FEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 28, 2026| 5:00 PM | TSC Senate Chamber

IN ATTENDANCE:

Officers: Executive VP Max Alder, Student Advocate VP Collin Hastings, Logan VP Po'okela Yamakoshi-Singh, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business Senator J.J. Watts, Graduate Studies Senator Jamie Parry, S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Senator Brinley Rhodes, Quinney College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Senator Elijah Manwill College of Education and Humanities Senator Halle Hart, College of Arts and Sciences Breanna Cahoon, Clubs and Organizations Executive Director Mia Bean, College of Engineering Senator Kaylee Shelton, College of Arts and Sciences Senator Lily Takemoto, Athletics and Campus Recreation Executive Director Ben Burdette, Student Events Executive Director Josie Packer, and Public Relations Director Abigail Murcray

Students At-Large: Jackson Capener, Kinsey Hill, Shailynn Spangler, Alex Bodrero, Gabe Cortez, Ariana Garcia Hernandez

Staff/Administrators: Executive Director of Student Involvement and Leadership Office, Linda Zimmerman, Staff Assistant for Student Involvement David Higashi

Remote: Interim VP for Student Affairs Krystin Deschamps

Welcome:

VP Max Alder: Welcomes and stars the Fee Board meeting

Interim VP Deschamps Executive Board Recommendation

Interim VP Deschamps shares the recommendations from members of the USU Executive Board. Dean Ward and Dean Smith recommend that the Student Fee Board should consider whether all fee areas should be moved under tuition, and the Truth in Tuition event gives an opportunity for students to participate, discuss, and understand tuition dollars. Dean Smith notes that student fees currently account for about 11% of the total cost of attendance for in-state students and 8% for out-of-state students. He proposes that the Student fee be moved into tuition, and that the university set aside 8% of tuition dollars, subject to student-led processes, to be allocated to areas currently covered by student fees. Dean Anderson supports whatever the board decides and supports the five-year review and its recommendations. Dean Anderson says he is inclined to support the Museum Fee request because it is appropriately moderate. He will abstain from rendering an opinion on the Athletics fee increase request. Dean Duncan shared her thoughts, and Interim VP Deschamps will share them later on in this meeting when discussing the library fee.

Executive Director Zimmerman asks whether those were the only deans who replied to Interim VP Deschamps and provided recommendations.

Interim VP Deschamps reports that she also spoke with Dean Carden in person, who supports the students' decision and favors students paying for what they use.

President Sorensen ask if her executive summary for the last meeting was just sent to all of the university leadership council or just the deans.

Interim VP Deschamps shares that she sent it to the entire leadership council. In the past, the follow-up was an in-person meeting. However, recently it has been an email to the entire council.

VP Alder motions to amend the agenda to strike the Logan Fee Board Policy Update discussion and vote.

VP Hastings Second
All were in favor

VP Alder moves to amend the agenda to add a 10-minute discussion and a vote on the Museum's new fee request.

VP Hastings Seconds
All were in favor

Discussion Museum Fee

VP Alder reminds everyone that the museum's request amount has changed from $2 to $2.50.

VP Hastings said he opposes this fee. VP Hastings has gotten many opinions from students who do not support the new fee request. Many opinions are that they rather pay when they go to the Museum. The revised budget, with the updated fee amount, results in a significantly lower amount than the original proposal. VP Hastings, the main reason he would support the fee is providing more art classes; however, the new budget does not provide confidence that this will happen now.

Senator Watts shares that he feels this Fee request does not benefit enough students to warrant an increase.

Carter Guiness shared that one of the main reasons for the proposal was to do more cool activities with the money they would receive, which is not a great reason. This is also not something students are demonstrating or saying is needed.

