

**Measure #: 65**

**Referendum Title: Amendment to Student Life Facilities Fee - OPERS (Office of Physical Education Recreation and Sports) Facilities**

**Ballot Type: Amendment to an existing fee**

**Ballot Author: OPERS**

**Contact: Andrea Willer**

**Question:** Shall the undergraduate and graduate students of UCSC continue to provide funding to support the ongoing operation, maintenance and future improvements to all OPERS facilities, by amending and extending the \$30 per student, per quarter Student Life Facilities Fee indefinitely, beginning fall 2017?

**Summary Points:**

- Amends and makes permanent the Student Life Facilities Fee which currently expires in Fall 2017; the fee will continue to be assessed with no end date.
- The fee will be assessed to all undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. A reduced fee will be charged in summer quarter based on the level of services available and consultation with the Student Fee Advisory Committee.
- The amended fee will limit use of funds to OPERS facilities only.
- The OPERS Student Advisory Committee, comprised of six undergraduates, one graduate, one faculty and one staff, will provide ongoing oversight of the fee as well as future projects.
- The fee will generate approximately \$1,600,000<sup>1</sup> in 2017-2018:
  - \$222,000 for student wages for over 200 student positions
  - \$463,000 for reserves for future repairs and improvements
  - \$440,000 for supplies, equipment, maintenance and utilities
  - \$475,000 for professional staff salaries and benefits
- Funds generated will be used for OPERS facility operations and maintenance; approximately 29% of which will be placed into reserves to fund deferred maintenance and possible improvement projects such as:
  - lights on the Upper East Field
  - pool filtration system replacement
  - outdoor jogging track replacement
  - tennis court resurfacing
  - basketball court resurfacing
  - pool fence replacement
- Both undergraduate and graduate students were consulted in the following mechanisms: Opinion Poll on the 2014 Campus Elections ballot, 6 student focus groups, multiple presentations and over 500 collected surveys.
- The Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) has elected not to advocate for or against this proposal. The committee believes that OPERS operations are essential to campus life and student well-being. However, in our solicitation of feedback from the student body, concerns arose about ambiguity in the

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2014-2015 fall, winter, spring undergraduate and graduate student enrollment average of 17,866

referendum language. The proposal also results in an overall increase in student fees, and given the proportion of requested funds designated to operations, maintenance, and professional staff salary—as opposed to the direct support of student activities—the committee was concerned that justification for the increase may not be adequate.

- The fee is sponsored for undergraduates on the ballot by a petition signed by at least 10% of registered undergraduate students; the fee is sponsored for graduates on the ballot by a resolution of the Graduate Student Association and a petition signed by at least 10% of registered graduate students.
- Without this fee there will be significant reductions to hours, programs and services at OPERS. Potentially, OPERS will need to reduce facility hours by 40%, and possibly have to close the Pool
- The current facilities include the East and West Field Houses, Swimming Pool, Jogging Track, East and West Tennis Courts, Multi-purpose Room, Dance Studio, Activities Room, Martial Arts Room and Upper and Lower East Fields.
- In 2014-2015 more than 8,000 unique UCSC students utilized the OPERS facilities for a total of more than 325,000 entries. This figure does not include the use of outdoor spaces such as the Upper and Lower East Fields, Outdoor Basketball Courts, and West Tennis Courts.

### **Background:**

The [Student Life Facilities Fee](#) was passed by UCSC undergraduate and graduate students in 1985 for the purpose of building and supporting a variety of student life facilities such as the student center (currently known as the Student Union), swimming pool, jogging track, East Field House, East Fields, and tennis courts. The Regents approved the fee on July 19, 1985 in two parts, to construct physical education facilities and the student center. Revenue from the fee is used for debt payments on funds borrowed for the construction of these facilities nearly thirty years ago, as well as costs to operate and maintain the facilities and a reserve fund for major repairs and upgrades. The \$30 per student, per quarter fee began to be collected in Winter 1988 as a thirty year fee; the fee is scheduled to end in Fall 2017, shortly after the final payment on the construction debt is completed.

Currently, the \$30 Student Life Facilities Fee is used as follows: approximately \$9.50 for debt service, \$13.30 for facility operations and maintenance, and \$7.20 for reserves for major repairs and upgrades on the associated facilities.

If adopted, the amended fee would result in \$30.00 devoted to facilities operation and maintenance for OPERS facilities. These facilities include the East and West Field Houses, Swimming Pool, Jogging Track, East and West Tennis Courts, Multi-purpose Room, Dance Studio, Activities Room, Martial Arts Room and Upper and Lower East Fields.

There is a separate referendum on the ballot which is proposing a new fee for Student Governed Spaces, including the Redwood Building, Student Union and Media Center. If both fee measures pass, all undergraduate students would pay \$40.00 per student, per quarter for Student Governed Spaces and OPERS facilities; graduate students would pay \$30.00 per student, per quarter for OPERS facilities.

(OPERS provides facilities that support OPERS Departments such as Physical Education, Intramural Sports, Sports Clubs, FitLife, Recreation, and general drop-in-use. Unique student participation in these departments are as follows:

- Physical Education            2021 students
- Intramural Sports            1817 students
- Sports Clubs                1000 students
- FitLife                        642 students
- Recreation                 4076 students

In 2014-2015 more than 8,000 unique UCSC students utilized the facilities for a total of more than 325,000 entries. Currently there are over 1000 UCSC students that participate in Sport Clubs, UCSC has 49 Sports Clubs, which is the most of any UC. The Clubs have practices, host competitions and events inside OPERS and on both fields. OPERS facilities have also been utilized to host large scale campus events such as Commencement, Edge of Eden, Fall Festival, Holi Festival, Alumni Weekend, and the Fiat 50th Celebration.

Currently the fee allows undergraduate and graduate students access to the OPERS facilities that are open to students almost 100 hours per week during the academic quarter and 64 hours per week during the summer.

The cost to operate the OPERS facilities is funded through this fee as well as additional revenue streams such as facility reservations, locker rental, faculty & staff membership fees, community membership fees, Master Swim usage, and UCSC Summer Conference Service program usage.

**How the fee will be used:**

OPERS will use the fee to continue to provide existing access to facilities. which are currently accessed by over half of the student body who participate in Physical Education, Intramural Sports, Sports Clubs, Recreation, Experiential Leadership Program, Athletics, Student Clubs and Organizations as well as individual students who wants to drop in to work out, play some basketball, jog the track, rent a tent, or just meet up with friends.

The majority of the fee will be used on salaries, wages, and benefits for staff and student employees. As the second largest student employer on campus, OPERS provides over 200 student employees, on average 40,000 hours of student employment per year, and almost \$222,000 in student wages annually. This fee funds professional staff salary and benefits (5.18 full time equivalency positions), student lifeguards, event assistants, maintenance workers, and facility operations assistants, as well as supplies and equipment, utilities, and other costs required to operate and maintain the facilities. Staffing costs include employees who manage and maintain the various facilities, a lifeguard supervisor, and a newly proposed custodian intended to improve the cleanliness of the facilities (which require a higher level of service than a typical academic or residential building). Salary and benefits costs have increased an average of 3-5% annually in recent years, and increases to the minimum wage have caused a sizable increase in the cost for the 200+ student employees that support OPERS facilities.

Similarly, utilities costs continue to grow. Last year, OPERS paid close to \$100,000 just on utilities, and over \$200,000 on maintenance. These costs will increase as the facilities age. The current budget is inadequate to meet the level of service currently available to students. The proposed fee will maintain current service levels, add a custodian, and build reserves for future facility improvements and major maintenance.

## **Why is the fee needed:**

<sup>2</sup>Currently UCSC has the least amount of recreational sports space of all the UC's, but rank as one of the top in participation based on usage per square foot/student population (is there a reference for this statement, like a report or study? If so, suggest adding a foot note with the citation). Our student body lives a healthy lifestyle, likes to exercise, take PE classes, and participates in a variety of sports and recreational opportunities at OPERS.

The original Student Life Facility Fee was passed in 1985 and fees were collected starting in 1988 when the construction was completed. The fee is the largest source of funding for operating OPERS facilities, and is set to expire in Fall 2017. If this fee is not extended, OPERS will not have adequate funding to operate the facilities listed in the question. Impacts may include:

- Hours of operation will be significantly reduced
- Programs, services, and reservations will be reduced
- Student employment opportunities will be reduced
- Fees to participate will increase

Additionally, OPERS facilities are nearly 30 years old and are in need of major repair, replacement, and enhancements to meet the needs of the growing student body. Part of the fee revenue will go into a reserve for future major repairs and maintenance, and possible facility improvements; an example of a high priority project would be making updates to the pool filtration system. The OPERS Student Advisory Committee, in consultation with OPERS staff, will prioritize the use of reserves and make recommendations for potential uses based on estimated project costs, funds available, and the needs of students. The appropriate administrator will provide administrative oversight on the use of fee revenues. Use of reserve funds is subject to approval through normal campus review processes.

This measure also changes the oversight body responsible for the fee to one that is focused on OPERS programs. Doing so simplifies the administration of the fee and enables the group to be better informed of the services provided by OPERS and student needs for OPERS facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> No Space to Spare, City on the Hill, October, 31 2013 article shows the amount of square footage for each UC recreation facility.