



Science Initiative Fund Operating Policy

Established 2011 (Revised 2018)

Preamble

The Academic Science Fund (ASF) was a project initiated by the McMaster Science Society (MSS) in 2011, in response to an increasing need to renew and update services related to the undergraduate science experience. Using similar funds at McMaster as a model, such as the McMaster Laboratory Advancement Benefaction (macLAB) in the Faculty of Engineering, a dedicated group of students worked with the administration to establish a program for collecting contributions from all full-time students enrolled in the Faculty of Science. This financial contribution is invested in a trust fund in order to generate funds each year, and will be distributed to students, staff and faculty in Science for approved projects.

The students agreed to support the ASF, and the first installment was distributed in 2011/12. Starting in 2016, the Academic Science Fund is to be known as the Science Initiative Fund (SIF) and continued its work of empowering students who had innovative ways of bettering the Faculty of Science. The SIF Board of Directors (formally, known as the Academic Science Fund Committee) administering the fund is composed of students and faculty. This document serves as a binding term of reference for the Board to guide their activities and decisions.

The SIF represents the hard work and foresight of a student body committed to ensuring the quality of their education at McMaster and the education of future McMaster science students. Without their support, this project would not have been possible. Special thanks to the Associate Dean of Science for ongoing support and guidance in the implementation of this project.

Purpose of the Fund

The purpose of the Science Initiative Fund (SIF) is to support student led initiatives dedicated towards improving the undergraduate experience for Science students at McMaster University. Proposals can include but are not limited to the improvement of laboratory facilities, non-annual student conferences, student life enhancement projects etc.

The funding application form will follow a set criteria that is applicable to both academic and student life projects. **Academic projects**, focusing on initiatives that provide more academic resources for Science students (ex. Laboratory facilities, academic student conferences, etc) will comprise the first group, while **Student Life projects** that focus on enhancing student life experiences, will form the second sector of the evaluation. Both categories can include both short term and long term projects. Allocation of funds between these two general categories will be dependent upon the number of applications received and the overall quality of proposals submitted for both categories. Academic projects will require the endorsement by a faculty member, while student life projects may require a consultant relevant to the project upon the discretion and request from the SIF Co-Directors.

Requests that will not be funded by the SIF include and are not limited to: travel expenses, accommodations, food and refreshments, individual wages, previously funded projects by the SIF (unless a novel and enriching experience is added), applications that benefit a limited number of students, and social events.

1 Board of Directors

1.1 The Board of Directors shall consist of the following members:

- 1.1.1 Two (2) SIF Co-Directors, hired from the general student membership
- 1.1.2 Deputy Chair: McMaster Science Society VP Finance
- 1.1.3 Dean of Science, or designate from the Office of the Dean of Science
- 1.1.4 McMaster Science Society Internal Finance Officer
- 1.1.5 Three (3) faculty representatives selected by the SIF Co-Directors.

2 Co-Director Selection

- 2.1 All positions will serve a term beginning May 1st and ending April 30st of the following year.
- 2.2 Application forms for the positions will be made available to all undergraduate students science students through appropriate means in March.
- 2.3 The SIF Co-Directors will be chosen by a hiring committee consisting of:
 - Outgoing SIF CO-Directors
 - Outgoing VP Finance
 - Incoming VP Finance
- 2.4 Candidates must be enrolled in full time (18 or more units) during the Fall/Winter academic year in the Faculty of Science at McMaster University.
- 2.5 The SIF Co-Directors will be chosen by March 31st.

3. Faculty Representative Selection

- 3.1 The three (3) Faculty Representative positions will be appointed by the SIF Co-Directors

4. Responsibilities and Procedures of Board of Directors

- 4.1. There shall be at least two (2) meetings of the Board of Directors per year.
- 4.2. The Board will be responsible for keeping students, staff and faculty informed of submission deadlines, availability of application forms and SIF bylaws.

- 4.3. Each member of the Board of Directors will be responsible for individually scoring and reviewing each application that is submitted. Scores are to be submitted a week in advance before the allocation meeting.
 - 4.4. If any individual is part of the Board of Directors and is a faculty endorser, project consultant or student applicant for a project, they must abstain from the evaluation and discussion of the application.
5. Responsibilities of the Co-Directors
- 5.1. The Co-Directors will call and preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors.
 - 5.2. The Co-Directors will call for proposals, receive all application forms, and prepare documents for review.
 - 5.3. The Co-Directors will decide on a feedback deadline that is at least 2 weeks in advance of the final deadline.
 - 5.4. The final deadline for Term 1 must be no later than the last day of exams. The final deadline for Term 2 must be no later than March 15.
 - 5.5. The allocation meeting for the Board of Directors must be held before March 31st for Term 2 applications.
 - 5.6. The Co-Directors will evaluate the proposals submitted by the feedback deadline.
 - 5.7. The Co-Directors will evaluate and propose changes to the Bylaw and Fund Procedures.
 - 5.8. Changes to the Bylaws will require the approval of the McMaster Science Society Internal Operations Officer before being proposed to the McMaster Science Society Executive for voting. Changes to the Bylaws will be passed by a majority vote of the McMaster Science Society Executive Board.
 - 5.9. The Co-Directors will monitor previously funded projects.
6. Responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Administration
- 6.1. The Director of Finance and Administration, or the financial coordinator of the Dean of Science Office, will administer funds to successful applicants as deemed by the Board of Directors with approval of the SIF Co-Directors.
7. Administration of Funds
- 7.1. The SIF trust fund will be maximized at \$35,000 through funding from the MSS budget at the start of each academic year, of which only \$30,000 is to be distributed as funding to awardees.
 - 7.2. McMaster University will deposit funds in the designated trust fund.
 - 7.3. The principle of the trust fund will be available for the disbursement by the Board of Directors as per McMaster University Trust Fund guidelines.
 - 7.4. The fund will be administered by the Faculty of Science Director of Administration with confirmation from the SIF Co-directors.
 - 7.4.1. Awardees must claim funding within one year of receiving the acceptance letter.
 - 7.4.2. Awardees can be reimbursed through a Chartfield account or through a cheque.
 - 7.5. Up to 1% of the funding amount to be distributed may be used by the Board of Directors for the purpose of plaques and any other miscellaneous fees associated with

