2015 Recommendations of the UMBC Undergraduate Student Fee Advisory Board to the Vice President of Administration & Finance
Introduction

This report details the recommendation of the Student Fee Advisory Board regarding the proposed mandatory fee increases for FY 2015-2016. This recommendation is intended to guide the administration in approving or amending the proposed fee increases based on student input.

The Board is comprised of eight members, including members who are actively affiliated with the UMBC Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association. Care was taken in approving candidates to the Board to maximize outreach potential. Each member of the Board served as a liaison to a different demographic of students. Resident students, commuters, undergraduate students, graduate students, and a diversity of majors were represented on this year’s Board.

Outreach

After hearing extensively from each Fee Owner about the Athletics, Commons, Transportation, Technology, and Auxiliary fees, the Board compiled the information into a consumable form and began reaching out to the undergraduate student body.

Our primary method of receiving student feedback was through a Google form that allowed students to read about what was being proposed, and provide their feedback about each fee. We publicized the survey on a myUMBC news post via the SGA group. The post received approximately 320 paws and several comments from students. Each Board member took the link to the myUMBC post and the survey and publicized it through their own lines. The Board also relied heavily upon email and social media as means of communication. Emails were sent by Board members to various electronic mailing lists, individual students and staff members to encourage undergraduate students to take the survey. The myUMBC discussion board post was utilized as means of driving students to the survey; emails sent would encourage students not only to take the survey, but also to ‘paw’ the discussion post to continue to draw eyes to this topic.

Board members and other members from various organizations -- including those represented on the Board -- promoted the undergraduate survey and Fee Forums via social media, including Facebook and Twitter. Between the social media accounts of the SGA and TRW, the Board ensured that information about the survey and the fees was distributed widely via social media. Overall we received 1286 responses to our survey, including both selected and written answers.

Recommendations

After thorough outreach to the UMBC undergraduate student body, the Student Fee Advisory Board would like to make the following recommendations concerning each of the five mandatory fees that were presented to the Board:
Technology

The first portion to the survey focused on the Technology mandatory fee. We asked students for their opinions on the fee increase and related expenditures.

We asked students if they supported upgrades to UMBC’s computer labs and academic software. The majority of students supported this, with 55% responding ‘yes,’ 30% responding ‘no’, and 16% responding ‘unsure.’ Furthermore, we asked students if they supported upgrades to Wi-Fi services and cyber security measures on campus. Again, a majority of the students supported this with 75% and 60%, respectively, responding ‘yes’.

When asked to rate the level of support for the fee increase on a 1-to-5 scale (1 being ‘not at all’, 5 being ‘very strongly’), 70% of students ranked their support at a ‘3’ or higher.

Our recommendation with regard to the Technology Fee is as follows: Approve the Technology Fee as it was presented.

Transportation

The second portion of our survey provided students with information about the planned expenditures under the transportation fee.

We asked students if they supported the addition of a Student Driver Program, and most students supported this measure. 42% responded ‘yes’, while 32% responded ‘no’ and 25% responded ‘unsure’. Based on some of the comments, students seemed unclear about the measure and were unwilling to give a definite answer without information. In next year’s survey, the Board will attempt to better explain similar expenditures under this fee in order to ensure that students can make a more informed decision.

We also asked students if they supported upgrades to Wi-Fi services on the buses. A majority of the students (65%) responded ‘no’, while just 18% responded ‘yes’ and 17% responded ‘no’.

Based on our scale, students did not support this increase overall, with only 36% ranking their support at a ‘3’ or higher. We feel as though the lack of support arises from the negative response to the expenditure for Wi-Fi upgrades on buses.

Given that 70% of students said they ‘never’ use UMBC transit, the Board does not feel as though the Wi-Fi on buses was necessary. That, coupled with the lack of student support for the expenditure, led the Board to make its recommendation.

Our recommendation with regard to the Transportation Fee is as follows: Amend the Transportation Fee such that the increase for FY 2015-2016 does not support the upgrades to Wi-Fi on buses. The Board further recommends that the fee increase be lowered from its current proposed value of $14 to reflect the suggested change.

The Commons
The third part of our survey aimed to gather feedback on The Commons mandatory fee. The Board asked students about the proposed expenditures increases and expenditures for the next fiscal year.

