

December 3, 2024

### Graduate Student Unitrans Fee Referendum 2025-2026

#### Ballot Language

##### Issue

Effective Fall 2025, do you approve a \$245/year Unitrans fee per year adjusted for the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The Unitrans fee will end in Summer 2030 and require a second fee referendum from graduate students.

##### YES

A yes vote approves the \$245/year Unitrans fee and provides graduate students fare-free unlimited access to Unitrans and Yolobus through the entire year. The fee referendum will cover the period from Fall 2025 to Summer 2030. A yes vote provides a Unitrans GSA Advocate who will advocate for expanded intercity services to West Campus and Woodland. Subject to a vote by City Council, it includes a GSA representative on the City of Davis Transportation Commission and graduate student representation concerning Unitrans services.

##### NO

A no vote rejects the Unitrans fee. Graduate students will continue to pay individually for access to Unitrans and Yolobus.

#### Overview

This referendum proposes a \$245 year-round Unitrans fee for five years to provide access to Unitrans for graduate students. This fee will ensure fare-free, unlimited access to Unitrans and Yolobus for the duration of the fee to all graduate students that fall under the purview of the Graduate Student Association. The fee referendum improves upon the current level of Unitrans bus service by 1) Providing graduate students with unlimited access to Unitrans and Yolobus services. 2) Funding to expand the bus service, fleet, and other capital needs to serve graduate students in Davis and Woodland.

It addresses the need for graduate student representation in transportation policy and advocates for the expansion of West Campus and Woodland routes. The fee would start in Fall 2025 and end in Summer 2030. The Unitrans fee can be applied permanently through a second fee referendum.

The passage of the 2025 referendum requires voter turnout equal to at least twenty percent (20%) of the graduate student population and a fifty percent (50%) majority vote for approval.

## To be Done:

There will be further outreach to all graduate students through focus groups and surveys. The consultation process will include town halls with the GSA general assembly (GA), the MBA, Vet Med, Nursing, and Medicine. This outreach must be completed by Feb 11 when the final language is submitted to COSAF.

## Fee Implementation

### 1. Fee Amount

- A fee of \$245 per academic year will be assessed to all [graduate students that fall under the purview of the Graduate Student Association \(GSA\)](#) starting in the Fall Quarter of the 2025-2026 academic year.
- This fee will be subject to an annual increase based on the CPI to account for inflation and rising operational costs.
- This would follow the ASUCD Unitrans fee as a campus-fee.

### 2. Life of Fee

- The fee and its impact will be reviewed in 2029-2030 and a new fee referendum will be proposed by the GSA in Spring 2030 for implementation in Fall 2030.
- While a five-year fee is unusual, it will provide graduate students with the opportunity to evaluate whether Unitrans has adequately served the graduate student body. A vote after five years on the continuation of the fee is needed to evaluate whether representation in transportation policy and expansion of intercity services has been met.

### 3. Coverage and Benefits

- The fee will provide fare-free, unlimited access to Unitrans and YoloBus services for all covered graduate students.
- This benefit aims to reduce transportation costs, promote sustainable commuting options, and enhance the overall quality of life for graduate students.

### 4. Use of Funds: Intercity Service Expansion

- In consultation with Unitrans, the GSA, and graduate students in an outreach process consisting of focus groups, surveys, and town halls with the GSA GA, the MBA, Vet Med, Nursing, and Medicine, a portion of the collected fees will be allocated to:

- EITHER expand intercity transportation services in Woodland through Yolobus facilitating easier travel between Davis and Woodland for academic, professional, and personal purposes. Expansion of services by Yolobus in Woodland makes affordable housing more accessible,
- OR expand intracity transportation services through the addition of a Unitrans route to West Campus. This will better serve graduate and professional students.
- In consultation with Unitrans, a portion of the collected fees can be used for capital needs including bus fleet, facilities, stops and other capital needs to serve students.
- The proposal allocates \$9,600/year (8 hour work/week) for a Unitrans GSA Advocate who will work with the University representative to the Yolo Transportation District to advocate for expanding services to Woodland. The Unitrans GSA Advocate will act as an advocate for graduate students to voice their concerns and contribute to the development of improved transportation services to Woodland. By February 13, this portion will be reviewed by Mabel Salon in Government Relations.

### **5. Use of Funds: Unitrans Representation and Advocacy**

- Through the GSA, a Graduate Student Unitrans Services Committee will be formed to work with Unitrans, the City of Davis, and Campus Planning to collect graduate student data to evaluate the addition of bus stops in Davis and campus that will better serve graduate students.
- In consultation with the City and subject to a vote by City Council, the GSA will have one graduate student representative on the City of Davis Transportation Commission to ensure that the interests and needs of graduate students are considered in city transportation policies and services as it relates to Unitrans service. GSA appointees would only vote on Unitrans specific items, any non-Unitrans items, GSA appointees would have no vote.
- In consultation with the GSA, ASUCD will review how graduate students can best fit into Unitrans and student government. By February 13, this portion will be reviewed by Gaius Ilupeju.

### **6. Use of Funds: Unitrans Employment for Graduate Students**

- Unitrans will open employment opportunities to graduate students, providing them with the chance to work as drivers, administrative staff, and in other roles within the organization. This offers graduate students valuable work experience, flexible job options, and additional income opportunities.



## Graduate Student Association

### **Initiative Provisions**

**Advisory Vote:** The outcome of the vote shall be advisory to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Chancellor, and the President of the University of California.

**Voting:** “Minimum voting pools” have been determined in accordance with University regulations. A minimum voter turnout of twenty percent (20%) of the graduate student population is required for a valid vote. The exact number of graduate students required will be provided by the University Registrar in advance of the election, and will be based on the winter quarter 2025 data. In addition, this referendum requires ratification by at least fifty percent (50%) affirmative vote for approval.

**Return to Aid:** In accordance with UCOP policy, this fee will provide funding available in Academic Year 2025-26 and subsequent years of twenty five percent (25%) of this fee annually to support graduate students with the greatest financial need.