### ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE

Student Organization Finance Office

### Account Maintenance Overview

After Officers have fully transitioned into their SOFO positions, they should make sure they have the tools and knowledge to help them maintain the group's account during their term.

#### Both Officers should know about the following:

- SOFO Account Numbers
- Account Line Items
- NU Financials Chartstrings
- Ledger Books
- Voucher Books
- Audit Trails
- Check Process
- Check Distribution
- Void Check Requests
- Group Mailboxes
- Account Reconciliation
- Frozen Accounts
- Deficit Spending



### **Account Action Checklist**

- In the "Officer Resources" page of the SOFO website, you can access SOFO's **Account Action Checklist,** which outlines all the requirements for SOFO Transactions and Account Actions. We highly recommend that you reference this document when conducting account maintenance:
  - https://www.northwestern.edu/ norris/services/sofo/assets/tra nsaction-checklist4-2019.pdf



### SOFO Account Numbers

#### **Account Number:**

2001-20XX-XXX-YY-100

- All SOFO account numbers begin with 2001 and end in 100
  - When writing your account number on SOFO forms, DO NOT include the initial 2001 or final 100 unless the form calls for your entire 16-digit account number
- Every group has a SOFO seven-digit number unique to their organization (20XX-XXX).
- The last two digits signify line items (YY).
- This account number is used with every transaction submitted to SOFO.
  - $\blacksquare$  Make sure to include all nine digits (20XX-XXX-YY) on the voucher.

### SOFO Account Line Items

# 20XX-XXX-YY

- Line Items are meant to separate different types of expenses within your account.
  - For Example: Events, Storage, Formals, Travel
- Every account has a general "00" line item.
  - Some accounts have ONLY an -00 line, while others have several lines (such as -01, -05, -50, etc)
- If your group is ASG recognized, you will have other lines meant for ASG funding and specific events (such as -01, -02, or -60 and above).
  - To use money from these lines, you will need the signature of your Account Executive (AE) if A-Status, or your Group Executive (GE) if B-status.

# **NU Financials Chartstring**

Fund Department ID Project ID Account Activity

731- 213DD00- 700PPPP-01-AAAAA

- All groups have a 20-digit Chartstring (such as the one above) that can be used to transfer funds or purchase goods from Preferred Vendors or University Services
- Chartstrings should only be shared with members of the student group that may need it for making purchases
- All groups have a chartstring that can be retrieved from SOFO by authorized officers

# NU Financials Chartstring

- NU Financials is the financial system by which University services and University departments can process payments and incoming funds to an organization using their SOFO account.
- Northwestern
- University services include Quartet, Motor Pool, Event Planning, and many more. These transactions are processed using a chartstring number.
- NU Financials transactions may take up to 45 days to post in a group's audit trail.
- If your student group is expecting incoming funds through NU Financials, SOFO can check the process of the transfer with a Journal-ID number
  - This ID # can be retrieved by the group from the department providing the funds.



# NU Financials – Moving Funds

- NU Financials transactions will only come in and out of certain line items, depending on the structure of your account:
  - If your account HAS an -01 and -50 line:
    - NUFinancials transactions will come OUT of the -50 line
    - NUFinancials transactions will go INTO the -01 line
  - If your account DOES NOT have an -01 and -50 line:
    - NUFinancials transactions will both come OUT of and go INTO the -00 line
- NUFinancials transactions post once a month and can put the account into deficit when they do so. If you suspect you have NUFN charges coming up, make sure to transfer funds into the appropriate line to prevent the NUFN charges from creating a deficit.

### Officer Transitions

- Officers sign in to their SOFO account by filling out a contractual signature card listing all of the officer's SOFO responsibilities.
- One of those responsibilities states that officers must be physically present to sign out of their SOFO account and name the incoming officer.
  - Emails from outgoing officers will not be accepted.
- All outgoing officers should plan accordingly and make sure that they physically sign out of their positions.