We asked students whether they would support the addition of a new Director of Multicultural Affairs in the Office of Student Life. The majority of students were opposed to this expenditure, with 55% responding ‘no’, 23% responding ‘yes’, and 21% responding ‘unsure’.

Once again, students’ overall did not support for this fee was relatively mixed. Approximately 65% of respondents ranked their support at a ‘2’ or lower, while only 35% of students ranked their support at a ‘3’ or higher.

Even after much discussion, the Board did not understand the necessity of the two new positions to be funded by the fee increase. This, coupled with the overwhelmingly negative feedback from students with regard to raising this fee, informed the decision of the Board to make its recommendation.

Our recommendation with regard to The Commons Fee is as follows: Amend the Commons Fee such that the increase for FY 2015-2016 does not support the addition of a new Director of Multicultural Affairs position. The Board further recommends that the fee increase be lowered from its current proposed value of $18 to reflect the suggested change.

**Auxiliary Facilities**

The fourth part to our survey focused on the Auxiliary Facilities mandatory fee. We asked students how they felt about the increase in the fee and the related expenditures.

We asked students if they supported the proposed rate of increase to begin funding the new Event Center that will be constructed in the coming years, and only 35% indicated that they would.

Overall support for the fee increase was mixed, with 50% ranking their support at a ‘3’ and 50% ranking their support at ‘2’ or lower. However, we learned from the written feedback on this question that many students did not know what the Event Center’s purpose, and were unclear about plans for future buildings at UMBC. We feel that with more knowledge about these plans, students may be more apt to support this fee.

Our recommendation with regard to the Auxiliary Facilities Fee is as follows: Approve the Auxiliary Facilities Fee as it was presented.

**Athletics**

The next part of the Mandatory Fee Review Survey focused on the Athletics mandatory fee. We again asked students about the proposed increases and expenditures specific to the athletics department and division of UMBC.
Our first question under this part of the survey asked students support for increased expenditures on travel for athletes. An overwhelming 76% of respondents said ‘no’ to the increase, with only 9% supporting the increase.

We also asked students whether they supported salary increases in spending on athletic scholarships. Most students (71%), again, said ‘no.’ 16% of students supported increased spending on scholarships.

Our last question in regard to this fee increase asked students if they would support a set-aside for future recreational equipment. Results for this question were relatively split, with 48% of students indicating ‘yes,’ 38% indicating ‘no,’ and 14% indicating ‘unsure.’ Despite the mixed results we received for this question, students provided a great deal of written feedback indicating that recreational spending would be more favorable than spending on varsity athletics. They also provided feedback about what kinds of recreational equipment they would like to see including updated cardio and weight room equipment.

Overall, students did not support this increase for the Athletics fee, with 69% of students ranking their support at a ‘2’ or lower.

After much discussion among ourselves and the Fee owners, the Board better understood the reasons for the fee increase, specifically the increased expenditures for travel and scholarships. After talking to the Athletic Directors and Fee Owner, the Board understands that the increased transportation expenditure reflect the increased costs of travel rather than an increase in air travel. Regarding the increased expenditure in scholarships, the Board was split. The Board was concerned with rising costs of tuition for students, but also concerned with the ability of UMBC Athletics to remain competitive in the coming year if scholarships were to decrease. This led us to make our recommendation for the Athletics Fee.

Our recommendation with regard to the Athletics Fee is as follows: Approve the Athletics Fee as proposed.

**Student Activities Fee**

The final part to our survey focused on the Student Activities mandatory fee. Since this fee did not increase, we were interested in seeing student support towards increased expenditures on SGA’s T-Shirt Fund, Printing Initiative, and Arts Fee Initiative.

We asked students if they supported the expansion of the SGA T-shirt Fund. 49% of students responded ‘no’, while 36% responded ‘yes’ and 14% said they were ‘unsure.’

We also asked students if they supported a campus partnership to increase arts-related programming and PAHB resources open to all students. An overwhelming amount of students supported this measure, with 60% supporting increases in programming and 54% supporting increased availability of PAHB resources.

Our last question for this part of the survey asked if students supported a reserve expenditure to fund an initiative that provided students with twenty-five (25) sheets of unrestricted printing per
year at AOK Library. Students’ responses were mixed, with 48% supporting this, 40% not supporting this, and 12% unsure. However, many students provided negative feedback regarding this expenditure.

