

# FEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 22, 2025 | 5:00 PM | TSC Senate Chamber

## IN ATTENDANCE:

**Officers:** Executive VP Brooklyn Ward, Logan VP Brandon Sorenson, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business Senator Emerald Spencer, Graduate Studies Senator Jamie Parry, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences Senator Dantzel Miner, College of Education and Humanities Senator Halle Hart, College of Science Senator Evan Anderson, Clubs and Organizations Executive Director Jade Velazquez, College of Engineering Senator Maddie Witte, Caine College of the Arts Senator Lauren Tougas, College of Natural Resources Senator Abbigail Lane, Athletics & Campus Recreation Executive Director Dallin Wilson, Student Events Executive Director Ashlynn Smith, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences Senator Landry Hunter

**Students At-Large:** Colin Hastings, Ronan Spencer, Max Alder, Hailee Murdock, Ashleigh Irvine, Jessie Christensen, Carter Guinness

**Staff/Administrators:** Executive Director of Student Involvement & Leadership Linda Zimmerman, Interim VP for Student Affairs Krystin Deschamps, Staff Assistant for Student Involvement David Higashi

**Absent:**

## Welcome:

Executive VP Ward: Welcomes everyone. Last week, the board was unsure of the correct SNAC fee amount per semester. The board needs to vote to amend the agenda for Jonathon Walters from SNAC to come in and present an update on the Fee amount.

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to amend the agenda to add an SNAC update from Jonathan Walters.

Executive Director Smit: so moved

Senator Hunter seconded

All were in favor of amending the agenda.

## INTERIM VP DESCHAMPS UPDATE ON THE SNAC FEE PROPOSAL

Interim VP Deschamps introduces herself and welcomes everyone. Last week, Interim VP Deschamps emailed the university's academic leadership for feedback. The email shared presentations and initial thoughts. Interim VP Deschamps shared that all deans support SNAC and value the service that SNAC provides. However, two deans thought that funding SNAC should be a university prerogative instead of being another burden on students. The Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences would be willing to donate money. The deans suggested a possible path forward by talking to the deans and asking them for help.

Senator Miner explains that SNAC expressed that they were looking for a sustainable and reliable funding source. Generous donations are not sustainable because they are not promised for the long term and are usually one-time large donations. Senator Miner asked whether the deans would make a recurring donation or if they would be willing to help find recurring donations.

Interim VP Deschamps responds that the CHASS dean was interested in working with University Advancement to make the help ongoing. She recognizes the validity of the point that SNAC seeks sustainable funding. Interim VP Deschamps noted a possible counterargument, pointing out that SNAC already has a secure and sustainable funding source, and others might ask why SNAC is asking for another.

Executive VP Ward welcomes Jonathan Walters and opens the floor for Jonathan to present his amendment to his presentation.

## SNAC FEE PROPOSAL UPDATE

Jonathon Walters shares that there was some misunderstanding with the estimate and conversions of what a dollar student fee per student equates to what SNAC receives per semester. Initially, the presentation worked off the assumption that a dollar per semester would equal \$34,500. However, later realized that a dollar per annually equates to \$34,500. The student fee amount needs to be amended to be \$6 semesterly. That is the only thing that needs to be amended.

Executive VP Ward opens it up for questions for Jonathan.

No questions were asked.

Executive VP Ward thanks Jonathon for his time and for updating the board. Then, we shared that the Utah Board of Higher Education has policy 5.16 that we have implemented into our policy for next, which states that student fees will be assessed and determine whether they should be moved into tuition or other areas. There is an option

where the board could recommend specific fees to be assessed. For example, if SNAC becomes a student fee, the board could be recommended to be assessed to see where the other funding sources are.

Executive VP Ward opens the floor for discussion.

## SNAC FEE DISCUSSION

Colin Hastings asked whether the board is voting on the \$3 fee or \$6. At the last meeting, the board was told that the amount could not be changed because the proposal was for a new fee.

Executive VP Ward explained that she looked at the policies and found no explicit or direct language saying we can't change the amount. Still, this proposal goes to a vote by the student body and not directly to the president. An option is that the board must grant SNAC the \$3 fee due to that being their initial ask.

