

Council on Student Affairs and Fees Report

HIV/STI Referendum Ballot Language Feedback

11/17/23

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ACTION ITEM NO. 2024-027

Is the ballot language clear what will happen if a student votes 'YES' on the HIV/ STI fee referendum? What could be added or removed to make this more clear?

No, it is not clear.

There are over 30 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The words/phrases "STI" and "HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis" are used interchangeably without establishing that "STI" ONLY encompasses a FEW of the known strands of STI and not all known strands. I suggest establishing in the "YES" and "NO" and on main ballot "Issue section" itself what the fee will cover out of all the known STI's.

Additionally, the term "regardless of insurance status." does not come across clearly. There are three issues with that statement on the ballot.

1. First, is that it fails to specify this fee is exclusively for undergraduate UC Davis students. In the presentation, it was disclosed that this fee is for only undergraduate students (who are required by the UC system to have insurance, either SHIP or their own as UC students are not allowed to be without insurance). The statement "regardless of insurance status." sounds like it is implying those who do not have insurance could utilize this service and adds some confusion to the ballot, but as we know, all UCD students have insurance which leads to that statement inducing ambiguity. Recommend rephrasing to something in the ball park of "regardless of undergraduate students who have SHIP or Private Insurance."
2. Second, it fails to specify at what facilities the treatments will be covered at on the YES section. Is this only something the Health and Wellness Center will offer or is this a worldwide fee?
3. Third, it fails to detail document how this fee is different from private and SHIP insurance since these treatments are already covered by UC SHIP and most insurances. 17\$ dollars a person to start this fee off with is a lot of money so extra detail should go into the YES/NO sections to ensure no ambiguity.

As a result of the previously mentioned reasons, the document wording in the YES box does not come across very clearly.

No, the ballot language is not clear. This ballot should include the quarterly fee amount and clarify that all students would pay it.

Yes, but it could be clearer stating the population of students it would primarily benefit. The fee amount should also be stated to give students a general idea.

The end of both the Issue text and the yes text should say "at the Student Health and Wellness Center."

It could be made clear that this ballot is for a fee that will be institutionalized

Yes, the language is clear.

I believe for the most part it is. I think that they need to make clear that this fee is only for testing at the student health center.

Yes.

The ballot language is clear.

Make it clear that people enrolled with SHIP still need to pay for this fee.

Yes, it is clear! Only suggestion would be to change .. "HIV/STI testing such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis regardless of insurance status."

No, the numbers on the most recently revised ballot are not clear. The ballot proposes a fee of \$17.08 per quarter for three quarters which totals 51.24 however the ballot table on page 4 shows an annual total of 51.23. Further, on page three, the ballot states the total that would be paid over the course of four years as \$204.92. Again, this number is off by a matter of cents. Additionally, I do not feel as though this number is clear to the student as to how much they would be paying over the four years since in that very paragraph it goes on to say the number would be adjusted for the CPI index so in actuality it is not an accurate reflection.

Yes the language is clear if a student were to vote yes. I do not think there is any changes, seeing as it is written clearly.

Yes, I believe it is clear as is.

The HIV/STI fee referendum language is clear when a student votes YES. It would implement a \$17.08 per quarter fee that would increase by the CPI. The list of STIs in the YES description should be removed. STIs and HIV diseases should not be listed in the issue section and should be in the description section.

Yes it is clear.

Yes

No, this ballot creates a fund that can be used to pay for testing (until it runs out). It does not create a free testing service (the way the ARC, Unitrans busses, or home-game tickets are free to students via fees). This fee *does not* guarantee free testing (the way ship fees pay for free testing as long as you enroll).

The language should very clearly state, this fee would create a fund to be used to cover the cost of HIV and STI testing on campus.

They should state the free testing services would be made available at SHCS.

No, the language on the ballot falls short in providing all the information a student would need to make an informed decision.

Is the ballot language clear what will happen if a student votes 'NO'? What could be added or removed to make this more clear?

No, it is not clear, especially in comparison to the YES side.

It would more accurately reflect the voters decision by instead of stating "A no vote will reject the passage of a new student fee", using this instead "A no vote will reject the passage of this new student fee."

Also this "and continue the status quo of students without UC SHIP" is negatively worded. This comes off more impartial than the previous sentence "and continue the status quo of students with non SHIP insurance" as it conveys to voters that people without SHIP insurance have other insurance compared to the current version that implies it is possible for people who dont have SHIP to not have insurance and be a UC student. All students are required to have insurance, which is something I did not know myself until recently and is very likely to be the case with people not involved in these programs professionally. (Citation: <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/insurance>).