Senator Parry shares that this request and the reasons are not compelling enough for this year. Senator Parry emphasizes the importance of keeping the events and resources free

for students. The request was not presented in a way that was conducive to helping the board understand the benefits that result from having a fee, such as extended hours of the museum or how big the need is for the student fee money. Senator Parry encourages restructuring the presentation and proposal to help students understand the museum's importance and the need for this fee, and to make the numbers easier to follow.

Executive Director Burdette agrees with Senator Parry that the presentation should be restructured to highlight the benefits students already receive rather than the community-based classes. The presentation showed that over 90 USU classes visit the museum, and highlighting this fact might lend greater weight to the museum's importance and use.

Jackson Capener shares that he opposes the fee and recommends going more in-depth next time on how the student fee money would be used, with specific examples to help students envision and be excited about what is not currently offered.

Alex Bodrero says he spoke with Katie Lee-Coven about charging a small fee for the community while keeping it free for students. She sits on the Logan City Council and wants to keep the museum free to the community. Alex notes that the problem he sees is that many activities are more exclusive to a single program because they are designed for that program. There are possibilities to use other methods to generate some revenue.

Senator Manwill says he is on the fence but leans toward approving the fee because it creates employment opportunities for students. Student employment can help people in their majors, but it is not required. It is also good to have opportunities for students who work around their school schedules and to support themselves financially. It is increasingly harder to find jobs anywhere. Given the minimal fee and the increased opportunity for student employment, Senator Manwill supports the Museum fee.

Senator Takemoto notes that the college does not have enough money to allocate to the Museum, even though the Museum was originally created and was self-sufficient for a while. The college itself has barely enough money for its current programs.

Executive Director Packer shares that it is important for student having employment opportunities. She believes that it is not in the best interest to pass this fee. Executive Director Packer shared that she was reviewing the expense chart in the presentation again and saw that $55,000 was marked for marketing, not for employment opportunities. Executive Director Packer agrees that if the presentation and proposal were restructured, she would be more inclined to vote in favor of the fee.

VP Alder motioned to call a vote.

VP Hasting Seconds

All are in Favor

New Museum Fee Vote

VP Alder shared that the vote was 78.3% in opposition, and the vote failed.

Letter from Athletic Director Cameron Walker

President Sorensen shares a letter from Athletics Director Cameron Walker. Athletic Director Walker thanks the student fee board and explains that the requested fee increase is intended to help Utah State Athletics remain competitive as it transitions into the PAC-12. The funds would address emerging needs, including facility updates, conference rebranding, student wellness services (including nutrition and mental health), staffing, and expanded student employment & involvement opportunities through internships and assistantships. He frames the fee increase as a shared, long-term investment that supports student experience, workforce readiness, and national visibility, while emphasizing transparency and assuring that no student fee money would be used for coaches' salaries or player retention.

Athletics Fee Increase Discussion

Executive Director Burdette explains that he gathered additional data to address concerns about the athletics fee and emphasizes the importance of protecting free student tickets as Utah State transitions to the PAC-12. Executive Director Burdette reminds everyone about last year, when students lost 1,000 student tickets to Athletics that were sold for general admission. He notes that athletics forgoes over $4 million in potential revenue by providing free student tickets for basketball and football, which directly benefits students. He surveyed 4,778 people about their feelings regarding the increase in fees. The survey results showing 95% student support for the fee increase, and data indicate that roughly 11,000 students used free athletic tickets in 2025. Ben also clarifies that the marching band and spirit squad are well supported through athletics funding for travel, lodging, and per diem. He argues that passing the fee strengthens student leverage to preserve free student tickets and ensures continued access to athletic events for current and future students

VP Collin Hastings acknowledges the difficulty of the decision and initially questions whether the student survey results may reflect bias. Despite not being heavily involved in athletics, he ultimately offers tentative support for the fee. He emphasizes considering both direct benefits—such as funding for student-athlete nutrition and mental health—and indirect benefits, including increased enrollment that helps spread bond costs across more students and stabilize student fees. He views the proposal as a "shared investment" in the university, recognizing that athletics is a major contributor to campus culture, spirit, and the overall student experience, and he supports the fee on that basis.