# Ledger Book

- Ledger Book: The main book or file for recording and totaling financial transactions.
  - Maintained by the group's treasurer.
- Groups are expected to have their own system of bookkeeping. This helps the group keep track of the current balance in SOFO, ensuring financial accuracy.
  - Ledger worksheets and templates are available on the <u>SOFO website (link)</u>.
  - Your records can be in many formats. Find the one that works best for your group!
    - Example: Ledger Book, Excel, Google Sheets, Accounting Software, etc.





# Ledger Book – Contents

- All transactions should be recorded in the organization's ledger book; these should include:
  - Transaction date
  - 2. Transaction type
  - 3. Voucher #
  - 4. Description
  - 5. Amount of transaction

- 6. Debits
- 7. Credits
- 8. Running balance should always be included with each entry

Ledger Re	cord		Student Group Name				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Date	Type	Voucher	Description	V	Checks	Deposits	Balance
7/31/17	Payment	Write the voucher # associated with transactions	Payee name, description of the event; If applicable, an invoice #, the check #, and the date of the check	Mark "√" if the item has posted in SOFO	Indicate the amount here if it was a DEBIT	Indicate the amount here if it was a CREDIT	Keep a running balance

# Ledger Book – Transition

- The ledger is passed on from treasurer to treasurer.
  - Allowing new treasurers access to the history of previous transactions.
  - The ledger must be shown to SOFO during account reconciliations.

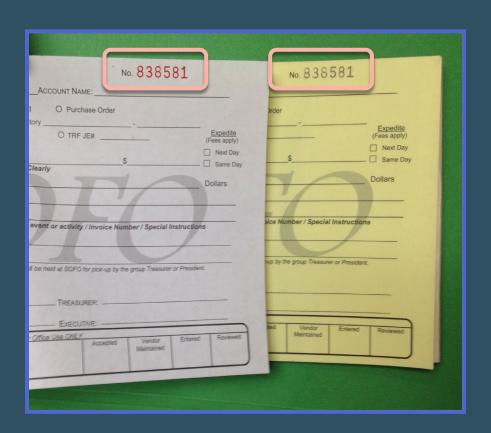
\*SOFO cannot hold the ledgers or any other type of paperwork of past officers in the SOFO office.



# Voucher Books

#### Vouchers are required for every transaction submitted to SOFO.

- Voucher books can be used as a resource for transaction history.
  - Each voucher has two copies: a white one that is submitted to SOFO and a yellow carbon copy that stays in the book.
- New treasurers should receive at least 3 items from the previous treasurers:
  - The group's voucher book
  - The group's ledger
  - A file with important group documents (Vendor Contracts, Transactions that still need to be submitted, etc.)
- If a new voucher book is needed, it can be picked up at the SOFO window by authorized officers.



### **Audit Trails**

 Audit trail: A detailed report of the transactions that occurred in the organization's account during a certain period.

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09/21/2015	BR000000298600001	ALD	Transfer		TRFR/je#06-017 v#827064 to NUF	N Motorpool	GL	198.90	38.75
09/22/2015	BR000000299300001	ALD	ASHLEY LLOYD/827062		REIM/FinanceCommitteeDinner		AP.	58.80	1.47
09/25/2015	BR000000299700001	ALD	DPST/BATCH#6022/Deposits	#168455 - 168462	DPST/BATCH#6022/168461/Box C	ffice Stamps LWyatt	BR		38.39
09/28/2015	BR000000299800001	ALD	DPST/BATCH#6023/Deposits	168463 - 168466	DPST/BATCH#6023/168466/Box C	ffice Stamps ACanizare	BR		30.27
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### **Audit Trails**

- Audit trails contain all of the following information:
  - Account Name and Number
  - Line-by-line description of every transaction
  - Current balance
  - Debits and credits





