

MEASURE 24: Transportation Fee Increase

QUESTION

Shall the undergraduates and graduate students of UCSC increase the current Transportation Fee of \$69/per student per quarter by \$13.33 in 2006-07; an additional \$13.33 in 2007-08; and an additional \$16.00 in 2008/09 and thereafter to provide funding for Campus Transit Operations, the acquisition of new transit vehicles, continued funding of unlimited student ridership on SCMTD transit services?

SUMMARY POINTS

- Increase current undergraduate and graduate compulsory fee of \$69 per student per quarter to \$82.33 (total) per student per quarter beginning in Fall 2006, to \$95.66 (total) beginning in Fall 2007, and to \$111.66 (total) in Fall 2008 and thereafter.
- Provides 25% Return-to-Aid on the increase amount only (\$3.33 of the 2006-07 increase, \$3.33 of the 2007-08 increase, and \$4 of the 2008-9 increase will go to Financial Aid) to assure that lower income students have assistance in paying the fee increase.
- Fee increases begin Fall Quarter 2006, increase incrementally, and become permanent with no ending date.
- Fees will be assessed each quarter and state-supported summer session on all undergraduates and graduates enrolled in that quarter or summer session.
- Based on an average 3-quarter enrollment of 15,000, this fee increase will generate approximately \$599,850 (of which \$149,850 will go to Financial Aid) beginning in 2006-07, an additional \$599,850 (of which \$149,850 will go to Financial Aid) beginning in 2007-08, and an additional \$720,000 (of which \$180,000 will go to Financial aid) beginning in 2008-09 and thereafter.
- The fee income will go to the office of Transportation & Parking Services (TAPS).
- Fee is sponsored for placement on the ballot by Student Union Assembly and the Graduate Student Association.

BALLOT STATEMENT

In order to prevent significant decreases in UCSC campus shuttle service beginning in Fall 2006 and, instead, allow for continuation of the same level of service presently provided, the Transportation Fee needs to be increased incrementally from the current fee level of \$69/per student per quarter in the following fashion:

	Current	Proposed Incremental Fee	Total New Quarterly
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	Fee	Increase	Fee
2006-07	\$69.00	\$13.25	\$82.25
2007-08	\$82.33	\$13.50	\$95.75
2008-09 (and beyond)	\$95.66	\$16.00	\$111.75

Currently, campus transit carries nearly 12,000 riders per day, while Santa Cruz Metro buses carry nearly 10,000 students daily. During the four-year period when student transit fees remained the same, Santa Cruz Metro has increased fares by 50%. This necessitated an amended contract between the Santa Cruz Metro and UCSC, which raised billing rates incrementally over seven years, rather than one year. Additionally, the UCSC campus shuttle program has experienced significant cost increases for fuel, maintenance, insurance, and personnel. Since funding for these services is derived nearly entirely from the Transportation Fee, the ability to maintain campus shuttle service at its current level is dependant on student approval of an increase in this fee.

PRO/CON STATEMENTS

When I decided to write the pro statement for this measure I thought long and hard on how to 'sell' it. How to make it sound better than it actually is, and provide you with an illusion of grandeur that will make us feel warm inside. I soon realized that would be an impossible task, we are all adults here, and we can handle the truth. A good decision requires the truth, and the truth is what I am going to provide.

The norm for most measures is that a 'no' vote will preserve the status quo. If you vote no on a sports stadium, it does not get built, you do not pay more, and everything remains the same. In this case it is the reverse; our transportation service is so mired in debt for reasons beyond TAPS' control that a no vote on Measure 24 will cause dramatic change. Our bus service will be cut by 33% if this measure fails; this will be on top of the 10% cut that we have already suffered this quarter (you are not paranoid; there are fewer buses running this quarter). Of course it goes without saying that many drivers will lose their jobs. There will be NO extra buses during the class change, as is the standard right now. And the regular buses will have reduced frequency, and some routes like the Core or Loop are just going to disappear. Think about that for a second. Hundreds of students pouring out to a bus stop that will only see a 50 person capacity bus every 15 to 20 minutes, and this bus will already be filled with the students at the previous stop. So be prepared to put on your walking shoes to get around campus during that time. Need to get to Oakes from Stevenson? Then you better put on your running shoes.

Now that we've seen the results of a no vote, it is time to describe a yes vote. The previously mentioned scenario will not be reality. There will be extra service added to our existing line up. In addition larger, higher capacity Loops will soon appear on the scene and hopefully make full buses and pass-bys a thing of the past.