Senator Parry explains that discussions with Executive Director Burdette and the detailed breakdown helped convince her to support the fee, particularly after learning that it preserves free student tickets that benefit the broader student body, not just student-athletes. She raises a secondary concern about past fee reductions during COVID and

whether some costs were shifted to tuition, suggesting that future discussions consider greater transparency around how athletics is funded through both fees and tuition. President Brandon Sorensen emphasizes the importance of the fee, noting that it funds essential student services, including mental health and nutrition, which would be prioritized for any student. He supports expanding graduate assistantships and internships, noting their academic and professional benefits. He frames the fee as a shared investment that strengthens the entire university by using nationally recognized athletics to elevate visibility for Utah State's research, academics, and student achievements, ultimately advancing the university's mission and long-term growth.

Senator Manwill motions to extend the discussion time by seven minutes

Senator Parry said people should not repeat what others have said; just say they agree with a person to save time.

Senator Parry Seconds

All were in Favor

Director Packer argues against the fee, stating that supporters are mischaracterizing its purpose. She emphasizes that the proposed funds are not related to preserving student tickets, which she confirmed with Athletics Director Walker's assistant, that tickets are not at risk. She notes that students already pay substantial athletics fees and that tickets are included in those costs. Packer contends that the increase would primarily benefit a small group—around 360 students—rather than the broader student body, which she believes contradicts the purpose of student fees and the Student Fee Board. She questions the survey's framing of ticket access, argues that student-athletes already have access to campus mental health resources, and maintains that while the services are worthwhile, it should not be the responsibility of the entire student body to fund them. She argues it is unrealistic and unfair to expect the general student population to fund mental health, nutrition, and staffing resources for such a small group—especially when those students already have access to existing campus services like CAPS.

Senator Shelton explains that she has become skeptical of the proposal after reviewing it more closely. She argues that athletics can create "rose-colored glasses" and agrees that the focus should remain on what the fee actually funds. She felt misled by survey language suggesting student tickets were at risk and was frustrated by what she viewed as a lack of transparency and delayed, generic communication from Athletics. Senator Shelton questions why a large fee increase would benefit a small group of students when mental health and dietetics resources already exist on campus, and why athletics has not better integrated students into internships and experiential opportunities. She states she would be more supportive if the proposal guaranteed expanded student internships, but ultimately feels there was insufficient information and engagement for students to fairly evaluate the increase.

Senator Watts shared that he is leaning towards no due to Athletics Director Cameron

Walker stating that with or without the fee. USU will be PAC-12 ready.

Jackson Capener shares that he wants to yield his time to Executive Director Burdette to learn more from his meeting with Athletics Director Walker.

VP Alder shares that Executive Director Burdette is on the speaker list.

Alex Bodrero asks what the current Athletics fee goes towards. Does any of it go towards the HURD and help with the signs or swag that they give out? Alex Bodrero thought the fee was going to the ticket sales and the student section.

Executive Director Burdette notes that part of the fee goes toward student tickets, and the rest goes toward other expenses, such as a part-time graduate assistant and a mental health worker. Not all of the $115 goes towards Student tickets, and none of the fee goes to the HURD. The money the HURD receives comes from the Activities fee, and the HURD is a self-funded organization through HURD Premium. The HURD receives a fraction of what other organizations receive from the Activities fee; the rest comes from HURD Premium.

Interim VP Deschamps shared that she chairs a committee that oversees student mental health and that there is a pressing need for additional mental health resources for student-athletes. There is also a real concern about eating disorders among student athletes; this is also a national concern. If the board approves this fee, she is confident it will directly help students in need.

Senator Parry explains that Senator Shelton, Executive Director Parry, and Senator Takemoto were very impactful by highlighting other financial needs on campus and by explaining that free student tickets are not an imminent threat of being taken away. She notes that it might not be useful to increase the fee without understanding the other investments within it. Senator Parry recommends that the board wait until the end of the six-month sprint to see whether the ticket value increases; if it does, the fee should be adjusted accordingly.

