

University of Colorado Boulder

Institutional Student Fee Plan

Updated September 2016

Effective beginning: FY 2016-17

I. General Guidelines

The *Institutional Student Fee Plan for the University of Colorado Boulder (Plan)* has been adopted in compliance with Section 23-5-119.5, Colorado Revised Statutes, and the Colorado Department of Higher Education's Policies and Procedures Section VI, part C Tuition and Fees. Any modification to the *Plan* must be made in cooperation with the CU-Boulder administration and the University of Colorado Student Government (CUSG) via their representatives on the Fee Advisory Board (FAB), and be approved by both representative groups on the FAB prior to submission to the Board of Regents. Any modification to the *Plan* must be approved by the Board of Regents.

This *Plan* shall apply to all fees adopted on or after July 1, 1997.

Any policy or procedure in this document found to be in conflict with policies and procedures established by the Board of Regents, Department of Higher Education (DHE), state or federal statute, or state fiscal rules is superseded by those policies, procedures or statutes.

II. Fee Categories

The fee categories covered by the *Plan* include:

Mandatory Fees. These are the required campus-wide fees assessed to all students. This category does not include fees which are optional or frequently waived. It includes:

- CUSG Student Activity Fees: The University of Colorado Student Government (CUSG) may charge fees for permanent CUSG student activities including support for the student center, student government, student programs, student cultural or social events, legal services, recreation activities, and similar facilities and services. CUSG may also charge non-permanent fees for the renovation and expansion of student-centered facilities such as the University Memorial Center and Recreation Center.
- Campus Student Services Fees: The campus may impose mandatory fees charged to the student body which are allocated to support student programming. Such fees provide direct student services which include, but are not limited to: student health services and facilities, arts and cultural enrichment, student mental health services, Athletic Fee, career services, and student bus and bike programs (also known as the RTD fee).
- Technology Fees: Mandatory fee collected for the purpose of providing or purchasing equipment or programmatic activities relating to computer equipment, laboratory equipment, or other technology. This type of fee primarily supports technology services and supplies. Examples of this fee include the Arts and Sciences Support for Educational Technology fee, Student Computing Fee, and Student Information System fee. Fees for course-specific technology are included in the course-specific fee category.

- Academic Facility Capital Construction Fee: Student fees may be used for academic facilities construction only when: All other financing options have been explored; students approved the use of funds through either vote of the student body; any changes relating to the use of fees under this section is initiated by the student government; and students are involved in the entire project.

Campus-wide Administrative Fees. Any campus-wide fee assessed against students by an institution of higher education, the revenues from which are used to, but not limited to, provide administrative services or to cover administrative costs.

- Standard registration fees that all students are required to pay are considered administrative fees.
- Does not include late registration fee or add/drop fees which are classified as Charges for Service.
- No new administrative fee or fee increase (in excess of inflation) shall be collected unless approved by a student election and limited with an expiration date.

Academic and Instructional Fees. Fees assessed to cover costs related to specific courses or programs that benefit the students who choose to enroll in the course or program.

- Course Specific Fee: Fees assessed by an institution to all students who enroll in a specific course. Course specific fees must be used for costs directly related to the course for which they are charged; must be charged to all sections of the same course; and should cover the unusual costs for those course offerings.
- Program Specific Fees: Fees assessed by an institution to all students who enroll in a particular instructional program.

The *Plan* does not cover:

- Charge for Service: A charge to cover the costs of delivering specific services. Charges for service are not campus-wide or mandatory for all students. Charges for service are, however, required for students who meet the criteria for which the charge is being assessed. These may include, but are not limited to: application fees, add/drop fees, fines and penalties, late fees, orientation fees, and matriculation fees. Charges for service do not require legislative spending authority appropriation and do not require student approval.
- User Fee: A fee to exercise a privilege or receive a service provided by an auxiliary facility, including but not limited to room and board charge, parking fees, space rental, meal plans, locker rentals, recreation center usage fees. User fees do not require legislative spending authority appropriation and do not require student approval.

III. **Mandatory Fee Proposal and Review**

The process for proposing and reviewing a mandatory fee will differ based on whether it is or will be a part of the Student Activity Fees managed by CUSG. As a result, the process for proposing and reviewing mandatory fees is sectioned into processes for: 1) CUSG Student Activity Fees and 2) Campus Mandatory Fees (Campus Student Services Fees, Technology Fees, and Academic Facility Capital Construction Fee)

1. CUSG Student Activity Fees Proposal and Review

Any student paying the CUSG Student Activity Fees may prepare a proposal for new or revised Student Activity Fees. New fees and changes to existing fees must be approved in accordance with existing CUSG policy.

Deadlines: The intent is for CUSG to follow its own formally recognized process for managing its Student Activity Fees. Complete CUSG Student Activity Fees process and policies can be found in the CUSG governing documents on the CUSG website.

2. Campus Mandatory Fees

Any interested party may initiate a proposal for a new fee or revision of an existing fee by preparing a fee proposal and submitting the proposal to the applicable vice chancellor for review.