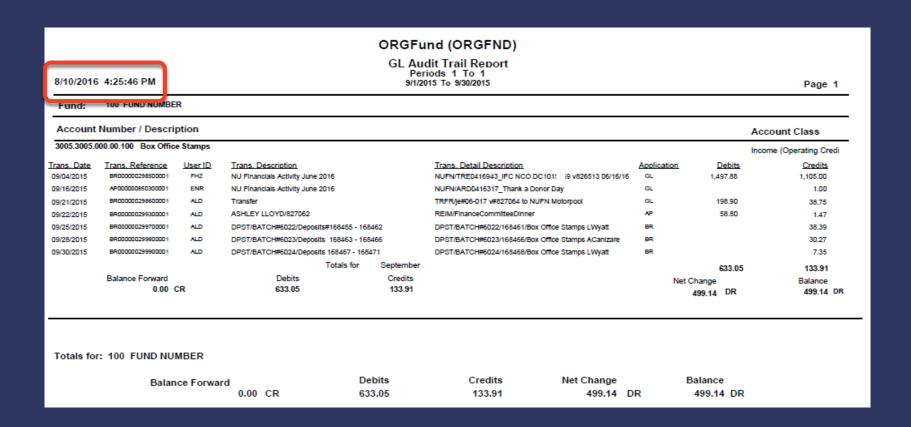
- All transactions are labeled by the following abbreviations:
  - Payment- PYMT
  - Reimbursement- REIM
  - Transfer- TRFR
  - Check Advance- CKAD
  - Void- VOID
  - Adjustment- ADJT
  - NU Financials- NUFN
  - Deposit- DPST
  - Correction- CORR

### **Audit Trails**

- Audit Trails are used:
  - In the account reconciliation process
  - To check if any NU Financials transactions have hit the account
  - To check if unauthorized transactions have been made
- Authorized officers can request an audit trail by coming to the SOFO office or by email.
  - If by email, be sure you use the email address you signed into the account with.



#### Date/Time Printed



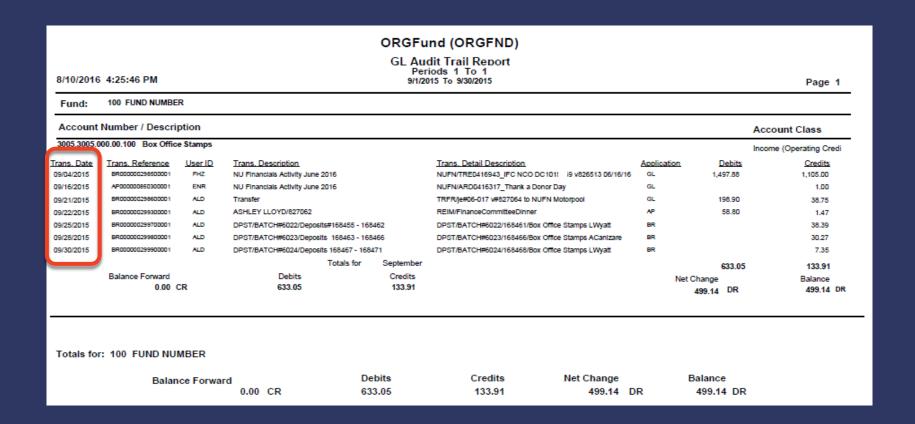
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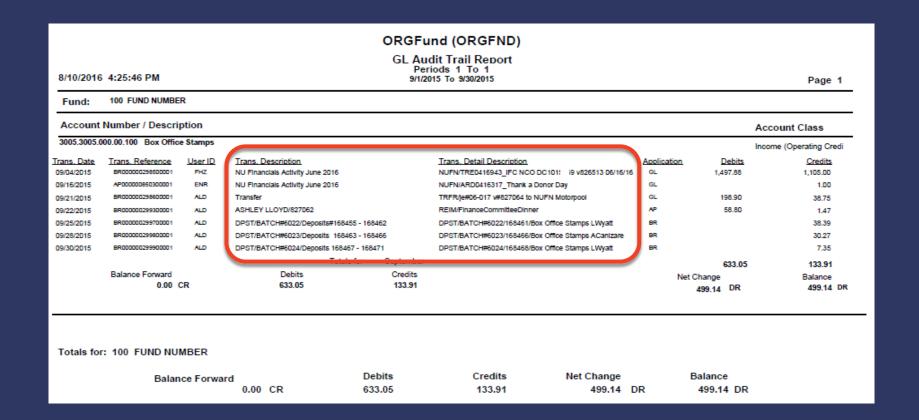
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#### Transaction Dates



