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UAF begins new student fee to promote sustainability

by Reba Lean / News-Miner intern

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FAIRBANKS — A new \$20 fee appeared on University of Alaska Fairbanks students' records in January to promote sustainability on campus.

If students are unsure exactly where money from the Student Sustainability Fee is heading, the people in charge of it also are working out the details.

"The interest of the students is making sure we have sustainability," said Robert Holden, associate director of Auxiliary and Business Services. "It's a large and broad topic."

Holden is the faculty adviser for the student-led project. Last spring, students voted to implement the Student Initiative for Renewable Energy Now fee as a way to boost green practices at UAF.

SIREN is a 10-year program that will collect \$20 from each of UAF's 6,000 students each semester. Chancellor Brian Rogers has pledged to match those funds with money from the university's existing budget, meaning the program could raise a combined \$4.8 million during the next decade.

While no one is sure where the money will be allocated, Holden discussed a few ways the campus would like to become more environmentally friendly. The board hopes to find ways to conserve energy and reduce university impacts on landfills. It has started small by growing a small amount of fruits and vegetables on campus.

After deciding that the chancellor and a student representative would distribute the money, an advisory board was created, consisting of student members from different departments throughout UAF. Student body president Todd Vorisek said he felt that members of the university's different departments were integral to the function of the board.

Fourteen positions, including one full-time university job, are included under the SIREN funding. Some of the positions include "plastics recycling representative," "biking coordinator" and "residence life coordinator."

The part-time jobs involve mainly oversight, representation and management and will pay \$3,000. The last student assistant must be a graduate who will assist Sustainability Director Michael Golub and will be paid \$15,000.

Golub "lives and breathes sustainability," Vorisek said.

During the past four years, he has converted 11 vehicles from gas-powered to electric. He said the campus has specific challenges with recycling and using renewable energy.

"We're unique," Golub said. "We're in Alaska."

Vorisek is looking for any input students might have for the sustainability board. The great thing about college, he said, is that unconventional thought is appreciated.

"Bring it in — let's take a look at it," he said. "I don't care how radical it is."

Contact News-Miner intern Reba Lean at 459-7572.

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« [TonkaTruckGreen](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 08:38 PM »

Just another fee they add into the mix. I just like how there is no set plan how to used the "piggy bank".

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« [1AhHa](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 08:25 PM »

How about a 20 dollar voluntary donation to the cause?

I sure everyone cares! Even the UAF employees will be more than happy to donate!

Looks to me the students are being forced to spread their borrowed money around according to the gospel of Obama.

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« [TheAlaskaCurmudgeon](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 07:32 PM »

The Truth About College is revealed here:

<http://lorien.ncl.ac.uk/ming/Dept/Fun/jokes/college.htm>

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« [bump](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 07:24 PM »

This could work out good. If the programs works, that's great. Who can be against a good environment? Not me.

If it doesn't produce any positive results then observant UAF students might realize after paying the fee for a couple of years that they have indeed been suckered and are paying into a slush fund controlled by a few junior bureaucrats, to no real benefit to the fee payers. Mixing good intentions and public funds and seeing no real benefits, except happier bureaucrats, might turn a young person into a fiscal conservative before they join the rest of us taxpaying voters.

Oh no! I just realized the other scenario. It could backfire and create a herd of future bureaucrats, enamored of the power.

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« [AggressiveProgressive](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 06:53 PM »

I don't care if students voted for it. I still don't want to pay yet another fee, especially if they don't even know what they're going to do with it.

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« [use_your_head](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 06:22 PM »

Fees being collected without a set plan on where/how to spend them; read UAF slush fund.

Yeah, more expenses.

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« [PokaTaiga](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 04:47 PM »

Vacuous buzzword indeed.

In principle, I am glad to see the students wanting to do something for the environment. In practice -- there is no excuse for charging the fee BEFORE we know what it's going to be spent on.

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12 Month or 12,000 Miles



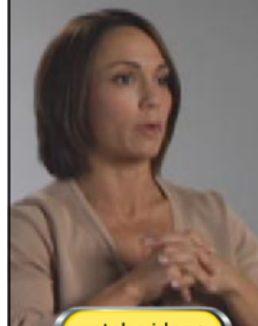
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« [Yota99714](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 04:18 PM »

Sustainability my butt. I looked up some of those new Sloan fixtures they put in the bathrooms on the toilets. Not only do they cost just under \$100 a pop, THEY USE BATTERIES.

If ya want some sustainability, quit lobbying fees at your students.

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« [Fbks_raised](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 04:15 PM »

My problem is they (the students since they voted for this) are paying too much attention to our local politicians and are enacting fees without a plan or specific program for the fees to go to (kinda like the bag tax).

To UAF students that voted for this: If you have to pay attention to the local politicians (or any for that matter) do the opposite of what they do, please do not copy them.

As far as UAF goes, I avoid going there. They are not online friendly, like the school I went to. The university I went to is a normal university that has a very comprehensive online program. UAF is very lacking in online offerings. For my Masters I am going to an online university that is accredited, much easier for people who have to work fulltime.

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« [truthinnews](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 03:50 PM »

Nice to see so many people are happy to pay more fees to go to school. Now if we could get more people to help pay down the national debt, there might be some jobs for these people when they graduate.

