

## The Wellness Fee Referendum (Draft version 11/4/14)

The proposed mandatory fee would fund expenses currently supported by the Recreational Sports Fee and the Intramural Sports Fee that are set to expire in 2016 and 2017, and would increase fees by \$68 to fund a *new* campus-wide wellness initiative. New wellness services include: improving University Health Services (UHS) surrounding mental health and extending clinical hours to better serve student availability; create new wellness programs such as nutritional cooking classes, climbing wall, alternative therapies, sexual assault resource center, and improve fitness services; incentivize campus-wide wellness programs for the larger campus community; and implement specific wellness services for underserved student groups. The new fee would begin in Fall 2015 and could only be increased or decreased no more than the healthcare rate of inflation +/- 3% annually, if approved by a student oversight committee.

### Background

#### Why Now

When it comes to promoting an environment of wellness, UC Berkeley has fallen behind peer institutes such as Stanford, UCLA, MIT, and Columbia who have developed wellness initiatives to provide students with a more meaningful college experience. As a result, student services at UC Berkeley have not kept pace with an ever-growing diverse student body who has expanded over 20% in the last 17 years with virtually no improvements in services. Wellness, health, and recreation services are in dire need of improvement including:

- Rec Sports and UHS financial limitations have prevented both from offering new, innovative mind-body services that students have been requesting (nutritional teaching kitchen, alternative therapies, climbing wall, expanded mindfulness activities).
- UC Berkeley students have “identified stress as an academic impediment at a rate higher than the national percentage, and more than 60 percent of students feel overwhelmed by anxiety.” Despite these concerns, the campus lacks an adequate mental health intervention program, and has no counseling services available on the weekends.
- Sexual assault is a pressing issue for UC Berkeley that does not have enough resources to adequately meet student need; students need a sexual assault resource center.
- Academics are the most cited cause of stress amongst UC Berkeley students, yet integration of mental health counseling into academic departments is extremely limited
- Full health care services at UHS/TANG are the least available when students are the most likely to use them: evenings and weekends. Rigorous academic demands often hinder a student's entire day making access to health services (9am-5pm) near impossible.
- With one of the most diverse student body populations in the world, the campus requires adequate wellness programs to serve marginalized students.
- Currently, UC Berkeley lacks an adequate program to incentivize campus-wide wellness programs.

### Student Involvement and Funding Alternatives

During the past year a student wellness work Group supported by the ASUC and Graduate Assembly collaborated with administrators from UHS, RecSports, and Equity and Inclusion to develop a transparent student-driven wellness initiative. Routinely, the group communicated with both the GA and ASUC Executive Boards along with regular 'wellness updates' to all GA Delegates and ASUC Senate members to solicit additional feedback. Additional student feedback was collected by analyzing numerous student surveys, and reaching out to student groups such as the Disabled Students Union, Cal Veterans Group, CO-OP system, and others through various channels. Discussions also occurred with other campus committees that included students from the Health Fee Advisory Board, Student Health Advisory Committee, Rec Sports Board of Governors, Bike Advocacy Committee, Graduate Student Mental Health Committee, and the ASUC's Wellness Coalition Group.

Members of the work group are striving to support capital construction costs for major renovation expenses (i.e. the Anna Head complex) which will hopefully support many of the new wellness services. Referendum fees will only support services and programming for students, as well as furnishings and alterations required to support these new wellness programs.

### Fees at Other UC Campuses

There is no comparable funding model to compare to, nor is there a wellness initiative that is similar in scope and size to this one. The strong partnership between UHS, RecSports, and students enabled this innovative vision to occur.

### Consequences if Not Approved

If the wellness initiative fee is not approved:

- With the Rec Sports fees expiring in 2016 and 2017, the department will lose nearly 40% of its operating budget and be forced to make dramatic cuts to facility hours and services.
- The mental health of students will continue to deteriorate
- Sexual assault will continue to challenge the UC Berkeley campus with inadequate resources to make substantive change.
- University Health Services will continue to be inaccessible during the time students are most available.
- The campus will lack cooking classes, new forms of alternative therapies, and other wellness student services that are in high demand.
- Diverse student groups (students of color, international students, veterans, students with disabilities, LGBTQIA, etc.) will have no wellness programs specifically designed to meet their unique needs.
- There will be no campus-wide program to incentivize a new climate of wellness.

### **Purpose of the Wellness Initiative Fee**

#### UHS Wellness Improvements

*Extended Hours:* Currently, the hours of operation for the TANG medical center are closed at the times students are most available to use them: evening and weekends when they are not in class. The

wellness initiative fee will extend hours of operations for Urgent Care and Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) on select weekdays, keep Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) open on Saturdays, as well as both Urgent Care and CPS open on Sundays.

