

The Purpose of Student Fees

Imagine, for a moment, a quite different UNL. Erase from the campus scene all recreational facilities, the Nebraska Unions, the Health Center, and the residence halls. Eliminate all student services such as counseling, career services, and study skills programs; all student organizations and activities, and government groups; and all campus programs -- films, concerts, dances, workshops, performing arts, intramural sports, etc.

What remains represents the core of higher education -- the academic curriculum. Everything else, some would say, is unnecessary. But is it? American educators have long recognized that college students develop not only intellectually, but physically, socially, and emotionally as well, and that these dimensions of human development are interrelated. Educators know, too, that academic achievement can be helped or hindered by the quality of campus life.

Thus, most American universities offer more than classrooms and instructors. They provide services, facilities, and programs designed to make the institution a community where most students' interests and needs can be met. At UNL, as elsewhere, some of these facilities, services, opportunities, and programs are self-sustaining; some are supported by tuition and tax monies; others are financed by "student fees," or what UNL calls University Program and Facilities Fees (UPFF).

Although paid by students for programs and services oriented to students, UPFF assessments are not "user fees." They are, rather, part of the cost of attending the University. All enrolled students -- even those who may be pursuing an off-campus course such as student teaching -- are assessed student fees along with tuition, whether or not they expect to take advantage of fee-funded facilities and services that particular semester. Like taxes that we pay within the larger communities in which we live, student fees are essential to the support of vital functions within the University community -- in this case, functions that enrich, enliven and humanize the institution.