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SB35-15/16: Student Fee Referendum

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Whereas, The University of Montana is currently experiencing a drop in enrollment;

Whereas, The Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) is experiencing significant operational budget shortfalls, expected to continue in Fiscal Year 2017;

Whereas, during budgeting for Fiscal Year 2016, the ASUM Senate withdrew funding from Zero-Based Carryover funds, from its Employee Contingency Fund, and from its healthcare savings in order to rectify an executive accounting error;

Whereas, ASUM’s agencies have experienced cuts of approximately 20% in the last three (3) fiscal years in order to account for decreasing enrollment;

Whereas, cuts to these programs have significantly reduced their ability to serve the student population at UM;

Whereas, these programs have experienced increased awareness and use of services despite dropping enrollment;

Whereas, the services provided by ASUM agencies such as Child Care, Legal, Transportation, Sustainability, Productions, Off-Campus Renter Center, and more, significantly impact student recruitment, retention, and success;

Whereas, the ASUM Activity Fee has increased twice since 2012;

Whereas, these increases came in the amount of $6 in 2012, which is reserved solely for ASUM recognized student groups, and in the amount of $3 in 2015 to establish an infant care center and a scholarship fund for student research;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that the following language be submitted to the April 2016 elections:

“The Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) currently has a $61.35 Activity Fee it uses to fund its staff, operations, agencies, and student group activities. Some of the services supported by this fee are:

- Funding for almost 200 student groups with a total membership of more than 44% of the UM student body
- Affordable, high-quality child care that allows student parents to remain in school
• UM’s only transportation system via the UDash bus fleet and bike rentals
• UM Productions, a student-run productions agency that brings shows like Macklemore and Death Cab for Cutie to UM
• Tenant/landlord dispute resolution and reliable renter information through the Off-Campus Renter Center
• Student/faculty dispute resolution through mediation by the Student Resolution Officer
• Short-term loans to students in addition to research, travel, and professional development scholarships
• Political advocacy for students in the Montana State Legislature with a student lobbyist
• Affordable and comprehensive Legal Services to students, including everything from consultation to representation
• Sustainability grants that have funded almost 50 student-led energy efficiency projects through the KREL fund
• The independent and student-run Montana Kaimin Newspaper and KBGA College Radio Station

These and other ASUM services are being more heavily utilized than ever before. ASUM proposes a $9.65 increase that is needed to maintain current services and directly attend to the immediate needs of UM students. Without this increase, ASUM will have to shut down at least one of its student-run agencies.

Do you support a $9.65 increase to the ASUM fee for continued student services?

Yes, I support a $9.65 increase for student services provided by ASUM.

No, I do not support a $9.65 increase for student services provided by ASUM.”

Passed by Committee: ____________________________, 2016
Passed by ASUM Senate: ____________________________, 2016

__________________________________________  __________________________________________
Kaitlin Hopingardner,                          Betsy Story,
Chair of Board on Relations and Affairs       Chair of the Senate