

UNIVERSITY *of*  
NORTHERN COLORADO



**INSTITUTIONAL PLAN  
FOR STUDENT FEES**

**Institutional Plan for Student Fees Committee  
February 11, 2005**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Institutional Plan for Student Fees was developed in 1994 by a committee comprised of four students, four administrators, and one faculty representative. The plan serves two primary purposes: (1) it outlines the processes for establishing new or increased student activity fees, participation fees, and administrative fees; and (2) it ensures student participation in setting student fees at the institution.

In the development of the Institutional Plan, the committee was guided by the following principle regarding student fees:

Student fees are used to support student services, activities, student approved capital construction, course requirements and administrative needs as determined to be essential for the enrichment and broadening of opportunities for students within the University community. Student fees should be directed toward fulfilling the needs and goals of the student body of the University. Student input is essential when determining the use of the monies collected. The areas funded by student fees should be monitored by students to insure that student needs and expectations are being addressed.

The plan contains four major sections: (1) The University Budget Approval Timeframe; (2) Student Activity Fees and Referenda; (3) Participation fees; (4) Administrative Fees. Each section provides a definition of each type of fee, process for increasing or establishing new fees with student participation, and a description of how the fees will be used and accounted for. An appendix (Appendix A) is provided and updated on an annual basis that categorizes each mandatory fee into the following categories: permanent student purpose, nonpermanent student purpose, bond fees, participation fees, and administrative fees.

### PLAN REVISIONS

- 1997
- 2000
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- February 11, 2005

## SECTION I. UNIVERSITY BUDGET APPROVAL TIME FRAME

The Board of Trustees receives the proposed operating budgets in May of each year. The operating budgets include the state appropriated cash, auxiliary services and student activity fee allocation. The proposal contains any recommendations for new, increased, decreased, or eliminated mandatory fees. The final budget is adopted in June. The general time lines for the budget process are as follows:

### ➤ State Appropriated:

- November - February - Preliminary budget development takes place including:
  - Approval of budget parameters by the Board of Trustees.
  - Distribution of forms and instructions for budget requests.
  - Initial review, prioritization and discussion within divisions.
- March - Budget deliberations begin. Final requests must include any proposed increases in student fees, or new student fees that are not defined as student activity fees. The primary student fees for consideration in the state appropriated budget are academic program fees, course participation fees, which may be proposed to the Board of Trustees at other times consistent with approval policy, technology fees, and administrative fees. The Institutional Plan identifies the process for involving students in the development of the proposals.
- April - Budget discussion concludes. Priorities are set within the resources appropriated by the state legislature.
- May - The proposed state appropriated budget is presented to the Board of Trustees.
- June - The final state appropriated budget is approved by the Board of Trustees.
- July - Notification to students in writing within thirty days of the approval of fees.

### ➤ Student Fee Allocation Process:

- July – UNC’s president advises the Student Representative Council (SRC) of the parameters for the Student Fee Allocation Process (SFAP). Parameters include: 1) the maximum increase allowed in per student fees, 2) an estimate of the total student fee budget 3) funding necessary for bond repayment, the operations of bonded facilities and other student services budgeted by the Administration, and 4) the net funding available for student decisions in the SFAP
- October - Budget forms and instructions are provided to the program directors receiving student fee allocations.
- November – SFAP training for program directors is provided.
- January - Budget requests are submitted to Student Representative Council (SRC) for consideration.
- January – The president advises SRC of the updated total SFAP budget based on enrollment projections.
- January- February - Student Fee Open Forums are held.
- March – Program Increase Hearings, student elections and referenda are conducted.
- March - April - Program budget allocation decisions are made by SRC. SRC recommendations are made to the University administration. The SFAP budgets are considered by the administration within the

context of the entire University budget, and proposed recommendations are prepared for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

- May - Proposed student activity fee allocation budgets are presented to the Board of Trustees along with the other budget recommendations.
- June - The final student activity fee allocation budgets are approved by the Board of Trustees.

## SECTION II. STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES AND REFERENDA

### ➤ Definition of Student Activity Fees:

- Student activity fees are those mandatory fees assessed to all students to support a variety of student services and activities whose services are open to all students including Student Representative Council, health services, student organizations, social-cultural programs and intercollegiate athletics. A portion of the fees assessed is also pledged to repay bonded indebtedness. Mandatory student fees shall not be used to fund ideological, political or religious activities as defined by University Regulation 3-2-108 (2) (a).
- Student activity fees are considered to be permanent student purpose fees. Nonpermanent student purpose fees are those fees voted on by the student body that contain an expiration date. Examples of nonpermanent student fees at UNC include the Colorado Student Association fee, bond fees for the University Center, the Campus Recreation Center, Student Health and Counseling Center, and the Women's Resource Center.

