



Student Fee Advisory Committee Minutes October 10, 2024

Attendees: Rosalinda Garcia, Fred Juarez, Dr. Hazelton, Ana Vargas, Jesus Galaviz, Mario Lopez, Adriana Anderson, Mark Chapa, and Natileigh Aviles

Other attendees: Denise Botello and Guadalupe Garza

Welcome

Ms. Garcia expressed her gratitude to the new members for joining the committee. She noted that most of the meeting would focus on reviewing the committee's work and purpose, but she would first like everyone to introduce themselves, as many may not be familiar with one another.

Introductions

All committee members and attendees introduced themselves by sharing their names, their affiliations with TAMIU, and a fun fact about themselves.

Overview: What is SFAC?

Membership

Ms. Garcia thanked everyone for their service and highlighted the committee's achievements from the previous year, expressing confidence in their continued success. She explained that a law requires each A&M school to form a committee to advise the administration and board of regents on various fees, including the Student Health & Medical Services fee, the Student Services fee, the Student Center Facilities fee, and the Recreational Sports fee.

She explained that this year's focus will be on the Student Health Fee, Student Center Facilities Fee, and Recreational Sports fee, as the Student Services fee has been rolled into the University fee.

Ms. Garcia explained that the committee consists of nine members: five students and four appointees selected by the president. The student members are appointed by the SGA, with three serving two-year terms and two serving one-year terms. The students in two-year terms are Adriana and Conrad (finishing in 2026) and Mario (finishing in 2025). The one-year members are Mark and Nataleigh, both finishing in 2025.

The president's appointees are Ana Vargas, Professor Hazelton, Fred, and Rosalinda. Dr. Arenaz made these appointments before his passing and also established the committee's charge, which she shared with the members the day prior.

Our Charge

Ms. Garcia explained the committee's charge, which outlines their responsibilities. The charge includes five key tasks:

1. Study the type, amount, and expenditure of the three fees mentioned.
2. Submit a written report on their findings.
3. Make recommendations, which may include suggestions for fee increases or a referendum.
4. Communicate their findings to the student body by reporting back to the SGA.
5. Meet at least twice during the academic year and prepare recommendations for the President by the end of the year.

Ms. Garcia noted that the committee would begin their review today, starting with background information on the fees. She explained the fiscal years, indicating that FY '25 refers to fall 2024 and spring 2025, while most discussions will focus on fiscal year 2026 (fall 2025 to spring 2026).

The fees being reviewed are:

- **Student Health & Medical Services Fee:** Currently \$75, the maximum allowed by the university system and cannot increase without a policy change.
- **Recreational Fee:** Set at \$82, also the maximum, and can only increase if the system changes its guidelines.
- **Student Center Facilities Fee:** Ranges from \$9 to \$100 based on credit hours; students taking 12 or more hours pay \$100, while those taking fewer pay varying amounts.

The university fee varies from \$269 to \$2,318, depending on credit hours.

Ms. Garcia highlighted that these fees fund essential university services and operations, covering costs for things like office supplies, library materials, event catering, recreational equipment, and salaries.

The funding for these offices comes from several sources, such as tuition, fees collected, grants, government funding, and fundraising and donations. These sources support the university's operations. Some offices may be funded by two sources, while others receive funds from all five, and the arrangements differ between departments.

Update on May 2024 Recommendations

Ms. Rosalinda summarized the committee's activities from the previous year, noting they studied fees and made two recommendations to the President, discussing them in a meeting that included student members and staff. She pointed out that the full committee made one recommendation, while students proposed another, referencing a document she shared with these recommendations and Dr. Arenaz's response.

Ms. Garcia explained that the committee reviewed their first recommendation regarding the Student Services fee. They looked at which offices were funded by this fee and debated whether it should support offices like registrars and financial aid. Some members felt these offices were essential, while others argued the fee should focus on offices with a more direct impact on students. They ultimately recommended funding offices like ACE, Career Services, and International Engagement instead.

Dr. Arenaz noted that a national association classifies admissions and financial aid as student services, and Texas law supports this. Even so, the University followed the Committee's recommendation and allocated the fee to Career Services and International Engagement. These offices are now funded by the University fee since the Student Services fee was later combined with the University fee.

Funds Currently Available in SFAC Account

Ms. Garcia shared that there are approximately \$12,000 left over from the Student Services fee from last year. The previous committee was tasked with identifying potential uses for this money, but they were unable to make recommendations before the year ended, so this group will now be tasked with addressing this.

Here's where we currently stand. At our next meeting, Fred and his team will present a draft budget for next year.

Fred noted that there's \$12,000 in funding for students, but there's been uncertainty on how to utilize it effectively, even after a year. Another \$12,000 has since become available, but again, there's no clear plan. He emphasized the need for a new group to gather and determine beneficial uses for the funds, highlighting that many students have long requested this support. He clarified that recreational sports fees are designated solely for recreational purposes and that a health referendum has positively impacted services like Disability Support Services (DSS) and added counseling resources.

Conrad inquired whether the \$12,000 is a recurring fund or if it's a one-time allocation.

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm