

Student Fee Advisory Committee

Friday, November 10, 2023

2:00pm

STC 231

Attendees:

- Rosalinda Garcia, *Co-Chair*
- Fred Juarez III, *Co-Chair*
- Carolina Ramirez, *Student*
- Rodolfo Rendon, *Student*
- Preston Salazar, *Student*
- Jesse Soto, *Student*

Absentees: Mayra Hernandez, Tatiana Gorbunova, Alfredo Duncan

Administration: Juan G. Garcia, Scheiby Fischer Gonzalez, Denisse Garza, Guadalupe Garza

1. CALL TO ORDER

Rosalinda Garcia calls the meeting to order at 3:03pm.

2. OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Garcia began by introducing herself and allowed all the others present to introduce themselves as well.

She provided background on SFAC and how all A&M schools are required by Texas law to form these types of committees to serve as a purpose of advising administrators and students on fees. She identified the four student fees which include student services, student health, student center facilities, and recreational sports fees. She reviewed the number of committee members (9), b) how they are appointed, and c) their terms. She explained that the university collects funds from student fees and the responsibility of the group is to review, report and make recommendations to the president to take forward to the Board of Regents. Ms. Garcia then shared the three items on her agenda for this meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

There was no motion introduced to approve the previous meeting minutes.

4. ITEM # 1 REVIEW OF THE BUDGET

Mr. Fred Juarez presented the projections for FY 25 for the four fees collected. He mentioned that the Student Service Fee is the biggest fee collected. Mr. Juarez pointed out that FY 24 had a deficit and there is also a deficit projected for FY 25. Ms. Garcia explained how fiscal years work and Mr. Juarez helped clarify.

Mr. Juarez presented the current budget for FY24 and projected budget for FY25. He described the difference between the Rec Sports Fee and the Student Service Fee by mentioning that the Student Service Fee is based on semester credit hours and Rec Sports Fee is based on head count.

He elaborated on how he determines revenue for the next fiscal year by looking at previous semesters' enrollment to project future enrollment thus fees that will be collected. He mentioned that the Student Center Fee is used for general and miscellaneous expenses for the building and provided an example of a previous air conditioning issue that required attention. He also pointed out that all four fees stay within their categories. Funds aren't comingled.

A student asked if the numbers are coming from student enrollment projections. Both Ms. Garcia and Mr. Juarez confirmed. Ms. Garcia further explained that because budgets are prepared in advance, the budgets being presented are only projections, but they may change.

5. ITEM # 2 STUDENT HEALTH FEE

Ms. Garcia presented information on Counseling Services. She shared the patterns the University has observed regarding mental health services. She described the increase of walk-ins and the increased severity of the cases.

She added that in addition to the current need, enrollment has begun to increase which means that all kinds of student needs will likely increase as well. Her observations are based on her role as the Chair of the BAIT team and on her conversations with Vice Presidents of other universities.

Ms. Garcia mentioned that other schools are considering increasing the student health fee to help augment services at their campuses. She explained that this is done in the form of a referendum and would need the support of the students to pass.

Mr. Juarez stated that the current health fee at TAMIU is \$50.65. The summer fee remains flat at \$25.00. The max the health fee can be increased to is \$75.00. If we consider an increase, the max we could increase the fee by would be \$24.35. Mr. Juarez explained that the funds collected with an increase could provide a new counselor position, help cover the cost of a new 24/7 TELUS counseling app or address needs presented by students with disabilities on campus.

Mr. Juarez explained that an increase would have to go through a referendum. He added that if we wanted to introduce a referendum, the committee would have to agree on when to move forward keeping in mind that students would have to be involved.

Ms. Garcia provided context on the process of a referendum. If there was a referendum and it passed it would need to go to the board of regents February meeting.

A student asked if it was possible to have the referendum the week of the break. Mr. Juarez pointed out that it is important it takes place when there is a presence of students on campus. If the committee is interested in introducing a referendum, Mr. Juarez mentioned that there are a few dates that he could propose that would ultimately lead to introducing the fee in FY 2025. The committee then discussed a possible timeline considering logistics and student activity on campus.

Ms. Garcia explained that fees collected from students are not the only funding method for salaries/services. She stated that the new disability Director position, for example, is being funded for the next few years from a grant.

Motion to move forward with recommendation to the President to hold a referendum to increase the Student Health Fee for FY 25. Motion by Rosalinda Garcia, Seconded by Fred Juarez.

For: 6 Against: 0 motion passes.

6. ITEM # 3 STUDENT FEE ADVISORY ACCOUNT BALANCE OF \$12,000.00

To be discussed at the next meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Rosalinda Garcia, Seconded by Fred Juarez.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04pm.

8. NEXT MEETING (TBD)

Meeting to discuss the use of the \$12,000 currently available in the Student Fee Advisory Committee account and the results of the Student Health Fee Referendum.

Mr. Juarez mentioned meetings usually occur twice a year, once during the fall semester and once during the spring.

Next meeting date will be late in the year or early next year 2024.