

Student Initiative Fund: Terms of Reference (Updated September 2019)

Background

The Division of Student Life (SL) annually receives requests for funding from students with ideas on how to positively contribute to the student experience at the University of Toronto. In response to this demand, SL has created the Student Initiative Fund (SIF) to assist students in accomplishing their goals. The intent of the Student Initiative Fund is to provide a source of funding to assist students in implementing programs that contribute toward a positive student experience and foster a sense of community at the University of Toronto.

Requests for funding to the SIF can be submitted by any University of Toronto St. George student who is assessed non-academic compulsory incidental fees, or any student group (recognized or otherwise) whose members are assessed non-academic compulsory incidental fees for any project for which they can demonstrate that the spirit of the project broadly aligns with the *Division of Student Life's Mission and Vision*: "Through our work and partnerships, every student will have the opportunity to actively participate in university life; find connection, community, and friendship; encounter new ways of thinking and being in the world; and experience leadership, independence, and success."

In addition to aligning with the *Division of Student Life's Mission and Vision*, the Student Initiative Fund (SIF) supports the *Domains of Innovation and Goals* set forth by the *University of Toronto Innovation Hub*.

Access for Every Student: students of all abilities and backgrounds have equitable access to programs, services, resources, and spaces
Goals: Creating accessible digital & physical spaces, addressing financial barriers, supporting under-represented & diverse populations, navigating institutional structures, deepening participation & engagement and improving financial literacy

Fostering Connectedness: students experience a sense of belonging and connection within and to the UofT community
Goals: Nurturing international engagement & intercultural understanding, cultivating relationships, increasing peer connections,

Future-Ready Students: students have opportunities to develop their skills and build their confidence beyond academics building & connecting communities and working across difference
Goals: Preparing students for a changing world, increasing work-integrated learning, expanding mentorship opportunities, leadership development, career exploration and development and fostering lifelong learning

Integrated Learning Experience: students have access to engaging learning experiences both in and outside of the classroom
Goals: Fostering academic & co-curricular connections, facilitating experiential & immersive learning, generating purposeful in-class engagement, equipping faculty with information to support students, encouraging self-directed learning and increasing online learning options using educational technology

Whole Student Development: students receive the support they need for their holistic well-being (physical, psychological, social and emotional) Goals: Cultivating mental, physical & spiritual health, building self-efficacy & self-motivation, fostering resiliency & self-care, identity development and the development of meaning & purpose

SIF Committee

The committee will be comprised of:

1. Nine student members as follows:
 - One student member as appointed by the University of Toronto Students' Union.
 - One student member as appointed by the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union.
 - One student member as appointed by the University of Toronto Association of Part-Time University Students.
 - Three student member as appointed by the Assistant Vice-President Student Life or designate from the general University of Toronto student population.
 - Three student members as appointed by the Assistant Vice-President Student Life or designate from the executive of a recognized student club.
2. Two staff members as follows:
 - One staff member as appointed by the Assistant Vice-President Student Life or designate from the groups of University staff known as the Student Life Professionals.
 - One staff member as appointed by UofT Ancillary Services, Trademark Licensing Department.
3. Two non-voting members as follows:
 - A non-voting chair as appointed by the Assistant Vice-President Student Life or designate whose role is to ensure that process and due diligence is followed.
 - A non-voting recording secretary appointed by the Assistant-Vice President Student or designate to assist in scheduling meetings, collecting proposals, preparing for the meeting, record keeping, communicating with applicants and generally assisting the chair.

Meeting attendance must be confirmed two business days in advance of scheduled meetings to ensure quorum is met

Should any particular constituent not wish to provide a member to sit on the committee, the Assistant Vice-President Student Life or designate would appoint a student member at their discretion, attempting to select a student who best represents that constituency.

The committee will meet at least once per funding session and review all proposals submitted by the funding term deadline until all the funds have been distributed.

Committee members will serve for a term of one year effective May 1 (with opportunity for renewal). The Division of Student Life will 'advertise' vacant positions on the committee through typical communication channels to students (social media, listservs, emails, etc.)

Quorum for the meeting will be 5 voting members (Quorum can be reached via digital submissions in

advance).

Tiers of Funding and Eligible Expenses

A student/group can only receive one tier one and one tier two in an academic year.

