



RUSA Resolution S19-05

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Sponsors: Internal Affairs Committee, Sustainable Governance Ad Hoc Committee

Resolution Concerning the Student Activities Fee

Whereas, the Student Activities Fee (SAF) is a component of every School Fee in undergraduate schools on campus to allow student governments to adequately fund organizations and activities which enhance student life on campus,

Whereas, the current SAF is based in the RUSA Constitution and is a continuation of the student fees assessed through referenda supported by RCGA and the governing boards of affiliated colleges, with administrators allowing student governments to raise fees through referenda,

Whereas, the current SAF under the RUSA Constitution does not allow student governments to easily adjust their own portions of the SAF,

Whereas, the Assembly can technically advocate directly for increases to the SAF, but no process, other than a referendum, is actually provided in the Constitution,

Whereas, the current SAF, which is actively allocated by student governments (\$28.50), has not increased in the decade of RUSA's history, and

Whereas, the number of student organizations supported by the SAF has increased significantly and the SAF has not been adjusted for inflation, thus decreasing the real value of allocated funds, as the SAF in real terms has fallen 19.7% since 2007 when RUSA was created, where the SAF, less direct disbursement, would be \$35.48 today instead of \$28.50 had it been continuously adjusted for inflation,

Whereas, in addition to the decrease in the real value of the SAF, limited increases in the campus fees and increased expenses for operating student centers results in more costs being deferred to student organizations, which in turn, places a further strain on the SAF,

Whereas, it is necessary for the continuation of funded student organizations that a sustainable mechanism be implemented to allow for incremental changes in the SAF to keep pace with inflation,

Therefore, be it resolved by two-thirds of the Assembly that a student referendum shall be held during the Spring 2019 elections in accordance with all applicable procedures under the Constitution and the Standing Rules, where —

1. The Assembly hereby approves of the following question being posed to the undergraduate student body during the Spring 2019 elections: “Shall RUSA’s Constitution be amended to prohibit increases to the student activities fee beyond 2% per year without referendum, while allowing increases less than or equal to 2% annually to be approved by student governments? (For reference, the current student activities fee allocated by student governments is \$28.50 per full time undergraduate student.)”
2. Each eligible voter shall be able to answer “YES” or “NO” to the above stated question.
3. The following explanatory text shall be placed on each ballot stating: “Student organizations on campus rely on RUSA and other student governments to fund them by allocating student fees. The RUSA Constitution does not currently place restrictions on how much they want to increase student fees; however, most student activities fee changes may have to go through a referendum. Adoption of this proposed amendment would allow each student government to adjust their fees by up to, and including, 2% annually to account for inflation and ensure that the real value of funds allocated to student organizations does not continue to decrease. Any increase above 2% would require a referendum conducted by the student government which wants the increase. RUSA would only be allowed to increase its fee (currently \$28.50 per student) by up to 2%.”
4. The ballot shall contain a link to the proposed text, to the current Constitution, and to a document showing the Constitution with the proposed amendment.

5. If a majority of students voting cast their ballots in the affirmative and at least one tenth of the undergraduate students vote, the RUSA Constitution shall be amended to add at the end of Section 6.04 the following text:

“The Student Activities Fee, after direct disbursements, shall not be increased more than 2% annually by the Assembly without a referendum. The student body authorizes the Assembly and professional school student governments to increase their direct disbursements by no more than 2% of all fees they receive each year without a referendum of the students in that school. Each professional school student government may increase their direct disbursement separately, with referenda or increases coordinated by the student government for that school. Any amount by which RUSA increases the Student Activities Fee shall apply to all students. Any increases initiated by the Assembly must be approved with a two-thirds vote as legislation.”
6. The Elections Committee shall be charged with furnishing a copy of the referendum question on the ballot to the Internal Affairs Committee for approval. The Internal Affairs Committee shall certify the results of the referendum, as required by Article 9 of the RUSA Constitution.
7. The Assembly shall authorize the authors of this legislation to coordinate a presentation on the referendum to student organization leaders and other interested parties.
8. The Allocations Board will record and publish annually the distribution of the fees collected from each school on a per student and per school basis.

RUSA President

Date