



RICE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Blanket Tax Standing Committee 2015-2016
Report on Review of New Blanket Tax Application
Rice Catalyst

Abstract

Rice Catalyst is a registered student organization that showcases student perspectives on popular science topics and undergraduate research. We're committed to fostering interdisciplinary interest in research and scientific writing and dialogue at Rice. The Blanket Tax Committee has reviewed Rice Catalyst's application and recommends the Student Senate **approve** Rice Catalyst's request for subsidiary status.

Evaluation

X.A.4.c and X.A.4.e of the Student Association Bylaws establishes criteria for the Blanket Tax Standing Committee to consider when reviewing an application for the creation of a new blanket tax. The Committee must find that an organization's proposal satisfies all of the criteria in order to recommend approval of that proposal. The Committee presents its findings with regard to each criterion below.

1. Would the requested funds benefit the student body and the Rice community?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that the requested funds would benefit all of the student body and the Rice community. As a research oriented university, the committee recognizes that research is a big part of campus academic life. Rice Catalyst seeks to invest in fostering such dialogue through its annual publication and TedX event.

2. Would the requested funds contribute to the organization's mission, purpose, and goals?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds the funds will contribute to the organization's mission, purpose and goals by financially supporting the funding of their annual publication and their annual TedX event.

3. Does the organization have a strong financial need?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that Rice Catalyst has a strong financial need.

4. Have all other reasonable means of acquiring funding been exhausted?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that Rice Catalyst has exhausted most means of acquiring funds.

5. Is the organization's financial need long-term and annual?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that Rice Catalyst's financial need is long-term and annual as undergraduate research is an important aspect of college student life.

6. Proper Budgeting

The Blanket Tax Committee finds Rice Catalyst's budgeting appropriate, reasonable, and well presented

Conclusion

As thoroughly discussed above, the Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that the Rice Catalyst proposal to be a subsidiary organization with access to blanket tax funds does satisfy all of the review criteria. This alone is sufficient for a recommendation to **APPROVE** the proposal.

As such, formally, The Student Association Blanket Tax Standing Committee for the 2015-2016 academic year hereby recommends that the Student Senate **APPROVE** Rice Catalyst.

Respectfully submitted, Griffin Thomas
Acting Chair, Blanket Tax Standing Committee

Rice Catalyst

Year Founded: 2008

Editors In-Chief: Teja Dasari (tkd5@rice.edu) & Ajay Subramanian (aks11@rice.edu)

Treasurer: Sai Chilakapati (scc4@rice.edu)

Advisor: Dr. Daniel Wagner (dswagner@rice.edu)

of Active Members: ~80

Who we are?

Catalyst, the Undergraduate Science Research Journal at Rice, showcases student perspectives on popular science topics and undergraduate research. We're committed to fostering interdisciplinary interest in scientific writing and dialogue at Rice. We invest in our writers, editors, and designers to educate and engage a broad audience.

Science needs to be accessible and engaging to captivate and inform a wider American public that is often inundated with misinformation, junk news, and conflicting opinions on key issues. Just from this year's publication, you can find a review on the science of Ebola transmission, an article on recycled water in the American West, and a research paper exploring the mechanics of the CRISPR/Cas9 system. In addition to our print publication, *Catalyst* just launched a brand-new website at catalyst.rice.edu, where we host interactive PDFs of all of our magazines and our ongoing science blogs. We are passionate about making science accessible and engaging, whether you're a research scientist or a casual reader hoping to learn a little bit about virtual reality.

Catalyst also hosts TEDxRiceU; in our 2015 event ("Right Here and Now"), we featured our first live performance and an increasingly diverse panel of speakers from Rice University and Houston. Off campus, we have taken a huge step forward by co-founding the International Collegiate Science Journal (ICSJ).