Funding preference will be given to new initiatives.

Meeting all of the minimum requirements does not guarantee SIF funding.

The SIF Committee will decide upon all funding requests and may award amounts up to \$3000 annually to one student/student group/project. SIF has Three Tiers of Funding:

Tier 1 Funding

Tier 1 funding is available for small-scale or simple initiatives that require funds up to \$499 CAD for room booking and food related expenses. Examples include snacks (with plates, napkins etc.) for an open mic night, a meet & greet session, supplies for a “mocktail” event, a room booking fee etc.

Groups and individuals can only receive Tier 1 funding once in a given year. Receiving Tier 1 funding does not prohibit groups and individuals from receiving Tier 2 in the same SIF year.

Tier 2 Funding

Tier 2 funding is available for medium-scale initiatives that require funds from \$0 to \$3000 CAD to enhance the student experience and foster a sense of community on St. George campus. Examples include: an Alumni night, an Art & Mindfulness exhibition, a workshop series, a themed conference, a University of Toronto talk series, an inter-departmental conference, a cultural event for students, etc.

Tier 2 funding requires two selection phases.

- Phase 1: Application Submission
 - Application is submitted on the SIF website.
- Phase 2: Pitches
 - Applicants that are selected during Phase 1 are invited to come and pitch their initiative to the SIF committee. Applicants selected will receive funding as determined by the SIF committee. Only 45 applicants will be selected during Phase 1. Pitches will be ten minutes total in length, with seven minutes being devoted to pitching the initiative and three minutes being devoted to committee questions.

Groups and individuals can only receive Tier 2 funding once in a given year. In addition to the online application, a 10-minute pitch presentation to the SIF Committee is required (7-minute presentation and 3-minute period for committee questions).

Exceptions

Proposals will not be funded if the project:

- Is for the purpose of fundraising
- Is held outside of the University of Toronto Community, i.e. an application is submitted by a University of Toronto St. George student on behalf of his/her community based organization

- Involves personal expenses
- Includes alcohol-related expenses
- Is capital in nature, unless the capital is used for the formation of a new student club
- Is for general operating expenses of student clubs or organizations, i.e. SIF is intended for projects/events/activities and not business cards, apparel, compensation for event organizers
- Is from an applicant who has not submitted the post-project reports for previous SIF-funded projects
- Excludes any student or student group from participation
- Requires reasonable event planning and risk management practices, and these have not been applied
- SIF will only fund programs and initiatives that take place on the University of Toronto's St. George Campus spaces. Pursuant to the Governing Council "Policy on the Framework on Off-Campus Safety", any SIF sponsored event will require its organizers to review the framework. When necessary, the organizers may also be required to meet with staff to implement appropriate principles concerning safety.
- We will not fund programs for non-University of Toronto St. George students, including high school students. The primary audience must be U of T St. George students.

See the Guiding Principles for further details on the specifics on how to apply and for what is/what is not covered in the fund.

Student and student group applicants are encouraged to:

- Seek approval of funding from other sources such as the Hart House Good Ideas Fund, the University of Toronto Students' Union, or Colleges/Faculties.
- As part of their applications, applicants will disclose if they are working with a University 'office' in the delivery of their project
- Successful projects are asked to recognize the Student Initiative Fund as a project partner

Transferring Funds and Reporting from Fund Recipients

40% of the funding request, based on the projected budget provided with the application, will be made available if requested. Within one month of the project conclusion, the sponsor/applicant will provide a detailed expense report of the project including all itemized receipts up to the total approved amount. Only expenses with corresponding original itemized receipts will be eligible for reimbursement. After the post-project report is received, the remaining expenses will be released. Failure to supply a post-project report will result in the project sponsor/applicant being personally responsible for the project costs.

Reporting from Student Life

As part of the annual Council on Student Services meeting schedule, Student Life will present a report

outlining funds collected, projects receiving funding, and a current balance. Should a positive current fund balance exist at year-end, these funds will carry over to the following year and will be eligible for distribution.

The Council on Student Services will also make all annual reports public on the Student Life website after consideration.

Committee members will review the SIF Terms of Reference on an annual basis and make recommendations to the chair to forward the recommendations on behalf of the committee to the Assistant Vice-President Student Life or designate for approval.