VP Hastings notes that the board is not limited by how much a fee affects the general student body; the board can suggest increasing fees to expand other resources, such as increasing CAPS size or the new SNAC fee that expanded nutrition services. Expanding nutrition for student athletes doesn't take away from other students, nor should student athletes be punished because of a lack of resources elsewhere.

Executive Director Packer comments that 350 students out of 18,000 is not a lot. Executive Director Packer believes that Athletics should pay for its students to have access to good mental health resources and nutrition. She says the fee increases take away from other students by reducing the $30 they could use to support themselves.

President Sorensen notes that every student pays student fees, but not all use each fee area they pay for. President Sorensen emphasizes the importance to have wholistic view

of the student fee system to help each student.

Senator Manwill notes that the same reasons he was in favor of the Museum Fee apply to the athletics fee: the increased availability of student employment opportunities.

Executive Director Burdette defended the proposed student fee supporting athletics, emphasizing that it is both financially necessary and morally important. He noted that, according to Athletics Director Walker, student ticket revenue is at risk and current student fees already leave a $2 million shortfall. Executive Director Burdette argued that student-athletes, though a small group (about 360 students), are still part of the Aggie community and deserve the same level of support as other students. He stressed that athletes face unique pressures—balancing academics, travel, and athletic performance—and thus require tailored mental health and wellness resources beyond what general student services like CAPS can offer. Rejecting the fee, he said, would be a vote against student-athletes' mental and nutritional well-being and against the broader university community that benefits from their contributions and national recognition.

VP Alder motions to call a vote.

President Sorensen seconds the motion.

Athletics Fee Increase Vote

VP Alder shares that the vote passes with 52% in favor.

Discussion & Vote on Logan Fee Board Five-Year Comprehensive Review

VP Alder notes that every five years, the board reviews all student fee areas and determines whether each fee should be retained or transferred to Tuition. Tuition is meant to fund academic and extracurricular activities. Student fees fund activities not related to Admissions. Each fee area and its administrators were asked the same questions. The board will review each Fee Area, determine whether the fee should remain or be moved to tuition, and whether it agrees with the reason given.

Activity Fee

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Activity fee as a student fee. The Activity Fee funds programs, services, and activities that enhance student experience outside the classroom. Moving to tuition would reduce student voice and oversight.

Senator Parry agrees with the dean that there should be an allocated amount in tuition for students overseas to improve further transparency while maintaining student oversight. Most fees provide academic benefits and are tied to academics, so they can be included in tuition.

VP Alder shares that, in meetings with representatives from the Utah State Board of Higher Education, it was stated that once a fee becomes tuition, it would not be discussed or considered by the student fee board again. If all fees were moved into tuition, the board would essentially be dissolved, and students would not have a say in how tuition dollars are spent.

VP Hastings says he disagrees that voices can still be heard when discussing tuition dollars. There are two truth-and-tuition meetings: one with the USUSA Officers and one with the general student body. VP Hastings shared that both meetings made him feel he had no voice. The general student body meeting has very low student attendance.

Senator Parry notes that if student fees are rolled into tuition, it should be proposed that a student board be established that oversees the portion of tuition allocated to current student fee areas.

VP Alder motions for a vote.

VP Hastings seconds.

All were in favor of keeping the Activity fee as a student fee.

Student Media Fee

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Student Media Fee as a student fee. This fee supports student-centered media activities, preserves student input, and is unrelated to academics.

VP Alder motions for a vote.

Executive Director Packer Seconds.

All were in favor of keeping the Student Media fee as a student fee.

Building (TSC, ARC, Maverik Stadium, Spectrum)

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Building Fee as a student fee. Covers bond costs for non-academic facilities; bond agreements require this funding to be provided by student fees.

