



# **INSTITUTIONAL PLAN FOR STUDENT FEES**

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# SECTION 1

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 Introduction

Colorado Mesa University, in compliance with statute (C.R.S. 23-5-119.5) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CCHE) *Student Services Policy, Section VI-C-1 (June 2012)*, has established this *Institution Plan for Student Fees*. The Plan and any modifications to this Plan are subject to the modification and annual approval of the Trustees of Colorado Mesa University (Trustees).

The purpose of this plan is to comply with statute and CCHE policy and provide guidance, information, and procedures on how student fees are defined, proposed, approved, and related student involvement. Colorado Mesa University reserves the right at any time to make changes in the policies and procedures included in this Plan, subject to applicable requirements regarding the approval or involvement of the students and institution's student government representatives (the Associated Student Government) and the Trustees of Colorado Mesa University (University). Any such amended policies or procedures will be applicable to actions of the University concerning student fees, defined in Section 1.2, assessed to part-time and full-time students, graduate and undergraduate students and resident and non-resident students enrolled at Colorado Mesa University

### 1.2 Applicability

Student Fees should be used to support and enhance the overall student experience. Student fees and the use of student fee revenue may benefit students both directly and indirectly. For example, given capital construction timelines some students currently attending an institution may not benefit as directly from fees for capital improvements; however, up-to-date facilities enhance and support the overall student experience and ultimately increase the value of the degree conferred. Likewise, a student may not take advantage of all the programs funded through specific fees, but these fees benefit the student body as a whole.

This Plan applies to all fees categorized in section 1.3 and in conjunction with CCHE Student Services Tuition and Fee Policy. Although student approval is not required for existing fees, new fees, or increases in fees, except where specified by statute, it is the intent of the University to adhere to guidelines set forth in statute (C.R.S. 23-5-119.5), and involve and solicit student input whenever possible.

This Plan does not apply to fees charged to cover the costs of delivering specific services, or user fees, which are incidental to the instructional activities. These fees for such services, or user fees include, but are not limited to, food service and housing charges, application fees, late fees, orientation fees, drop/add fees, library fines, matriculation fee, and parking penalties or fees.

### 1.3 Fee Categories and Definitions

The following fee categories and definitions as guided in CCHE's Tuition and Fee Policy. Fees are any amount, other than tuition, assessed to individual students as a condition of enrollment in the University. Fees may be used for academic and non-academic purposes, including but not limited to: funding registered student organizations and student government; construction and remodeling, maintenance, improvements, and operations of student centers, recreational facilities, and other projects and improvements for which a facility fee is approved; intercollegiate and intramural athletics; student health services; technology; mass transit; parking; and bond payments for which fees have been pledged. The University may not have fees associated in all categories, but reserves the right to enact such fees should the need be justified and such fees are enacted in compliance with existing statutes.

#### 1. Academic and Instructional Fees:

- **Course Specific Fees:** Fee assessed by an institution to all students who enroll in a specific course (e.g., an introductory engineering course). The revenue generated from this charge should be used to pay for costs related to the specific course. These fees are required for students who enroll in the specific course.
  - **Online Course Fees:** Fee assessed by an institution to all students enrolled in an online course. The revenue generated from this charge should be used to pay for costs related to the online delivery of the course. These fees are required for students who enroll in the specific course.
  - **Program Specific Fees:** Fee assessed by an institution to all students who enroll in a particular instructional program (e.g., the mechanical engineering program). The revenue generated by this charge should be used to pay for costs related to the specific instructional program. These fees are required for students who enroll in the specific program.
  - **Department Fees:** Fee assessed by an institution to all students who enroll in a particular department (e.g., the engineering department) within the institution. The revenue generated by this charge should be used to pay for costs related to the specific department. These fees are required for students who enroll in the specific department and require legislative long bill spending authority.
2. **Mandatory Insurance Fees:** Fee charged for health, dental, professional liability, or disability insurance based upon the nature of an instructional program.
3. **Academic Facility Fees:** Campus-wide mandatory fee paid by all students on campus for the purpose of constructing new institutional facilities, and/or renovating, expanding, and maintaining existing institutional facilities that are core to the role and mission of the institution.
- **Technology Fees:** Campus-wide mandatory fee paid by all students on campus for the purpose of providing or purchasing equipment or programmatic activities relating to computer equipment, computer laboratory equipment, or other technology.
  - **Auxiliary Fees: Health Service Fees:** Any fee assessed against students by any institution of higher education, the revenues from which are used for the establishment and operation of campus health clinics or contract health services.