the administration of the fund. Any administration cost must be agreed upon by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

8. Eligibility of Funds

- 8.1. Only full time undergraduate Science students are eligible to apply for SIF.

9. Distribution of Funds

- 9.1. The amount of funding distributed between the categories will depend on the number of applications received under each category. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

9.2. Academic Projects

- 9.2.1. Defined as projects, which provide academic resources for undergraduate students within the Faculty of Science.
- 9.2.2. A Faculty sponsor is required to correspond with the applicant in order for a submitted application to be considered for funding.
- 9.2.3. Aside from the required signature of the aforementioned sponsor, a letter outlining the Faculty collaboration is recommended, but is optional.
- 9.2.4. Applications regarding facility equipment are eligible for funding.
- 9.2.5. However, to be considered, the Faculty or relevant Department must contribute a minimum of 50% of the equipment cost.
- 9.2.6. Previously funded projects are eligible to apply for funding for up to 3 years, granted a novel, enriching experience is added for each application.

9.3. Short-Term Projects

- 9.3.1. Defined as projects whose duration of effect will last less than twelve (12) months;
- 9.3.2. Short-term projects will be reviewed two (2) times per academic year, with specific deadlines set by the Board of Directors;
- 9.3.3. All potential parties involved in the submitted project must be notified of the application process at least one (1) month prior to deadlines;
- 9.3.4. Successful applicants are required to send a Completed Project Report to the Board of Directors by December 15 of the following year to notify and ensure proper use of the funds.

9.4. Long-Term Projects

- 9.4.1. Defined as projects whose duration of effect will last twelve (12) months or greater;
- 9.4.2. Long-term projects will be reviewed two (2) times per academic year, with specific deadlines set by the Board of Directors;
- 9.4.3. All potential parties of the submitted project must be notified of the application process at least one (1) month prior to deadlines;
- 9.4.4. Successful applicants are required to submit an annual Progress Report to the Board of Directors by December 15 of the following year until the project has been deemed completed.

9.5. Student Life Projects

- 9.5.1. Defined as projects that contribute to the enhancement of student life for undergraduate students enrolled within the Faculty of Science;

- 9.5.2. A **project consultant** is required to correspond with the applicant in order for a submitted application to be considered for funding. This “project consultant” can be a student, member of a relevant Faculty or someone working at the Faculty services of McMaster University;
- 9.5.3. Food costs, transportation, alcohol, and wages are not eligible for funding.
- 9.5.4. Events and projects organized by the McMaster Science Society and sub-societies are ineligible for SIF funding (ex. MSS Musical, I Love Science Day, Ultimate Arts Show, etc).
- 9.5.5. Honorariums cannot exceed 10% of total SIF funding request (up to discretion of the SIF directors)
- 9.5.6. Applicants that apply for funding for fundraisers are eligible to apply for advertising and promotional expenses only.
- 9.5.7. Student Life projects will be reviewed two (2) times per academic year, with specific deadlines set by the Board of Directors
- 9.5.8. All potential parties of the submitted project must be notified of the application process at least one (1) month prior to deadlines
- 9.5.9. Successful applicants are required to submit an annual Progress Report to the Board of Directors by December 15 of the following year until the project has been deemed completed.

10. Improper Use of Allocated Funding

- 10.1. Applicant(s) and faculty endorser(s) of a project where funds are improperly managed will go under an internal review conducted by the SIF Co-Directors, MSS President and MSS VP Finance to hear the applicant's case.
- 10.2. A decision will be made after all parties involved have discussed the matter at hand. The applicant will be informed of the decision in 2 weeks from the time of the applicant internal review.
- 10.3. Depending on the severity of the case, applicants and endorser(s) of a project may be subjected to a SIF probation lasting between 2 to 4 academic years.
- 10.4. Applicant(s) and faculty endorser(s) on SIF probation will be prevented from applying to the SIF for the academic year.

11. Fund Sustainability

- 11.1. Any unused funds from the SIF budget will remain in the trust fund at the end of each academic year for use in the following year, at the discretion of the Board.
- 11.2. If the Board of Directors decides not to allot the full amount of funds available in a given year, the remaining funds will be reallocated to the total amount of funds available for the following year

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