### ➤ Process:

- The maximum increase in per student fees allowed will be calculated using the inflation rate established by the Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) and used by the legislature in the prior fiscal year.
- The total student fee budget must cover bond obligations, operations of bonded facilities funded by student fees, and student fee services budgeted by the administration before allocation to SFAP programs. Budgeting for the student fee bond obligations and services outside the SFAP process will be handled under the process for Administrative Fees in Section IV.
- Any changes for student fee funded programs that rent space or purchase services must be accompanied by a description of the changes in space rented or service purchased.
- The Student Fee Allocation Process (SFAP) is briefly described in this document in compliance with the CCHE policy, which requires an Institutional Plan on Student Fees. Specific procedures relating to the student activity fee approval process are found in Chapter II of the UNC Student Representative Council's (SRC) Bylaws. Specific procedures related to student referenda are found in Chapters II and III of the Bylaws.
- The Student Representative Council (SRC) determines the process of the student activity fee allocations and presents its final recommendation to the UNC President. Students are involved in the fee allocation process in a variety of ways. Students may participate in the Student Fee Open Forums, which are held in January and February. Students may also present to SRC on behalf of a program justifying funding increase requests.
- Through student referenda the entire student body of UNC has the opportunity to voice their opinion about student activity fee rates. Per SRC bylaws, student activity fees at UNC have a mandated percentage cap set each year. The bylaws set forth that in order to exceed the SRC limit, the issue must be put forth in a student referendum. The student referenda are determined by the Student Representative Council, petition of 1000 student signatures, or university administrative request. The outcome of the student referenda, with SRC's approval determines the recommendation for the initial rate of student fees. The student fee allocations are then presented to the UNC President with final recommendations forwarded to the University Board of Trustees.

- Should any dispute arise about student activity fee funded programs during SFAP, a grievance procedure is in place, which includes input from students, faculty, classified and exempt representatives and administrators. This procedure is established by the Student Representative Council and is implemented throughout the allocation process.
- According to state law, in order for student fees to be used for construction of facilities, including academic facilities, there must be a student referenda and student involvement in the entire project. Use of tuition or fees for academic buildings is not permitted until all other financing options have been explored, and any referendum relating to the use of fees for academic building is initiated by the Student Representative Council.
- Student referenda regarding student fees can be initiated by any student. SRC's duties are to objectively inform the student body of referenda issues and do so in public forum. Restriction on SRC campaigns are available in the bylaws of SRC and are in compliance with Colorado Revised Statutes. No new fee, fee increase, or fee extension that is defeated by a vote of the student body may be resubmitted for a student vote until the following, regularly scheduled election.

### **SECTION III. PARTICIPATION FEES**

➤ Definition of Participation Fees:

- Participation fees are charged in courses where there are expenses associated with the use of the specialized facilities, examples could be: bowling alleys, ski lifts or for long distance field trips more than 100 miles one-way.

➤ Process:

- Revenues collected from the academic program fee will be allocated to each college. The dean will determine appropriate procedures for allocating funds subject to review and approval by the Provost.
- Requests for increases in course expense budgets will be handled through the annual budget setting process with the dean forwarding requests to the Provost.
- The University will not assess any other charges for course/program materials and or/services without the prior written authorization of the Provost, the President, and the Board of Trustees.
- Requests for approval of additional participation fees will be forwarded for review to the Provost office for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

## SECTION IV. ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

### ➤ Definition of Administrative Fees:

- For the purposes of this plan, administrative fees refer to any mandatory fee assessed to all students for administrative services.

### ➤ Process:

- Requests for new administrative fees or increases to existing administrative fees require a formal proposal that includes justification for the fee or the increase. New fees and increases to fees above the inflation rate need approval by a vote of the student body. Proposals for new fees require a pro forma budget, which includes revenues generated by the fee and expenditures to be made from these revenues. Proposals for increases require current budget information, anticipated cost increases, and a pro forma budget of the increased fee and the associated expenses. All new fees must contain an expiration date.
- The formal written proposals are forwarded to the University Committee on Administrative Fees by the appropriate Vice President. The Committee reviews and evaluates the proposals. Additional information or a formal presentation may be requested by the Committee. The Committee makes a recommendation to the President for any new fees and increases to be presented to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is solely responsible for approval or disapproval of administrative fees.
- Formal written proposals for new fees or fee increases for the next fiscal year are due twelve weeks before the May Board of Trustees meeting. A decision must be reached by the Committee in time to include the fee request in the student election and subsequent budget presentation at the May meeting. If no changes are requested by the Board, the fee is left in the budget process for approval at the June board meeting.
- Once approved, the University must notify students in writing within thirty days of the approval. This written notification must include the amount of fee or increase, the reason for the fee or increase, the purpose for which the University will use the revenues generated from the fee or increase, and whether the fee or increase is permanent or temporary, and the repeal date for the fee assessment or increase.

### ➤ Accountability:

- Administrative fees will be recorded in separate accounts and the associated expenses will be paid from those accounts. Administrative fees are not to pay for expenses other than those associated with the fee designation. Small fund balances are allowed to carry forward in order to facilitate the next fiscal year budget, but excessive fund balances would indicate the need to review the amount of the fee.
- It is also the responsibility of the University Committee on Administrative Fees to review all administrative fees currently in place on an annual basis for continued applicability, accountable use of funds, and fund balance requirements. Recommendations for changes including discontinuance or decrease of fees are to be made to the Board of Trustees on the same time schedule as requests for new fees or increases.

### ➤ Committee Structure:

- The Committee will be a standing committee made up of administrators, student representatives, and a faculty representative. The administrators and students will serve on the committee by virtue of their position within the University and the Student Representative Council. One faculty representative will be solicited from the Faculty Senate.

## APPENDIX A

### INSTITUTIONAL PLAN FOR STUDENT FEES Mandatory Fee Matrix

Mandatory Fees	Administrative	Academic	Bond/Facility	Student Purpose	Permanent	Non-Permanent
Application Fee	X				X	
Doctoral Dissertation Fee	X				X	
New Student Enrollment Fee	X				X	
Graduation Fee	X				X	
Instructional Fees (Participation Fee)		X			X	
Health/Counseling Debt			X	X	X	
Campus Recreation Center Fee Debt			X	X	X	
University Center Debt			X	X	X	
Women's Resource Center Debt			X	X	X	
Student Activity Fee				X	X	

*Revised February 11, 2005*