Voter Information Pamphlet

Safeguard Student Health Care Fee
Referendum 2005

Independent Analysis By:

Committee on Student Fees

Election Dates: March 8th, 9th & 10th 2005
Vote Online: http://bearfacts.berkeley.edu

The purpose of this student fee referendum is to give students a yes or no option of paying a mandatory fee in order to maintain and improve the level of student services, programs, and facilities at the University Health Services (UHS). The student-directed Health Fee Advisory Committee (HFAC), in partnership with UHS, is requesting a $43 per semester mandatory "Safeguard Student Health Care" Fee.

The Committee on Student Fees (CSF) is the non-partisan student voice on student fees and policy at UC Berkeley. To educate the campus community, we have created a Voter's Guide to help teach students about the referendum process and the details of this fee. We encourage you to visit our website at **http://www.berkeleycsf.org** or to stop by our office at 210 Eshleman Hall.

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Vote online though Bear Facts: http://bearfacts.berkeley.edu
March 8th, 9th & 10th

Voter's Guide brought to you by:
The Committee on Student Fees and Budget Review

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Safeguard Student Health Care Fee Proposal Summary:

Purpose:

- To protect and improve student access to affordable, high quality, on-campus medical and mental health care for all Berkeley students at the Tang Center.
- To meet significant growth in student demand for health services by increasing Tang Center staff.
- "Safeguard" is intended to supplement but not replace current campus funding of University Health Services.
- This fee is intended to support student health and counseling programs and services available to ALL registered Berkeley students, even those who do not enroll in SHIP (Student Health Insurance Plan).

Fee Requested:

- $43 per semester
- $31 for those enrolled in Summer Sessions

Sample Services Provided with the Fee:

- Urgent Care and Medical Services: additional medical appointments, extended urgent care, lab and x-ray hours, and expanded pharmacy hours
- Mental Health Services: more same day drop-in appointments, shorter wait and faster access to on-campus counseling and psychiatric services
- Technological Efficiency: Online scheduling for medical appointments and faster service when scheduling appointments by phone.
- Preventative Health Services: Programs addressing health topics critical to optimal student health (some examples include: STD education, HIV awareness, etc.).

Vote YES:
Statement in Favor of "Safeguard Student Health Care" Fee:

Current funding received by UHS is insufficient to support the growing and changing health care needs of Berkeley students in the face of nationwide, double-digit increases in healthcare costs. The "Safeguard Student Health Care" Fee will maintain and expand urgent, primary, and mental healthcare for all Berkeley students, including those not enrolled in SHIP and those relying on financial aid. Students on 4 of 10 UC campuses pay a similar type of fee. The following are the top reasons why you should vote in favor of this fee:

• Over 24,000 students use on-campus health services each year. The average student visits the Tang Center 2.5 times a year. If this fee is not passed, the Tang Center will have to introduce co-payments (visit fees) as high as $35 per visit. Based on this information, the average student will break even or save with the pre-paid "Safeguard" fee.

• The pre-paid "Safeguard" fee protects students from the risk of expensive co-pays in the case of sudden and unexpected illness or injury.

• "Safeguard" secures and promotes overall health in the Berkeley community by allowing greater on-campus access to healthcare for ALL students, even those without SHIP membership. 25% of UC academic withdrawals are for medical reasons. As students, we cannot wait for the university, the state, or the federal government to fund our health services. It is essential to our quality of life and our success.

• "Safeguard" will help restore student health services lost during previous UC budget cuts. This upfront investment in health care will allow Tang to improve existing services, provide new technologies such as online scheduling of medical appointments, as well as increasing the hours for pharmacy and urgent care to better meet student demand.

• Next year, students will have to pay for health care in some form. This referendum gives students a say in how they will pay for those expenses. "Safeguard" is the most equitable way to pay. Without the mandatory fee of $43 at the beginning of each semester, consequences will include: the introduction of co-payments (visit fees), additional increases in the student health insurance (SHIP) premium, and increases in user fees for medical services (e.g. labs, x-rays, etc). "Safeguard" will also help prevent a decline in the availability of services at the Tang Center.

• With "Safeguard" one-third of the proposed fee revenue will be directed to financial aid to provide financial support for the neediest students. Co-payments do not have a financial aid component and will most likely come directly from students' personal budgets.

• Per visit co-payments may deter students from seeking necessary health services when needed. In a Fall 2004 survey of several thousand Berkeley students, 17% said that if $20 co-payments were introduced at the Tang Center, they would definitely delay seeking

health care—even for an urgent problem. Almost 50% said they might delay seeking help if a $20 visit fee were required.

• Passing "Safeguard" will improve access to on-campus psychiatry services and will expand counseling services and programs. Student demand for mental health services has grown significantly over the past two decades, but Tang has not been able to meet demand.

Vote NO:
Statement in Opposition to the "Safeguard Student Health Care" Fee

Paying for "Safeguard" will force students to further subsidize other students' health care. By voting no, more students will pay fees only for the health services that they use. This fee is one of many other mandatory campus fees, which will inevitably increase with inflation. The following are top reasons why you should vote against this fee.

