HESA Policy for Funding Student Initiatives

Student Life Committee
Draft of February 15, 2008

(0) **Purpose.** This policy fosters a stronger student life for the Harvard Extension School in three ways.

(0a) **Broader student life.** By recognizing "Initiatives" for funding and support, this policy encourages students to organize Events and Activities as well as the Societies ("clubs") that have always been eligible for funding.

(0b) **Dependable HESA process.** By establishing a clear calendar to HESA funding with responsible decisionmakers at each step, this policy reassures students that HESA can be counted on to get to "yes" and a check when eligible Initiatives apply for funds. It is important that HESA procedures not frustrate student initiatives with slow decisions or administrative inefficiencies.

(0c) **Best practices and help.** By introducing a workshop for the Initiatives into the calendar, HESA helps the Initiatives toward best practices and can help to save the most valued Initiatives when they are in trouble. While HESA does not concern itself with the day-to-day affairs of other organizations, it can help them to succeed as an independent voice for healthy ways of leading and collaborating.

(1) **Initiatives.** The student life that HESA fosters in the Extension School is a blend of several sorts of collaborations that are here called "Initiatives." They are generally of three types--

*Events* (e.g. job fairs, conferences, workshops, juried competitions) that have an organizer.

*Activities* (e.g. athletic teams, publications, performance groups) that have an organizer, and often an unusual activity-based structure.

*Societies* (e.g. social clubs, pre-professional societies, student chapters of political, scientific or professional societies) that have charters similar to the template provided by HESA, and are often topic based.

(1b) Initiatives may be academic or non-academic in nature.

(1c) Initiatives are encouraged to seek other resources at Harvard, and to collaborate with Harvard affiliates and student organizations of nearby universities.

(2) **Earmarks.** The Board of HESA funds eligible student Initiatives with "earmarks" or line items in its own budget for the Fall and Spring semesters.

(2a) Earmarks are grants of HESA funds that are disbursed by the Treasurer, and tracked in the HESA budget.

(2b) Earmarks are disbursed for expenses allowed in the Harvard University Handbook for Student Organizations, unless a dean makes an exception for the disbursement.
One earmark is given for each semester that the Initiative will be active in a budget year.

The President may fund summer activities of funded Initiatives, or the first expenses of new Initiatives that have never been funded before from a Summer Discretionary Fund.

(2) **Eligibility.** An initiative is eligible for HESA funding if it—

Benefits HES degree, certificate, or diploma candidates (See HESA Constitution, Article I, Section 3).

Has an HES student or alumnus as a leader.

Complies with Federal and state laws and Harvard rules for student organizations.

Participates in the HESA funding process in good faith.

(2a) Initiatives that meet these criteria are eligible for HESA earmarks even if they include affiliates of other Harvard schools, or MIT, or other universities, or the local community. However, HESA does not fund the variable cost of participation for persons not affiliated with HES.

(2b) If an eligible initiative does not participate in the scoring and earmarking process described below, then it may be funded by the President from the Summer Discretionary Fund.

(3) **Allocation process.** HESA allocates earmarks to Initiatives in these steps.

(3a) The Board allocates a part of its budget to Initiatives.

(3b) On the first Sunday in April, the Student Life Committee meets with the leaders of student Initiatives in a workshop to verify their eligibility, receive their requests for funds, and score their health and contribution to HES students against standard criteria.

(3c) The Student Life Committee approves proposed earmarks for the participating Initiatives.

(3d) The Chair of the Student Life Committee posts each Initiative's score and proposed earmarks for the Fall, Spring, and if applicable, the Summer to the HESA website.

(3e) The Board approves the earmarks for each Initiative.

(3f) The earmarks are posted to the website before the Reading Period preceding the Spring Final Exams.

(3g) After June 1, Initiatives may receive variances from the approved earmark of up to 10% from the President for stated and reasonable cause, with notice to the Board.

(4) **Disbursements.** HESA disburses earmarked funds to Initiatives in these steps.

(4a) To each Initiative the Treasurer disburses a standard "start-up $200" or, in exceptional circumstances, another amount approved by the President.

(4b) The Treasurer fulfills subsequent requests for disbursements, if they are accompanied by an expense report that, in his or her judgment, shows that the previous disbursements have been spent as
allocated.

(4c) The Treasurer disburses funds earmarked for the Fall in the Fall, for the Spring in the Spring.

(4d) The President may approve exceptions to 4a, 4b, and 4c.

(4e) In the event that unforeseen expenses or revenue shortfalls require a reduction in the amounts of earmarks, the Executive Committee will approve new earmarks for all Initiatives.

(5) Reporting. Disbursements in each month are posted in a "budget vs actual" statement on the HESA website at the end of the month.

(5a) No figures for a current month are posted.

(5b) Information about disbursements in the current month is given orally to the Board in any meeting that may be held.