

Measure Name: Graduate Student Fee Increase

Ballot Type: Altering an Existing Fee

Ballot Author: Graduate Student Association

Sponsor: Graduate Student Association

Question: In order to continue funding graduate student activities, such as travel grants, shall the graduate students vote to increase the Graduate Student Government Fee by \$2.00 per student, per quarter effective Fall 2012?

Summary Points:

- Revenue will be used to meet the increasing demands on the Graduate Student Association for travel grant funding.
- Increases the current Graduate Student Government Fee by \$2.00 per student, per quarter.
- Fee will be assessed to all graduate students enrolled in the fall, winter, and spring quarters, as well as state-supported summer quarter as applicable.
- Fee increase will generate approximately \$8,460 annually.ⁱ Of this 33%, or \$2,792, will go toward the Return-to-Aid component that will help students who receive financial aid pay for this fee.
- A portion of the revenue generated by this fee increase, not to exceed 2.5%, will be used for the Office of the President assessment to support central operations (OP administration, OP provided central services and system-wide initiatives). Any assessment shall be done in accordance with University policies. Based on the current assessment level of 1.6%, this fee would be charged approximately \$135 per year. If student referendum fees are removed from the base calculation of the Office of the President assessment, this fee will be automatically removed.ⁱⁱ
- The Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) supports this proposed fee increase because the SFAC finds it to be fiscally sound and believes that the cost is equivalent to the benefits.
- Student Consultation: The GSA has discussed this fee increase with graduate students at the GSA meetings. In addition, GSA has consulted with graduate student department representatives. GSA voted on this issue on 12/1/11, with a majority of members voting in favor of pursuing the fee increase.
- Fee amendment is sponsored for graduates on the ballot by [insert final sponsorship mechanism here].

Background Information:

The Graduate Student Government Fee was instituted by the UC Regents in Fall 1965 at a level of \$8.00 per student, per quarter. In Spring 2007, graduate students passed Measure 33 which increased the fee to \$14.50 per student, per quarter. If this fee amendment passes, the new Graduate Student Government Fee will be \$16.50 per student per quarter.

Ballot Statement:

This revenue will be utilized for the general funds of the Graduate Student Association. In practice, this fee will help offset the increased demands on the GSA for Travel Grant funding.

The GSA made a specific decision last year to raise its expenses and spend our reserves. This was primarily done through increasing our quarterly allocation to Travel Grants. As departments have continued to cut their funding available for graduate students in all aspects, including their travel budgets to professional conferences, it was decided that it was crucial for the GSA to step in to help fill this gap. However, what was a temporary increase has been shown to be necessary for the large volume of Travel Grant requests that are received. The current options are to either cut the allocations to Travel Grants within the next two years, or to increase revenue in order to stay at the new allocation level. The GSA voted to ask students if they would be willing to pay \$2 more per quarter to help us maintain the current level of funding for all activities, especially Travel Grants.

Currently the GSA is one of the few places on campus for many graduate students to obtain funding for the professional conferences which are key to their success as a students and their future on the job market. All graduate students will benefit from the increased revenues utilized by the GSA and spent on behalf of the graduate student body.

The last increase to the College Student Government Fee was in 2007. Since then the cost of travel has increased greatly and the resources available through departments has decreased greatly. For the cost of a cup of coffee every quarter, graduate students can help the GSA in our assistance to those traveling for professional purposes.

ⁱ Based on average 2010-2011 graduate student enrollment of 1,410.

ⁱⁱ The Graduate Student Association is strongly opposed to including Student Referendum Fees as part of the base calculation for the Office of the President campus assessment.