Senator Anderson asked whether the board could choose the option to be voted on.

Executive VP Ward responds yes.

Senator Hunter shares that she is a fan of the SNAC pantry and is for providing funding, but she also agrees that other funding paths have not been fully explored. The \$6 is excessive and should be at a lower amount.

Senator Spencer shared that many students have made a lot of food donations. The Huntsman school students have donated 1,200 pounds of food to the SNAC Pantry. Students could contribute in that form while also following up with the Dean about more of a monetary donation. Other colleges could do the same, where the students do food drives while the schools do monetary donations.

Collin Hastings shared that he had tried to talk to students and had no students against the new fee. Understanding that there might be other funding avenues, SNAC seeks secured and sustainable funding. The significant donations are unknown about when they will come or when they will end. This proposal goes to a vote on the student body, which might be hesitant on the large amount. Compounding the fact that students might not be educated about the proposal might hinder those from voting in favor of the fee. Colin recommends a \$3 fee, giving them a secured and sustainable funding source while they can follow those other avenues.

Senator Parry shared that if deans are willing to fund the growth of SNAC for a year, then SNAC can look at how successful their efforts are in getting more consistent customers. The deans and colleges are funded today, and then they can come back with a new proposal showing more stable growth and a better assessment of their funding needs.

Senator Witte shared that she favors the SNAC fee because it creates more buy-in and allows students to use the SNAC without guilt. However, students should not be forced to feed other students. Recommends the \$3 fee to provide a constant source of funding.

Executive Director Smith shared that she was interested in a \$3 fee to experiment for this next year and then reevaluate the data and see how many unique numbers are pulling through every week and semester. If the data shows that an increase is needed, the board should increase

Max Alder believes that the board must help any organization with a good cause, like SNAC. However, Max hesitates to pass a \$6 fee because passing a new fee that large could set a precedent where other areas would ask for similar size increases. The \$3 fee could push SNAC to pursue other sources of revenue while giving SNAC a sustainable source.

Senator Laine agrees that the fee should sustain growth while not putting the burden of SNAC on students. Senator Laine shares that she is hesitant due to all discussions of having SNAC evaluate their success this upcoming year without having the place to stop it and alter it, without SNAC initiating that themselves. What is the framework for the future student body officers to alter this fee?

Executive VP Ward responds that the responsibility would be on the current student body officers to inform the future student body officers to follow up. There is also a chance that as the proposal gets moved up to other bodies, such as the Board of Trustees and the Utah Board of Higher Education could deny the proposal. This year, the legislature is looking specifically at student fees. Even if the student body approves the proposal, the Board of Trustees and the Utah Board of Higher Education must sign off.

Max Alder asks whether the vote will have six options for each dollar amount or if the vote will have a single amount to approve.

Executive Director Zimmerman says the vote will be on a single amount at a time, and the vote would be for or against that amount. Then, a board member can motion another amount, and then the board can vote on the new amount or option.

Senator Parry reminds the board that in the presentation students showed that they were willing to pay \$18 because students value and recognize the importance of the service that SNAC provides. However, \$3 might be more helpful in understanding the starting point and then gathering data, mainly if the deans help support SNAC.

## SNAC NEW FEE VOTE

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to vote on a \$6 SNAC fee.

Senator Hunter seconded

Senator Parry so moved

All voted in favor of the motion of the vote.

**The vote for the new \$6 SNAC Fee FAILS**

Senator Miner moves for a new vote for a \$3 SNAC fee

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion for a \$3 SNAC fee

Senator Hunter seconded

Senator Parry so moved

All were in favor of moving to vote on the \$3 SNAC fee

**The vote on a new \$3 SNAC fee PASSES.**

## **INTERIM VP KRYSTIN DESCHAMPS AGGIE SHUTTLE FEE INCREASE UPDATE**

Interim VP Deschamps shared that there was a split between academic leaders on supporting the increase. One Dean said that if deferred maintenance, the problem will continue growing, becoming more costly and challenging to fix. If you do not invest in things now, they become a more costly proposition later. Another dean shared that reliable transportation. The other deans were indifferent but understood the value of Aggie Shuttle provides.

