

Information Provided by the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation in Response to Information Request from Student Members of ARFAC

To: All interested parties
From: Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
Subject: Questions and answers relevant to the Athletics and Recreation Fee

January 7, 2013

1. An increase to the Athletics/Recreation fee has been considered for several years but has not moved forward. How has your office coped with budget pressures over the past five years and why seek an increased fee at this juncture?

The Athletics unit of the Faculty has incurred a deficit for the past five years that has been offset by the Faculty and the university. The contributions by the Faculty and the university cannot continue due in large part to the impact of the decreased government funding.

2. Should we expect growth to student services with a fee increase? If so, where do you see the growth?

The current level of student service already exceeds the capacity of the Faculty to maintain that service, which is why we have a deficit. A fee increase will merely return the fiscal balance. Free admission for all U of A students to Golden Bears and Pandas is part of the current discussion. The PAW centre will create an increased opportunity for students to participate in fitness and recreational activities.

3. Recreation Services has seen significant growth recently. Can you provide statistics showing student participation in recreational services?

A document (THE ATHLETIC AND RECREATION FEE: A Background Report) was circulated to MBAC and ARFAC in November, 2013 that includes these data.

4. What is the annual budget to cover travel cost for our athletes? What (accommodations, transportation, meals, etc) and who (student athletes, staff, management, etc) do travel costs cover? Can you provide a detailed breakdown of these costs for the past five years?

The annual transportation, accommodation and meal costs for the athletes, coaches and trainers are approximately \$1,000,000 per year, including qualifying events and championships. Pre-season events are funded separately and are not covered by fee revenues. These costs have been consistent for the past five years, but have risen at rate significantly above cost-of-living since 2001.

5. What funding sources (scholarships, bursaries, etc) are available to student athletes for travel costs and what the names, values, and duration of these funding sources?

Provided by FPER

Student athletes receive a per diem of \$20 per day when competing out of town, which is included in the explanation in #4 above. Student athletes also receive team meals while on the road through funds generated by the Adopt an Athlete program. Scholarships and bursaries are used for tuition, fees, books and possibly accommodation.

6. How many and which varsity teams travel? How often do varsity teams travel? How many individual student athletes require travel support?

24 varsity teams travel, and the frequency varies by sport. Most student athletes would travel at least 8 weekends per year, with the exception of football (with 4 road trips).

7. Does the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation fundraise to cover the travel costs of our student athletes in leagues? If yes, can details be provided? If no, why not?

Yes, fundraising covers some travel costs. Amounts vary by team.

8. Please provide us with the 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2011/2012, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014 Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation budget as well as a breakdown of the student fees collected during these years and what this revenue was used to fund.

The information requested here has been provided to MBAC and ARFAC. Additional copies can be provided.

9. What is the exact proposed increase? During the last ARFAC meeting it was mentioned that a \$60 increase would put the U of A in the average range of Canadian universities. Is this the increase we're looking at? Please provide the names of other Canadian universities with athletic/recreational fees and the amounts of those fees.

The increase will be \$16.38 per full-time student per term. Comparative data with other Canadian universities have been included in the report provided to MBAC and ARFAC. Information provided to ARFAC describes how the increase was calculated. It is our intent to keep the increase to a minimum in deference to the financial pressure on students.

10. What is the number of graduate students on varsity teams?

There would rarely be more than 5 graduate students that are student-athletes, but there would be far more that are involved in research and service roles with varsity teams. These would include students in the Masters in Coaching program, in the Faculty of Rehab Med, and the sport sciences. Athletics also provides supervision of graduate students and funding for graduate student projects.

11. What kinds of consultation do you envision in the process of seeking a fee increase and in deciding how any increased revenue will be applied? How will students be involved in such consultation? What responsibilities will students have in such consultations?

Consultation includes discussions at ARFAC, at SU and GSA meetings, at MBAC, with UAB, and with any other interested students upon request. Student responsibilities would include reading and understanding the information provided, and communicating with their constituencies. The outcome needs to result in clear recommendations to MBAC but also recommended revisions to funding policies to go forward to other university committees if necessary.

12. What measures do you propose to ensure ongoing transparency and accountability in the use of fee funding (eg annual reporting to GFC and campus media outlets like the Gateway)?

Annual presentations to ARFAC and MBAC would be a normal part of the process. Annual presentations to the SU and GSA are certainly possible, upon request.

13. How will you ensure that a proposed increase in Athletics/Recreation fee will meet both undergraduate and graduate student demands and priorities?

The consultation process is designed to engage students in the use of the increased fee revenue. The revenues are used only for the purposes that have been mandated by the university as outlined in the report provided.

14. What are the analytical and decision-making processes that led to your recommendation to increase the Athletics/Recreation fee?

The documents presented to the SU and GSA reps on the ARFAC committee provide this information. A substantial body of relevant work was done in 1998 and 1999 to determine the scope and purpose of the A&R fee revenue. Analysis of the current financial situation compared to the agreement arrived at in 1999 was the impetus for the current process.

15. Have you examined other sources of funding or fees to support athletics and recreation, in particular to support the costs of varsity team travel? If yes, please outline the sources. If not, please explain why not.

While the 1999 agreement did include conference travel as a base expense to be covered by the A&R fee revenue, we have agreed to cover travel with the current fee revenue and through self-generated revenue (sponsors, donors, alumni, gate). As explained in the ARFAC and MBAC meetings, we are not requesting an increase in the A&R fee to cover travel. We are asking for the fees to cover the costs of staff (excluding benefits which are paid by the university) for coaches, administrators and student employees in Athletics, Recreation Services and Operations. We have provided a detailed breakdown of all staff in the form of an organization chart and budget by category of employee.

16. Has the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation examined reducing the number of varsity teams to deal with its current fiscal state?

Yes. To eliminate the operating deficit for Athletics would require the elimination of six to eight varsity programs. If adequate fee revenue is not available, we would have to begin a consultation process with the students and the university to examine this option.

Provided by FPER

Has the Faculty examined reducing the number of out-of-town events that varsity teams participate in?

Varsity teams participate in a Canada West Conference and the competitions are dictated by the schedules.

Has the Faculty examined its using current funding sources, such as Adopt-an-Athlete and the Legacy Fund, to support varsity team travel?

Yes. An explanation is provided previously in this document.