A Fee Request Form must be completed for each proposed fee. Refer to the Budget and Fiscal Planning website for the form. Each fee proposal must include:

- Type of fee proposed (student services, technology, academic facility capital construction)
- Name of the sponsoring unit, including a primary point of contact for the sponsoring unit
- Amount of the fee, including the original fee amount if a change in the amount of the fee is being proposed
- Justification for the requested increase/decrease and/or change to the purpose of the fee, including expected use of fee revenues and benefit to affected students
- Description of the types and amounts of expenses the fee will cover, and any expenses that may not be covered by the requested fee revenue
- Expected revenue generation
- Basis of fee assessment – by academic year, semester, headcount, credit hour, etc.

The proposal and recommendations will be submitted by the appropriate vice chancellor to the campus Fee Advisory Board (FAB) for review and recommendations. The purpose of the FAB is to review, discuss, and comment to student leadership and campus administration on fee requests, and especially to provide student leadership with the opportunity to respond to fee proposals. The FAB does not have authority to approve fees. The FAB will be chaired by a designee from the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor (or designee from the FAB in his/her absence), as a non-voting member (unless there is a tie vote). In addition to the chair, the FAB will be comprised of representatives from the vice chancellor's offices of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Campus Infrastructure and Safety, and Dean of the Graduate School, plus the following student representatives:

- one representative from the CUSG executives
- President Pro Tem from the CUSG Legislative Council
- one representative from CUSG Representative-at-Large Council
- CUSG Finance Board Chair

- one representative from the CUSG Council of Local Schools and Colleges
- one representative from the United Government of Graduate Students

If the fee is determined by the FAB to be for a nonpermanent student purpose, then such fee must be approved by a student election and must contain an expiration date. Fees for permanent student purposes do not require a vote of the student body.

Additional requirements specific to Academic Facility Capital Construction Fees:

The FAB will review the proposal to ensure that all other financing options have been explored and that a detailed plan for the inclusion of students throughout the project is included in the proposal.

Per Board of Regent policy 12: *Student Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid*, "any new fee used to finance long-term debt for the construction or remodeling of a building which is primarily used for academic and or athletic(s) purposes, may only be approved by majority vote of the students voting at a regularly scheduled student election or specially called elections."

Information for this student vote will be provided to the student body and will be, but not be limited to:

- Full disclosure of information relating to the fee
- Made available at least 30 days prior to first reading through the use of newspapers, handouts, and/or official campus websites.
- Factual and unbiased

Results of the student body vote on the use of fees for academic facilities will be communicated in writing to the FAB. A positive vote is necessary to advance the approval process and will become part of the fee proposal.

Subsequent reviews and approvals will be sought from the Chancellor, the President, and the Board of Regents.

IV. Campus-wide Administrative Fee Proposal and Review

Any interested party may initiate a proposal for a new fee or revision of an existing fee by preparing a fee proposal and submitting the proposal to the applicable vice chancellor for review.

A Fee Request Form must be completed for each proposed fee. Refer to the Budget and Fiscal Planning website for the form. Each fee proposal must include:

- Type of fee proposed (student services, technology, academic facility capital construction)
- Name of the sponsoring unit, including a primary point of contact for the sponsoring unit
- Amount of the fee, including the original fee amount if a change in the amount of the fee is being proposed
- Justification for the requested increase/decrease and/or change to the purpose of the fee, including expected use of fee revenues and benefit to affected students
- Description of the types and amounts of expenses the fee will cover, and any expenses that may not be covered by the requested fee revenue
- Expected revenue generation
- Basis of fee assessment – by academic year, semester, headcount, credit hour, etc.

The proposal and recommendations will be submitted by the appropriate vice chancellor to the campus Fee Advisory Board (FAB) for review and recommendations.

If the fee is determined by the FAB to be an administrative fee, then such fee must be approved by a student election whether it is a new fee or a request to increase an existing fee above inflation. In addition, this fee must have an expiration date.

V. Academic and Instructional Fee Proposal and Review

Any interested party may initiate a proposal for a new fee or a revision of an existing fee by preparing a fee proposal and submitting the proposal to the applicable department chair (or unit head) for review.

A Fee Request Form must be completed for each proposed fee. Refer to the Budget and Fiscal Planning website for the form. Each fee proposal must include:

- Type of fee proposed (course, program)
- Name of the sponsoring unit, including a primary point of contact for the sponsoring unit
- Amount of the fee, including the original fee amount if a change in the amount of the fee is being proposed
- Justification for the requested increase/decrease and/or change to the purpose of the fee, including expected use of fee revenues and benefit to affected students
- Description of the types and amounts of expenses the fee will cover, and any expenses that may not be covered by the requested fee revenue
- Expected revenue generation
- Basis of fee assessment – by academic year, semester, headcount, credit hour, etc.

