



Creating Club Budgets

To give all clubs an opportunity to receive funding, the treasury department has created a system that encourages all clubs to create budgets in advance and audits those budgets in a fair, transparent manner. In order to participate, each club must create a budget each semester. To make this a smooth, painless process for all involved, this guide was created. In addition, it is suggested that you read the “How does the Funding Board work?” document found in the Canvas page in conjunction with this guide.

Step 1: Establish Your Club’s Goals

After analyzing hundreds of club budgets, it’s clear that clubs with clearly defined goals make better budgets. Goals are vital because they make it easy to focus on actions that meet the goals and eliminate those that don’t. For goals to be effective, they must be made explicit. For example, if Club X has no explicit goals, it might think that a pizza party is a good idea. However, if Club X has the specific goals to “promote reasoned political discourse,” a pizza party is a questionable way to reach that goal.

How should goals be developed? Ask the following questions:

- Why was this club initially founded?
- What do my club members want from this club?
- What specific value does this club provide to the LU community?
- What can this club do well?
- How can this club develop its members?

If asked to explain the reason the club exists, club officers should have a well-thought-out explanation and answers to any potential follow-up questions.

Step 2: Brainstorm Effective Ways to Meet Your Club's Goals

After setting goals, it's time to figure out the most effective ways of meeting them. It is suggested that all club officers be involved in this process. After brainstorming, each idea should be evaluated against the goals previously established. Figure out which of them will *most effectively* meet your goals.

To provide an example of this kind of thinking, we take Club X and discuss several options that might have come up in its brainstorming session. Club X's mission is to "encourage reasoned political discourse." Options to meet that mission might include:

1. *Host moderated debates between students with different political views.* This clearly lines up with the club's goals.
2. *Write letters to legislators advocating for certain policy positions.* See #2. Although a great activity, this doesn't seem to meet the club's goals.
3. *Hold a monthly ice cream social for club members.* The occasional social meeting is fine, but these shouldn't be the majority of your budget.
4. *Hold monthly listening/discussion events for historically admired speeches.* This could be a great way to meet the club's mission.
5. *Serve the Lynchburg community by attending weekly service events.* See #2. Club leaders should consider encouraging Club X's members to do this outside of club meetings.
6. *Purchase a website domain name on which club members will write blog posts on communicating well.* This is a unique way to meet a club's goal. The Funding Board likes clubs who make investments that can provide benefits for years to come.

Before Step 2, Club X's goal was to "encourage reasoned political discourse." After Step 2, Club X's goal is to "encourage reasoned political discourse by writing blogs, hosting moderated debates, and discussing the works of historically admired political figures." If you spend a lot of time on Steps 1 and 2, you'll be well-prepared to make an effective Club budget.

Step 3: Establish a High-level List of Funding Requests

Create a list of events, purchases, and meetings you want to host throughout the

coming semester. It may be useful to have a calendar on hand for this. As this list is created, remember to set your club up for future success by budgeting for marketing and outreach. As you list events, estimate attendance for each gathering.

Step 4: Break Down Each Item on Your List

One by one, work through each item on the list you established in Step 3.

1. Break each high-level item down to component parts. For example, an event may include decorations, food, reimbursements to guest speakers, etc.
2. Research prices for each of the component parts, figuring out the most cost-effective supplier for each of them.
3. On a budget spreadsheet (the Treasury will provide you a template), assign specific costs to each component. Beside each specific cost, feel free to drop a weblink or personal notes justifying the expenditure. If you can't find an objective price anywhere, use your best estimate.
4. Sum up the components for each event/purchase to arrive at total event/purchase costs.
5. Sum up each total event/purchase cost to arrive at your club's total semesterly budget.

That's it! Submit your budget to the Funding Board for review.