

University of Washington, Seattle Services & Activities Fee Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request

Student Publications

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Budget Request Highlights

In this section, please list all line items for any changes in request amount greater than \$1000, along with a short description of each line item and the amount requested. For all other changes under \$1000, please list the total summed figures in a final "miscellaneous expenses" item at the bottom. Please ensure that all the SAF funded line items below and previous SAF allocation total add up to the requested amount. Our goal with this section is to provide an overview of the current financial state, along with any changes in SAF funding that are being requested this year.

Each unit's FY26 request may only represent a maximum increase of 6% or \$35,000 over the unit's allocation for FY25 (whichever is higher in context of the unit's FY25 allocation).

While we would love to fund everyone's full request, SAF is financially constrained by the Washington State Legislature. RCW 28B.15.069 limits the amount that the Services and Activities Fee (SAF) is allowed to increase each year. For FY26, the SAF amount can be increased by a maximum of 3.55%.

Our unit's award in FY22 was **\$371,040**.

Our unit's award in FY23 was **\$382,176**.

Our unit's award in FY24 was **\$412,752**.

Our unit's request in FY25 was **\$445,770** and our award was **\$433,770**.

Our request for FY26 is **\$468,770**, which represents a **8.06% (\$35,000)** from FY25.

In this section, please break each increase into its own sections (e.g. wage & benefits changes, increases in current employee hours/FTE, funding new positions, etc.). Example sections have been provided (you may delete the example sections).

Wage & Benefits Increases (4.5%)

\$13,244

Of student staff, only the hourly employees will see an increase. We are trying to address our systemic issues with our stipend and freelance rates, but have not figured out a way to accomplish this goal.

Supplemental Funding for Operations

We've experienced large increases that affect our operations in two main areas.

1. Even though we are printing fewer copies of fewer publications, printing costs continue to increase dramatically.
2. Liability/libel insurance, which we're required to have, increased 146% this year. What had been a fairly stable 3-year policy is now 1 year. The insurance market is in turmoil.

Full Budget Overview & Justification

In this section, you will have the opportunity to explain your request in greater detail via the guiding question(s) below. You are encouraged to use graphs, charts, or other visual tools. Your goal for this section is to provide the SAF committee (and the public) with sufficient (and substantive) context and justification for the use of these funds.

1. How are expenditures distributed across the programs and/or services your unit offers? Please provide a general overview of how much spending is allocated to each category of expense, such as staffing, materials, etc., as is applicable.

The heavy majority of SAF's support pays for compensation.

2. Please give a summary elaborating on how SAF Funding has been used to support students *(Please refer to dollar amounts in this discussion when possible)*.

- a. In what ways has SAF funding been essential to supporting your unit's on-going services and role in the university? Please provide at least one specific example of a program/service.

Compensation is our largest expense, and the majority of it goes to students in one of three forms: hourly pay, stipends for (primarily) editors, and freelance. Hourly pay and stipends incur a benefit load. Freelance does not.

In the embedded spreadsheet, you can see student compensation represented as Temporary and Personal Service Contracts. The total for all student compensation, including benefits, is \$417,424, or 89% of our request.

The balance of our request could be linked directly to student activity, including our printing bill and student travel to cover away football games, and championship games of other sports. (We increasingly rely on donations to help defray the cost of travel. Joining the BIG has brought us a huge increase in travel expense.)

We don't allocate SAF funding in this way, but we could. In reality the vast majority of the director's time, and all of the newsroom adviser's and accountant's time, are spent supporting student activity.

- b. How have your unit's services and programming changed over time, and how have you adapted the use of SAF funding?

Most of our SAF funding has always been used for student compensation, and a percentage of the publisher's compensation. That hasn't changed.

What has changed dramatically is the type of content that students produce, and how it's distributed. Where we used to print a newspaper 5 days a week, now we publish online every day via our website and social media; plus newsletters three days a week. Our readership has grown as you can see on the attached graphs.

- c. Are there programs/services that SAF has funded in the past that your unit no longer provides?

No.

- d. Are you currently using your unit's allocation for new programs or services that were not originally requested as an item in your SAF budget request?

No.

- 3. What is the nature of your reserves/fund balances? For what purposes do you hold reserves? How were they accrued?** (Reserves/Fund balances are termed and considered differently in every unit. If you are unsure of what these terms mean or would like clarification on anything, please reach out and ask.)

We believe our current capital in excess of expenses is about \$110,000. We have accumulated reserves over the past few years, thanks to SAF's support, new products that have performed well, and tight hold on expenses. We expect to be able to add to this balance if things go according to plan. Fundraising to partially underwrite travel expenses has helped us build reserves.

We have reserves to provide a runway for our next director, and as a cushion against a project that does not go according to plan. They can't all be winners.

Budget Breakdown

In this section, please include a breakdown of your requested revenues/expenses for FY26 and your unit's budget for FY25.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN				
	FY26 Request	FY25 Expected	FY25 Actuals Notes	
REVENUES				
SAF Funding	\$ 468,768.00	\$ 433,772.00	N/A	
State/University Funding	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	
Self-Generated Revenue	\$ 257,250.00	\$ 245,000.00	N/A	
Grants/Subsidies	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	N/A	
Interest Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	
Other Revenue				
Total Revenue	\$ 776,018.00	\$ 728,772.00		
Change in Revenues	\$ 47,246.00	6.48%		
	FY26 Request	FY25 Expected	FY25 Actuals Notes	
EXPENSES				
Salaries & Wages:				
Classified	\$ 82,449.00	\$ 80,832.00	N/A	
Professional	\$ 109,076.40	\$ 124,152.00	Slight change to the upside for FY25, will revert back to expected in FY26. Due to leadership change.	
Graduate Appointments	\$ -	\$ -	NA	
Temporary	\$ 256,000.00	\$ 245,000.00	Cost for student staff paid hourly, and students receiving stipends, is reflected here.	
Other Salaries & Wages	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	
Total Salaries & Wages	\$ 447,525.40	\$ 449,984.00		
Retirement & Benefits:				
Classified	\$ 28,363.46	\$ 27,806.40	N/A	
Professional	\$ 32,406.60	\$ 36,885.56	N/A	
Graduate Appointments			N/A	
Temporary	\$ 52,224.00	\$ 49,980.00	Benefits for hourly and stipend staff	
Other Retirement & Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	
Total Retirement & Benefits	\$ 112,994.06	\$ 114,671.96		
Operations:				
Personal Service Contracts	\$ 109,200.00	\$ 105,000.00	Freelance pay here for writers, photographers, illustrators, etc.	
Other Contract Services	\$ 47,000.00	\$ 45,500.00	N/A	
Grants & Subsidies	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	
Travel	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 15,500.00	N/A	
Supplies			N/A	
Other Operations	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	
Total Operations	\$ 173,700.00	\$ 166,000.00		
Total Expenses	\$ 734,219.46	\$ 730,655.96		
Change in Expenses	\$ 3,563.50	0.49%		
Revenue - Expenses	\$ 41,798.54	\$ (1,883.96)		

Information on Other Revenues:

If you have other sources of revenue, please give an overview of those anticipated revenues (including new sources) and how you expect them to change in the coming years. If relevant, include a breakdown of services & positions funded by SAF vs other revenues.

The Daily Fund for Excellence is our discretionary fund. We consistently ask for donations on our website. We run campaigns to help with specific projects/events, such as financial help for reporters and Daily staff members who covered the protests and encampment last spring, as a rivalry match with The Daily Emerald at the University of Oregon, and last winter, to cover the Sugar Bowl and College Football Playoffs. We're getting more efficient at this, along with superb help from the advancement professionals within Student Life.

We'll continue these efforts.

Additional Questions

1.

- a. How would you adjust your operations if you did not receive your full request? Please elaborate on the potential impact on staffing and services.

We are grateful for SAF and STF's generous support. We work hard to provide valuable learning and employment opportunities for students. Our metrics show our readers and listeners rely on us for news, information, and entertainment. We tend to be conservative in our requests, and have received nearly everything we requested.

If we were not fully funded, we would employ fewer students. There is nothing else to trim.

- b. What if you received an amount less than your FY25 allocation?

We would have to make some very hard choices, depending on how large the shortfall would be, especially if we were unable to generate sufficient advertising revenue or donor support to keep us whole. We were projecting a deficit for last year, but finished stronger than we expected. All we can do is strategically innovate with purpose, focus on our mission, and pay attention to costs.

- c. **What student services/programs are integral to your mission that you would not cut even if you received an amount less than your FY25 allocation?**

We'd keep grinding away on pretty much everything.

2. If financial resources were not a restriction, what is one program/service your unit would add/expand on to enhance students' experience at the University?

We would address our structural pay issues. Our stipends are so low that most students have other jobs, or cannot afford to work at The Daily. More equitable pay would help us attract a broader range of students.

3. How does your unit ensure that student fees do not subsidize non-student, academic, research, and other costs that are the primary responsibility of the University and its colleges?

Our only focus is student media. We are not involved in other activities.

4. How are you utilizing the SAF logo? In what ways do you spread awareness of your affiliation with SAF?

The SAF and STF logos appear in a prominent location in every print product. We'll be able to display it more effectively on the new dailyuw.com, which will debut in later January.

5. If you are projecting a net deficit for FY26, please provide additional context for this net deficit (e.g. reallocation of carryover funds from previous fiscal years, extraordinary expenses necessary to meet operational needs, etc.).
(Optional – Answer “N/A” if not relevant to your unit)

NA

6. When projecting out 1-3 fiscal years, what challenges, if any, do you foresee for your unit? How could SAF be helpful in navigating these challenges?
(Optional – Answer “N/A” if not relevant to your unit)

Student compensation will continue to be a challenge. If the UW could see its way to reduce or eliminate much of the benefit load rate on student pay, we'd be able to make significant progress on pay inequities in the newsroom. SAF and ASUW/GPSS could be hugely beneficial in lobbying the UW to fix this problem.

Another challenge is the uncertainty and cost of libel/liability insurance. It's possible the entire insurance market would collapse, at least in the near term. And yet, the UW requires that we carry it. This is beyond SAF's influence, but it's a huge risk to our continued operations.