Digital television equipment, a hip-hop concert, musical instruments and dozens of speakers have all been made available to Northeastern students this year, funded by the proceeds of the Student Activity Fee.

The Budget Review Committee (BRC) has allocated approximately $1.23 million to student groups since the start of the second summer session. The money comes out of the Student Activity Fee (SAF), paid for by the approximately 14,000 students who pay $100 per year.

This year's pot reached approximately $1.9 million with the help of $500,000 leftover from the last pot, said Alison Barlow, BRC chair. The $1.23 million already allocated includes approximately $450,000 given for special requests and $780,000 for group budgets, Barlow said.

Special requests this year have come from groups such as Northeastern University Television (NUTV), who received approximately $12,000 for television cameras and for production equipment, said John Bragg, NUTV vice president for financial affairs.

"It's the first step we needed to get going," Bragg said. "Without cameras or an editing computer, we wouldn't be able to get started on production. This is the first chance for students to do production and editing without being in a class to do so."

In addition to special requests, the BRC finances other bills and pots, from the Major Concert Fund to telephones in the student center.

The Council for University Programs (CUP) put on a fall concert featuring Busta Rhymes in September. The concert, Barlow said, was funded through the Major Concert Fund. Over half of the $250,000 Major Concert Fund was spent on the fall concert, leaving the rest for the annual Springfest concert, Barlow said.

"In regards to Springfest, we are working hard on a proposal with our committees and chairs to make the best use of Northeastern's money to get the best entertainment we can," said Danielle Strong, CUP vice president of internal affairs.

The Major Concert Fund was established last spring to set aside money primarily for the use of CUP to put on a major Springfest concert.

Each year, the BRC also uses the SAF to budget money for certain organizations such as CUP, the Student Government Association, afterHOURS, the Media Board and the Student Activities Office. The rest of the money then goes into the general request fund.

Allocations that have come out of the general request fund include new band instruments and the installation of new equipment at WRBB radio. Barlow said this year the BRC has already surpassed the amount of money allocated last year.

"We've seen more interested student groups at the [BRC] workshops, about 140 have attended," Barlow said.
Student groups cannot request money until they attend a teaching workshop on how to give a presentation to the BRC.

Last year, Barlow said only about 76 percent of the SAF was allocated. The remaining 24 percent, along with any previously allocated money, such as last year's $300,000 that was left in groups' budgets, gets taken back and put into next year's pot.

Barlow said the money is given on a first-come, first-serve basis, however no request will be approved without close scrutinization.

The BRC looks at each component of a request, decides which items adhere to their guidelines and chooses which requests they are able to finance.

Some requests have no guidelines in the manual to follow.

"New things come up every week where we haven’t seen them before, so we can't make a guideline about it ahead of time and we basically have to decide what kind of precedent we want to set," Barlow said.

Once the committee makes a decision on how to handle new situations, they stay consistent across the board, Barlow said.

"Consistency is the big thing. We want to treat all student groups fairly. We don't want student groups feeling like we gave special preference to one group because that's not the case," Barlow said. "We want everyone to have the best programs that they can have."

Barlow said she hopes most of the money can be allocated with a small amount left over at the end of the year as a backup.

"I'd like to have some rollover next year, about $200,000 as a cushion," she said.