

**2017 – 2018 UTRGV Student Government Association (SGA)
Guidelines for Distribution of Student Travel Funds**

A. Statement of Purpose

The Student Travel Funds (STF) are available to support students traveling to conferences and competitions in order to enhance their academic and professional experience.

B. Travel Eligibility

1. Any student interested in receiving travel funds must meet the following conditions when applying for the semester of travel:
 - a. Must be enrolled at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley for the current semester (exception for Summer semesters).
 - b. Undergraduate students must have a minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA and graduate students must have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA (transfer GPA not included).
 - c. Must be in good standing with the university.

C. General Guidelines

1. Definitions
 - a. “Travel:” the action of traveling to a conference or competition.
 - b. “Lodging:” A hotel room or university residential facility used by an applicant for the duration of a conference/competition.
 - c. “Attendee:” A student attending a conference solely as a non-competitor/presenter/participant.
 - d. “Participant:” A student taking part in a conference or competition by competing, presenting, or performing.
 - e. “Group:” Two or more students attending the same conference or competition.
 - f. “Fiscal Year:” Pertaining to dates that fall between September 1, 2017 and August 31, 2018.
 - g. “Domestic Travel:” Traveling to a conference/competition that is within the U.S.
 - h. “International Travel:” Traveling to a conference/competition that is not within the U.S.
2. The purpose for the applicant’s travel should be to explicitly enhance their academic and/or professional experience gained while attending UTRGV.
3. The conference or competition must be held at least sixty (60) miles away from the Brownsville or Edinburg campus.
4. Students applying for Student Travel Funds are not allowed to receive academic credit for any registered courses as a result of the conference or competition.
5. Depending on the number of applications received, the SGA may only be able to fund a portion of the amount requested for lodging and/or registration fees associated with a conference or competition.

6. SGA has been allocated a total of \$70,000 budget by UTRGV to fund STF for the current Fiscal Year.
 - a. Refer to the table shown on Section F subsection (2) for budget allocation amounts per semester cycle.
 - b. Any remaining funds from a Semester Cycle will be relocated to the following Semester Cycle.
7. After an initial meeting with a designated SGA representative, a report will be sent to the Financial Affairs Standing Committee of the Student Government Association Senate to determine whether a STF application is approved or denied.
8. If an application is eligible and approved, the Financial Affairs Standing Committee shall determine the amount of funding that may be awarded to the applicant(s).
9. SGA will follow the US General Services Administration (GSA), State Department Per Diem for lodging to determine reasonable, pre-tax lodging in the city where the event is being held. Please refer to <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> and search by hotel zip code for the most accurate domestic rates.
10. Depending on the timing of the funding request review and approval, the lodging and/or registration fees may be provided via 'direct bill' or reimbursement.
 - a. To utilize 'direct bill' through the university, the SGA support staff must directly handle booking of hotel accommodations in advance through Corporate Travel Planners. Four students must stay per room with a minimum of three. Reasonable accommodations can be provided with documentation and input from Student Accessibility Services.
 - b. In the case that SGA is 'direct billing' an applicant(s) Hotel, a traveling member must present their own credit card at the Hotel for Incidental Fees.
 - c. SGA will not provide funding for incidental fees incurred.
 - d. In order to receive reimbursement for lodging, a hotel folio with a list of all students per room or proof of payment for a university residential facility must be submitted.
 - e. To pay registration fees in advance, the travel coordinator must schedule a meeting with the SGA support staff to coordinate payment.

D. Individual Students

1. Individuals who are recognized as participants competing, presenting, or performing at a conference/competition may be allocated up to \$500 for lodging and/or registration.
2. Individuals who are recognized as attendees may only be allocated up to \$250 for lodging and/or registration expenses associated with a conference/competition.
3. In order for an individual attendee or participant to receive reimbursement, the applicant must have 'direct deposit' set-up with UTRGV through ASSIST.

E. Group Travel

1. SGA will provide funding for up to twenty (20) students attending the same conference and/or competition. SGA may fund an entire group up to \$5,000 for attending or participating in a conference and/or competition.
2. If two (2) or more students apply to attend the same conference and/or competition, the applications will be reviewed together and considered a group.
3. In order to process reimbursement directly to a student organization that has been awarded, a W9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification) must be on file at UTRGV. If a W9 is not on file, the document must be sent via email to the designated administrator, Cristina Garcia at cristina.garcia@utrgv.edu.

F. Procedures Before Travel

1. Apply online through V link (www.utrgv.edu/vlink) under the “Student Government Association” page.
2. Application deadlines have been established for travel occurring during a specific date range. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

Semester Cycle	Travel Period	Application Deadlines	Budget Per Semester Cycle
Fall	September 1 – December 31, 2017	October 15, 2017*	\$30,000
Spring	January 1 – May 31, 2018	February 15, 2018*	\$20,000
Summer	June 1 – August 31, 2018	June 15, 2018*	\$20,000

- * Application deadlines are subject to close early depending on availability of funds per semester cycle.
- * Applications will be reviewed on a first come first serve basis.
- * If an application is approved, the funding will be distributed in a first come first serve basis.

3. Once an application has been submitted, the amount of funding requested for lodging and/or registration cannot be increased.
4. Once an application has been submitted, the number of students on the request cannot be increased. If the number of students attending decreases, an email notification must be sent to sgafunds@utrgv.edu.
5. Student travel must be in compliance with the Student Travel Policy located in the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures.
6. The “**Authorization for Student Travel Form**” must be completed along with a “**Release and Indemnification Agreement Form**” for each applicant. The

travel forms must be submitted to and approved by the Office of the Dean of Students (Brownsville: Cortez 205 and Edinburg: University Center 323) prior to coordinating ‘direct bill’ and/or reimbursement.

- a. If conference/competition is used for **Domestic Travel**, use the following link to obtain the required Student Travel Form Package (Domestic).
 - <http://www.utrgv.edu/files/documents/student-experience/dean-of-students/studenttravelpackage-domestictravel.pdf>
- b. If conference/competition is used for **International Travel**, use the following link to obtain the required Student Travel Form Package (International).
 - <http://www.utrgv.edu/files/documents/student-experience/dean-of-students/studenttravelpackage-internationaltravel.pdf>

G. Procedures After Travel

1. Submit all receipts and other relevant documents together within five (5) calendar days from the stated return date on the approved Student Travel Fund Application. Submission of receipts may be done via email to sgafunds@utrgv.edu or by presenting the receipts to the designated administrator, Cristina Garcia, located in Brownsville, Student Union 1.28 (956-882-5111) or emailing them to cristina.garcia@utrgv.edu. Please submit receipts and other relevant documents all at once when emailing them to these email addresses.
2. **If receipts and other relevant documents are not submitted within the time period stated above, awarded funding will be declined.**
3. Each individual applicant must complete an “**Online Program Evaluation Form**” (found on the SGA Vlink page) within five (5) calendar days from the stated return date on the approved Student Travel Fund Application. For group travel, at least one “**Online Program Evaluation Form**” must be submitted.
4. **If the “Online Program Evaluation Form” is not completed within the time period stated above, awarded funding will be declined.**
5. When applicable, reimbursement may be ready approximately three (3) weeks after all travel paperwork is completed and submitted. The applicant(s) will be contacted regarding reimbursement, assuming they have complied with all Guidelines for Distribution of Student Travel Funds.

H. Application Status

1. If an applicant(s) would like to inquire about their application status, you may contact our designated administrator, Cristina Garcia, located in Brownsville, Student Union 1.28 (956-882-5111) or you may email her at cristina.garcia@utrgv.edu or at sgafunds@utrgv.edu.

All travel funding will be appropriated in accordance with the SGA Student Travel Funds Guidelines.

I. Provisions and Governing Regulations

1. The Student Government Association reserves the right to decline funding if any paperwork is incomplete, incorrect, late, or if criteria or requirements to be met are deemed unacceptable.
2. The Student Government Association reserves all rights and discretion for approval and amount awarded of funding.
3. The Student Government Association may decline funding for students who fail to submit receipts and other relevant documents by designated deadlines.

For any questions or concerns, please contact sgafunds@utrgv.edu

*The 2017 – 2018 UTRGV Student Government Association (SGA)
Guidelines for Distribution of Student Travel Funds were reviewed approved by the Senate on
September 15th 2017.*