- **Auxiliary Facility Debt Fees:** Fee assessed by an institution of higher education to pay for the construction, expansion, renovation, maintenance, operation, and/or lease of auxiliary facilities/areas. Revenues from which are used for the payment of bonds issued for principal or interest payments on long-term debt for auxiliary facilities. Auxiliary operations are defined as self-supporting, and may include, but are not limited to, residence halls, food service, intercollegiate athletics, college stores, parking, student centers, recreational facilities, child care centers, and continuing education. All bonds issued on behalf of auxiliary facility fees will be in compliance and follow C.R.S. 23-5-119.5
  - **Student Facilities and Operations Fees:** Any fee assessed against students by any institution of higher education, the revenues from which are used for, but not limited to, the following: maintenance, operations, and/or lease of auxiliary facilities/areas used as student centers, recreational facilities, parking lots, or child care centers, or for the payment of bonds issued for principal or interest payments on long-term debt for student facilities.
  - **Intercollegiate Athletics or Intramural Club Athletics Fees:** Any fee assessed against students by any institution of higher education, the revenues from which are used to, but not limited to, support for intercollegiate or intramural club athletic activities or for payment of bonds issued for the principal and interest payments on the long-term debt of any facility used for intercollegiate athletics and/or intramural club athletics.
  - **Student Government/Student Activities Fees:** Any fee assessed against students by any institution of higher education, the revenues from which are used, but not limited to, payment of direct and indirect operating expenses of student government, support for student programs such as cultural or social events, off-campus housing assistance, student clubs, student organizations, and student fees. Student government or elected student leaders typically have a role in how these fees are assessed and utilized.
4. **Administrative Fees :** Any campus-wide mandatory fee assessed against students by any institution of higher education, the revenues from which are used to, but not limited to, provide administrative services or to cover administrative costs. Does not include late fees or add/drop fees which are classified as Charges for Service.
  5. **Charge for Service:** A charge to cover the costs of delivering specific services. Charges for service are, however, required for students who meet the criteria for which the charge is being assessed. These may include, but are not limited to application fees, add/drop fees, fines and penalties, late fees, orientation fees, and matriculation fees.
  6. **User Fee:** A fee to exercise a privilege or receive a service provided by an auxiliary facility, including but not limited to room and board charges, parking fees, space rental, meal plans, locker rentals, and recreation center usage fees. User fees do not include any general student fee charged to all students, any fee paid for continuing education activities, or any fee paid to purchase entrance to campus events.

## **SECTION 2**

### **STUDENT FEE PROPOSALS, APPROVAL, REVIEW, AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

#### **2.1 Course Specific Fees**

Course specific fees relate to costs for a specific academic course. Any revenue must be used for costs directly related to the course for which they are charged and all sections of the same course offering must have the same course fee charge for all sections. Although approval by a student referendum is not required for new, existing or increases in course specific fees, the University through the Budget Office solicits the Associated Student Government's (ASG) recommendation on all course fees.

All requests for new course specific fees or increases in those fees are to be requested through the University's annual budget process. After requests have the approval of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, they are submitted to the ASG Fee Allocation Committee for review and recommendation. Course Fee requests will be presented at the next regularly scheduled ASG meeting. Each request must contain the following information:

1. The amount of the new fee or fee increase,
2. The reason for the new fee or fee increase,
3. The estimated total annual revenue generated by the new fee or fee increase, and
4. The purpose for which the institution will use these revenues.

#### **2.2 General Purpose Student Activities Fee**

General Purpose Student Activities Fees fund student organizations, activities, clubs, and services. Examples include, but are not limited to, the student newspaper, student radio, student outdoor program, cultural and diversity programs and activities, associated student government, regional and national student competitions and transportation services.

Bi-annually, the Associated Student Government conducts a student fee allocation process for student organizations, programs, and activities. The process is organized and facilitated by the ASG's Fee Allocation Committee (FAC). The FAC is a standing committee made up of student senators, the ASG Finance Officer, and/or a chair appointed by the ASG. Representatives from student organizations present and justify student fee funded budgets to the FAC and may request additional student fee funding. The FAC's recommendations are presented to the student senate and ASG president for review and subsequent recommendation to the University's administration. Following approval by the administration, the ASG's recommendations are presented to the Trustees of Colorado Mesa University for final approval.

### **2.3 Student-Centered Facilities Fee**

Student-Centered Facilities Fee relates to the costs associated with facilities that benefit students. The fee revenue offsets costs including but not limited to the bonded indebtedness, construction, maintenance, furnishing, and equipping of buildings and infrastructure and program operations, such as the University and Maverick Center. Student-Centered Facilities Fees follow the same approval process as General Purpose Student Activities Fees.

