Student Organization Finances
Advisor Resource Guide

LAWSON UNITS & ACCOUNTING

Lawson is the system that the college uses to manage budgets. As an advisor of a registered student organization, you, in addition to specified members of your organization's executive team, have access to Lawson and the various reports that can be run within Lawson.

Upon recognition, each student organization is assigned a Lawson unit number which is used to connect the organization with their available funds. Unit numbers are five digits long and start with 91 or 92.

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company   *unit*   *account*

Lawson can run a number of reports. In general, we find that the Year-to-Date Transaction report and the Year-to-Date Budget Varience report to be most beneficial when reviewing organization expenses and deposits.

Student organization members will need to know their Lawson account information for a number of procedures. We have a list of Lawson numbers in the OSA in case students forget. Additionally, professional staff in the OSA have access to all student organization accounts incase questions arise.

NOTE: Lawson does take awhile to post charges and credits to an organization's account. It may be helpful for organization treasurers to keep their own financial records. Year-to-Date transactions can be downloaded as an Excel file directly from Lawson to create/update personal financial records.

COMMON ACCOUNT CODES
- 39100: Beginning Balance - *Balance at the beginning of the year*
- 46500: E&G misc. revenue sources - *Most account credits*
- 62000: General Supplies & Materials - *Most organization purchases*
- 63500: Copy charge - Print Center - *Organization print charges*
- 67400: Conference & registration fees - *Charges for conferences*
- 71800: Misc. nonacad contract service - *Contract fees for outside talent*
- 72100: Meals on-campus - *Food purchases at the Cage or Pause*
- 72200: Catering-St. Olaf food service - *Bon Appétit catering charges*
- 99400: Correcting intra-co transfer - *Deposits from funding branches/transfers*

Additional account codes can be found on the Finance Office website

FINANCIAL STANDING

In order to remain active on campus, student organizations must maintain good financial standing. Organizations are placed on probation if they enter the red. If an organization We advise student leaders to review their Lawson accounts regularly to make informed financial decisions to avoid overspending. As an advisor, your assistance in providing guidance to your organizational leadership on financial matters is greatly appreciated.

CREDIT CARDS

The Office of Student Activities has a number of credit cards that members of your student organization can check-out. In order to check-out credit cards, students must follow a number of steps.

1. **Complete the financial training**. This can be organized in the OSA by the SGA Chief Financial Officer.

2. Check-out a credit card and **fill out the form**, listing the unit number and additional information.

3. Go shopping within 48 hours and obtain **an itemized receipt for all items purchased**.

4. When done, return the card to the OSA to **complete the form and turn in the receipt**.

Credit cards cannot be registered to accounts that are used to automatically pay annual fees or used to pay Venmo charges. Credit cards cannot be used on campus at the Bookstore, the Pause, or Bon Appétit locations. Student organizations will need to use a department card for on-campus purchases.

TAX EXEMPTION

St. Olaf College is a tax exempt entity in the state of Minnesota. Our tax exempt number is **20133**.

When making organization purchases, it is important that students inform cashiers for in-person purchases or contacting customer service representatives for online purchases to ensure tax is not paid. There are a few exceptions to our status. Services such as prepared meals and lodging can be taxed. A general rule is that items cannot be taxed.

Each credit card pouch includes a number of tax exemption cards, one general and a number from common vendors (Cub Foods, Menards).

FINANCIAL FORMS

There are a number of financial forms that students in your organization may need to utilize. These forms and their explanations can be found on our website and paper copies can be found in the OSA. Many forms require a signature from a staff member in our office so it is often best to direct students to stop by when completing financial paperwork. Common forms include Check Requests, Cash Advances, Deposits, and Reimbursements.

ORGANIZATION FUNDING

Each funding branch of SGA has a different procedure for receiving, hearing, and approving organization funding requests. Complete informaiton about funding procedures can be found in the Student Organization Handbook or on Oleville.com.

In general, student organizations who would like to request funding for events and initiatives will need to do the following:
- Compile a detailed, itemized budget.
- Complete an online form.
- Attend a meeting of the organization's designated funding branch.

The funding branches of SGA will often ask a number of questions when organizations request funding. Prior to requesting funding, we advise student organizations to consider the following:
- What fundraising opportunities could the organization support?
- What, if any, contribution is being made by organization members?
- Are the alternative options that would decrease costs?

The majority of our student organizations fall under the purview of the Student Organizations Committee (SOC)

Many (but not all) organizations that support and celebrate historically marginalized groups fall under the Diversity Initiatives Support Committee (DISC)

Organizations that are focused on service and volunteer engagment fall under the Volunteer Network (VN)