After the department chair (or unit head) reviews and approves the proposal, it must then be presented to an appropriate advisory committee for further evaluation and recommendation. The advisory committee is established within the academic unit proposing the fee, and should consist of:

- One student recommended by the appropriate student organization or government, for the purpose of reviewing the fee proposal. In cases where an academic unit does not have a student organization or government, this requirement may be met by engaging a CUSG student representative.
- One (or more) of the students affected by the fee, except in the case of a new program that has not yet been implemented.
- One student appointed by the appropriate Dean or Vice Chancellor
- One faculty and/or staff member appointed by the appropriate Dean or Vice Chancellor

The department chair (or unit head) forwards both the proposal and advisory committee recommendation to the appropriate dean's office for further review. The proposal must document individuals who participated in the advisory committee review and recommendation. The dean will submit the approved fee proposal and advisory committee recommendation to the Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning. The Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning will assemble all academic and instructional fee templates received from schools, colleges, and/or academic departments and meet with the Provost and Chief Financial Officer for review. Upon this review and approval, the Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning will

prepare the proposed fee list for submittal to the Board of Regents for review and final approval.

VI. Complaint Resolution Process

Students with a complaint concerning an existing, non-CUSG administered fee should register this complaint in a written communication to the FAB Chair. Complaints regarding mandatory fees must contain evidence that the fee approval procedure was not followed in the correct manner, that the fee revenue is not being used for the purpose described in the relevant proposal, or the amount of the fee is not commensurate to the benefit provided. Complaints may not be based on an individual's desire to avoid paying the fee.

The FAB Chair will investigate and respond in writing within 30 days. In the event it is determined that the established procedure was not followed or that the fee revenue is not being used for the purpose that was intended, the FAB chair will notify the appropriate vice chancellor or dean. The dean or vice chancellor has 30 days to respond in writing with a statement of what steps will be taken to correct the situation. It is the responsibility of the vice chancellor or dean to ensure compliance. The Chancellor (or his/her delegate) shall have the final responsibility for resolution of complaints.

Students with complaints concerning the Student Activity Fee (CUSG) process must submit this complaint in writing to the CUSG Appellate Court. The court will follow the CUSG Appellate Court Bylaws.

VII. Regent Approval and Notification

The Board of Regents shall annually review and approve fees covered by this *Plan*. Such fees will be charged to students only after the review and approval of the Board of Regents.

Notice of newly approved fees or fee increases shall be given to students through the Bursar's web site at least 30 days prior to assessment on the first bill of the fall, spring and summer sessions. The notice must provide the amount, reason, purpose, use of the fee, and whether it is permanent or non-permanent.

VIII. Timeline for Fee Approvals

- The University of Colorado Boulder campus timeline for fee submission is provided on the Budget and Fiscal Planning website and will be updated periodically to accommodate changes in the Board of Regents fee review schedule.
- If the fee timeline for external review and/or approvals is changed, units will need to accommodate those scheduled changes. Changes to fee schedules will be communicated to the appropriate dean or vice chancellor office and fee liaisons as needed.
- The Board of Regents typically considers final fee proposals during the spring semester.
- The University of Colorado Boulder and the Board of Regents are required to report to CDHE by September of each year any changes in current mandatory student fee rates and all new mandatory student fees, including why the additional cost was covered by a fee increase or a new fee and not by tuition and the date the Board of Regents reviewed and approved.

IX. Review of Existing Fees

All fees require regular review and evaluation, which includes rate assessment and fee revenue use and unspent fee revenue balances. The Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning will periodically complete a review of the fees covered by this Plan and at least every four years. Fees will be reviewed with regard to original purpose, intended and current use of fee revenue, impact on students and academic units, adequate student inclusion in and access to the services of goods provided, billing procedures, financial aid issues, problematic impacts, and other fee-specific factors. Any uncommitted fee fund balances over \$100,000 will be reviewed annually.

Reviews will be conducted in consultation with respective unit heads, campus student government representatives, standing fee review committees, and other parties relevant to the type and purpose of the reviewed fee(s). Findings and recommendations from this review will be submitted to the Provost and Chief Financial Officer for final decision on continuance or termination of the fee(s). If it is deemed that a specific fee has an excessive balance without a spending plan then an action plan will be implemented in order to spend down the balance according to the original intent of the fee.

X. Additional Provisions

No new fee, fee increase, or fee extension that is defeated by a vote of the student body may be resubmitted for a vote of the student body until the following regularly scheduled election.

No new fee or fee increase (in excess of inflation) assessed for nonpermanent student purposes shall be collected unless approved by a student election and such new fee or increase contains an expiration date.

Administrative costs charged to students or student groups beyond the usual and customary overhead assessment on auxiliary activities must be identified in all fee proposals.

At any time during the proposal and review cycle, a fee proposal may be disapproved by the Chancellor, Provost, or Senior Vice Chancellor/Chief Financial Officer at their discretion based on the best interests of the university, its programs, and affected students. No new or increased fee will be implemented without obtaining appropriate approvals.