### **2.4 Governing Board Approval**

All fees and fee increases are reviewed and approved annually each spring by the Trustees of Colorado Mesa University. Any decision by the Trustees with regard to fees shall be final and incontestable either on the thirtieth day after final action by the Trustees or on the date on which any evidence of indebtedness or other obligation payable from the fees is issued or incurred by the Trustees, whichever is earlier

### **2.5 Use of Student Fees or Tuition for Academic Facilities**

The University may use tuition and/or student fees for academic facilities construction or renovation subject to the following conditions:

1. All other financing options have been explored;
2. Students have approved the use of student funds through a student vote/ referendum or student government approval. *Note: Only the use of a student fee for academic facilities construction requires approval by vote or referendum or by student government. Institutions may use tuition for the construction or renovation of academic facilities without approval through a student vote or referendum, provided that, at a minimum, the institution has explored all other financing options, has presented their proposed use of tuition revenues at a public meeting, and has informed students which capital projects will be funded with tuition revenues;*
3. Any referendum under this section is initiated by the ASG.

### **2.6 Administrative Costs Charged to Student Fee Funded Organizations**

An Administrative Service Recharge (ASR) is assessed to auxiliaries and student fee funded auxiliaries for which for which the University must maintain internal accounting and financial records. The ASR covers costs associated with but not limited to payroll, budgeting, accounting, business office, and institutional information technology services.

## **2.7 Budget, Expenditure, and Fund Balance Review**

Student Fee budget, expenditure, and fund balance are reviewed annually during the budget planning process. Budget planning templates are provided for the bi-annual student fee allocation process. Templates report two years of actual revenues and expenditures, current year budget, and fund balance information. During the fee allocation process, the Student Fee Allocation Committee evaluates the student organization's fund balance in conjunction with existing student fee funding and any new funds being requested. In addition, the University's budget office reviews fund balances annually, identifies significant balances, and coordinates and identifies spending plans in coordination with ASG.



## **SECTION 3**

### **REFERENDUM PROCEDURES**

Should ASG elect a student vote/referendum concerning applicable student fees, the process shall be subject to the following guidelines:

1. The ASG bears full responsibility for conducting the referendum, including full disclosure of the information relating to the referendum and emphasizing whether the referendum is binding or advisory.
2. Information distributed by the ASG concerning the referendum shall be factual and unbiased. That does not preclude individual members of the ASG Student Senate from expressing their opinions or supporting a position. A member of the ASG Student Senate may not, however, represent that opinion or position as the opinion or position of the ASG.
3. Campaigning by members of the student body is subject to the provisions of the ASG election code.
4. The text of a student fee referendum is subject to administrative legal review through the Office of the President.
5. A student fee referendum shall be voted on over a period of not more than five (5) class days or less than three (3) class days.
6. At least five percent (5%) of the current student headcount enrollment must vote in order for a student fee related referendum to be valid. The outcome shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast in the referendum.
7. Referendums that fail may not be resubmitted for a student vote until the following regularly scheduled election.

## **SECTION 4**

### **NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

#### **4.1 Notification Requirements**

The University administration will notify all campuses of proposed new fee or fee increase. The University Center and satellite (Bishop and Montrose) campuses shall post the notice of the proposed new fee(s) or fee increases at or near informational areas and/or other visible areas. Notices shall also be provided to the student newspaper and radio station through the Student Life office. The notification period shall provide at least thirty days' notice to students of proposed new fee or fee increases. During the notification period any student or student group may appeal the proposed fee or increase following the guidelines outlined in Section 5. If an appeal has not been properly filed by the end of the notification period, the proposed new fee or fee increase will go forward to the Trustees of Colorado Mesa University for approval.

#### **4.2 Contents of Notice**

At a minimum, any notice or news release pertaining to a proposed fee assessment or increase must contain the following information:

1. The amount of the new fee or fee increase;
2. The reason for the fee assessment or increase;
3. The purpose for which the institution will use revenues received from the fee assessment or increase;
4. Whether the fee assessment or increase is temporary or permanent and, if temporary/nonpermanent, the expiration date for the new fee or fee increase; and
5. A student's appeal rights and the deadline for filing an appeal.

## **SECTION 5**

### **COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

#### **5.1 Timeline for Appeals**

Any student or student group may appeal a proposed new fee or fee increase at any time before or during the notification period defined in Section 4. An appeal must contain all required components outlined in Section 5.2 or it will be denied without further review. Subsequent delivery of missing components after the end of the notification period will not be considered a timely submission.

#### **5.2 Appeal Procedures**

All appeals shall be submitted in writing and submitted to the University's Vice President of Finance. At a minimum, each appeal shall include the following:

1. The reason for the appeal,
2. An alternative proposal and
3. A petition supporting the appeal containing the signatures and student identification numbers of not less than 3% of enrolled students (estimated at 287 students – Fall 2017).

After reviewing and consulting with ASG, the Vice President of Finance will then forward the appeal recommendation to the University's President prior to submitting to the Trustees for final approval.