Wellness and Recreation Fee Referendum

A mandatory, student Wellness and Recreation Fee (WRF) has been proposed to raise funds to improve the level of student services, programs and facilities offered by Recreational Sports and University Health Services. The fee would specifically raise funds to finance construction and operations of a Wellness Center (WC), to finance construction and operations of a new Memorial Stadium Fitness Center, to eliminate the $10 a semester RecSports membership fee, and starting in 2016 and 2017 respectively, to fund expenses currently supported by the Recreational Sports Fee and the Intramural Sports Fee. The fee would begin in Fall 2013 at an initial level of $40 per semester and would increase at regular intervals as described below.

Background

Why Now

Over the last 15 years student enrollment has increased by 19% while the size of the Recreational Sports Facility (RecSports) and University Health Services (UHS) Tang Center have remained unchanged. As a result, many gaps have arisen such as:

- At a world-renowned academic institution like UC Berkeley, tending to the physical and mental welfare of students is an important issue. UC Berkeley's current recreational facilities are inadequate to serve student needs.
- The general standard for recreational athletic space at other comparable universities is 8-10 ft^2 per student and currently UC Berkeley only has 3.5 ft^2 of recreational space per student. RecSports can only accommodate 33-50% of total demand.
- Space and funding limitations have prevented UHS from offering new, innovative mind-body services that students have been requesting (e.g., cooking classes, alternative therapies, expanded mindfulness activities).
- Insufficient funding for facilities expansion, specialized equipment and collaborative UHS and RecSports staffing and training has also resulted in an inability to enhance services for students with disabilities and severe injuries.
- Group exercise classes are one of the most popular offerings by RecSports. Because of the lack of space currently available, there is a limit on the present variety of classes.

Student Involvement and Funding Alternatives

During the past two years, students, RecSports and UHS leaders have come together to create a plan for a student-oriented Wellness Center (WC). ASUC and Graduate Assembly have led the student involvement and have integrated broad student feedback (i.e., student survey data) into setting the priorities for the space use, programs and services to be funded by the fee. Members of the planning team did approach campus administration about other funding sources to subsidize or offset referendum costs for a WC for students or a larger WC for students, faculty and staff; however, campus administration is unable to provide funding for this new initiative.

Fees at Other UCs

The WRF is unique, with no comparable UC campus-based fee, and is the result of a strong partnership between RecSports and UHS (including joint staffing, equipment and training that will allow expanded opportunities for participation in fitness and wellness activities by students with disabilities and severe injuries).

Consequences if Not Approved

If the WRF is not approved:

- When the Recreational Sports Fee and the Intramural Sports Fee expire in 2016 and 2017, Rec Sports will lose nearly 40% of its operating budget and be forced to dramatically cut facility hours and services.
- The $10 RecSports membership fee would continue to be charged each semester and during the summer.
- The new Wellness Center will not be built, leaving the campus with the following ongoing problems:
    - Overcrowding at RecSports

- Unmet requests from certain populations (e.g., specialized equipment for students with disabilities, private gender-neutral changing rooms)
- Inability for UHS and RecSports to respond to students requests for new services that would support their ability to adopt healthier student behaviors and overall well-being.

Purpose of the Wellness and Recreation Fee (WRF)

New Wellness Center

Design, build, operate, maintain, equip and staff a new, up to 35,000 gross ft^2 Wellness Center (WC) expected to open in academic year 2016-2017. This partnership between Recreational Sports and University Health Services would:

- House innovative health and wellness programs and fitness equipment
- Be designed to target a LEED Gold or better sustainable building rating

The new WC will welcome all students and accommodate as many of the following programmatic goals and activities as the budget permits. These services reflect students' priorities for the WC as reported in a Fall 2012 student survey conducted by the ASUC and the Graduate Assembly:

New

- Climbing wall
- Low-intensity weights
- Teaching kitchen (e.g. healthy meals in 15-minutes or less, cooking on a budget, vegetarian cooking)
- Healthy café
- Whirlpool/sauna
- Quiet space (e.g. floor stretching, meditation)
- Alternative therapies (e.g. acupressure, reflexology)
- Private changing area, including shower and changing facilities designed to meet the needs of student parents, students who identify as transgendered or students whose religious or cultural beliefs require private facilities

Expanded/Improved

- Cardio machines
- Weights and weight machines
- Activity spaces (e.g. yoga, tai chi, Pilates, dance) with better acoustics and temperature control
- Health and well-being classes and individual sessions (e.g. nutrition, stress management, mindfulness, counseling, physical therapy)

New Memorial Stadium Fitness Center

Design, build, operate (including rent), maintain, equip and staff a new, approximately 5,000 ft^2 Memorial Stadium Fitness Center to be completed during 2014. Students will not have to wait until the new Wellness Center is built to have increased access to fitness equipment. Conveniently located for students who have classes, work or live on the East end of campus, this center would include cardio machines and weights while incorporating many universal accessibility design principles.

Replacement of Two Current Fees Set to Expire: Recreational Facilities and Operations (Currently $78.50 total)

Currently, students pay two mandatory fees to support the operations of existing recreational facilities:

- 2006 Recreational Sports Fee at $50.00 per semester, increasing to $55.00 per semester in Fall 2015, and expiring at the end of Spring 2016.
- 1981 Intramural Sports Facility Fee at $28.50 per semester, expiring at the end of Spring 2017.

Elimination of the $10 RecSports Membership Fee

The current voluntary RecSports membership fee at $10 per semester would be eliminated as of Fall 2013.

The WRF is intended to supplement but not supplant the portions of UC Berkeley's Student Services Fee income currently allocated to RecSports and to University Health Services.

Breakdown of the Wellness and Recreation Fee (WRF)

The WRF proceeds would be used to fund the following expenditures, in order of priority:

1. Mandatory return of 1/3 of the WRF proceeds to financial aid to help offset the cost of this fee for the neediest students who are eligible for campus-based financial aid.
2. Repayment of debt for the Wellness Center and the Memorial Stadium Fitness Center.
3. Space rental for the Memorial Stadium Fitness Center.
4. Ongoing expenses to operate, maintain, equip, and staff all Recreational Facilities, including the Wellness Center and the Memorial Stadium Fitness Center as well as existing facilities.
5. Annual contribution to a capital renewal reserve for the Recreational Sports Facility and the Wellness Center.

The capital cost to design, build and equip the Wellness Center and the Memorial Stadium Fitness Center would be financed primarily with debt, with principal and interest to be repaid by the WRF. The fee schedule below is estimated to support capital project budgets of up to $29,000,000 for the Wellness Center, including the campus capital renewal fee, and $1,300,000 for the Memorial Stadium Fitness Center. Ongoing expenses and capital renewal (items 4 and 5 above) are budgeted to escalate at a rate of 2.5% per year.

For the purpose of assessing feasibility, the cost of the proposed Wellness Center was estimated based on a potential location on the westernmost portion of the block defined by Bancroft, Fulton, and Durant. Location on this site would require relocation of existing tenants and demolition of the existing structure at 2200 Bancroft: the project budget would include the demolition of 2200 Bancroft but not the relocation of the existing tenants, which the campus would fund separately.

The debt supported by the WRF is expected to be retired after 2045-2046. Once this debt is retired and no outstanding debt supported by the WRF remains, the WRF would expire. The students may then hold a new referendum to determine the future of the WRF and the services and facilities it supports.

Table 1 shows the estimated fee schedule of the WRF through 2045-2046. Fees are per semester

Table 1. Proposed Fees per Semester*	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018 thru 2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022 thru 2025 - 2026	2026 - 2027 thru 2030 - 2031	2031 - 2032 thru 2035 - 2036	2036 - 2037 thru 2040 - 2041	2041 - 2042 thru 2045 - 2046	After 2045 - 2046
Recreational Sports Fee	50	50	50	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intramural Sports Facility Fee	29	29	29	29	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RSF Membership Fee	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wellness & Recreation Fee												
New Facilities	-	30	30	30	82	82	84	105	112	120	129	**
Existing Facilities	-	10	10	10	56	85	101	110	124	140	158	**
Total Wellness & Recreation Fee	-	40	40	40	138	167	185	215	236	260	287	**
Total Fee per Semester Paid by Students	**89**	**119**	**119**	**124**	**167**	**167**	**185**	**215**	**236**	**260**	**287**	**
Estimated Value of Fee Adjusted for Inflation***	89	116	113	115	151	148	148	152	148	144	140	**

* The same fee would be charged to students who attend summer session, regardless of how many sessions they attend

** The debt supported by the WRF is anticipated to be retired after 2045-2046 - once the debt is retired, and no outstanding debt supported by the WRF remains, the WRF would expire

*** Values shown reflect an estimated average inflation rate of 2.5% per year - the actual rate would vary over time

The WRF would:

- Apply to undergraduate and graduate students
- Be collected during fall and spring semesters, with the same fee charged to students who attend summer session, regardless of the number of sessions they attend.

Oversight of the WRF and Projects

The Wellness Center Program Committee would provide oversight for the Wellness Center project while it is planned, designed, and constructed. The committee charge includes prioritizing the program elements and determining the amount of space devoted to each, and ensuring the project scope remains within the project budget, including adjusting the scope as required.

The Wellness and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee would be convened after the program committee has completed its work. The fee committee would have the responsibility to review information on the amount and uses of WRF revenues, and recommend any changes to future year fee levels or uses in accordance with campus and university guidelines and policies.

Referendum Passage

In compliance with university, campus and ASUC policies, this referendum must meet the following criteria during elections to be approved by the student body:

- At least 20% of the student body must vote on the issue.
- A majority of the votes cast must be in favor of the issue (50% +1).

ASUC Ballot Language

A mandatory undergraduate and graduate student fee of $40 that begins in Fall Semester 2013 and will start to increase during Fall Semester 2016 has been proposed for the following purposes: to finance construction, equipment and operations for a Wellness Center (WC) with cardio machines, climbing wall, group activity classes, teaching kitchen, health and wellness classes, counseling and more; to finance construction, equipment and operations for a new Memorial Stadium Fitness Center; to eliminate the optional $10 a semester RecSports membership fee; and to fund the expenses currently supported by the mandatory Recreational Sports Facility Fee and the Intramural Sports Facility Fee that will expire in 2016 and 2017, respectively (see ASUC Voter's Guide for fee schedule and additional WC services). Do you approve this fee?