VP Alder motions for a vote.

Executive Director Burdette Seconds

All were in favor of keeping the building fee as a student fee.

Campus Recreation

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Campus Recreation Fee as a student fee. Supports student and professional staff, club sports, intramurals, outdoor programs, and non-academic fitness classes.

VP Alder motions for a vote

VP Hastings Seconds

All were in favor of keeping the Campus Recreation fee as a student fee.

Athletics

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Athletics Fee as a student fee. Maintains student voice in athletics; moving to tuition would reduce leverage and involvement.

VP Alder motions for a vote

VP Hastings Seconds

All were in favor of keeping the Athletics fee as a Student fee.

Aggie Shuttle

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Aggie Shuttle Fee as a student fee. Provides nearly one million rides annually for students; recognized as an auxiliary by USHE policy R550.

Senator Cahoon asks, since the board just voted on the increase, if the fee area moved under tuition, would the vote for the increase stand or be nullified?

Executive Director Zimmerman states that everything voted on and discussed will be part of the recommendation to the President, meaning the vote for the increase and the vote to move the fee into tuition will be considered.

President Sorensen shares that the recommendation will be taken by both President Mortensen and President Sorensen to the Board of Trustees and to the Utah State Higher Education Board.

Senator Cahoon asks for clarification on what the results are if the board decides to move a fee area into tuition.

Executive Director Pugh states that the board would recommend either a fee increase or moving the entire program to a tuition model. Tuition would increase by that amount.

VP Alder motions for a vote

Senator Watts seconds

All were in favor of keeping the Aggie Shuttle fee as a student fee

Library

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to transition the Library Fee into tuition. The fee supports library resources and technology used for instruction, research, and scholarship. The fee also supports outside-the-classroom services like OverDrive/Libby and a popular print collection requested by students. Potential benefits of moving to a more accurate tuition baseline for students, less "sticker shock" from fees, and responsiveness to credit hours and inflation. Potential drawbacks include reduced transparency, reduced student impact, risk of flat funding despite enrollment growth, and potential required cuts to collections and other essential student resources. VP Alder asks whether most of their budget comes from tuition and tax dollars.

Executive Director Pugh confirms that the majority of the budget is comprised of tuition and tax dollars.
Interim VP Deschamps reports that Dean Jennifer Duncan told her the Library does not receive any money from tuition; its funding comes from student fees and E&G accounts.

Executive Director Pugh notes that the Education and General (E&G) accounts are funded 60% by tax funds and 40% by tuition. The money is mixed together, not in separate parts.

Interim VP Deschamps shares that Dean Jennifer Duncan explained that more students are using the library than ever before and are more engaged than in the past, largely because the library provides a strong sense of belonging and is one of the few remaining shared study spaces on campus. She said she would understand and not fault the group if the fee were moved to tuition or kept as a student fee, even if a different decision is ultimately made. However, she emphasized how critical the fee is to the library's operations, warning that losing it would significantly harm the library's ability to function. She noted that students and student researchers would lose access to journals, which would have a severe negative impact on research. She concluded by stressing that the funding must come from somewhere and thanked the group for considering the issue.

Senator Parry shares that when similar fees were cut in the past, tuition dollars filled the gap, meaning tuition already funds some non-academic areas. While she agrees that the library is mostly academic and that the academic/non-academic line is arbitrary, she argued that the tuition funding process has less student input than the student fee process. Her main concern is that moving the library to tuition would reduce student voice. Senator Parry questions whether a tuition model would fully and proportionally replace the library's funding or simply lock it in at its current level.

VP Alder shared that it was a dollar to dollar transferred. He also notes that in 2022, the library had 220,000 users, and in fiscal year 2026, 340,000.

Senator Manwill shares that the librarians have a good understanding of the library and are prepared for either outcome. However, Student fees give a more stable footing because the data is more transparent.