• In the past three years, students' fees have risen 55% for resident undergraduates[1] and campus-based fees are already too high. Currently, the highest campus-based fee is a $37.20 per semester fee for Class Pass. Students should not have to pay another mandatory fee.

• Approximately one-fourth of students do not visit the Tang Center in a given year. These students should not be required to pay for the health care of students who visit Tang. Students can pay for their own personal health costs as long as they are the ones incurring them.

• Students who have private insurance can use local medical providers and facilities covered by their own insurance plans.

• In this period of severe budget cuts, it is unfair to mandate that all students contribute to maintaining on-campus health services, particularly when health care is not a priority for some students. Students should not be required to pay for services beyond basic primary care. Students should not have to pay for services and programs at the Tang Center that they may never use (e.g. STD education, HIV awareness, or alcohol and drug prevention programs).

• Co-payments could prevent the abuse of health services and ensure that students will only use the Tang Center when it is absolutely necessary.

[1] This percentage was calculated using the Educational Fee, Registration Fee, and Campus Based Fees from the 2002-03 to the 2004-05 academic school years.

• Students currently experience long wait times for appointments and inconvenient hours of operation at the Tang Center. We have no guarantee that this fee will improve these services.

• This is another example of costs being unfairly shifted onto students by the university and the state of California. Students should not have to pay more mandatory fees for essential services. If the Tang Center's services are considered important by students, then the campus should continue to provide support for these services.

• "Safeguard" is intended to supplement but not replace campus funds allocated to University Health Services, but this fee will not protect against across-the board budget cuts (e.g. 10% cut to all student services). It will only protect against cuts targeted to UHS.

Frequently Asked Questions

Health Specific:

1. Why is this happening now?

There are several reasons that this fee is being voted upon right now. National healthcare costs are rising at about 10-15% per year making healthcare unaffordable for many people, including students. At Berkeley, campus financial support for student health services has eroded due to budget cuts while student demand for health services is on the rise.

2) I have my own private health insurance. What can the Tang Center do for me?

Students do not need to be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP) to access services at the Tang Center. All students can use the Tang Center to meet a variety of needs and services. 90% of graduate students and 74% of undergrads are enrolled in SHIP.

Fee Specific:

1) What other Campus-based fees do I currently pay per semester?

-ASUC fee ($27.50)
-Student Center fee ($6)
-Ethnic Studies fee ($2.25)
-Intramural Sports Facility fee ($28.50)
-Life Safety fee ($31.50)
-Recruitment and Retention Centers fee ($3)
-Class Pass ($37.20)

2) If passed, how can we ensure that the money collected will meet student demands and priorities?

To build in accountability to students, the referendum will establish an independent student advisory committee to ensure that the "Safeguard" fee, if passed, is used to meet student health needs. This advisory committee will advise the Director of UHS on the allocation of fees. Any increases or decreases can be recommended, but will ultimately need the approval of campus management.

Referendum Specific:

1) What is a Referendum?
A student referendum is a vote, or ballot election, conducted to determine student support for a measure or a new mandatory fee. It is a process that enables any group to place an issue directly onto the public ballot for approval or rejection.

2) How many students will need to pass a referendum?
Any new mandatory student fee must be approved by a simple majority of voting students (50% of voters plus 1 vote), and 20% of the registered student population must vote. Without student approval, the fee will not be assessed.

3) When and where do I vote?
Voting will take place online on Bear Facts on March 8th, 9th &10th.

4) Who is eligible to vote?
All registered students for the Spring 2005 Semester.

5) Where can I get more information?
Official nonpartisan Election Web site: http://students.berkeley.edu/sas/referendum/
Committee on Student Fees: http://www.berkeleycsf.org/

Sample Ballot

(as of February 22nd 2005)

Safeguard Student Health Care Referendum

To protect and improve student access to high quality, on-campus medical and mental health care, **do you approve a mandatory fee to support Berkeley's student health and counseling services**?

The fee will exclusively support **student health and counseling programs and services available to all registered Berkeley students**, even those who do not enroll in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).

The fee is ***intended to supplement but not supplant*** the portion of UC Berkeley's Registration Fee income currently allocated to University Health Services, Tang Center.

As the cost of health care continues to rise, this fee will ensure that Berkeley students have direct access

to affordable, reliable, quality health care on-campus.

The fee is subject to the following costs and conditions:

— Collection of the fee will begin in Fall 2005 and will be assessed as a **$43 charge each Fall and Spring semester** and as a $31 charge for students registered in Summer Sessions. The fee is subject to annual adjustment within the limits described below.

— An **independent student health advisory committee will work with campus health officials, to ensure that fee money is allocated to meet students' changing health care needs** in the areas of urgent care, basic medical care, mental health care, specialty medicine, lab and pharmacy services, and preventive health education.

— By February of each year, the **independent student health advisory committee will recommend any increase or decrease in the fee rate to campus health officials**. Increases in any one year may not exceed health care inflation rates for physician and clinical services published annually by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (currently 5-7% per year).

— In accord with campus policy, **one-third of fee revenues will be returned to financial aid** to help offset the cost of this fee for the neediest students who are eligible for campus-based financial aid.

___ Yes

___ No