

COSAF Report | Recommendations & Comments

Review: ASUCD Fee

Associated Students of UC Davis

February 23, 2023

Action Item #2024-056

Per the ASUCD **BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES UNDERGRADUATE REFERENDUM** language, there will be a \$26 increase (25 percent of which will be used for Return to Aid) to the ASUCD Base Fee portion of the ASUCD Fee, increasing the overall ASUCD Fee from \$35 to \$61 per undergraduate student per quarter effective fall 2020, followed by an additional \$8.00 increase to the quarterly ASUCD Base Fee to be implemented annually in Academic Year (AY) 2021- 22 to AY 2029-30, with automatic CPI adjustments annually thereafter.

Therefore, COSAF oversight is to provide comments & recommendations based on the information provided to the Council. COSAF does not vote on a CPI recommendation, as incremental increases to the fee are built into the referendum language.

COSAF Review Timeline:

Date	Action
2/9/24 COSAF Meeting	Presentation: Greg Ortiz, ASUCD Business Manager Allyson Francisco, Controller Mostafa Rasheed, Vice Controller
2/23/24 COSAF Meeting	Full council discussion
2/23/24	Qualtrics survey distributed to council for comments/recommendations. Due 2/25/24

The following pages include recommendations and comments provided by council members regarding the ASUCD Fee presentation and use of ASUCD fee revenue.

Given that the base fee is being used to pay students that were previously volunteers with stipends to hourly pay, I am in favor of increasing the fee. Also, the ASUCD base fee supports many services that are essential to basic needs for students (the Pantry, Mental Health Initiative, Housing Advice, etc), and thus, I feel appropriate and necessary for the increase in the fee. I am more hesitant on ASUCD using these increases on usages that aren't directly correlated to basic needs, but can understand the want to improve facilities for efficiency reasons now that one) student population is always increasing and inflation amongst related markets.

The ASUCD fee provides so much for the students and student employees on campus. However, the fee allocation has deviated from its initial purpose when it was raised. The fee was brought to a vote to maintain the current operations of ASUCD and for the increase in student wages but has now been stretched to include expansions and other uses that were not explained in the referendum.

The ASUCD fee presentation was very insightful but it did seem like they have a large carry forward that should be considered when assessing their fee.

I agree with the council discussion that ASUCD should be a little more clear on how their expenditure is used to maintain current operations as some of their projects seemed more focused on expansion.

All looks good to me. Thx!

I find that the ASUCD fee is a very large amount of money with a high quarterly increase. I feel like the ASUCD is a crucial aspect of student life, however, I'm not sure if they truly need and utilize all of the funds in the best way possible. I look forward to some of their projects, like relocation of the Pantry, which will allow the Pantry to better serve students in need. However, other projects, like a building expansion to add a coho break room for over 1 million dollars does not seem like the best usage of student funds. I don't know of any student department that has a break room. And if more storage is the cause of this, perhaps simply adding more cubbies would be sufficient.

The ASUCD fee ballot language states that the fee will be used for maintenance of the facilities and not for expansion of these facilities. The fee provides benefits to the whole student population and is useful, however, my concern is the dramatic increase in costs.

ASUCD's transition from stipends to hourly wages marks a significant stride towards achieving equitable compensation for ASUCD student positions. I worry whether ASUCD will adhere to the referendum's directive of primarily sustaining operations. The introduction of a break-room in the CoHo teeters on the brink of what the referendum was for, and the absence of delineated plans for utilizing growing funds to uphold existing services raises concerns about the potential accumulation of an unnecessarily extensive carry-forward budget.

The presentation was clear and showed the future projects ASUCD is budgeting for.

While I am supportive of all services provided by ASUCD and its efforts to pay all student workers, I do not believe they need four different student fees to run efficiently. This ASUCD fee takes \$24 from students and has not entirely adhered to their ballot language to "maintain current ASUCD operations, services, and events that serve UC Davis students." While the planned improvements will be a complement to services, it does not seem to justify charging students \$24/year (in addition to other fees). I also do not agree with the automatic CPI adjustments as it leads to high reserves which is something we have seen ASUCD have. I would have rather seen ASUCD use this fee to "expand Finance Council funding" to bring more resources to our student clubs.

As costs are increasing for services across the board, fees such as the ASUCD fee must increase to keep providing the same support and services to undergraduate students. The entities receiving ASUCD funds were comprehensive and transparent regarding their uses and it is my belief that an increase in the fee would be in the best interest of students across the board.

The presentation was put together very well and it's evident how the fee is being utilized to impact student life.

Good fee no comment

The presentation was really informative in regards to explaining where the fees were being used.

Based on their provided fee template, the majority of their projected allocation increase at an individual expense level is for student salaries. These variances are the result of their transition to having 100% of student employees be in paid positions. So much work by student employees of ASUCD goes on behind the scenes for so many of their operations so I was glad to hear that this is their goal and this is where the vast majority of their base fees is allocated to.

In all the ASUCD fee is expanding rapidly - but according to the referendum that was approved in 2020 (during the height of covid and money issues for students).

I don't personally share ASUCD's budget priorities, but I understand that these are set by the (1) Professional staff who are area matter experts in their domain and (2) the student senate that is elected by and represents the student body as a whole. As such, I defer to these people with actual expertise in the area they run and actual expertise regarding what undergraduate students (which they represent) want. In my reading of the fee "maintain operations, services, and events" line, I read this as guaranteeing that, if approved, the listed services would not be cut for budget reasons. I do not see it as limiting ASUCD to maintain the 2020 pandemic levels of service (or preventing ASUCD from improving service). It is far-fetch to imagine ASUCD having to push services back to 2019/2020 pandemic levels to be compliant with this fee. The intention was to lift the budget crunch burden to stop ASUCD from cutting services student wanted. ASUCD should consider student priorities and use this large surplus to invest in the longevity of CORE services that maximize benefits to ALL students.

While it was informative, there is a question of whether maintaining the level of service is akin to improving the facilities for those services. It is great to see that there will be an expansion to the CoHo, as that is a pressing issue due to the lack of seating during popular hours, but I'm not sure if other expansions are as direly needed.

I appreciated the presentation by ASUCD this year. Compared to last year, I felt that this presentation was more informative and provided a better picture of the ASUCD Fee. I think that I have concerns about certain usages of the Base fee, which stem from the ballot language of the Basic Needs Initiative. I believe that current usage is going beyond maintaining the current operations of ASUCD like the Initiative said. There are a lot of changes and expansions that are happening that make me think it is being used outside of maintaining the status of ASUCD through times of inflation. I do not think ASUCD is using it in any ill manner, but it is just an unfortunate misstep during the creation of the fee referendum. I do not know what that means for the fee but I think this should be double checked because the fee increases are extremely high each academic year until 2029-2030.