Statement on Referendum Vote

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Every two years, the SUNY guidelines mandate that a vote takes place on whether or not to keep the Mandatory Student Activity fee mandatory or make it voluntary for students to pay. This vote is referred to by SUNY administration as the referendum vote and will be held in the Student Union Theater located on the University at Buffalo’s North Campus during the final week of September.

From 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. beginning on Tuesday, September 25th through Thursday, September 27th, undergraduate students attending the University at Buffalo, in good academic standing, have the opportunity to take part in this democratic process.

In order to continue and sustain the high level of programming and services offered by SA, the SA Executive Board is proposing that the Mandatory Student Fee be increased from the current fee, $104.25 per semester, to $109.00 per semester.

The current mandatory fee has not been increased since the Fall of 2014, when the fee was raised $10. SA President Gunnar Haberl states that, “after spending the past summer evaluating other SUNY Student Government’s activity fees and taking an in depth look at SA’s budget/operating costs, the proposed $4.75 increase will allow the Student Association to offer the same level of quality events and services provided to all UB undergraduates as well as give next year’s Student Association the potential to grow.”

SA’s events continue to grow and expand every year and it is important to take into account that minimum wage, insurance costs, and operating costs have continued to rise while the fee has remained unchanged. Haberl goes on to say, “Our goal is to continue the long standing legacy of the University at Buffalo Undergraduate Student Association as being the leading and premier example of an undergraduate student government in the SUNY system.”

The Mandatory Student Activity fee is what allows the Student Association to exist. The Mandatory fee goes towards funding over 150 clubs and organizations, major events/traditions such as the Fall Fest Concert Series, Spring Fest, Comedy Series, Distinguished Speakers Series sponsorships, Buffalo Untapped, Homecoming Carnival, discounted Sabres and Bills tickets, free AMC movie tickets, extended tutoring hours, along with numerous Student Affairs advocacy efforts.
The Student Association exists to improve the quality of life and the college experience for all undergraduates at UB and without the Mandatory Student Activity Fee, the Student Association would not be able to fulfill its obligation to serve and provide for all undergraduate students.

If the fee is made voluntary, the Student Association that the UB community knows would cease to exist. Clubs would disappear, traditional events would end and student advocacy efforts would hit an all time low. If you are a member of a club, attend any of the Student Association events throughout the year, or like the fact that your interests are constantly represented to the University Administration, SA urges you to vote yes and keep the Mandatory Student Activity Fee mandatory with an increase to $109.00 per semester. If passed, please note that the increase would take effect the Fall 2019 semester.

SA Vice President, Anyssa Evelyn, stresses the importance of the Mandatory Student Fee. She states, “Without the mandatory student fee, the Student Association wouldn’t be able to afford the operations of the over 150 clubs that currently exist and allow all students an opportunity to pursue their interests outside of the classroom.”

As part of their campaign for elected office, the SA Executive Board promised to evaluate how the student fee is spent and look into if changes needed to be made to reach a broader undergraduate audience. “This year, many changes were made to SA’s Fall programming in order to keep up with the increasing costs and reach a broader undergraduate audience” says SA Treasurer, Tanahiry Escamilla, “The reality is that clubs are growing, club event’s are expanding, and the cost of SA programming that reaches a large undergraduate population continues increasing every year.”

If any undergraduate student at the University at Buffalo has any questions or concerns regarding the Referendum Vote or the SA budget, we encourage them to please visit the SA Office located in 350 Student Union. The SA team is passionate about the work they do daily on behalf of the over 19,000 undergraduate students at the University at Buffalo. The entire SA team is confident that this will continue to be an exciting, productive, and successful academic year.

About the University at Buffalo Undergraduate Student Association

We are your undergraduate student government. We exist to make you undergraduate student experience everything that it can be. We represent you before the University administration, continuously advocating for your best interests. We also provide a wide range of services, oversee and ever growing roster of clubs and organizations, and put on memorable events all year long.

The University at Buffalo’s Student Association is unique amongst SUNY schools in that we are entirely student run. SA is funded through student fees and ultimately overseen by our executive officers, the SA Senate and the SA Student Assembly all of which are comprised entirely of undergraduate students. We are your Student Association.

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