Overall students supported the proposed expenditures, with 68% ranking ‘3’ or higher based on our scale.

In addition to the student support, the Board viewed the breakdown of costs per person per page for the proposed unrestricted printing initiative. This allowed us to make our recommendation.

Our recommendation with regard to the Student Activities Fee is as follows: Amend the Student Activities Fee such that the budget for FY 2015-2016 does not include increased expenditures for the T-Shirt Fund, and does not include a line-item for unrestricted printing.

Moving forward

On the whole, we are very thankful for this opportunity and hope that it continues to be successful in the coming years. As part of our survey, we also asked students questions about the Student Fee Advisory Board and its processes in order gain insight about what was successful, and what the board should improve upon.

First, we asked students if they were familiar with the Student Fee Advisory Board and its role. While the results were split almost evenly, we found that 37% were familiar with the Board, while 58% said that they were not. As a board, we feel that we will need to be more visible in the future, so that students have a more complete understanding of our role in this process, and may be more inclined to provide feedback. We feel that next year’s Board may find it useful to increase their social media outreach earlier in the process in order to better publicize the Board and its process to students.

We also asked students if they felt that they had been provided with adequate information to form opinions about the proposed fee increases. We found that 73% of students indicated that they had been adequately informed. While this was the response given by the majority of students, we feel that a more detailed, supplementary report might be provided along with the survey in order to better explain some of the expenditures that might be unclear.

Conclusion

The Student Fee Advisory Board recommends that the proposed increases in the, Technology, Auxiliary, and Athletics Fees be approved as presented. The Board recommends that the Transportation fee be amended such that the expenditures related to the Wi-Fi upgrades are removed from this year’s proposed fee increase. The Board also recommends that the Commons Fee be amended such that the expenditures related to the Director of Multicultural Affairs are removed from this year’s proposed fee increase.
Next year, the board hopes to gain even more student feedback by more thoroughly promoting the Fee Forum, the survey, and the Board itself so that students are given as many opportunities as possible to express their comments and concerns regarding the proposed fees.

While the Board is thankful that the administration is ready and willing to work so closely with students on an issue as important as annual fee review, we would like to see their commitment solidified with a pledge to financially support the outreach conducted by the Board in years to come.

Thank you,

The Undergraduate Students of the Student Fee Advisory Board

Manisha Vepa, freshman, Student Government Association Executive Aide to the President
Kevin Williams, senior, Student Government Association Coordinator of Internal Affairs
Andres Garcia, sophomore, Student Government Association Financial Support Team Member
Grant Searfoss, sophomore, UMBC Athletics Men’s Lacrosse Team Member
Nelly Waribe, junior, Transfer Student Tau Sigma Honor Society Member
Dominic Brown, senior, Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships Student Assistant
Ma’neh Tcheffo, junior, Resident Student Association Director of Advocacy and Leadership
Appendix 1
Demographics of Fee Survey Respondents
Figure 1.1
Breakdown of Number of Semesters Completed by Respondents

- 1-2: 440 (34.1%)
- 3-4: 380 (29.6%)
- 5-8: 239 (18.6%)
- 7-8: 143 (11.1%)
- 8+: 88 (6.8%)

Figure 1.2
Breakdown of Percentages of Resident and Commuter Respondents

- Resident: 591 (45.8%)
- Commuter: 699 (54.2%)

Figure 1.3
Breakdown of Respondents’ Majors

- Engineering/IT: 402 (31.2%)
- Math/Science: 435 (33.7%)
- Art/Humanities: 174 (13.5%)
- Social Sciences: 279 (21.6%)

Figure 1.4
Breakdown of In-State and Out-of-State Respondents

- I pay in-state tuition: 1171 (90.8%)
- I pay out-of-state tuition: 119 (9.2%)
Figure 1.5

Breakdown of Percentages of Full-time and Part-time Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a full-time student</td>
<td>1146</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a part-time student</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am a full [1146]

I am a part [144]
Appendix 2
Summary of Responses to Fee Survey
Technology

Below are charts showing the breakdown of responses for each question asked related to the Technology Fee.