No, it is not clear enough. I suggest that the ballot should only provide information about the estimated future cost of HIV/STI testing, excluding details about the current cost.

Yes, it is clear.

No, the "no" section needs to be articulated in a way that doesn't imply that 1 in 2 UCD students are not without health insurance, because all of us have to be. The parenthetical should also include that the prices provided are before co-pays from private insurers, but are the actual numbers reflected for those on Medical or other state insurance. As brought up in the meeting, it should also indicate that this is the price for the Student Health and Wellness Center, and that a no vote rejects free testing at the center.

Replace the use of "status quo" as this is a colloquial term that some students may not know

Yes, the language is clear.

I think that it is clear. I think that they need to make clear that this fee is only for testing at the student health center. I do believe that this sections is not neutral.

Yes - however it needs to be said that the price of a test is specifically for the Student Health and Wellness Center.

The ballot language is clear.

Yes

Yes, it is clear! Only suggestion would be to add an asterick at the end of the text and then right below the box indicate something like this --> "**See Table 1" that way it guides the voter to locate the visual.

See above.

I think the language is clear for the no position as well

Yes, I believe it is clear as is.

The HIV/STI fee referendum language is clear when a student votes NO. It would not implement a \$17.08 per quarter fee. The number of students not enrolled in SHIP should be removed, especially since only undergraduates will see the referendum language to vote on. The current out-of-pocket cost, at \$100 dollars, should be removed since the cost will change in the next academic year 2024-25. That is when the implementation of the fee will occur. The out-of-pocket cost of \$305 in 2024-25 should state that this is the cost at the Student Health and Wellness Center.

It is a little biased as it includes information that could be better placed in another section of the ballot. For example, including that the fee could increase to \$305 per visit in the NO section could be categorized in the description section.

Yes

No, the ballot language for a no vote is muddy and misleading. The no vote means no fund is created. Students continue free testing vis SHIP or non-ship off campus providers (depending on their elected insurance coverage).

The following language is confusing and unnecessary and is not what a no vote does: "which is 1 in 2 UCD Students, to pay out of pocket for HIV /STI testing (Out of pocket comprehensive HIV/STI testing costs are around \$100 per testing event for non-SHIP UCD students, but it will increase to \$305 per testing event in the academic year 2024-2025)."

They should state this applies to testing at SHCS.

No, the language on the ballot falls short in providing all the information a student would need to make an informed decision.

Are there any parts of the ballot language that you find ambiguous? What is ambiguous about that part and how can it be made more clear?

There are many parts that are ambiguous throughout the ballot, outside of my previous recommended changes mentioned. I caution you to use language carefully. "STI" and "HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis" might seem interchangeable until you search how many STI's there are. Being specific is also important, because you wrote "students" on the ballot but presented it as "only undergraduate students".

The yes vote should be more descriptive to match the number of characters as the no vote (i.e. include population that is benefiting primarily and approximate costs).

n/a

It should be made clear that future students will not have chance to vote for or against this fee, meaning current students are making a decision that will impact all UC Davis, forever.

Language could also be included detailing that ALL undergrad students will be paying this fee even if they are already paying health insurance fees. I.e., health insurance costs aren't inclusive of the HIV/STI fee.

No, I do not find any of the ballot language to be ambiguous.

There are multiple fee amounts mentioned in the ballot language. They need to pick an amount and stick with it.

The ballot is direct and clear.

- Free testing isn't necessarily free as we are all paying for it.
- The yes and no descriptions don't make it clear that these testing's and prices are referring to campus health testing.
- The description of the fee says it will be imposed upon all members of the student body. Make sure to say it's for undergraduate students.

Yes, the referendum states the fee will be imposed on the 'student body' however, I suggest to highlight both undergrad and graduates that way it is clear.

The text states, "would save a non-SHIP student more than \$4675.08 in testing costs" but the table shows it will be exactly \$4,880. Consider stating the exact amount.

n/a

The phrasing on the increased cost and whether the tests are at no additional fee or free

No.

Students are currently paying for insurance and would pay for the fee; therefore, it should be noted that the fee would provide HIV and STI testing at no additional cost to students. The referendum must include the Student Health and Wellness Center in the issue section. Additionally, it is not stated when CPI adjustments will occur; it is assumed to be annual.

In the overview section it is interesting that it only talks about how non-SHIP students save money in testing costs; I feel that as this fee would be applied to SHIP students as well, it feels that these students would have to pay extra money to be covered by SHIP as well as by this fee. Considering that costs have been going up, it would be important to include some kind of sunset date to this fee or a way to regulate it based on economic fluctuations as it would be best for the student body to have a way to let their thoughts about this fee be reflected in a more frequent manner.

No

(A) This fee creates a fund from which money will be pulled out until it is gone (then no more paid for tests). Language should clearly say that the tests are "pay for" or "remission" is provided (not free, these are not permanently free).

(B) language should address eligibility. I.e., only currently enrolled, fee-paying students are eligible for test coverage.

(C) I find the pricing presented to be misleading. Every student is insured on campus with insurance that is compliant with the California minimum benefits requirements. These minimum requirements include HIV and STI testing coverage *and* coverage for at home tests. By law, students also have a right to medical privacy. As a dependent, they can file to have their insurance usage maintained as private from their plan's sponsor.

The real cost for all students with SHIP is \$0.00 a quarter. The real cost for students with off-campus providers is \$0.00 a quarter (privacy and at home convince included). There should be: (1) 2 extra columns in the table showing this and (2) language explaining this in the ballot.

I'm worried about the impact it could have on my community if, people are told a test will cost them \$400, when actually it is free to them via their insurance. This could have the opposite effect of the intended. Please make sure that your fees are reflective of our actual costs!

(D) You say the number of tests required for the year is 1. But you calculate the cost for student as if it is 4 times a year. This is misleading and seems designed to inflate the costs. Again, this could be harmful to people who need to go get tested.

(E) Fees in column do not reflect the CPI escalation. It is presented as a fix fee (which it is not).

(F) The term "sexually active queer folks" is limiting and in some way subjective. Can we use the actual medical definition used by those providing the guidance (I.e., what does the CDC or WHO call this demographic). My reading of the document is that the CDC recommends this for "men who have sex with men" - not just people who identify as "queer folks". These are not the same groups of people.

"1 in 2 UCD students" is assumed without UCship insurance. But it is not clear if those students are covered by other insurance plans.

I felt like there were several discrepancies between the numbers on the slides and the ones on the ballot. Also I think that they need to make it explicitly clear that this only applies to the SCHS.

Is the ballot language neutral? Why or why not?

No, it is obvious whoever made the ballot is strongly in favor of a YES vote. Very strongly evidenced by this part of the ballot:

"A no vote will reject the passage of a new student fee, and continue the status quo of students without UC SHIP, which is 1 in 2 UCD Students, to pay out of pocket for HIV /STI testing (Out of pocket comprehensive HIV/STI testing costs are around \$100 per testing event for non-SHIP UCD students, but it will increase to \$305 per testing event in the academic year 2024-2025)."

It sets up a False Dilemma Fallacy to the voter due to the incorrect presentation of information that misrepresents SHIP membership and the cost of non-SHIP UCD students getting HIV/STI testing done.

For SHIP Data: We have data showing that more than half of the campus (not 1 in 2) opted out of enrolling into SHIP. More UCD students (graduates and undergraduates) opt out of SHIP than into it. In the month of 8/23 14,617 students enrolled in SHIP (citing SHIP enrollment yearly reports) out of roughly 39,601 freshman students (citation: https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/_files/factsheets/2023/admission-table-1-1-1.pdf). So if we calculate this (39,601 freshman - 13,056 = 26,545 undergrads without SHIP) where as (39,601 / 2 = 19,800) we see that more (26,545 > 19,800) than half of all freshman students opt out of SHIP than choose to enroll in it. This proves misrepresentation of "students without UC SHIP, which is 1 in 2 UCD Students". It is not 1 in 2 students, it is far more according to the data.

For Testing: According to the CDC, HIV testing can be done for free or at reduced costs (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-testing/finding-tests.html>), I also recommend visiting planned parenthood as they offer testing as well. Many HIV self tests are also in the 50\$ range, not 100\$. I called the Health and Wellness center to get a quote on a full HIV test with all the associate fees, its totals around 80\$ if your not covered by SHIP, not 100\$. I was also informed by them that if you dont have SHIP, out of pocket STI testing in general costs 25\$. Also according to Department of Health and Human Services, the PreP Act also requires most insurances to kick in for HIV/STI testing

My recommendation is to go back to the drawing board, find your sources, and cite them on the ballot like you have done with the links you provide like the "CDC" link under the OVERVIEW. I see a lot of broken down information like cost down to the penny but no sources.

It is not neutral. It seems to be biased, favoring students without UC SHIP.

The ballot language is not neutral. It leads the student to believe that they should vote yes. The statistics are in favor of a yes vote.

See above comments re the no section.

There is language in the overview section that leans persuasive.

"STI rates are at an all-time high, often have no symptoms, can cause permanent health problems, and increase risk of acquiring HIV. The National STI Plan calls on public health entities to "synergize STI and HIV advocacy," and that "STI prevention and treatment success is integral to the success of HIV prevention and treatment." The National HIV Strategy recommends "policies that reduce cost, payment, coverage, and/or access barriers to improve the delivery and receipt of services for people with or who experience risk for HIV.""

This paragraph attempts to overstate the need for these resources and implies there are barriers to accessing testing on the UC Davis campus, yet the testing resources ARE available to access, approx half the student body is enrolled in UC SHIP, and the other half has another type of health insurance.

I do not think the ballot language is neutral because of the extra data added in for voting no about the ratio of students with SHIP and costs, whereas voting yes did not have any extra information.

No I do not think that the ballot language is 100% neutral. I think that it is pushing for a yes vote. One thing that I find extremely biased is the yes and no sections of the ballot. The yes is simple, but the no is complex and is telling the reader only the negatives of saying no. You need to make the no section much simpler. Here is an example: "A no vote will stop the passage of this new student fee attempting to provide free HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis testing at SHCS."

The ballot language seems to be neutral and explains the effects of the fee for students.

The ballot language is neutral.

- Does not mention the alternative options for testing outside of SHCS
- The NO description is longer and has more information than the YES description, could be seen as trying to sway voters a certain way.

Yes, ballot language appears to be neutral. Providing data and highlighting the importance of the testing from multiple sources provides neutrality.

Somewhat - I think a lot of the cost savings that are referred to in the ballot are not entirely accurate as those do not have ship must have some other health insurance to be enrolled as a student where they likely can receive lower copays at other healthcare centers than what the ballot suggests. While I understand it is specific to the costs at UCD SHCS, I think the cost savings are a bit inflated. Additionally, I don't think that the ballot makes clear that students who already have UCD SHIP health insurance which exists as almost the majority of undergrads, already receive this service so that cohort would almost be paying for the service twice.

Yes, I believe so. It may lean a bit towards the pro side, seeing as the vote language has a bit of bias.

Yes, the ballot language is generally neutral. However, the explanation for the "No" option does seem to want to direct individuals into picking "Yes." It seems to put more weight on the consequences of choosing "No."

The ballot language is not fully neutral. Listing STIs in the YES section and not in the NO section will alter the perception of voters. The number of students not enrolled in SHIP is not accurate for the undergraduate population and, therefore, misrepresents the number of students who have to pay out of pocket at the Student Health and Wellness Center.

The ballot is a little biased throughout the document. One example of this is through the table on Page 4: the first column lists the costs for non-SHIP students. while the second column lists for all students. It is unclear who the fee is meant to serve when price comparisons are listed in this manner; it would be best to have the first column have data for all students so that it is easier to compare with the second column.

Yes

No, I admire the goals of the writer in advocating for my community. But I think this ballot, in its current form, is clearly advocating that passing this measure is the only way forward. This is demonstrated in how "worst case scenario" pricing (4x a year, uninsured) which doesn't reflect the majority of students (all insured, 50% sexually active, likely not all of that 50% are men who have sex with men). Also show how this is billed as "free testing" but actually its "paid" testing fund (that could run out). The bias is very clear but addressing the comments above and presenting fairly the situation (i.e., students are insured) and the actual prices (free in California). Will go a long way to improving the neutrality of the language.

No, the language is biased and doesn't cover all the accurate information. Making all the information transparent is necessary because this fee is pretty high and the students should get exact information.

Do you have any specific recommendations to pass along regarding the ballot language of the HIV/ STI Fee referendum?

I listed my recommendations in the above sections, but frankly it is very sloppy and biasedly written. It needs a comprehensive rework of its wording and level of detail in order to present a impartial option to potential voters.

Yes, they should make it clear of who is more likely to receive the services and the fact that this is a fee only undergrads are paying for, yet it is in benefit of the entire student body.

There should be a portion of the description that addresses the double pay concern that SHIP students will have. Also, in the meeting it was said that this would be free testing for all students, not just undergraduate students, so removing the word "undergraduate" from the issue might be better. I also think there should be a sunset date (but placed really far into the future -- maybe 20 years?), solely because I want to see this get passed and fear that a lack of a sunset date will not go over well with both COSAF and student voters.

