

# COSAF Report

ASUCD Fee Referenda Ballot Language feedback

November 5, 2019 9:08 AM PST

Action Item# 2020-003

## Q2 - Please provide your overall comments on the ASUCD Fee draft ballot language.

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Because the \$18 increase seems steep, this will take students by surprise. I think the front page needs to be 100% clear about why the high amount increase is necessary and exactly where the money will be going. I think the reason the Unitrans referendum passed was because it was very clear about how the money was going to impact students. This referendum needs to draw from the Unitrans referendum to highlight significance and incorporate specificity.

The fee would be more likely to pass in my opinion if the increase from now to next year wasn't so significant. I also want to inquire about what would happen in regards to ASUCD's use of the Student Service Fee if this referendum were to pass. The most important thing would be to have consistent language when talking about the fee. As well as explicitly naming acronyms for those students that may not be as experienced with the terminology. Don't repeat the same thing over and over again. The overview doesn't seem to match the description in terms of what the referendum will be providing funding for.

I think it should be made more clear that there will be an increase of \$7.50 each year after the pilot year in addition to the new base fee of \$26.

The overall draft ballot is very long and confusing. The voters will not read through all this information to get the general idea of the referendum because it is too long and a lot of the language is very confusing for the lay reader. There are portions that are repeated and other portions that can be combined. The first sentence (which I believe will be the only thing the majority of the voters will read) is too long and confusing. In addition, the table should be more clear and actually within the first page of the referendum since this gives a lot of info that the voters should look through. There isn't enough information about what specifically would happen if the voters vote yes vs no which should be clear because this will contextualize the importance of this referendum. I don't really get a sense of why this referendum is necessary and what you will do with the money. This is a lot of money to ask from students and voters should be aware of the consequences. It really is not clear until multiple readings how much the increase will be because there are just so many numbers swirling around within the first sentence. Again overall, the information is important but some info should be condensed to allow the voters to fully understand the referendum.

The entire "issue" section is just a long run-on-sentence. There are simply too many ideas. You do not need to remove any ideas. Just cut the section into short sentences. This comment further applies to the rest of the draft. There are also inconsistencies with the spacing. One example, the "voting" section has a large gap between "census" and "data."

1) I think it would be helpful to include a statement regarding the percentage of your funding that is returned to students through student employment. I thought that was a strong aspect of your presentation and when looking at the referendum I only see a comment as the number of student employed. 2) I did find it confusing (and maybe slightly misrepresentative) that you were discussing revenue from the base fee instead of ASUCD's total revenue during the presentation.

Since our culture and generation is more visual, I think a simple graph that was presented today would help students see the magnitude of the deficit. If I read this fee referendum then I see this fee increase to provide more services, events, and opportunities rather than the current hole ASUCD is currently facing and will continue to face.

The ASUCD ballot provides a substantial amount of information that students will be well informed.

For a number of the fees that COSAF reviews, COSAF has the ability to recommend a CPI increase as a way to provide oversight. For the ASUCD Fee, the CPI increase is automatically applied? Is there a reason that COSAF would not have the ability to hold ASUCD accountable for how they are spending the fee revenue?

Too much of an increase in the first year. "Return to Aid" is probably not a phrase that is familiar to most students. Life of Fee----the ballot says that the fee does not have an "expiration" date. Actually, it does. It ends in 2031.

## Q3 - Please provide any specific edits or additions to sections you would like to

recommend.

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Something I think the referendum needs is a few concrete examples of units that will be supported - what the unit is/does and what the money SPECIFICALLY will go towards.

I would suggest that you guys discuss the fee in terms of annual versus quarterly. In the "Issue" section saying "see attached graph" versus (25 percent of which will be used for Return to Aid). Also, Return to Aid should just be described as Financial Aid. CPI should be written as the Consumer Price Index. In the "Description" section "all members of ASUCD should just be described as the undergraduates. Using bullet points will make the ballot language easier to comprehend. There are 3 times where the ballot language discusses needing a voter turnout of at least 20% of the undergraduate student population & from that needing 60% of that group to say yes. The group overseeing the fee should not be ASUCD themselves but COSAF. The checks and balances system exists for a reason: to make sure no one is doing things they aren't supposed to be doing. Also, it is hard to trust a group that got themselves into nearly half a million deficit to oversee a fee independently.

