

DEPAUW STUDENT GOVERNMENT

A White Paper Concerning DePauw Student Government Executive Pay *White Paper No. 3*

Introduction:

According to the DePauw Student Government Constitution, the mission of DePauw Student Government is to “*act as the chief advocate for the students of DePauw University, to implement any and all things possible to improve the quality of the DePauw University experience, [and] to affect positive change through encouraged involvement and communication with the student body, administration, and faculty.*”

Over the last two decades, DePauw Student Government (DSG) has undergone an incredible transformation. While DSG has always sought to improve the university experience for all DePauw students, the individual commitment demonstrated by each student representative has grown with time. Each administration has worked to correct the mistakes of administrations past, while forging ahead to both stabilize the internal functions of the organization and improve services offered to the student body. While it is true that all members of the DePauw community benefit from a strong and involved student government, it must be acknowledged that the increased capacity of DSG to champion students’ concerns has not come without a cost. As DSG has become more ambitious in its agenda setting, tackling and engaging more directly with campus concerns, so too has the workload, especially of the executive board, directly increased as a result.

As members of DePauw Student Government, we recognize the importance of servant leadership. It is an honor to serve DePauw’s students and we are proud that all members of the organization buy in to the principles we so strongly try to adhere to. For members of DSG, the reward has never been tied to recognition or merit pay, but rather, to the feeling of a job well done. There is no better satisfaction than knowing that you helped solve a problem and contributed directly to the increased happiness of a peer. In an ideal world, knowing that you made a difference is reward enough. However, this is, of course, not the world we live in. This white paper, with unanimous consent of the DePauw Student Government Executive Board, outlines a proposal for executive pay and argues for the establishment of a tiered compensation structure for future DSG Executive Board members.

Executive Compensation Proposal

If approved by the DePauw University student body, the Executive Board of DePauw Student Government would receive the following stipend amounts per semester:

Externally Elected Positions

President:	\$500
Vice President:	\$500

Vice President of Student Life:	\$400
Vice President of Academic Life:	\$400
Vice President of Community Relations:	\$400
Vice President of Allocations:	\$400

Internally Elected Positions

Director of Public Relations:	\$300
Parliamentarian	\$300
Secretary	\$300

At this time, the executive board is endorsing a tiered compensation structure. We believe that a tiered structure best aligns with the actual time commitment of each position. The structure also delineates between externally and internally elected positions. External elections take place in April of each year and are open to the general student body. Internal elections take place during the May assembly meeting each year and are open to all student representatives of campus organizations and class senators. Executive Board members would receive monthly stipend checks throughout the semester, in line with the payment systems of other organizations such as the First Year Mentor Program. To best maintain the neutrality of DePauw Student Government, Executive Board members will be paid out of the Student Activity Fee budget. Total accumulated funds available to student organizations in the 2016-2017 school year will total approximately \$600,000. The payment of executive board members for the year would constitute \$7,000 or 1.17% of this budget. The VP of Allocations is confident that there is room enough in the budget to account for executive pay without detracting from the monetary needs of other student organizations.

There are, of course, other payment systems that DSG could pursue. Other options explored include a combination of university stipends, work-study eligibility, and university scholarships. We have found that each of these options has significant downsides. In the case of university scholarships, executive board members who already receive the maximum award DePauw will give based upon a student's perceived need would simply have grant award money swapped for

the DSG scholarship. Thus, this proposal could help members of DSG who do not receive significant aid, but would not assist those who do.

Similarly, one way to compensate executive board officers would be to simply make DSG related work work-study eligible. Any DSG executive board member who was also work-study eligible would then be able to count their hours spent working on items for DSG as work-study hours. Members of the executive board who are not work-study eligible would simply continue working uncompensated. We believe that this policy would generate sharp divides among the executive board. Like the previously listed proposal, only some executive board members would benefit. In this case, the winners would be those board members with work-study eligibility.

A final option considered was petitioning the university to pay DSG Board Members a stipend through one of its offices. This is one way tutors, First Year Mentors, Resident Assistants, Admissions Representatives, and Intercultural Conversation Facilitators are paid. While this option works great for these programs, we do not believe that paying DSG Board Members through the university is in the best interest of the organization or the student body. If DSG Executive Board Members were paid through the university, then members would be required to act as agents for the university. More specifically, the agency that DSG currently has to act in the best interest of students alone would be significantly eroded. If DSG members were to pursue an action disliked by the university, the university could simply threaten to end executive pay in an effort to coerce DSG board members to endorse the university's agenda. While some could argue that this threat of coercion exists currently to some extent based on the nature of the student leader-university dynamic, we believe that this threat is currently minimal. Today, DSG is able to represent students first because the organization is attached only loosely to the university. Thus, in order to maintain this neutrality, we strongly suggest that executive officers be paid out of the Student Activity Fee budget. In doing so, DSG executive officers truly become servants on behalf of the students. Students, as always entitled to, would continue to have the ability to remove executive officers deemed incompetent of adhering to all duties and responsibilities. Executive pay generates higher stakes for all parties involved, increasing the commitment of executive board members.

Arguments in Favor of Executive Pay

Participation in DSG has a chronically low retention and promotion rate in all chambers. Every year the organization loses talented members and finds itself back to square one, taking a step back to regroup before embarking ahead. While we certainly aspire to having a certain number of new perspectives and voices in the DSG sphere each year, annually replacing over two-thirds of the membership generates immense productivity losses. Productivity losses are particularly high at the executive board level as few underclassmen in the Senate Chamber, Representatives

Chamber, or Allocations Board elect to use their DSG experience to run for a position on the executive board. Individuals with previous DSG involvement are better able to make an immediate impact in their executive board position while new-comers face a steep learning curve. There are several reasons why DSG loses underclassmen talent each year. Some students take a leave of absence from DSG to focus on their academics. Some leave because they simply cannot fully commit to their coursework, DSG, and their campus jobs. Others leave because competing campus leadership programs pay student participants. And some participants leave because the workload far exceeds the reward. Nonetheless, we find the latter reasons particularly concerning.

The section below outlines arguments in favor of executive pay. The Executive Board of DePauw Student Government endorses a tiered compensation structure because it increases access to participation in DePauw Student Government at the highest level, assists DSG in maintaining a competitive advantage with other student leadership opportunities available on campus, and aligns with the generally accepted status-quo of paid student government leadership at other colleges and universities.

Increasing Opportunity and Access

Over the past three decades, DePauw has made a considerable commitment to increasing collegiate access to students from all backgrounds. Today, the university boasts wide-ranging socio-economic diversity made available through generous merit scholarships and need-based grants. While such scholarships and grants make it more feasible for students to attend DePauw, many students struggle to cover daily expenses. Of these students, most are employed through the work-study program, occasionally seeking additional employment through local businesses. While students who work while attending school often improve their time-management skills, many are unable to fully participate in the plethora of extracurricular activities offered by the university. Students who fail to meaningfully participate in campus leadership are often at a disadvantage when it comes time to interview for jobs and internships. Although recruiters are sympathetic to students who work while attending school, these students still appear at a disadvantage. We believe that installing executive pay can help make the DSG Executive Board a fantastic leadership opportunity available to all students.

If DSG Executive Board members were paid, students who are work study eligible would be able to both participate in a university-sponsored work-study and DSG. No longer would they have to choose an often redundant, mindless campus job over the challenging work offered within DSG. Those who typically do not work their fully allotted hours to begin with might choose to substitute their work-study job with their involvement on the DSG Executive Board. Either way, all students would benefit from increased access to the board. Improving access to the DSG Executive Board also yields significant benefits to the organization and student body. Improving

access to the DSG Executive Board can help improve the diversity of the board, allowing for new perspectives to aid in decision-making and an increased ability to ensure that all student voices are being accounted for. To reiterate the importance of access, we have outlined the weekly time commitment of each position. These totals include only the time spent in meetings. Many of these totals double if one adds in the amount of preparation required to effectively contribute at all meetings:

Compilation of Weekly Meeting Hours by Position:

President:	10.75 hours
Vice President:	9 hours
Vice President of Student Life:	5 hours
Vice President of Academic Life:	3.75 hours
Vice President of Community Relations:	3.75 hours
Vice President of Allocations:	5.5 hours
Director of Public Relations:	1.25 hours
Parliamentarian:	3 hours
Secretary:	2.25 hours

As one can see, involvement in DSG requires a significant time commitment, one that simply is unattainable for work-study eligible students, especially if one takes into the account the amount of preparation required to successfully contribute to these meetings. If we are going to continue ensuring that participation in student government at the highest levels is available to all students, regardless of their financial background, we must pay DSG Executive Board Members.

Increasing DePauw Student Government’s Competitive Advantage

We often forget how lucky we are, as a small liberal arts college, to offer close to 150 clubs and organizations for students to become a part of. Offering so many organizations ensures that students will find their niche while allowing for all to learn invaluable leadership skills. While offering numerous opportunities to build leadership skills is a quintessential part of the DePauw experience, these opportunities often breed competition. DePauw Student Government is thus one such outlet to build important leadership skills, but it is far from the only outlet. At DePauw, several other organizations pay student leaders. After the freshman year, many students elect to become student tour guides, academic tutors, First-Year Mentors, Resident Assistants, ICCFs, fraternity and sorority executive board members, and/or members of the executive board for student media outlets such as The DePauw, WGRE, and D3TV. All of these leadership opportunities have one thing in common: they pay students for their hard work. While DSG is

distinctly unique from these organizations, its prestige is not yet great enough to stop students from choosing one of these paid leadership opportunities over participation in DePauw Student Government. Some might object that students who pursue paid opportunities over DSG leadership are students who are not of the moral character required of DSG members to begin with. The current DSG Executive Board disagrees with this opinion. We strongly believe that compensation will not fundamentally change who runs for a DSG Executive Board position. At the end of the day, we believe that DSG Executive Board members still do significantly more work than the executive board members of many of the other paid student organizations. Under the proposed compensation structure, many of the executive board members, especially at the VP level, will make \$1-3 an hour, hardly an amount most students would find incredibly attractive. To better demonstrate the necessity of paying DSG Executive officers to better compete for talent with other student organizations, we have pulled the compensation structures of other student organizations for comparison:

Compensation Structure of Other Campus Leadership Opportunities

1. DePauw First Year Mentor Program

First-Year Mentors:	\$250 per semester
Peer Mentors:	\$500 per semester

2. Intercultural Conversation Facilitator Program

Facilitator:	\$125 per semester
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3. The DePauw

Editor in Chief:	\$360 per semester
Business Manager:	\$360 per semester
Managing Editor:	\$300 per semester
Chief Copy Editor:	\$200 per semester
Assistant Copy Editor:	\$100 per semester
News Editor (2):	\$100 per semester
Sports Editor:	\$100 per semester

4. Academic Resource Tutors

Tutor	\$7.25-\$10/hr at 2-10 hours per week
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5. Admissions Tour Guide or Intern

Tour Guide	\$7.25/hr
Senior Intern	\$10/hr at approximately 10 hours per week

6. D3TV Board of Directors

General Manager:	\$775 per semester
Exec. Director of Programming:	\$675 per semester
Director of Programming (2):	\$600 per semester
Director of Web Programming:	\$600 per semester
Scheduling & Operations (2):	\$600 per semester
Director of Marketing:	\$600 per semester
Assistant Director of Marketing:	\$450 per semester
Alumni Outreach/Events Coord.:	\$600 per semester
News Director:	\$625 per semester
Sports Director:	\$625 per semester
Director of Finance:	\$500 per semester
Assistant New Director:	\$450 per semester
Assistant Sports Director:	\$450 per semester
Web Director:	\$600 per semester
Internal Advertising:	\$425 per semester
Assistant Director of PR:	\$425 per semester

The list above is not an exhaustive list of paid campus leadership opportunities, but is a useful source of information for the basis of comparison. While some of these positions entail a larger time commitment than time spent as members of the DSG executive board, many of them do not. Thus, the proposed rates offered by the current executive board are very conservative and are clearly within the bounds of the going rates. Given that the proposed rates fall below those of other campus leadership opportunities, if a student truly only pursued a leadership opportunity for the compensation, they would not logically choose DSG. Thus, while compensation is being proposed to better compete with other organizations, we still maintain that only those who truly believe in the mission of Depauw Student Government will run for executive office because the opportunity costs still favor other campus organizations.

Executive Pay: Reinforcing DSG's Mission

While a comparatively weak argument for executive pay, it is important to recognize that executive pay is a widely accepted practice at other colleges and universities. According to the American Student Government Association, "77% of schools nationwide offer some sort of compensation" (ASGA Online Webpage). Ten years ago, this number was 71% (ASGA Online Webpage). Clearly, the overwhelming trend is to pay student government officers. Installing executive pay is an idea that was suggested and endorsed by a group of senior communication majors who completed an external communication audit of DSG. The audit states,

“When analyzing the data from both the interviews and surveys, it became apparent that members of DePauw Student Government dedicate a substantial amount of time to their positions. While most members have a clear passion for serving on the Council, often times the commitment forces people to only serve one term. However, there are organizations on DePauw’s campus that provide monetary incentives for their members to serve in such positions. In the grand scheme of things when you consider the time commitment and degree of responsibilities associated with serving on DSG, one can’t help but question why our government representatives aren’t monetarily rewarded as well. With an incentive, retention rates will likely increase and members will be recognized for their hard work.”

Members of the audit team fully believe that DSG can better serve students if members are paid. If members of the executive board are paid, then there is lesser incentive to join additional student organizations, granting executive board members more time to commit to their responsibilities. Furthermore, members will feel a greater sense of pride and accomplishment in what they do, enhancing the DSG brand, and remaining in the organization, even when the going gets tough.

To keep matters in perspective, the following list is a study of some of the compensation structures of peer institutions. While not all peer institutions compensate their executive offices, we found that all outstanding student government organizations do.

Institution	Pay Structure
Grinnell	11 person cabinet paid for 20 hours per week at \$8.50/hr
Antioch (Ohio)	President- \$6600 annual stipend Secretary & Treasurer- \$2000 annual stipend Student Reps (2)- \$1200 annual stipend
Knox College	10 positions, \$600 annual stipend
St. Olaf	14 positions at \$2000 annual stipend 2 positions at \$1000 annual stipend

Conclusion

It is the mission of DePauw Student Government executive members to create a more prosperous and cohesive community. At its core, executive board members are some of the most dedicated student servants on campus. As elected campus leaders, it is their duty to field student concerns and act as a collective voice for students. We strongly believe that the current system prohibits the participation of all members of the student body in DSG. In order to better enable access to the organization, increase the organization's competitive position among other campus leadership opportunities, and more directly reflect the purpose of representative democracy, we believe that a tiered compensation structure must be implemented for the DePauw Student Government executive board. It is our hope that the compensation of executive board members will encourage healthy competition in upcoming elections and encourage our most qualified campus leaders to participate in our campus's arguably most important student leadership organization. It is with confidence that the current DePauw Student Government executive board unanimously endorses compensation for future executive board members, fully believing that such a change will only bring direct benefit to the DePauw student experience.

Motioned by:
Senator Signature:

Seconded by:
Representative Signature:

Aye _____

Aye _____

Nay _____

Nay _____

Abstain _____

Abstain _____

Attested by:

(Secretary)

Approved by:

(President)

(Executive Vice President)

Date of Resolution Final Draft: 2/21/16