I think the commitment to pay this fee imposed on all future students should be explicitly stated.

I would also implore the sponsors of this fee to rethink including automatic CPI adjustments. I think the fee itself AND automatic CPI adjustments are quite a lot for students to vote on within one ballot. I urge the sponsors to consider allowing the CPI adjustments for this fee to be examined and voted on by COSAF annually (as many student fees are) in order to be as transparent and equitable to students as possible. Student fees and increases to those fees should not be taken lightly and every attempt should be made to minimize increased costs to students. When there is an increase in cost imposed on students, this should be backed by annual data and a demonstrated NEED for the increase. Although this is a worthy cause to be funded, advocacy and passion for this cause should not cloud ultimate transparency of fees paid by students.

The total cost per year for the table at the end under the fee column should be \$51.24 a year.

I do not think the cost breakdown in the table at the end for the "without fee proposal" should include costs for 4 times a year since the academic school year only covers 3 testing cycles. The time frames should be kept constant for both with and without fee proposals.

I would not to vote to give COSAF's recommendation for this referendum as it is. The fee, although attempting to support something important, is not necessary for the campus to continue its main academic mission. Therefore, this fee needs to have a sunset date of maybe 10 years so that students in the future have a option to revisit the fee, and the fee should not have compulsory CPI adjustments. The CPI adjustments should come before COSAF to recommend. Without these two additions, I do not see me voting in support of it.

I think the ballot should not mislead voters by labeling itself as a free service for students as students will ultimately be paying \$50 a year. Instead, it should be a fee that provides a service, as Jason mentioned, at no additional cost. Additionally, the ballot should be clear that this is specifically for services at the Health and Wellness Center, and students may be able to receive care at other locations in Davis with a small co-pay. I'd also like for the CPI adjustment to be reviewed by COSAF rather than be applied automatically as we do not know how much of a need there is for HIV/STI testing specifically at Davis - therefore, a CPI adjustment every year would allow the fee to accumulate to potential levels that exceed the student body needs.

I agree with members who commented on the fee's sunset period. I would recommend making it in order that it can be revisit in a 10-15 years period.

- I recommend that the 'overview' section fall directly after the 'description' section.
- There is a small text right before the overview that should be removed because its stated twice in the text. It is stated once right before the overview section and then directly at the end of the same section.
- I recommend placing the table provided with useful information higher up. Consider placing it right after the overview section but before the 'advisory vote' section.
- The numbers appear to be off by a little bit throughout the text, consider fixing. $\$17.08 \times 3/\text{quarter} = \$51.24 \times 4/\text{years} = \204.96 .

The language of the ballot pertaining to the CPI adjustment should be changed. With the way that it is written right now, this fee would automatically receive a CPI adjustment annually. I see two issues with this. First and foremost, there are very few student fees that automatically receive this inflationary adjustment as there are annual factors that must be taken into consideration such as reserves, sources and uses, demand of services, market prices, and other subsidiaries. That is the role of COSAF to suggest recommendations for given on-campus departments and the fee revenue they receive as to whether they need that adjustment in a given year or not. Even much larger campus entities with both larger and smaller quarterly student fees must be assessed this way and this fee should not be any different. The ballot language should specify that this adjustment won't be auto-applied but rather voted on by COSAF. Additionally, CPI is a measure of the cost of goods sold in a market and while it does help to retain purchasing power for an entity, it does not combat inflation but rather enables it to progress.

No

No.

I strongly recommend that COSAF oversee CPI adjustments from the HIV/STI fee. While many years may need a CPI adjustment, it is likely that some years will not. Including COSAF oversight to CPI adjustments would affect the way I would vote on the HIV/ STI Fee referenda.

Have detailed recommendations above.

No

As present in the presentation, it seems the issue isn't money (we all have insurance) but education on how to go get tested. I would strongly support a ballot initiative that paid for "Health counselor" to help student navigate finding care with their providers, filing paperwork to maintain privacy, and understand CDC recommended testing guidelines for their demographic.

As written, I think this ballot does little to change the status quo and instead just tries to dump money on an issue (and duplicate costs we *all* already pay).

They should state why it is important to access the testing services at SHCS, although they might be available in other clinics, such as Sutter health.

I agree with the general consensus of the meeting that this fee needs a committee looking over cpi adjustment instead of automatically adjusting for cpi each year.