I think that if possible there should be a more gradual increase in the student fee, \$8 to \$26 in one year is a big jump. It might be better received by the student population if this fee increase were a gradual process.

Use either quarterly or yearly (annually) throughout and not both because this forces the voter to do math. Include bullet points instead of long paragraphs because that makes it easier to read and digest. In the first sentence refer to the tables because they are not referenced early on and include important info that actually should be within the first page. Explain what CPI is and spell it out because many lay readers will not know what this is. That first sentence can and should be broken down into multiple sentences because it does not flow very well. The part in parenthesis in the first sentence "(25 percent of which will be used for Return to Aid)" should be moved to the end because at its current location it makes the sentence clunky. The wording is a bit unclear because it took me multiple readings to understand the actual fee amount per year. It should be as clear as possible in regards to the amount of increase because this is why the voters are voting. Under DESCRIPTION, "all members of ASUCD" is not explained what this means and can mislead or be misunderstood to only mean certain students. This should be "all undergraduate students" since all undergraduate students pay for ASUCD. Why is there a 12.5% annual increase for salaries and stipends since the average is 3% (on this same point, will you still be asking for the Student Services Fee since that is another source of revenue that pays for salaries)? What is the ASUCD DREAM Committee? This portion should include more easily recognizable programs that students actually know such as Picnic Day. Also this entire portion should have bullet points instead of paragraph form. The last portion under DESCRIPTION on page 1 and the first part of page 2 is repeated in page 2 under OVERVIEW which is again repeated in the VOTING section on page 5. This portion on page 1-2 and page 2 under OVERVIEW should be deleted and only included on page 5 in the VOTING section. In the paragraph under OVERVIEW (which should be broken into bullet points), your 4 points differ from the 4 points on page 1 under DESCRIPTION. The very last paragraph on page 3 is actually very clear and I think that paragraph should be on page 1 to better explain the entire referendum. Again the tables should be on the first page because it really shows the entire cost over time that voters need to be aware of. This is not a language suggestion but including another oversight body such as COSAF besides ASUCD is necessary to convey no conflict of interest. Under ADJUSTMENT OF FEES "the ASUCD fee will be adjusted annually by the CPI escalator..." is confusing because the fee is also increased annually by \$7.50. Spell out BIA and explain what this is.

Define "greatest financial need." Clarify what is meant by the \$7.50 annual increase ends in Spring 2031. It could easily be misinterpreted to meaning the fee reverts back to \$26 by Spring 2031. While the nature of this referendum necessitates economic jargon, try to limit the amount in a single sentence. I.e. The last sentence of the "Use of funds derived from the fee" section.

- 1) Perhaps you could also include a comment regarding how you evaluate whether your programs are meeting specific objectives/learning outcomes?
- 2) I personally am not certain what "Refrigerator Services" entails.

Add in the Issue section that this fee has not increased since 1979 so couple of units were eliminated due to the shrinking budget. In the last proportion of "Return to Aid Funds". this does not seem like a good reason to increase ASUCD budget because of the lack of explanation that it is a campus wide initiative and ASUCD contributes to the support of students.

An addition to the referendum that would be helpful is to maybe include what the ASUCD fund supports. Before the presentation for COSAF I did not know the fund supported, but after the presentation I understood well why an increase of this fund was necessary. However, students will not get this presentation so it would be great if this information could be added to the form.

Simplify the wording. Explain what "return to aid" means. Indicate the percent of student on campus who receive Financial Aid. Change the dollar amount to something that is easy to follow  $(\$18 + \$7.50)/2 = \$12.75$ . How about proposing a \$13 a quarter fee increase, with CPI?

**End of Report**