## **AGGIE SHUTTLE FEE INCREASE DISCUSSION**

Colin Hastings shared that he was firmly in favor of the fee increase last year. This year, Colin is still firmly in favor of it. For a \$1.73 increase, the board is helping fund a whole new fleet of buses that are more ADA accessible, will last longer, and will break down less. Colin likes that Aggie Shuttle is replacing buses as they age and not just replacing the fleet simultaneously.

Senator Hunter added that the Aggie Shuttles are utilized by nearly all of our students on campus. This isn't something that is limited or needs more people to use. The longer the old buses are used and accrue wear and tear, the more problems will arise and become more costly.

Senator Parry notes a big concern was the lack of data and information about how fast

buses would get replaced with the fee increase. According to Senator Parry, the fee increase will equate to \$500,000 over the next seven years. Senator Parry shared that it is hard to visualize how the increase will help the Aggie Shuttle procure buses faster.

Ronan Spencer shares that he is not convinced about the fee. The presentation and the proposal did not seem to change from last year's student fee meeting. Ronan shares that he is concerned that it will be a continuous cycle where Aggie Shuttle will keep asking for fee increases. Ronan also shared that he was shocked that they did not try to find any alternative funding ventures like selling off their buses. But if the fee increase passes, I hope that it goes into having new routes.

Max Alder shares that he was in the meetings with Senator Hart, and the reason why Aggie Shuttle shared that the reason the presentation is the same is because this is a part of the same long-term plan that they made a decade before. The reason that it is more than a \$1 increase is due to what happened back in COVID when their budget was shortened a little bit. The request is to help put the budget back to where it should have been. Currently, we are close to the end of the long-term plan. Aggie Shuttle is not only utilized but relied on by so many students. When the buses need to repair the bus, and sometimes the route cannot be serviced at all. This slows the entire process while also requiring time and money to repair them. Getting the new buses slower will limit these concerns. Aggie Shuttle does charter buses; however, there is just little interest. In addition, there is not a lot of interest in purchasing buses that are at the end of their lifespans.

Senator Miner shared that she was against the fee increase for two reasons. The first reason was that if they did not get the fee increase, they were still on track to pay off the loan. There is no dire need for the fee increase. The second reason was that Aggie Shuttle should not be used to be paid for wages.

VP Sorenson shares that if the board compares the value of the buses per year, the results show that they are very similar. However, the new Gillig buses last 20 years compared to the 5- or 6-year life expectancy. The new buses will help Aggie Shuttle not pour more money into the failed buses that will continue to break down over the years.

Senator Tougas asks Interim VP Deschamps if the deans feel Aggie Shuttle is important. Would the deans be willing to donate in a way similar to what they offer for the SNAC Pantry? Or if there is an alternative way to the Aggie shuttle, there doesn't seem to be a tax on the students.

Interim VP Deschamps shared that Whitney Pugh might be able to speak more in-depth about that topic. To her understanding, there are two separate types of fees, and Academic colleges can only support certain types of fees.

Whitney Pugh shares that appropriated funds that are funded by taxes are not used for auxiliary purposes. Deans have other sources, such as donations from donors and sources not funded by taxes. Getting deans to use those sources might prove to be complicated.

Carter Guinness shared that the old buses are averaging 6.7 years old. The old buses are very much on the edge of the valuable life with buses. Aggie Shuttle will pay off the loan, but they will need to do more loans in the future when they purchase more buses.

Senator Spencer shared that the amortization schedule for both buses is similar and that they are going to cost similar, but rather than buying two Thomas buses, they are buying 1 Gillig bus. But the salvage value of the Gillig is more. Senator Spencer thinks that due to Aggie Shuttle solving accessibility needs on campus, the board should pass the vote for the fee increase.

Senator Lane shared that she was torn on whether to support the fee increase. She understands that the increase will benefit accessibility; however, Senator Laine has a hard time supporting the increase since they are still able to pay off the loan without the increase. Senator Laine wishes that the Aggie Shuttle reallocated resources so that they could pay their student drivers and hire more people.

Colin Hastings added that Aggie Shuttle does not have staffing issues due to hiring a new person to handle the Staffing, and they haven't had issues since they hired that person

Senator Hart adds that Aggie Shuttle used to have problems with Staffing and had to cut routes, but this year, they did not have to cut any.