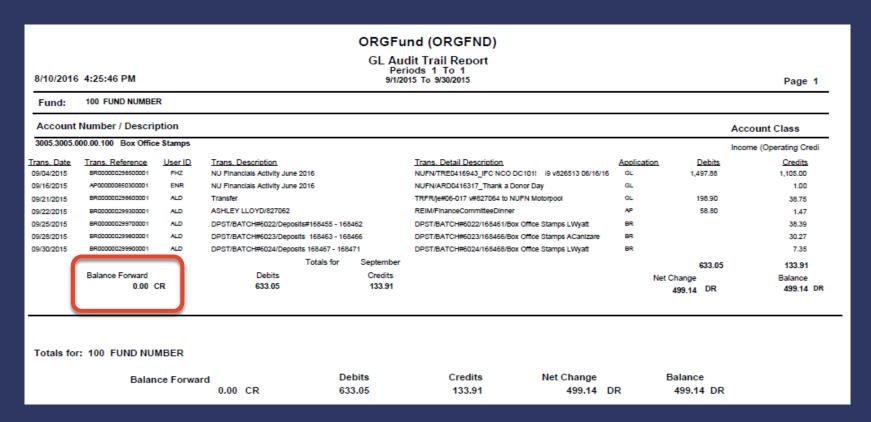
#### Transaction Descriptions



Transaction Debits (money going out) or Credits (money coming in)

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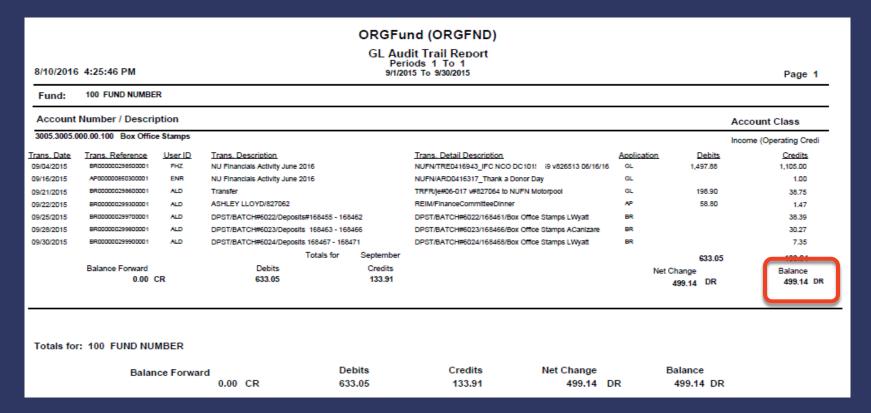
- Balance Forward
  - Amount in the account at the beginning of the date range



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- Current Balance\* at the end of the date range
  - \*A number followed by CR indicates a POSITIVE balance, whereas a number followed by DR indicates a NEGATIVE balance (meaning the account is in deficit)



#### Account Totals

If the audit trail includes multiple line items, this section will present the totals for the entire account (as opposed to each individual line item)

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### Check Process - Overview

- □ All transactions submitted to SOFO take 2-4 business days to process.
  - If there are any issues found with the paperwork associated with the transaction, then the process will be delayed until the issue is resolved. Please allow additional time for these.
- Unless otherwise noted, reimbursements, payments, and check advances will be processed as checks.



### Check Process – SOFO Side

- All transactions undergo a step-by-step process to maintain accuracy and efficiency.
  - First, all transactions are reviewed by the financial assistant at the SOFO window, who will verify that the group representative is a trained officer, make sure that the account is not frozen, and look over all the attached paperwork.
  - The paperwork then undergoes a second revision by one of the student supervisors, to double check that all of the information is correct and that the student groups are following all SOFO policies.
  - The information is entered into our accounting system by a financial assistant to proceed with the check making process, then reviewed again prior to printing.
  - Once checks have been printed, they are reviewed one final time to verify that the checks were all attributed to the right groups for the exact amounts.



### Check Process – Distribution

- All checks must be picked up by either the trained president or treasurer of the group (unless the officer indicates a mailing address on the voucher – in this case, the check will be mailed by SOFO).
  - The designated payee on the check cannot pick up the check, as it is the officers' responsibility to see the transaction through to the end
- Due to the number of checks we process, we do not notify each group when their transactions have been completed. If you would like to check on the status of a transaction, feel free to call or email us.



# Check Process – Voiding

- ☐ All checks are valid for up to 90 days from the date printed on the check.
- It is the officer's responsibility to make sure that the designated party receives the check in a timely manner. If a check is not cashed within those 90 days or the check is lost, the officers will need to have the check voided and re-issued.
  - Checks that did not have a mailing address on the voucher and were not picked up will remain in the SOFO office. If the checks have not been picked up after 90 days, we will contact the current officers informing them of the situation.
- If the check needs to be cancelled or reissued after being printed, the student group will need to submit a Void Check Request.
- Once printed, the check is a legal commitment between the student group and the payee. If the payee (whether a business or individual) was paid in another manner or no longer requires payment, then SOFO will require a confirmation from the payee confirming that this is the case in order to void the check.

# Void Check Requests

- In order to void (and reissue) a check, a trained officer must submit a Void Check Request to SOFO.
  - This applies both to checks that only need to be voided and to checks that need to be voided and reissued
- The void check request must be submitted with the original check
  - If the original check was lost, the group will need to submit a \$30 stop payment fee in the form of a transfer voucher made out to SOFO

		Norris University C (847) 491-2328 ♦ sofo@nort	
		. ,	• 0
	Organiza	ntion Name	
structions:	Ü		oid a check issued from their account.
er actions.	To do so, you must		a request to have the check re-issued;
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	PAYEE NAME: _		VOUCHER #:
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	☐ The check was	s not cashed within 90 days of b	eing issued.
	☐ The check wa	as lost.	
	_		check was lost:
		n has been paid by other means	
	Please explain	n:	
		1.	
	Other. Please	explain:	
w	ould you like the	check reissued?    Yes	□ No.
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	If you would like	the re-issued check mailed plea	se update the address below:
			-
nsiderations	for voiding checks:		
If the origina	l check is not presented	with this form, a Stop Payment fee * v ocessed at no additional cost to the stud	rill be charged to the account that originated the check.
	ks must be re-issued if t	he payment obligation with the payee	nas not been met, canceled or forgiven.
-		when the check clears the bank. eled when the original transaction is ve	pided.
-			payment and notifies the student organization of by submission of a notarized letter of intention.
* The		rently \$30.00, but subject to change w.	

# Group Mailboxes

- All groups have a designated mailbox in the SOFO office in which copies of deposit slips and other documents from transactions that may have had issues are held.
- Officers have the responsibility to periodically check the group's mailbox.



### **Account Reconciliation**

- All groups must reconcile at the end of every quarter (including summer), even if no transactions were made.
- In order to reconcile the account, an authorized officer must present their ledger book to SOFO along with the completed Account Reconciliation Form.
- If an officer fails to reconcile at the end of the quarter, the account will be frozen.

	Student Or No	RECONCILIATION FORM rganization Finance Office rris University Center 2328 • sofo@northwestern.edu	<u> </u>
	ORGANIZATION NAME:	QUART	TER/YEAR:
	ACCOUNT NO.: 2 0		
dditional nes are for rganizations aving ecounts w/ ultiple Line	LINE ITEM LINE DESCRIPTION  -00 GENERAL FUND  -01  -02  -03	in ORGANIZATION (Ledger)	in SOFO (Audit Trail)
	For additional line items, please use the reve		
	RECONCILING TRANSACTIONS (from detail be TOTAL YET TO POST IN SOFO		-/-)
	TOTAL CORRECTIONS TO BE MADE BY S	SOFO (±	-/-)
	TOTAL ACCOUNT BALANCE:	<u>\$</u>	\$
	TOTAL ACCOUNT BALANCE:  By my signature, I attest to the accuracy and the of my knowledge, all the transactions to date, en that all unrecognized items must be resolved and	tered into by the student organization th	at I represent. I understand
	By my signature, I attest to the accuracy and the of my knowledge, all the transactions to date, en	tered into by the student organization th I documented to complete this reconcilia	at I represent. I understand
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### **Account Reconciliation**