*Counseling and Psychological Services:* Every year UC Berkeley loses campus affiliates and students to suicide. Other serious mental health complications afflict students to the point of impacting performance, as reported on surveys. The wellness initiative will provide, for the first time, mental health experts for TANG's primary care clinics to immediately assist students that may benefit from an intervention or continued counseling. Thus, eliminating the cumbersome external appointment system that can take students up to 10 business days to see a mental health expert.

*Mental Health Integration into Academic Departments:* Funds will also be used to inspire a cross-campus wellness program to add mental health counselors into academic department buildings. Students' mental health needs are exacerbated by intense academic pressures, and these counselors would be capable of informing department educators and administrators about the unique needs of their students in order to promote wellness. The fee will also assist with furnishing, technology, and space alteration needs to support counselors (no major capital projects).

#### New Wellness Services

*Nutrition:* The Bay Area is renowned throughout the world as an epicenter for culinary excellence. Unfortunately, UC Berkeley lacks a nutritional and cooking program to teach students about eating healthy and sustainable edible practices. The wellness fee will support a nutritional cookings program for students.

*Alternative Therapies and New Wellness Programs:* New wellness programs will be created that meet the consistent demands of students. Some of these programs could include alternative therapies (e.g. acupressure, reflexology, meditation), health and well-being classes, light-weight / low impact gym, stress management activities, relaxation spaces, mindfulness training, and climbing wall opportunities. The fee will assist with furnishings and space alteration needs to support the new wellness programs (no major capital projects).

#### Sexual Assault

To better support the needs of sexual assault survivors and prevent such tragedies on campus, the wellness initiative will support advocacy staff to work with survivors and educational campaigns. The fund will also provide support to institutionalize a Sexual Assault Resource Center on campus.

#### Diversity Student Wellness Programs

Specific wellness programs for underserved student populations will be supported including, but not limited to: wellness programs for students of color, veterans, international students, and LGBTQIA communities. The program will also provide other needed services such as a health maintenance and sports program for students with disabilities.

#### Wellness Sustainability Plan

To ease student costs over time a portion of the fee will support a sustainability director who will implement strategies to offset student costs for new services; the sustainability director will also be in charge of coordinating such efforts with the large campus administration.

### Innovative Campus-Wide Wellness Projects

To create an environmental shift toward wellness, a fund will be established to support UC Berkeley one-time wellness projects annually that promote student wellness; the oversight of the program is to be determined.

### Replacement of Two Current Fees Set to Expire: Recreational Sports Fee and Intramural Sports Fee (Currently \$88.50)

Currently, student pay two mandatory fees to support the general operations of the Recreational Sports Department.

- 2006 Recreational Sports Fee at \$50 per semester, increasing to \$55 per semester in Fall 2015, and expiring at the end of the Spring 2016.
- 1981 Intramural Sports Facility Fee at \$28.50 per semester, expiring at the end of Spring 2017.

### **Breakdown of the Wellness Initiative Referendum Fee**

The new wellness initiative fee of \$68 per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) in its first year would be used to fund the following expenditures (ordered largest to smallest); the sunset of the fee is 30 years and the funding is intended to supplement but not supplant existing or future funding

1. Mandatory return of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the proceeds to financial aid to help offset cost of this fee for students who are eligible for campus-based financial aid.
2. UHS extended hours, sexual assault student resources, and improved mental health counseling along with operational, furnishing, and alteration costs to provide such services (58% of fee).
3. New wellness services including operational, furnishings, and alteration costs to provide such services (29% of fee).
4. Diversity student wellness programs and associated costs (8% of fee).
5. Wellness sustainability plan to lower student costs over time (3% of fee).
6. Campus-wide wellness incentive program (2% of fee).
7. If supplementary funds come in for the same purposes delineated here, the Committee can decrease the fee accordingly.
8. Funds from both the renewal of the Rec Sports membership fee and the Wellness Fee are only valid if Rec Sports is independent from Cal Athletics.

### **Wellness Initiative Student Fee Oversight Board**

All fees will be overseen by the Wellness Initiative Student Fee Oversight Board, which will be charged with ensuring that the fees support the original intention of the referendum, and will have the responsibility of monitoring the revenue and expenses of such programs. The board will also have the ability to incrementally increase or decrease the fee no more than the healthcare rate of inflation +/- 3% every year to support new wellness needs to meet changing student demands over time.

### **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**

The proposed mandatory fee would support a commitment to Wellness at Cal. The fee would **renew** the expiring Recreational Sports Fee (2016) and the Intramural Sports Fee (2017), and would **increase** fees by \$68 to fund a *new* campus-wide wellness initiative. New wellness services include: improving University Health Services (UHS) surrounding mental health, and extending clinical hours to better serve student availability; create new wellness programs such as nutritional cooking classes, climbing wall, alternative therapies, sexual assault resources, relaxation spaces, and improve fitness services; incentivize campus-wide wellness programs for the larger campus community; and implement specific wellness services for underserved student groups. The new fee would begin in Fall 2015 and could only be increased or decreased no more than the rate of healthcare inflation +/- 3% annually, if approved by a student oversight committee.