Senator Cahoon says she understands this would fall under tuition, but is unsure how some student resources would be affected by the change.

Senator Parry notes that the concern is that budget funds will not remain proportionate to enrollment levels, which is important for user-based services. If enrollment increases but tuition revenue does not grow, they will not have enough money for those programs.

VP Hastings notes that this fee area is the opposite of the others: the library fee is closely tied to Academics and loosely tied to non-academic activities. He notes that, under the current definition of student fees, the library fee should not be classified as a student fee.

Alex Bordrero notes that, based on the definition of student fee, the library fee should be rolled into tuition. He suggests the board recommend that the fee stay in student fees, and allow the Utah State Higher Education Board to move the fee to tuition.

Arianna Garcia-Hernandez asks whether it is possible to reallocate funds toward tuition while keeping a portion of student fees to support user-based services and programs not tied to athletics.

Senator Parry noted that it would be difficult to do so because of the difficulty of separating academic and non-academic uses.

Executive Director Packer shared that she agrees with VP Hastings and supports moving this fee to the tuition category.

VP Alder shares a message from the Dean of the Library that they have seen a steady rise in activity and energy in the library due to increased drawing power, drawing more people to the library.

VP Alder motions for a vote

President Sorensen seconds

The majority voted to move the Library fee into tuition.

Technology

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to move this fee area into tuition. The technology fee supports campus computer labs primarily used for academic purposes.

Jackson Capener asks for clarification on what the fee actually supports.

VP Alder notes that 11 open-access computer labs for students are funded by this fee, from staffing to computer updates.

President Sorensen credits the Fee Administrator as the only one who has asked for a decrease in the fee. President Sorensen believes that this fee is an academic fee and

Executive Director Packer states that she supports moving this fee to tuition.

Senator Cahoon shares that the fee administrator wants to keep this in student fees. Senator Cahoon acknowledges that there are many reasons for including this fee in tuition.

Senator Shelton notes that some of the technology fee goes to the idea lab, which is more student-activity-based and a place where students can test ideas. She agrees that the fee administrator is great

VP Alder moves to call a vote.

Jackson Capener seconds

The majority votes to move the fee into tuition.

Art & Music

VP Alder shares that the recommendation is to keep the Art & Music Fee as a student fee. The Fee funds production and promotion of arts programs, free student access to theater and music productions, and supports Marching Band, Pep Band, Pipes & Drums, and Tippets Gallery.

Senator Takemoto notes that while the fee supports academic-related events, it primarily benefits students outside the college by providing all students with free access to art events and activities.

President Sorensen asks Senator Takemoto how the long-term benefit of the funding would be affected if the fee were moved into tuition.

Senator Takemoto replies that moving the fee into tuition would most likely require reallocation of funds because other areas need funding. The student fee ensures that these events are free for all students and helps fund programs such as the marching band, the Scottish Bagpipes, and the Drum Corps.

VP Hastings suggests that, in the future, the board should break down the Arts fee and allocate some of it to Course fees. Even though this supports only a small group, VP Hastings still favors keeping the Arts fee a student fee.

Shailynn Spangler asks for clarification on how the fee funds salaries for summer events.

Senator Takemoto responds that it is hard to explain. All summer productions remain free year-round, and salaries are included in that calculation.

VP Alder moves to call a vote.

Senator Parry Seconds

The majority voted to keep the Arts Fee in the Student Fees category.

VP Alder shares that the next step is that Max will write a letter to President Mortensen, and President Mortensen and President Sorensen will present the recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Once the Board of Trustees approves, President Mortensen and President Sorensen will present it to the Utah State Higher Education Board.

Executive Director Packer asks whether the final recommendation comes from President Mortensen or the Board of Trustees.

Executive Director Zimmerman clarifies that this is a recommendation to the President, who can differ from the students' recommendation, and the board of trustees can as well.

VP Alder motions to adjourn the meeting.

President Sorensen Seconds

All were in favor.