Organization's Mission, Purpose, and Goals:

The four main goals of *Catalyst*:

1. Serve as a platform for Rice students to collaborate in scientific discussion, reflection, and exposition, including of topics in popular science and student research.
2. Promote interest in and discussion of the basic sciences at Rice University
3. Inform the general public of the quality of undergraduate research and scientific writing at Rice University
4. Publish at least one issue at the end of each spring semester to be distributed two weeks before the last week of classes and maintain consistent science blog series online.
5. Host TEDxRiceU, an independently run symposium where prominent speakers and performers in the Rice/Houston area are invited to give presentations for the general public.

Catalyst aims to facilitate discussion and student expression on topics in science and undergraduate research on and off campus, and toward this end, publishes four sections. "Attractions" articles are written to appeal to anyone, "Breakthroughs" articles

incorporate more technical content, and “Connections” articles showcase undergraduate research projects and writing. To provide a more diverse and educating complement to the annual publication at the end of each year, Rice *Catalyst* also maintains an online research/scientific called *Catalyst Discoveries*. In doing so, we provide a perspective of the interplay of science with other fields such as history, politics, and philosophy.

The club has brought together students across all majors toward writing, editing, and designing in science. We foster collaboration by facilitating meetings between the writers, editors, and designers, technical writing workshops, social events including our annual retreat, and study breaks. As design is a uniquely essential part of *Catalyst*'s appeal, we are also committed to offering graphic design resources and mentoring. *Catalyst* is proud to collaborate with a number of institutions on campus; we have begun working with a new historical publication on campus and look forward to collaborating with the Office of Natural Sciences toward the inaugural publication of the Natural Sciences Magazine.

Current Constitution, Copy of Current and Previous Academic Year Budget, Hypothetical Budget:

Attached in Order Below

General Explanations of Funding Requests:

Catalyst is a student-run media club that publishes annually in print and online. Print publications are made available to all Rice students, with distributions at the individual colleges and Rice media events. TEDxRiceU in the spring semester. Publishing with a publishing company and in the volume to serve the campus is very expensive. As such the entirety of our budget consists of print an costs. The remainder is budgeted for TEDxRiceU.

Current Efforts to Acquire Funding:

Rice *Catalyst* primary source of funding currently is from SAPP and the Center for Civic Leadership. However, due to SAPP's restriction (ex. Limit of \$1500) there is only so much in regard to these major events we host that SAPP can cover. [CCL funding no guaranteed] As such, *Catalyst* relies on sponsorships and fundraisers from external sources for the remainder of our budget. This places a limitation on our publications, our events, and our mission to make Rice a more research oriented student body.

How priority access to the Blanket Tax General Pool will aid long-term sustainability of the organizations?

Catalyst will benefit greatly from a steady source of funding, which will guarantee an annual publication and spring TEDx event. Furthermore, without the constant stress of acquiring financial support, *Catalyst* can instead fully focus on creating a higher quality journal, augmenting our online presence, and distributing to a wider audience. It is our hope that we can use blanket tax funding then as a stepping-stone towards expanding our organization to potentially multiple publications and multimedia.

How additional funding will benefit the Student Body?

Catalyst is an essential element of Rice University, a globally ranked research institution. In light of President Leebron's vision and dedication toward research, we strongly feel the need to become a blanket tax organization to more broadly represent student voice and achievements. *Catalyst* was founded to increase discussion on science and engineering on campus, and our Journal is written and edited to engage all students, with or without a strong background in science and engineering. The Journal serves as a representation of all the incredible student research occurring on and off campus. We distribute the Journal in the colleges, academic buildings, and labs. In recent years, we have sent copies to the Texas Medical Center in an effort to showcase Rice students and the university beyond campus. Furthermore, all publications and our online blog series are available for everyone on our website. Publication is vital to *Catalyst's* mission of fostering scientific discussion amongst students, and limited funds have hindered the ability of the organization to accomplish our goals.