- Account Reconciliation: An accounting process that uses two sets of records to ensure figures are accurate and in agreement.
- An audit trail should be compared to the group's ledger. Any questions, concerns, or errors should be immediately reported to SOFO or corrected by the treasurer on the account reconciliation.

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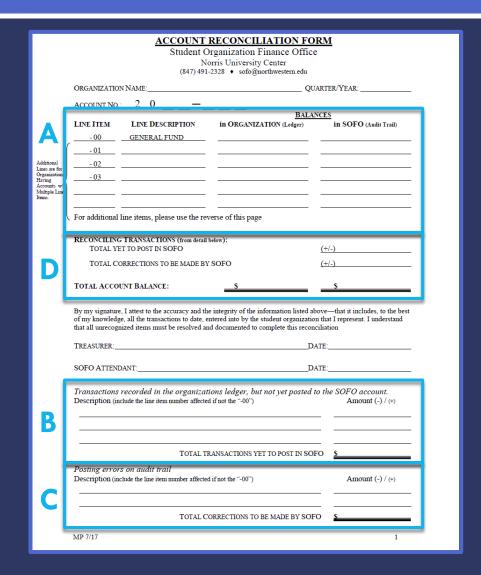
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### **Account Reconciliation**

- A. All account line item balances should be listed here.
  - From both the group's ledger and the SOFO audit trail.
- B. Transactions recorded in the organization's ledger but not yet in the SOFO audit trail: should be identified here.
- C. Posting errors on the audit trail: Any mistake made by SOFO should be identified here.
- D. Total Account Balance: add or subtract the amounts listed in sections B and C from the SOFO column so that both totals (the ledger and audit trail) match



### Frozen Accounts

- Accounts may be FROZEN for any of the following reasons:
  - 1. Either officer has not been trained or taken the quiz
  - 2. Failure to reconcile at the end of the quarter
  - 3. Either officer has not signed in
  - 4. Account or line item is in deficit
  - 5. Unreconciled Check Advance
  - 6. Unreconciled Debit Card
  - Request from the advisor, sponsoring authority, or a Norris department

### Frozen Accounts

- An account that is frozen for any reason cannot process any type of transaction until the officers have taken the necessary steps to unfreeze the account.
- No tax-exempt forms can be given out to any groups that are frozen.
- Checks that have already been made may be picked up by a trained group officer while the account is frozen.
- Any transactions submitted prior to freezing the account will still be processed if no lines are in deficit.



# Deficit Spending

- Normally, if an account is in deficit, it will be frozen and no further transactions will be accepted until the deficit has been cleared.
- However, if the group is expecting funds to be transferred into the account they can be authorized for deficit spending.
  - The officers would need to present the NU Financials Journal-ID number of the expected transfer, which SOFO will use to check the status of the funds.
    - The office or department providing the funding should be able to provide the officers with this Journal-ID.
  - If an officer has submitted a deposit to the account and it has not yet posted to the audit trail, they should present a copy of the deposit slip (provided by the Cashier's Office) to SOFO in order to authorize the use of those funds.

# Account Maintenance Wrap-Up

#### Both officers should now be familiar with:

- SOFO Account Numbers
- Account Line Items
- NU Financials Chartstrings
- Ledger Books
- Voucher Books
- Audit Trails
- Check Process
- Check Distribution
- Void Check Requests
- Group Mailboxes
- Account Reconciliation
- Frozen Accounts
- Deficit Spending

