

Policy Manual

Issues Policy

Issues Policy 02 (IS-02): Ancillary, Auxiliary, Incidental, and Administrative Fees

Adopted by: Board of Directors

Adopted on: March 22, 2011

Summary:

The introduction and expansion of ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees over the past two decades is a symptom of the crisis in the financing of post-secondary education institutions in British Columbia (BC) and Canada. These fees download increasing costs to students while obscuring the total cost to those students for their studies. They obfuscate institutional budgeting processes and deflect responsibility for funding post-secondary education away from provincial and federal governments.

The financing of post-secondary education is in crisis. Declining per-student public funding over the past two decades has left institutions in search of alternate financial resources. Dramatic increases in tuition fees have been used unsuccessfully to meet this need due to the inability of fees to sufficiently scale to replace public funding, leaving post-secondary institutions facing steep financial shortfalls. At Thompson Rivers University this trend was exacerbated by the increased expectations, and thus financial demands, of becoming a full university in 2004 without a corresponding increase in per-student public funding.

As a result, concurrent to tuition fee increases, and particularly following regulation of those increases, ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees have been introduced and increased as an additional means of collecting revenue from individual students. This has often meant that the representation of the cost of post-secondary education to students has been understated, and where these additional fees fund core academic and administrative functions students are paying multiple fees to receive the same services.

For institutional budgeting, ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees are similarly obfuscating. Multiple fees often fund individual departments or functions and revenue from individual fees are often applied to multiple departments or functions, making it difficult for participants in institutional governance to accurately identify costs and revenues. At the same time, these fees underwrite government divestment, further undermining the possibilities for institutional financial sustainability.

Finally, while fees that support student government and student-run service or media organisations are often understood as ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, or administrative fees, they are more accurately defined as membership dues. These organisations have no other significant legitimate source of revenue and are justly supported by dues paid by members with democratic rights within those organisations.

Policy:

- I. The Union supports:
 - a. Provincial legislation that limits ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees to such purposes as:
 - i. Operation of students' unions or associations that are registered societies and whose membership is limited to students;
 - ii. Operation of organisations that are subsidiaries of those outlined in Section 1.a.i.;

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- iii. Construction, maintenance, or operation of buildings or spaces owned and operated by organisations outlined in Section 1.a.i.;
 - iv. Activities or services that seek to enhance the cultural, social, or recreational life of students and that are non-academic in nature, and;
 - v. Operation of on-campus news media organisations such as radio stations, newspapers, or other media outlets that are incorporated under provincial or federal laws and that are controlled in majority by students;
- b. Referenda of the student body to be charged for the creation of all new ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees that:
- i. When the fee is to be charged by an institution, must:
 - 1. Be conducted by, and at the expense of, the institution;
 - 2. Provide for oversight by a recognised students' union or association;
 - 3. Provide for approval of referenda questions by a recognised students' union or association;
 - 4. Meet a quorum of no less than twenty (20) percent of the student body to be charged, or fifty (50) students, whichever is more, and;
 - 5. Receive support of no less than fifty (50) percent plus one of ballots cast to pass;
 - ii. When the fee is to be collected by an institution on behalf of a recognized students' union or association, must:
 - 1. Be conducted by the students' union or association according to its constitution, bylaws, and policies, and the requirements of legislation governing registered societies;
 - 2. Meet a quorum of no less than twenty (20) percent of the student body to be charged, or fifty (50) students, whichever is more, and;
 - 3. Receive support of no less than fifty (50) percent plus one of ballots cast to pass;
- c. Inflationary, cost-of-living, or students' union approved discretionary increases to existing ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, or administrative fees of no more than five (5) percent annually, and only where provisions for such increases were specified in the referendum question which established the fee;
- d. The expedient and provincially enforced elimination of ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees that do not fall into the categories outlined under Section I.a. by means that do not compromise the functionality or quality of academic instruction, inquiry, or support services;
- II. The Union opposes:
- a. Tuition-related ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, and administrative fees that are established or charged for core student services, institutional capital expenses, or the academic, or administrative operations of the institution including, but not limited to, fees for:
 - i. Application, confirmation, or registration;
 - ii. Student identification cards;

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- iii. Construction, maintenance, or operation of classrooms, laboratories, libraries, commercial, academic, or administrative buildings or spaces;
 - iv. Consumable supplies, equipment, or instruments not retained by the student;
 - v. Appeals processes;
 - vi. Graduation ceremonies, certificates, degrees, diplomas, or other academic awards;
 - vii. Alumni associations or other advancement or fundraising operations;
 - viii. Information technology equipment or infrastructure, computer labs, internet or local network access, or electronic mail;
 - ix. Mandatory field trips or mandatory field placements;
 - x. Academic support, accessibility, counselling, teaching or tutoring services;
 - xi. Financial aid, loan programmes, or scholarship endowment funds;
 - xii. Athletic programs or facilities;
 - xiii. Library acquisitions;
- b. Any compulsory fee or fee increase that violates institutional or government regulations, policies, or guidelines;
- c. Efforts to seek student consent for ancillary, auxiliary, incidental, or administrative fees outlined in Section II.a. through student referenda or any other means.