USF Board of Trustees
December 6, 2007

Issue: USF St. Petersburg Activity & Service Fee

Proposed Action

Implement a .60/credit hour increase to the A&S fee for USF St. Petersburg

Background Information

Significant Policy Issues for Board to Consider

The most recent increases to student fees at USF St. Petersburg were:
1. Fall 2003 – Transportation Access Fee ($2.25/credit hour)
2. Fall 2004 – Athletic Fee (.25/credit hour)

An A&S increase has been recommended by the Student Government Association to address rising costs for student life salaries and benefits, supplies, operating expenses, entertainment/entertainer costs, new initiatives and the increase in student organizations.

In addition, a significant amount of the SGA reserves have been spent down to cover the cost of capital projects such as the new outdoor recreation complex. Additional revenue would assist in replenishing the reserve fund.

Strategic Goal(s) Supports:
Enhancing all sources of revenue, and maximizing effectiveness in business practices and financial management to establish a strong and sustainable economic base in support of USF’s growth.

Workgroup Review:
Finance and Audit Workgroup

Supporting documentation:
Student Government Bill 07-101 “Resolution to increase the Student A&S Fee”
A&S Committee Meeting Minutes

Prepared by:
Dr. D. Kent Kelso, Regional Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
727-873-4882
BILL 07-101
"Resolution to Increase the Student A&S Fee"

WHEREAS: Activities and Service fee monies are collected to fund programs, activities and services for students; and

WHEREAS: These programs, activities and services provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and abilities; and

WHEREAS: These programs, activities and services directly contribute to building a vibrant campus life; and

WHEREAS: The relative value of the dollars collected as activities and service fee monies is decreasing in correlation to the value of the dollar and other variations in cost associated with the operation of said programs, activities and services; and

WHEREAS: The A&S fee has not been increased in several years; and

WHEREAS: An increase in student involvement on campus, evidenced by the increase in the number of student clubs and organizations which must be funded in order to build vibrant campus life, requires additional funds; and

WHEREAS: For each year that a fee increase is not made, a fee increase for the following year is increasingly limited;

Therefore, Let it be Resolved: The Student Government of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg adopt to recommend to the University of South Florida St. Petersburg Administration1 that a fee increase of $0.61 per credit hour be made to activities and service fees collected.

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Approve:

USF ST. PETERSBURG
STUDENT GOVERNMENT
140 CHEANEY'S CAC
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701

Christian Buckler
Student Body President

Attest:

Kaitlyn Arnold
Student Body Secretary

Sponsor: Senator Thomas Bruce
First Reading: September 11, 2007
Second Reading: September 18, 2007
Assembly Vote: Passed 10-2-1

1 Amended September 18, 2007 by majority.
Members present: Faculty: Dr. David Carr, Dr. Deanna Michael; Students: Ernest McDonald, Pejman Mahmoudi; Ex-Officio: Dr. Kent Kelso, Regional Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Matt Morrin, Director of Student Life, Christian Buckler, Student Government President

Dr. Kelso recommended Dr. Carr as chair of the committee, Chris Buckler had no objections. Dr. Carr accepted and called the meeting to order.

Dr. Kelso distributed handouts for review which included: Fee Cap Analysis 2007-08, Student Government “Resolution to Increase the Student A&S Fee”, and the 2004 USFSP request to increase athletic fees (last recorded request for a fee increase).

Florida statute requires all public universities establish and maintain A&S, athletic and health fees. Any recommendations for an increase must come from a committee whose members consist equally of students and faculty. The recommendation is then presented to the Chancellor for review.

The committee reviewed a Student Government Association request to increase the A&S fee by $.60 per credit hour. According to Mr. Matt Morrin (Director of Student Life and Advisor to SGA), it had been at least five years since the fee was increased. A&S fees funds programs, activities and services for students and includes staff benefits and operating costs for the department of Student Life. Dr. Kelso mentioned that the $.60 represented the maximum increase available to the institution based on the fee cap formula. He also mentioned that it was his understanding that Tampa and Lakeland were pursuing fee increases that were either at the maximum level or near to it. Lakeland was also petitioning for a relief in the cap to raise fees above the 5% maximum. He had no information regarding action by the Sarasota campus.

Dr. Carr asked Student Government if the student body was consulted on this request. President Buckler stated that SGA approached the student body (informally by SGA representatives) and received strong support for the increase. Mr. McDonald stated that the few who did not support the fee increase did not understand the budget situation or how fees were distributed.

Deanna Michael (College of Education) had concerns regarding the student government meeting schedule. The College of Education intern program and class schedules conflict with the current 2:00 meeting time. Chris Buckler announced that SGA changed the scheduled meeting time to Tuesdays at 9:00pm to accommodate these students.

The question of health services coverage was raised. Dr. Kelso stated that the St. Petersburg campus only provides health education. Medical needs are referred to a local doctor near the campus. Students can also pay a one time fee of $75.00 to go to the Tampa campus for services. USF St. Petersburg also has a relationship with local hospitals for emergencies, including mental health emergencies. Students are offered health insurance coverage through a plan negotiated by
the university. There was general consensus that efforts should be made in the future to support a comprehensive health services program on the USFSP campus.

Ernest McDonald stated that budget requests for the 07-08 year came in at approximately $300,000 over estimated revenues. With the current budget restraints, needed improvements such as the general maintenance of pool, waterfront and gym were not able to be made without making cuts to other programs. For example, the graduation celebration, the SGA operating budget and programming funds for the office of Multicultural Programs were among the many activities that experienced reduced or no funding.

Chris Buckler talked with the Alumni Association for funding opportunities. He mentioned that E&G funds are not available for programs and food. Foundation and concession money is the only option outside of A&S funds, and there is very little available in either of these two sources. In addition, the student government has had to dip into their reserve funds to meet annual operating needs because of the increase in funding requests and the lack of annual funding to address those requests. The students pointed out that student organizations have grown from 16 to over 45 individual chapters, and there were signs of continued growth. Funding this growth taxed the budget.

Dr. Carr suggested changing the marketing strategy to recruit more faculty and staff members to utilize the fitness center and other revenue generating venues. The students indicated that the faculty and staff memberships do help but is not making a dent in the budget. Lower fees were suggested to entice more members. It was felt by the students that the fitness center membership fees were significantly lower than other community fitness centers and therefore at an appropriate level. The current fees are considered lower than other campus fees.

Dr. Kelso mentioned student interest in investing in an expansion of the fitness center (into the racquet ball courts) to include free weights and more stationary equipment.

According to Mr. McDonald, if the $.60 does get approval, it will still be difficult to operate under the current situation of increased demands for funding by student organizations and student life. A five-year plan for the future needs to be put in motion.

Dr. Carr made a motion to accept $.60 A&S fee increase, Deanne Michaels seconded the motion, with no discussion Dr Carr asked for a vote. The vote was unanimous to accept the Student Government recommendation of a $.60 A&S fee increase. Dr. Carr adjourned the meeting. Dr. Kelso thanked the committee members for their service on the committee. Dr. Kelso announced that the recommendation of the committee as contained in the committee meeting notes will signature by the chair would be submitted to the Chancellor for review.

Activity & Service Fee Committee Chair

Regional Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs