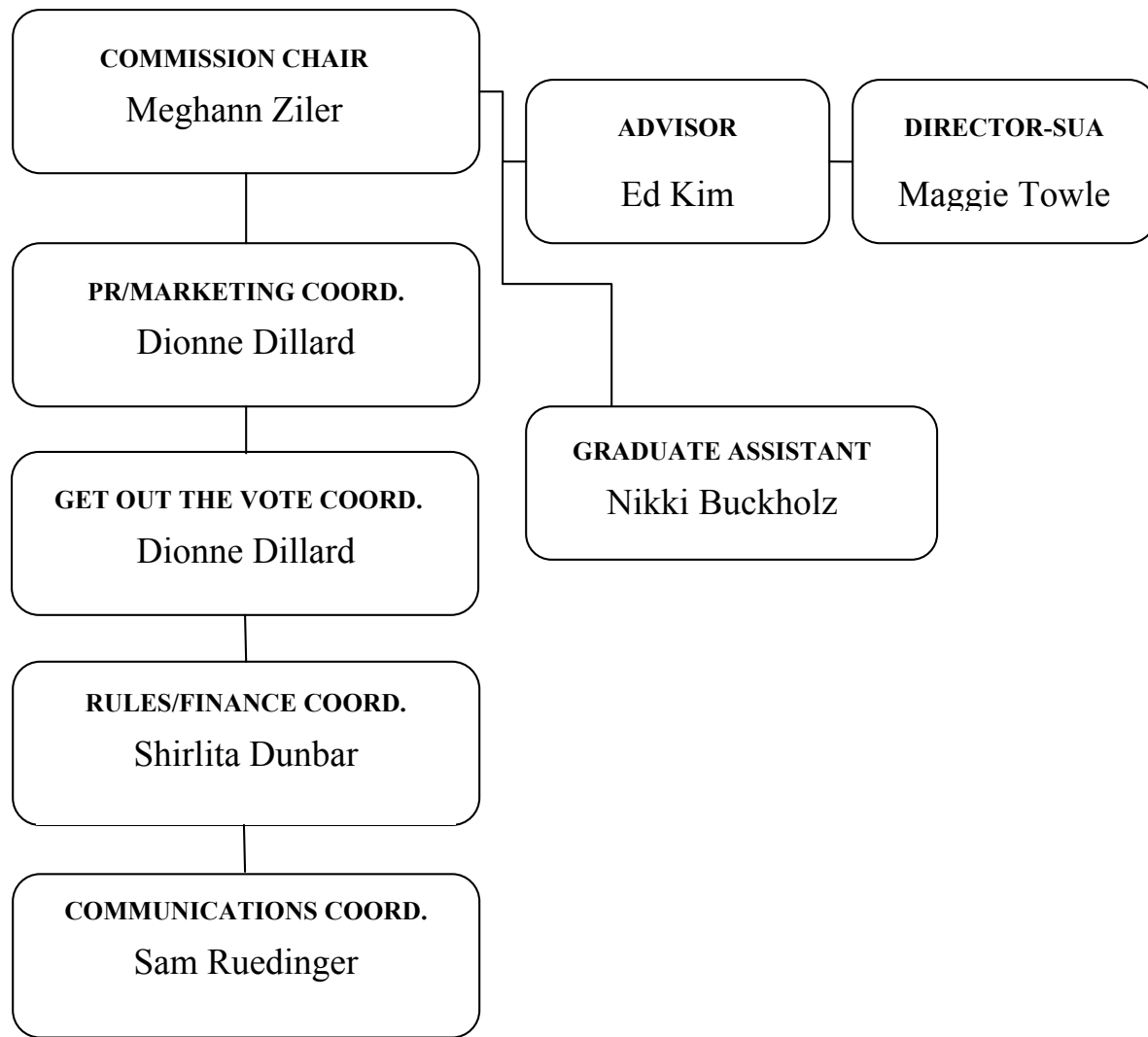
SUMMER OPERATIONAL HOURS:

After the elections are held in April, ACEC's tasks will include conducting any necessary hearings on complaints, completing the necessary audits of campaigns and other paperwork, and continue to be supported by Student Activities for any and all student groups wishing to use ACEC's services. The Commission is usually discharged in May once any elections processes or complaints have been completed. During the summer and early fall the advisor for ACEC helps facilitate any election requests until the new commission has been selected by MSA and GAPSA.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART:

Each fall the Commission is chosen through a selection process that includes a written application and an interview by the ACEC advisor, representatives from the Minnesota Student Association (MSA), the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA), and a past ACEC Commissioner. Once selected, the Commission is approved by MSA and GAPSA. During the fall semester, the commission undergoes training while the majority of the planning and implementation of the All-Campus Elections occurs in Spring Semester. This year, under the guidance of Student Activities, a graduate assistant will co-advise the Commission and assist in event planning.



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Performance Report

As ACEC continues to gain momentum on campus, the Commission has experienced many successes and has also identified areas that can and will be improved upon in both the 2009 elections this spring and in the 2009-2010 election year.

• **Commission Selection**

This past fall (2008), applications for the Commission were promoted in numerous ways, including advertisements in the MN Daily, the In The Know (Student Activities e-mail newsletter), GOLDPASS, the MyU portal, MSA Forums, GAPSA Assemblies, through the Student Senate and a campus-wide email sent from the Office of Student Affairs. We recruited as early as possible (beginning in the summer prior to school start), and the amount of recruitment materials aided in this year's increased pool of applicants. This year we received 13 applications, more applications than in previous years. For 2009-2010 we will continue to market these positions much earlier to reach more students, and also seek out more avenues to promote ACEC, particularly electronic mediums.

• **MSA and GAPSA Debates**

In 2008 the Commission hosted 3 debates – one for the MSA Presidential candidates (held in the West Bank Auditorium), one for the Vice Presidential candidates (held in Coffman Union) and another for the GAPSA Presidential candidates (held prior to a GAPSA social event at the Varsity Theater). The Commission will continue to consult with MSA and GAPSA leadership (individuals not running for any elected positions) on how we can together continue to improve upon these events.

• **Get Out the Vote Rallies**

We served lunch (Mesa Pizza and Coca-Cola beverages) to students on all three campuses. Each rally lasted two hours, and had approximately 2000 students attending over the course of three days. Students were able to vote on several laptops provided as voting stations. The Commission decided to hold the events at three high-traffic areas on each of the three campuses (East Bank, West Bank, and St. Paul), which proved to be a successful choice. We raised the visibility of the elections considerably and provided access to previously underserved populations (i.e. West Bank and St. Paul).

• **Elections**

The main All-Campus elections were held on April 7, 8 & 9, 2008. Four groups utilized ACEC to fill 60 positions. These groups were:

University Senate

College of Biological Sciences (1)

College of Liberal Arts (12)

Institute of Technology (4)

Minnesota Student Association (MSA) Forum

Student Body President and Vice President (1)

At-Large Forum Representative (16)

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Performance Report (Continued)

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)

President (1)

MPIRG U of M Local Board

Minneapolis Campus Representative (20)

St. Paul Campus Representative (5)

Student Group Elections

In addition to the above-mentioned elections held on April 7-8, 2008, ACEC extended its services to all registered student groups, ranging from board elections to electronic constitution approval through a simple voting process. During 2007-2008, fifteen student groups used ACEC to fill 45 positions and approve 2 student group constitutions. Some of these groups include : Alpha Epsilon Delta, Al-Madinah Cultural Center, Korean Student Association, Black Student Union, CSOM Business Board, Somali Student Association, African Student Association, the College Gaming League, and Women In Business.

Voter turnout overall improved by approximately 18% last year – 5,108 in 2008 as compared to 4,333 in 2007. ACEC works diligently to promote the elections through advertisements, email announcements and events like the Get Out The Vote rallies, however the Commission firmly believes that the candidates and the student organizations that sponsor elections through ACEC have the most impact on voter turnout. Most notably was GAPSA's voter turnout, which was nearly double their number of votes cast from last year (586 votes in 2007 to 1043 votes in 2008). Thanks to the efforts of their candidates and the rest of their organization, they are setting an example for increasing student interest in being civically engaged. By working closely with student government, ACEC will continue to increase voter turnout and the visibility of the elections process.

The criteria to measure our success are total percentage of voter turnout, results of election evaluations by groups that utilize ACEC, the number of election complaints received and generally how smoothly the elections experience was for the student population. By these criteria, the elections during the 2007-2008 school year were a great success: voter turnout increased by 18%; there were no reports of voting errors; there were no complaints between candidates or on the election results. The goals for each year's Commission are to carry out the campus elections in a proper and organized fashion and also interpret the Commission rules in a just manner. The Commission also conducts a campus wide Get Out the Vote effort to initiate stronger voter response. As more students become aware of their right to vote, ACEC's presence on campus will be more important in maintaining the integrity of the process and upholding fair and unbiased elections.

The Commission is a group that often works behind the scenes with elections and candidates. But the team's actions are also very open to the public. ACEC has worked with Student Unions & Activities to post their meeting minutes, timelines and candidate information on their website. Also, the MN Daily and student government (i.e. GAPSA and MSA) keep a close watch on what the Commission does. ACEC is very clear about their goals of conducting a fair and unbiased election processes on campus, and continually strives to provide those services to all students. Along with the public, advisors from Student Unions & Activities also evaluate ACEC after the elections to suggest possible changes for the upcoming school year.

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Description of Impact at a 10 Percent Reduction in Fees Request

A cut of 10 percent would be detrimental to the All-Campus Election Commission. This is because the Commission operates on only what is necessary in order to adequately prepare and manage the elections. Therefore, a decrease in our budget can only mean a decrease in the number of Commissioners or a reduction in advertising:

- First, a cut would signify a decrease in the number of Commissioners for our campus elections. Commissioners are considered a stipend position but the stipend amount has remained the same the past three years. Because each of the five Commissioners has a specific area of expertise and detailed tasks, we are able to make the elections important and accessible for the students. By removing one of the Commissioners, the jobs for the remaining members will increase dramatically. Given certain time restraints and nature of being a Commissioner, this will greatly affect the quality of work being produced. The elections are carried out smoothly because the Commission is able to divide up the tasks and use our budget accordingly.
- A cut of 10 percent can also represent a decrease in advertising. The most important part of carrying out an election and making sure students vote is getting the word out through different advertising methods. When publicity is limited, a low voter turnout is guaranteed to happen. Without a high turnout, students here at the U will be less inclined to be in touch with current issues facing the University community and grow more discontent with the lack of student voice being heard. In order to make sure that as many people vote as possible, advertising must be adequate to get information to the public.

| BUDGET | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Complete the sections below, as it applies to your organization Shaded sections are formulas and should not be changed | | | |
| Student Organization Name: | | | |
| INCOME | ACTUAL | PROJECTED | REQUEST |
| | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
| Student Services Fees | \$ 12,757.97 | \$ 13,000.00 | \$ 13,000.00 |
| Foundations | | | |
| Corporations | | | |
| Individual Contributions | | | |
| Fundraising Measures | | | |
| In-Kind Support | | | |
| Investment Income | | | |
| Grants Internal to UM (i.e. Administrative, Coke) | | | |
| Grants External to UM | | | |
| Operation Reserves (should be 10%) | | \$ 530.00 | \$ 530.00 |
| Equipment Reserves (if applicable to your organization) | | | |
| Long Range Planning Reserves (if applicable to your organization) | | | |
| Carry over from Previous year | \$ 249.86 | \$ - | \$ 120.00 |
| Total Income | \$ 13,007.83 | \$ 13,530.00 | \$ 13,650.00 |
| OPERATIONAL EXPENSES | ACTUAL | PROJECTED | REQUEST |
| | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
| Salaries, Wages, and Stipends | \$ 3,000.00 | \$ 3,000.00 | \$ 3,000.00 |
| Insurance, Benefits, Taxes | | | |
| Consultants / Professional Fees | | | |
| Travel | | | |
| Food | \$ 173.11 | \$ 200.00 | \$ 200.00 |
| Equipment | | | |
| Supplies | \$ 45.46 | | |
| Printing and Copying | \$ 84.98 | | |
| Telephone and Fax | | | |
| Postage and Delivery | | | |
| Rent and Utilities | | | |
| In-Kind Expenses | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | \$ 2,130.00 | \$ 2,130.00 |
| ** Online voting system (moved from Programming to Operational expenses) | | | |
| Total Operational Expenses | \$ 3,303.55 | \$ 5,330.00 | \$ 5,330.00 |
| PROGRAMMING EXPENSES* | ACTUAL | PROJECTED | REQUEST |
| | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
| Food | \$ 3,055.29 | \$ 3,000.00 | \$ 3,000.00 |
| Room Rental | \$ 300.00 | \$ 500.00 | \$ 500.00 |
| Advertising | \$ 2,648.95 | \$ 2,700.00 | \$ 2,700.00 |
| Entertainment | | | \$ - |
| Travel | | | \$ - |
| Other | \$ 3,258.00 | \$ 1,350.00 | \$ 1,350.00 |
| Total Programming Expenses | \$ 9,262.24 | \$ 7,550.00 | \$ 7,550.00 |
| GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ 12,565.79 | \$ 12,880.00 | \$ 12,880.00 |
| Difference (Income Less Expenses) | \$ 442.04 | \$ 650.00 | \$ 770.00 |
| <p>* For the Programming/Project expenses, organizations must provide a breakdown of the programming/projects that comprise the total costs listed above. In turn, the sum of each programming/project's costs should add up to the totals listed for each item. The Programming/Project breakdown sheet is provided on the next page and should be duplicated for each individual program/project. Breaking down your organization's projects and supplementing with narrative pages could alleviate the need to compile this information for the fees committee at a later date.</p> | | | |