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« [inchworm](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 03:39 PM »

JJS, \$4500 for two semesters of full-time courses is a pretty good deal. Check out the University of Washington. Undergrad RESIDENT tuition is \$7,692. Non-resident is \$24,367. At Arizona State University you'll pay \$6000-\$7000 for a year as a resident undergrad, and \$19,630 as a non-resident. The University of Idaho Moscow is comparable to UAF, with resident undergrads paying \$4,932 for full time enrollment up to 18 credits per semester, but their part-time tuition is \$250/credit, compared to UAF's \$141 or \$159 per credit for resident students. And non-resident students in Idaho pay \$15,012 for a year full time and \$755 per credit for part time.

It seems like a statewide past time to criticize the university and how much it costs. By no means is the UA system perfect, it has tons of flaws and waste. But I really think so many people bash it without knowing the realities of costs in different places. And I think all universities have some do-nothings and some ridiculous fees.

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« [sunflower10](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 03:12 PM »

JJS,

While it certainly is a personal choice when picking your University, I do want to correct your statement that ALL students who live off campus and take classes at TVC are charged these astronomical fees. If you are active duty military (or civilian) for that matter, and you want to attend classes on Ft. Wainwright, almost all of these fees are waived.

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« [buboy](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 02:55 PM »

Do the UAF teachers and staff need more money. OK all you liberal students. UAF is liberal right! What are you going to do to curb the cost?

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« [JJS](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 02:37 PM »

mileder,

You didn't read my post. Maybe you should go to UAF and learn how to read because I don't go there and I never will. You like giving away your money for stupid stuff be my guest.

Spaceman,

Good for them, the UAF is so greedy that they charge those students who live off campus and attend TVC fees for UAF students. Actually my \$4,500 and many other military members TA goes quite a ways without UAF. I get free books, no parking fees, no other stupid fees.

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« [Invictus](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 02:36 PM »

"Sustainability" -- a seemingly meaningful word, but totally vacuous in definition and implementation.

Ahh well, sometimes you get exactly what you want/deserve. If the majority of UAF students want to put their money towards something with a cool sounding word, but with no clue as to what, where, or how -- more power to them.

Sustainability funds will be needed to sustain the fund and its managers. UAF byline should read:

"Proudly Training our Future Government Bureaucrats"

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« [TheAlaskaCurmudgeon](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 09:45 AM »

Henry: If you keep insisting on reading articles before you comment on them, you'll eventually be barred from posting here.

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« [Echo_North](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 09:23 AM »

Let's see...for one class taught by an "adjunct" faculty with NO training as a teacher:

Student Athletic/Campus Rec. fee..\$24

General Technology fee..\$15

Material fee..\$60

Student Government fee..\$35

Student Sustainability fee.. \$20

UA Network Charge..\$9

parking

Total: \$163.00 (over tuition) for items never used by most professional development students taking ONE class!...and for an adjunct teacher to boot!!

Meanwhile, UAF has literally hundreds of faculty and paid grad students doing nothing...not teaching, not conducting research..and on top of all that, many of the lead persons in the various departments are making in the mid-six digit salaries!

It is high time our "state" university do a major contraction. It may be the single largest public drain for little or no public good. I have four kids, and not one has ever been encouraged to attend a UA school!

Signed: BA and MA UA former student

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« [samherreid](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 09:02 AM »

Sustainability, an ideology perceptible only by wealthy. Makes you wonder where these students incomes are coming from?

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« [Mundus_Vult_Decipi](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 07:58 AM »

Oh hell, Obama will the pay the fee with your tax dollars, so get over it. You all get to pay, not just the students.

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« [Henry.](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 07:57 AM »

"Right ON! More fees! Just what poor students need."

"Bad idea to have the students pay for it."

"ANOTHER Fee?!?!?"

"How's about they learn to manage the ridiculous wealth they already have, rather than adopting new fees and driving students away!! "

"Another stupid fee huh"

Wow, guys. Didn't really read the article, huh? Didn't read the FOURTH PARAGRAPH?!?!?"

"Last spring, students voted to implement the Student Initiative for Renewable Energy Now fee as a way to boost green practices at UAF."

Those poor students. New fees forced on them by themselves.

TRY READING THE ARTICLE BEFORE COMMENTING!!!!!!!!

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« [spaceman](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 10:39 AM »

JJS- pull your head out. About 2,500 people a day ride the UAF shuttles. See how far your \$4,500 a year goes at colleges outside.

« [AggressiveProgressive](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 10:39 AM »

Right ON! More fees! Just what poor students need. The feds pay out hundreds of billions to crooked bankers, defense contractors, the worthless drug war on Americans, and giant agribusinesses, but students have to pay yet another fee for making their campus more sustainable. At least we have our priorities straight as a nation. LOL!!!

Good idea to make the campus more sustainable. Bad idea to have the students pay for it. Like JJS said, there are already enough fees charged for stuff many students don't even use.

« [Shokd](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 10:29 AM »

ANOTHER Fee?!?!?

Here's an idea: how's about the chancellor and regents freeze their pay for a bit. While they're at it, how's about they all go and take some remedial budgeting classes?

How's about they learn to manage the ridiculous wealth they already have, rather than adopting new fees and driving students away!!

« [mileder](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 09:56 AM »

So don't go there JJ. Sheesh, what a whiner.

« [JJS](#) wrote on Wednesday, Feb 10 at 07:29 AM »

Another stupid fee huh...and let me guess those going to TVC will face this fee along with others such as the gym fee, shuttle fee for a shuttle that is never used and more. Another great reason for me to never give UAF \$4,500 TA a year.