## **AGGIE SHUTTLE FEE INCREASE VOTE**

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to vote on the \$1.73 increase.

Senator Laine so moved

Senator Hunter seconded

All were in favor of moving to a vote.

**The vote for an Aggie Shuttle Fee increase by \$1.73**

## **INTERIM VP KRYSTIN DESCHAMPS MUSIC & THEATRE FEE INCREASE UPDATE**

Interim VP Deschamps shares that one of the deans said the fee should not be passed until the questions from the student fee board members are answered. A couple of deans supported whatever decision the student fee board members made. Other deans spoke

about how impactful music and theater are in the community, especially at athletic events. Dean Morrison of the Caine College of the Arts is supportive of the fee increase but is also gladly accepting a lower increase than proposed, especially after meeting with Student Body President Matthew Richey. Dean Morrison also gave insight into the fact that the 9,000 people attending events (from the Music & Theatre Presentation) were people going to the Caine College of the Arts (CCA) events.

Executive VP Ward adds that there were three figures in the presentation: one for meeting inflation, one for beating inflation, and one that is lower than inflation. The board can also consider another figure that can be brought to the table and be considered by the table.

Senator Parry asked if the lowest amount that Dean Morrison and Student Body President Matthew Richey discussed was the \$3.30 that was on the presentation. Or a lower figure? The following body that will discuss the fee increase proposal also has the power to suggest a lower increase. Senator Parry suggests that the student fee board should consider the highest amount that the board and students find acceptable. Senator Parry believes that the board should recommend the \$3.30.

Executive VP Ward shares that the Student Body President didn't receive specifics, but President Richey is working with legislatures and other university higher-ups.

## **MUSIC & THEATRE FEE INCREASE DISCUSSION**

Colin Hastings shares his skepticism about the \$4 increase. However, Colin believes that the Music & Theatre fee deserves to increase. The skepticism lies in the amount of the increase. Colin believes that the board should recommend a lower amount of \$2.50 to see what they can do and have them come back next year and then get reevaluated. Students that Colin talked to do not find Music and Theatre to be high on the priority list.

Executive Director Smith asked if the 9,000 people who had visited CCA events were unique students. Or does that count as repeat participants? Also, how many students who go to CCA events are CCA students? Executive Director Smith shares that she agrees with Colin that music and theatre are not high in a lot of students' interest, but a \$2 increase is sensible.

Roman Spencer shares that part of the intention for the presentation is to help increase the engagement between arts and students. Providing a unique opportunity to enjoy and explore the arts for free as a student, compared to going to a show in Salt Lake and paying \$50 for a bad seat. Everyone that Roman had talked to supported the arts. The problem that Roman sees is that the current marketing efforts feel exclusive. Future marketing materials should emphasize that the event is free and open to all students. A lot of students might not realize the events are free.

Senator Witte asks that since 25% of the budget goes to the Marching Band, which almost solely supports athletics, do athletics support the Marching Band and the CCA monetarily?

Executive VP Wilson shares that he would have to follow up with Athletics about that.

Interim VP Deschamps shares that Dean Morrison is following up on whether the 9,000 were unique customers and if they were all students.

Senator Laine shares that she is in support of raising the fee but not for the full amount. Senator Laine is in support of giving them a \$2 to \$3 raise and then coming back next year if needed. Would also like to see more marketing not only to students but to the community as well. The CCA should explore other avenues of funding, such as athletics.

VP Sorenson also wants to break down the 9,000 number. VP Sorenson is also curious about whether the pep band pays for the space that they play in during games in all the stadiums where they play. VP Sorenson Agrees that the full amount asked is too much. Senator Tougas shares that in her time as the Arts Senator, she knows that the band funds their own instruments, uniforms, and the rights to the music they play. The Band buys new music every week. As far as she is aware, athletics does not contribute monetarily to them. Most marketing goes to the community because the community has to pay for their tickets.

Senator Hunter shared that the presentation did not show that the fee increase would affect any of the marketing material. Senator Hunter also shares her struggle to support a 40% increase and would prefer a lower amount.