Rice Catalyst

2015-16' Fiscal Year Budget

Revenue

Type	Budget
Rollover	\$695.54
SAPP Expected	
Last Year	\$2300.00
Expected Increase	\$700.00
OFUR*	\$2100.00
SA Initiative Fund*	\$1000.00
PWC Fund	\$1500.00
Total Operating Expected Revenue	\$8295.54

Expenditures

Type	Budget
Catalyst Annual Publication	
Printing Cost	\$3000.00
Publication Reception and Presentation	\$150.00
Marketing	\$100.00
Ted _x Rice University	\$1200.00
Expansion Costs	
Food	\$300.00
Student Panel	\$250.00
Speaker Amenity Costs (Travel, Food, Gift Cards etc.)	\$200.00
Increased Marketing	\$250.00
Monthly Meetings (x5)	\$100.00
Staff Retreat	\$250.00
Board Retreat	\$100.00
General Marketing Expenses	
Issuu	\$120.00
Website	\$200.00
T-Shirts	\$825.00
Printing	\$50.00
Merchandise	
Lanyards	\$75.00

Logo Water Bottles	\$100.00
Office Supplies (Bins for Distribution, etc.)	\$100.00
Total Operating Budget	\$7120.00

Budget Overview

Net **\$1175.54**

* Estimated Amount Expected

Letter from Treasurer:

Our expenses were budgeted using a forward thinking approach. One our team's biggest goal this year is to expand the presence of the Catalyst at Rice University and among our peers. Part of that vision is an increased publication volume (both in numbers and size) that can be distributed among a wider audience range. As such, we foresee an increase in publication costs. We hope to keep this increase in cost to a minimum by aggressively pursuing other vendors without compromising on quality. Furthermore, the Catalyst hopes to increase its' online presence through the established publication platform YUMPU. Yearly subscription with a basic package, without any analytic software, is around \$120.

Aesthetics, often underplayed, plays a big role in the process of expanding our reader base. This year we want to commit to the bigger online presence campaign by redesigning our website to reflect and better portray Catalyst's excellence. A popular website design platform we wish to use is Squarespace. Squarespace offers professional templates and numerous designing options. Another valuable advantage of squarespace is the ability to retain the rice.edu URL, which can be done with assistance from RICE IT. Approximate annual cost for squarespace will be around \$100. Another aspect of this broad campaign is to increase awareness through a marketing campaign, which would include distribution of T-shirts, lanyards, and/or water bottles. Expenditure costs were calculated with quantity values of 200.

Over the years the Catalyst has seen and benefitted from an increase in participation from the student body. Our staff now exceeds over fifty students and faculty members. Communication gaps are a common issue with much valued size increase. To thwart such gaps, we wish to host monthly meetings to provide updates on the many projects Catalyst members are pursuing. The costs budgeted will cover food expenses for 5 meetings (October, November, January, February, March).

Although a projected deficit is expected based on our established sources of revenue and our intended expenditures we hope to address this gap by aggressively

pursuing sponsorship avenues. A list of potential sponsors will be compiled after thorough research. Then, a presentable sponsorship packet, outlining the Catalyst's mission, goal, and sponsorship packages, will be created and distributed. Possible sponsors include: hospitals [Methodist, TCM, Memorial Hermann, M.D. Anderson], local vendors (Coca-Cola, Torchy's, Potbelly), community think tanks, corporate sponsors (possibly initiated by Catalyst alumni), etc. From a long-term financial standpoint, running annually with a deficit is problematic. As such the possibility to make the Catalyst into a Blanket Tax Organization for the following general election term will be aggressively pursued. We are hopeful that this time around the Catalyst will pass due to recent changes in the blanket tax process and better SA leadership.

For any further questions regarding the budget please contact:
Sai Chilakapati
510-648-7529
scc4@rice.edu

Rice Catalyst Constitution

Last updated: April 25, 2015

Statement

Catalyst is a peer-edited publication dedicated to fostering discussion of the sciences at Rice University. We provide an avenue for students to present their own research or provide commentary on topics of interest.

Mission

Catalyst shall:

- serve as a platform for Rice students to express research work and views on scientific topics
- promote interest in and discussion of the basic sciences at Rice University
- inform the general public of the quality of undergraduate research at Rice University
- publish at least one issue at the end of each spring semester to be distributed two weeks before the last week of classes

Membership

All undergraduate students are eligible to become members of this organization.