| PROGRAM BREAKDOWN 2009-2010 | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Student Org Name | All Campus Elections Commission | | | | | |
| Name of Program | Candidate Information Session | | | | | |
| Food | \$ - | | | | | |
| Room Rental | \$ 150.00 | | | | | |
| Advertising | \$ - | | | | | |
| Entertainment | \$ - | | | | | |
| Travel | \$ - | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | \$ 50.00 | | | | | |
| Program Total: | \$ 200.00 | | | | | |
| Narrative: | Information sessions are provided for students who are interested in running for positions offered through ACEC. They are designed to provide question/answer opportunities for students interested in running for an available position and to advertise the services of ACEC to student groups interested in utilizing the Commission for their elections. The other costs are for printing materials and A/V equipment rental. | | | | | |
| PROGRAM BREAKDOWN 2009-2010 | | | | | | |
| Student Org Name | All Campus Elections Commission | | | | | |
| Name of Program | Candidate Debates | | | | | |
| Food | \$ - | | | | | |
| Room Rental | \$ 350.00 | | | | | |
| Advertising | \$ 200.00 | | | | | |
| Entertainment | \$ - | | | | | |
| Travel | \$ - | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | \$ 300.00 | | | | | |
| Program Total: | \$ 850.00 | | | | | |
| Narrative: | ACEC hosts the MSA Presidential, MSA Vice-Presidential and GAPSA Presidential debates as a neutral third party and provides the general student body the opportunity to hear from the candidates running for these positions. The Commission will be exploring new opportunities such as posting videos of the debates online to raise awareness of the candidate's viewpoints. The "other" costs are for printing of debate materials and A/V equipment rental. | | | | | |
| PROGRAM BREAKDOWN 2009-2010 | | | | | | |
| Student Org Name | All Campus Elections Commission | | | | | |
| Name of Program | Get Out The Vote Rallies | | | | | |
| Food | \$3,000.00 | | | | | |
| Room Rental | \$ - | | | | | |
| Advertising | \$2,500.00 | | | | | |
| Entertainment | \$ - | | | | | |
| Travel | \$ - | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | \$1,000.00 | | | | | |
| Program Total: | \$6,500.00 | | | | | |
| Narrative: | | | | | | |

Increasing voter turn-out is a major responsibility of the ACEC. We hope to improve upon our number of students voting and participating through a successful marketing campaign that includes placing print ads in the MN Daily, putting up posters around campus and in the residence halls, and through mass emails sent to all students. Another way to inform and encourage students to participate is through our Get Out The Vote Rallies. The Commission has improved significantly on the Get Out The Vote Rally event since it started 4 years ago. The rally creates a fair-like atmosphere in which students can get free food and beverages while also being able to vote at several laptops setup as voting stations. The rallies take place on all East Bank, West Bank and St. Paul campuses to maximize the targeted student population. In response to previous fees recommendations, the Commission will be reducing the food costs by 30% and increasing their marketing budget. The "other" costs cover printing, trash removal and laptop rental for voting stations.