Executive Director Pugh shares that he works closely with Athletics and their budget. In this most recent fiscal year, Athletics transferred \$21,000 for the marching Band into their budget, and prior to that, Athletics transferred \$16,000 annually.

Senator Parry shared that the reason why the fee increase feels so substantial is because they haven't had an increase since 2016. Senator Parry believes even doing an increase that matches inflation will increase the CCA's ability to have those two musicals and grow the program. Senator Parry hesitates to do anything less than match inflation.

Executive Director Wilson adds that he would support a \$4 fee or at least a fee that would match inflation. We have already seen the effects of not having an increase; the CCA had to cut down the number of shows that they produced. The fee and the CCA have a positive impact on the campus community.

Executive Director Velazquez shares that if students were going to professional musicals

or performances, due to actors or the performers being professional, tickets would be really pricey. The CCA allows students to do these performances for free or at a lower cost. Music and arts can be universally celebrated and enjoyed. Executive Director Velazquez would love to see more data, but students can already see an impact within the community and reach where inflation will have an impact on the fine arts.

Max Alder shares that initially hesitant when seeing the increase being \$4 but agrees that the board should recommend some sort of increase. A lot of the general student public population is not going to go to a lot of these shows and events, even with an increase in marketing efforts. The fee does not directly benefit every student, compared to some other fees.

Collin Hastings shares that he appreciates CCA not constantly requesting fee increases, but that was not forced by the board, meaning that it is not the board's responsibility to help the CCA recoup funds lost. Colin asks: Was cutting the shows due to the lack of funds or lack of interest? Does the CCA need six shows? How many seats are we currently filling? Colin Hastings cannot personally justify the \$4 or \$3.30 fee increase.

Senator Witte shares that it is beyond fair to return the art fee to where it would have been if it had kept up with inflation. There is not a lot of data to support the fee, and art, in general, is subjective. Unlike the other proposals that serve actual student needs, such as food insecurity and transportation accessibility, the Music and Theatre fee does not.

Senator Parry shares that she believes that the arts provide a lot of value to the USU community. Arts are known to add to the quality of life and help build the USU community. In the presentation, they did have to get rid of those two plays and would add them back with the fee increase. The CCA has done as much as it can for 10 years instead of constantly asking for increases. The increase will directly impact those students currently in the program.

Senator Tougas shares that the CCA already had to start charging for certain events because they didn't have enough money. If the CCA doesn't get the increase, they will reduce all events to a degree for students. A lot of these events are tied to programs and degrees. The event cutting is similar to not being able to take a certain class in any other program. This also impacts students' experiences and creates a disadvantage when finding a job.

Senator Spencer shares that the fee increase is similar to a rebate since they have been spending money without asking for an increase. The increase could also really help the recruiting effort as well for the CCA. When compared to other universities in the state, other universities have art museums and traveling exhibits, attracting more than just students but also community members. USU could benefit from doing something similar.

Senator Anderson shares that inflation is impacting not only the CCA but also students through tuition, fees, and general living expenses. This adds to the burden of students, especially those who do not attend the CCA events or programs.

Collin Hastings adds that the CCA did not provide any data on events that were selling out at events. If students in the college need these events for their degrees, the increase should be in course fees.

## **MUSIC & THEATRE FEE INCREASE VOTE**

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to vote for the \$4 increase.

Senator Hunter So moved

Senator Parry Seconded

All were in favor of moving to the vote

The vote for the \$4 increase FAILED

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to move for a lower amount.

Colin Hastings moves to recommend a fee increase of \$2

Senator Witte seconds.

Senator Hunter so moves.

The motion does not pass to a vote.

Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to move another amount.

Carter Guinness moves to recommend a \$3.30 increase.

Senator Parry seconded.

Executive Director Smith so moves.

All were in favor of moving to a vote

**The vote for the \$3.30 increase for the Music & Theatre fee PASSES**

Interim VP Deschamps shares that Dean Morrison thanks everyone for their dedication and efforts in the process.

Executive VP Ward shares her appreciation for everyone's participation and hard work. Executive VP Ward entertains a motion to adjourn.

Senator Hunter seconded.

VP Sorenson so moves.

The meeting is Adjourned.