Executive Board

The Executive Board and shall consist of:

- 2 Editors-in-Chief
- 2 Directors of Design
- 1 Assistant Director of Design (optional)
- 4 Executive Editors: Attractions, Breakthroughs, Connections, and Discoveries
- 1 Webmaster
- 1 Director of Communications
- 1 Treasurer and Fundraising Chair
- 1 ICSJ Representative

The Executive Board has complete and final authority with regards to:

- the content and distribution of all print publications and the website
- the spending of the organization's funds

Roles and Responsibilities

Editors-in-chief

- in concert with the other officers, develop a reasonable timeline for each issue
- develop submission guidelines for the publication
- oversee the editing of all articles to ensure they are publishable
- ensure this Constitution is followed
- oversee staff meetings, Executive Board meetings, and fundraising events
- field and answer general questions and complaints about this organization
- secure adequate facilities for all meetings
- ensure that interested Rice undergraduates are informed of submission deadlines
- ensure that no copyrights are violated
- ensure the secure transaction of funds in partnership with the Student Activities Office

Directors of Design/Assistant Director of Design

- oversee the “look and feel” of each issue
- enforce the Identity Standards
- train designers in the skills necessary for the development and design of the publication
- assign designers to articles for the publication
- ensure that an electronic copy of each issue is created by the set deadline
- work with the Webmaster

Executive Editors

- work with interested faculty members to specifically ensure that interested students in their respective department are informed of the option of having their research published
- oversee all articles on student research to ensure they are publishable
- work with their respective teams to edit articles throughout the editing cycle, including overseeing staff editors and collaborating directly with staff editors and writers in their sections
- ensure that editors and authors return articles on time
- ensure that all copyright release forms are signed by the authors
- oversee all articles on worldwide research to ensure they are publishable and that no copyrights are violated

Webmaster

- maintain the website in terms of functionality and appearance under the guidance of the Editors-in-Chief and Directors of Design

Director of Communications

- lead the effort to develop and publicize events, activities, and media (in conjunction with design team) for the organization
- collaborate with a team to enhance our social media presence and campus

- engagement, on-campus awareness, and partnership with student organizations
- coordinate outreach events and programs (primarily publicizing distribution events, retreats, study breaks, and social media)
- work with Editors-in-Chief and Treasurer to secure adequate funding for events

Treasurer

- oversee and schedule the fundraising efforts of the organization, including:
 - weekly sales (boba, cupcakes, etc.)
 - corporate sponsorships
 - Blanket Tax or other on-campus fundraising opportunities
- work with the Editors-in-Chief in maintaining a financial timeline that accounts for all major activities and events (including retreats, publicity materials, publication costs)
- procure SAPP funding for activities and events

ICSJ Representative

- communicate relevant information as liaison between Catalyst and ICSJ boards
- recruit members of the general staff to contribute to ICSJ editing and writing

Editor

- edit articles on a timely basis and meet all deadlines set by the Executive Board
- (for article writers) meet with writers and designers to discuss the progress of the articles
- (for bloggers) edit at least 1 article a week and send it to the Editors-in-Chief and Webmaster

Article Writer

- write article drafts on a regular, timely basis and meet all deadlines set by the Executive Board
- meet with his/her Executive Editor, Editor, and Designer to discuss the progress of the article
- follow guidelines established in grammar, citation, and image rights manual

Designer

- train in necessary skills with the Directors of Design for arranging the layout and graphics for the publication
- work with the editors and writers to create appealing layouts and graphics for the articles

Additional Notes

- Meetings shall be held at the discretion of the Executive Board.
- All decisions, unless otherwise specified herein, shall be made by majority staff vote. Only staff members have the right to vote.
- Members of the Executive Board shall be elected by current and future editors-in-chief.
- There will be a recruitment period at the beginning of each semester to fill necessary

staff positions.