

FUTURE ACTION ITEM #5

Proposed Student Recreation Center Mandatory Student Fee Rate Change
Academic Year 2024-2025
(Leslie Brunelli/Elizabeth Chilton/Jenna Hyatt/Sean Greene/Grant Rickard)

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

SUBJECT: WSU Pullman, Academic Year 2024-2025 Mandatory Fee Rates

PROPOSED: That the Board of Regents authorize an increase to Student Recreation Center Mandatory Fee

SUBMITTED BY: Leslie Brunelli, Executive Vice President, Finance & Administration/CFO

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: The Student Recreation Center (SRC) is a key part of student life on the WSU Pullman campus. The SRC serves more than 80% of students throughout the year, and it provides vital spaces and services that support students' physical and mental health. Research has shown that recreation centers and opportunities positively impact recruitment, retention, and academic success.

To continue its mission to support student health, the SRC is proposing a \$7 (4.1%) increase in its mandatory fee. The fee would increase from \$168/semester to \$175/semester. All Pullman-based undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in 7 or more credit hours during the fall/spring semesters pay the fee. The summer fee is prorated for students taking 1 or 2 credits.

	Resident	Non-Resident
Current Rate (Semester)	\$168	\$168
Proposed Rate (Semester)	\$175	\$175
\$ Increase	\$7	\$7
% Increase	4.1%	4.1%

The proposed increase will:

- Assist in covering the \$2.48 million annual bond payment (expiring in 2032).

- Allow the SRC and Stephenson Fitness Center to maintain/expand operations at standard levels, including hours of operation, maintenance, and custodial support.
- Maintain student employment at existing levels. The SRC currently employs about 350 students each year.

The SRC is proposing the increase to adjust for rising costs and declining revenues. The SRC fee was increased 2.44% for FY2023-24 but had not been increased in 3 of the previous 5 years despite continual increases in costs of wages, utilities, and general goods and services. In FY2023-24 alone, wages have increased 6%, salaries and benefits 2.5-4%, and general inflation 4%. At the same time, the SRC is experiencing reduced fee collection due to declining enrollment. Total fee collection in 2023-2024 is down \$1.14 million compared to 2019-2020.

Increased costs and declining fee collections have led to reduced hours this academic year – the first time the SRC has cut hours since it opened 23 years ago. The SRC has also cut full-time staffing, goods and services, and program offerings to reduce expenses; deferred maintenance and replacement of furniture, fixtures, and equipment have been ongoing for several years.

Although several maintenance projects have been initiated for safety reasons (pool disinfection and filters, boiler and chiller replacement) and to mitigate facility damage (roof repair and replacement), the SRC has additional high-priority projects that must be addressed. These projects are funded through reserves, which have been negatively impacted by decreased fee collection and increased project expenses.

If the fee is not increased, the SRC anticipates further reductions in services for students, including additional cuts to building hours and student jobs, as well as deferral of vital maintenance projects and equipment replacement that would negatively impact student experience and, particularly regarding equipment replacement, compromise safety standards.

The UREC Advisory Board, which has majority representation from students (11 of 16 seats) and includes representatives from ASWSU and GPSA, supports the proposed increase. The board voted to approve the fee increase on Feb. 19, 2024. The Service and Activity (S&A) committee will review for endorsement in late March 2024.