Thank you for your time, and vote wisely

*Drew Salzbom,
Third Year, Stevenson College
Transportation Advisory Committee
Transit Oversight Committee*

Some Background

UCSC students first instituted a \$3.50 transit fee in 1972, and it was last raised to \$69 per quarter in 2002. This is probably the highest campus transportation fee in the country, and it reflects an extraordinary commitment of UCSC students to transportation alternatives (alternatives to single occupancy vehicles). The fee currently brings in 4 million dollars per year and pays for all on-campus shuttles and for unlimited ridership on Santa Cruz County "Metro" buses (1.8 million dollars).

In addition to the student contribution of 4 million dollars, other income sources including summer session, the conference office, the parking permit program (\$500,000), housing and parking fines (\$80,000) provide a total of about \$800,000 in funding per year. It is a strict rule of the University of California that no state funds may be used to fund parking or transit.

Due to increases in costs, especially in fuel and the Santa Cruz Metro, the transit program is currently running at a deficit of \$500,000 per year. In 2007-08, Transportation and Parking Services projects it will have to cut daytime shuttle service by 20% if the transit fee is not increased. Measure 24 phases-in a \$46 increase in the transit fee to \$112/quarter in 2008-09. Twenty-five percent of the proposed new income would go to the Financial Aid Office ("Return-to-Aid") to assure that low income students will not have to bare the full cost of this fee.

Some Reasons to Vote for Measure 24

Measure 24 will enable Transportation and Parking Services (as well as the SC County Metro) to have a reliable source of income for the transit program. It allows transportation staff to develop a sound plan to deal with all that a complex transit program entails. It provides stability in the current level of service on campus as well as unlimited ridership on the Metro. Unlimited ridership on the Metro is understood to be enabling in keeping cars

off campus. Fewer cars on campus means fewer parking headaches, less traffic on campus, and less traffic near campus (and therefore a better relationship with local neighbors).

Some Reasons to Vote Against Measure 24

Under the current teaching assistant contract, TAships do not cover this fee (nor the fee increase) therefore this would be a fee directly paid "out of pocket" by graduate students. Measure 24 also keeps UCSC in the same transit paradigm it has been in for decades, and it has simply become very expensive. Drops in shuttle service have been met with strong opposition in the past, but maybe unlimited ridership on the Metro is not held so dear. Students who do not use the Metro system or the campus shuttles do not directly benefit from this fee increase and would only be further subsidizing these programs. Lack of funding for transit may be an important stimulus to rethinking our transit program.

Ian Dobbs-Dixon

Graduate Student in Astronomy

Graduate Student Association President

With almost daily new revelations about UC executive administrators' misappropriation of funds and cronyism coming from the media and the State Legislature, we should not be increasing our own fees. In the Politics, Aristotle wrote, "Want is not the sole incentive to crime. The fact is that the greatest crimes are caused by excess and not by necessity." We should be calling for more oversight and accountability for our current fees and not increasing the cost of education. Please vote NO on Measure 24 and call on TAPS for a full accounting of the funds already at their disposal.

Kevin Parks

Graduating Senior

Classical Studies

College Nine

As a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Transit Oversight Committee (TOC), I understand that TAPS cannot afford to operate at the current level of funding. However, I do not believe that it is the responsibility of students to pay for campus infrastructure. The student transit fee should not be supporting the shuttle system of this campus, but this tax on students accounts for approximately 95% of transit revenue.

This measure does not even begin to address the greater issue of transit sustainability. The passage of this measure would only buy the transit system time. It does not resolve the issues that have resulted in the transit deficit.

Rather, it begins the cycle that created the deficit in the first place:

- Student fees are increased
- Wes Scott (Director of TAPS) has told SUA that if the measure is passed there will be an increase in services (but as we have seen in the past, the transit budget cannot sustain these services and they will likely be cut later)
- More buses are purchased (used buses) which will likely require extensive maintenance
- There will be raises in salaries and/or additional driver hours/number of employees
- At best we can only expect gas prices to stay the same, but they are more likely to increase
- Increase in enrollment (especially if Colleges 11/ 12 are built)
- When our contract with the METRO is up for renewal, it is logical to assume they would ask for an increase in rates

These are not blind predictions, rather the same set of factors that resulted in the transit budget's current deficit of over \$1 million. TAPS staff would agree that even if this measure were to pass, it is likely that in as little as five years they would have to again ask the students to increase the student transit fee.

It is time that the students send a clear message to the UCSC administration that they have a responsibility to support the needs of this campus and the students who attend this University.

Eric R. Street, Jr.

Undergraduate Representative:

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Transit Oversight Committee (TOC)

Con Statement Endorsed by:

Thomas Nicolas Moran

Undergraduate Representative to TAC

Eric Grabiell

Staff Representative to TAC

Marco Garcia

Staff Representative to TAC