**Do you support upgrades to the Wireless bandwith to improve Wifi speed?**
- Yes: 963 (74.7%)
- No: 218 (16.9%)
- Unsure: 109 (8.4%)

**Do you support upgrades to current cybersecurity measures?**
- Yes: 775 (60.1%)
- No: 303 (23.5%)
- Unsure: 212 (16.4%)

**Do you support upgrades to campus learning technology?**
- Yes: 704 (54.6%)
- No: 381 (29.5%)
- Unsure: 205 (15.9%)

**Overall, how strongly do you support the increase in this fee and its related expenditures?**
- 1: 184 (14.3%)
- 2: 196 (15.2%)
- 3: 363 (28.1%)
- 4: 353 (27.4%)
- 5: 194 (15%)
Transportation and Parking Fee

Below are charts showing the breakdown of responses for each question asked related to the Transportation and Parking Fee.

**Do you support the addition of a Student Driver Program to increase student job opportunities on campus?**

- Yes [539] 41.8%
- No [434] 33.6%
- Unsure [317] 24.6%

**Do you support upgrades to WiFi services on UMBC buses?**

- Yes [234] 18.1%
- No [837] 64.9%
- Unsure [219] 17%

**Overall, how strongly do you support the increase in this fee and its related expenditures?**

- 1 [489] 37.0%
- 2 [338] 26.2%
- 3 [308] 23.9%
- 4 [98] 7.8%
- 5 [57] 4.4%
University Commons Fee

Below are charts showing the breakdown of responses for each question asked related to the University Commons Fee.

Do you support the addition of a new Director of Multicultural Affairs to create a campus environment which affirms diversity?

- Yes 303 23.5%
- No 710 55%
- Unsure 277 21.5%

Overall, how strongly do you support the increase in this fee and its related expenditures?

- 1 577 44.7%
- 2 261 20.2%
- 3 275 21.3%
- 4 104 8.1%
- 5 73 5.7%
Auxiliary Facilities Fee

Below are charts showing the breakdown of responses for each question asked related to the Auxiliary Facilities Fee.

**Do you support the proposed rate of increase to fund a new UMBC Events Center?**

- Yes: 455 (35.3%)
- No: 595 (46.1%)
- Unsure: 240 (18.8%)

**Overall, how strongly do you support the increase in this fee and its related expenditures?**

- 1: 445 (34.5%)
- 2: 195 (15.1%)
- 3: 362 (28.1%)
- 4: 162 (12.6%)
- 5: 126 (9.8%)
Athletics Fee

Below are charts showing the breakdown of responses for each question asked related to the Athletics Fee.

**Do you support increased spending on sports teams travel?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>163</th>
<th>12.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do you support a set-aside for future recreational equipment?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>496</th>
<th>38.4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do you support increases in spending on athletic scholarships?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>211</th>
<th>16.4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall, how strongly do you support the increase in this fee and its related expenditures?**

| 1 | 634 | 49.1% |
| 2 | 255 | 19.8% |
| 3 | 210 | 16.3% |
| 4 | 95  | 7.4%  |
| 5 | 96  | 7.4%  |
Student Activities Fee

Below are charts showing the breakdown of responses for each question asked related to the Student Activities Fee.

**Do you support the expansion of the SGA t-shirt fund?**
- Yes: 466 (38.1%)
- No: 637 (49.4%)
- Unsure: 187 (14.5%)

**Do you support the establishment of a new campus partnership to have more arts- and arts-related programming and initiatives open to all students?**
- Yes: 778 (60.3%)
- No: 371 (28.8%)
- Unsure: 141 (10.9%)

**Do you support the reserve expenditure to create a campus partnership that will open up resources in the PAHB to become available to all students?**
- Yes: 701 (54.3%)
- No: 356 (27.6%)
- Unsure: 233 (18.1%)

**Do you support the reserve expenditure to initiate a pilot program to provide every student 25 sheets of unrestricted printing per year in AOK library?**
- Yes: 618 (47.9%)
- No: 516 (40%)
- Unsure: 156 (12.1%)

**Overall, how strongly do you support the increase in this fee and its related expenditures?**
- 1: 238 (18.4%)
- 2: 175 (13.6%)
- 3: 368 (28.5%)
- 4: 206 (22.9%)
- 5: 213 (16.5%)