

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Agenda Item Summary Sheet**

**Name:** Finance and Facilities Committee

**Date:** May 20, 2015

**Title:** Minnesota State Colleges Student Association Consideration of Fee Increase (First Reading)

**Purpose (check one):**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed<br>New Policy or<br>Amendment to<br>Existing Policy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approvals<br>Required by<br>Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other<br>Approvals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring /<br>Compliance                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Information                                   |   |

**Brief Description:**

Board policy 3.7 recognizes MSCSA as the designated student association for the colleges establishes the conditions for the association's ability to collect fee revenue to fund association operations. This per-credit fee is currently set at \$.31, meaning a full-time student at one of our colleges pays \$9.30 on an annual basis. This year, after a lengthy and detailed budget process that included three separate presentations to students at our January, March, and April conferences, the MACSA General Assembly adopted a budget for FY2015 that includes an increase in the per credit fee.  
Board policy provides for the board to review and accept or revise the fee proposal after two readings.

**Scheduled Presenter(s):**

Kayley Schoonmaker, President, Minnesota State College Student Association  
Matt Rubel, Treasurer, Minnesota State College Student Association

*First Reading*

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**BOARD ACTION**

Minnesota State Colleges Student Association  
Consideration of Fee Increase  
(First Reading)

**BACKGROUND**

The Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) was formed in 1998 when two previous student associations, the Minnesota Technical College Student Association and the Minnesota Community College Association merged. Both of these groups have a long history of student advocacy going back decades. Our mission is focused on providing an affordable, accessible, and quality higher education for the people of Minnesota.

In order to best work toward our core mission, we focus our efforts on four important areas of higher education:

- Advocacy on the campus, system, state, and federal levels including our annual advocacy day at the Minnesota State Capitol and a consistent presence on Minnesota State College and Universities system committees and councils.
- Leadership development training that builds students into effective leaders on their campuses and beyond graduation.
- Civic engagement through non-partisan voter registration work and helping students understand the mechanics of the electoral process.
- Scholarship programs that provide financial assistance to students and recognize their campus and community involvement. Over the past decade, we have increased our scholarship endowment from \$30,000 to \$350,000, and awarded over \$100,000 in scholarship funds to MnSCU students.

Minnesota Statutes 136F.22 dictates that there must be a single recognized statewide student association for the colleges. Board policy 3.7 recognizes MSCSA as that entity, and adopts language mirroring the statute's concerning the ability to collect fee revenue to fund association operations. This per-credit fee is currently set at \$.31, meaning a full-time student at one of our colleges pays \$9.30 on an annual basis. Historically, we have done everything possible to avoid increasing this fee and students have been paying the same amount for approximately a decade.

In recent years, declining enrollment across campuses has led our students to make significant changes to programming and operations. Over of the past five years, we have cut approximately \$127,000 or 15% of our budget while continuing to meet the needs of students.

This year, after a lengthy and detailed budget process that included three separate presentations to students at our January, March, and April conferences, our General Assembly adopted a budget

for FY2015 that includes an increase in our fee. The increase will allow us to maintain current programming, staffing levels, and make strategic investments to better allow us to pursue activities core to our mission.

### **FEE INCREASE PROPOSAL**

The budget approved by our General Assembly included an additional \$.04 in fee revenue. This would move the fee from its current level of \$.31 to \$.35 per credit. For a full-time student, this would be an increase of \$1.20 annually. In terms of a percentage, it would equal just under a 13% increase over the previous year's fee. To put the increase in a historical context, this amounts to an increase of about 1.3% annually over the life of the fee.

### **RATIONALE FOR THE INCREASE**

We take seriously our role as the statewide voice for students on our campuses. We have taken great steps over the past number of years to avoid any changes to the fee paid by our students.

This proposal is before you today because we believe this modest increase will allow MSCSA the opportunity to continue efforts to advocate for students and to maintain the level of services our students expect from their association. It is our sincere belief that increasing a fee once in ten years is reasonable and will not drastically impact individual students.

If this fee increase is not approved, we will take steps that would drastically affect our ability to continue providing assistance to students in some key areas such as campus budget consultation, leadership training, issue advocacy, and other areas crucial to our mission.

As an association, we're sensitive to the costs facing our students. We believe this reasonable fee increase is something truly necessary to continue providing excellent student representation and leadership training to our members.

### **RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MOTION**

The Finance and Facilities Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the following motion:

The Board of Trustees accepts the increase of the MSCSA fee from \$.31to \$.35 per credit hour beginning fall semester 2015.

### **RECOMMENDED BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOTION**

The Board of Trustees accepts the increase of the MSCSA fee from \$.31to \$.35 per credit hour beginning fall semester 2015.

*Date of Adoption:* 06/17/2015

*Date of Implementation:* 07/01/2015