Q&A on Student Fees

- The state’s budget deficit has resulted in mid-year program cuts
- A spring student fee increase is proposed as one part of the solution at UC
- Financial aid would mitigate the impact on lower-income students

Q. What is the student fee increase being proposed at the University of California?
A. To help address state budget reductions and protect the core instructional program from cuts, the UC Board of Regents will consider an increase in mandatory systemwide student fees of $135 per quarter beginning with the spring 2003 term. This would be the first such fee increase at UC in eight years.

Q. When would the fee increase take effect?
A. The increase would be implemented in the spring term of the 2002-03 academic year. At all campuses except UC Berkeley, the spring quarter begins in late March and student fee payments are due by mid-March. At UC Berkeley, which is on the semester system, the spring term begins in January, but students would not have to pay the $135 increase until mid-semester.

Q. Why is this happening?
A. Due to a statewide deficit of more than $21 billion, the state of California is reducing its budget significantly. Already, since the recession began, UC has taken budget cuts of more than $240 million and has gone without an additional $237 million in funding it had counted on for faculty and staff salary increases and other cost increases. Further cuts to UC’s budget are expected in 2003-04. The University must look to a balanced package of solutions to get through this difficult period; a student fee increase, as one part of the package, will help prevent deeper cuts and will help protect the student instructional program from budget reductions. Protecting access and quality in the student instructional program is UC’s top budget priority.

Q. What are UC student fees now?
A. Mandatory systemwide student fees have not increased at UC since 1994-95; in fact, in the late 1990s they fell 10 percent for resident undergraduates and 5 percent for resident graduate academic students. Currently, full-year systemwide fees are $3,429 for resident undergraduates and $3,609 for resident graduate academic students. Campus-based miscellaneous fees add to the total. However, two-thirds of UC students receive financial aid – more than half of it in the form of grants that do not have to be repaid – reducing the “sticker price” of student fees.

Q. How would students and their families be impacted by this fee increase?
A. One-third of the revenue from the fee increase would be returned directly to financial aid in order to mitigate the impact on lower-income families. In general, students with less than $60,000 in annual family income would not be impacted by the increase.

Q. What about professional school fees?
A. In addition to the $135 systemwide fee increase, the Regents will consider a proposal to increase student fees for professional school programs by between $150 and $400 per quarter beginning with the spring 2003 term. These increases are being proposed to help prevent deeper budget cuts and in recognition of the fact that fees for all of UC’s professional school programs are now significantly lower than the average at comparable public universities. The differential ranges from $2,200 per year in nursing to $8,400 in medicine. The proposed professional school fee increases are $150 in nursing and theater/film/television, $250 in pharmacy and optometry, $350 in veterinary medicine, and $400 in medicine, business, law, and dentistry (all figures per quarter).

Q. What about next year?
A. Further systemwide and professional school fee increases in 2003-04 are possible given the severity of the state’s budget situation and the university’s commitment to protecting instructional programs from cuts. Student fee levels for 2003-04 will not be set until early 2003.

FOR MORE UC NEWS CALL 510.987.9200 OR VISIT UC NEWSWIRE AT  www.ucnewswire.org