

Spring 2018

S18RS SGCR No. 16 (Performance Arts Fee)

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STUDENT SENATE
S18RS
SGCR No. 16
BY: SENATOR GREEN

ENROLLED

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

TO PLACE A REFERENDUM BEFORE THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY IN THE FALL 2018 ELECTIONS TO URGE AND REQUEST THE LSU BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO RECONSIDER THE PERFORMING ARTS FEE

PARAGRAPH 1: WHEREAS, THE PERFORMING ARTS FEE DOES NOT CURRENTLY SERVE THE STUDENT BODY WITH RESPECT TO THE COST STUDENTS PAY FOR IT; AND

PARAGRAPH 2: WHEREAS, THE STUDENT BODY SHOULD VOTE FOR THIS CHANGE ON A REFERENDUM IN THE FALL 2018 ELECTIONS; AND

PARAGRAPH 3: WHEREAS, THE OFFICIAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDENT FEE VALUE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Performing Arts Fee Report

Student Fee Value Assessment Committee

Background

The Performing Arts Required Student Fee was first instated as a four dollar (\$4.00) per semester fee in the Fall of 1997 with the following purpose:

“Provide direct benefits to LSU students by: (1) supporting new programs/events in music, theater, and dance and (2) by supplementing and enhancing existing programs now offered by the LSU Union Program Board”

The fee was passed by a referendum voted on by the student body on April 9th, 1997, with 59.58% (1655 students) voting in favor and 40.42% (1123 students) in opposition. The fee was to be distributed as follows: two dollars (\$2.00) per student for a music account, one dollar (\$1.00) per student for a theater account, and one dollar (\$1.00) per student for a performing arts series account. According to the Executive Summary published by the Board of Supervisors concerning this fee, expenditures from these accounts were to be approved by “a committee comprised of students (including representation from the Union Program Board and/or Student Government Association, faculty and administrators (including the LSU Union Director or his/her designee)”. In the Spring of 2002, this fee was increased to five dollars (\$5.00) a semester to provide additional support to the

performing arts series account and to add an account for Black Box Communications Studies. Since then, the fee has stayed the same with the final breakdown being distributed as follows:

Music	\$2.00
Theater	\$1.00
Performing Arts Series	\$1.80
Black Box Communications	\$0.20
Total Fee	\$5.00

Timeline

The Student Fee Value Assessment Committee was formed on February 7th, 2018, as a result of SGR No. 2 passed by the Student Senate with the explicit purpose “to review student required fees and their outcomes by weighing the value of each program, service, and entity.” This committee, comprised of members of both the Executive and Legislative branches of Student Government met weekly after its formation to review public information regarding Student Required Fees. On February 9th, the committee requested from administration in the College of Music and Dramatic Arts additional information regarding the performing arts fee such as budgets, expenditures, and attendance for any events associated with the fee. The committee also asked to set up a meeting with representatives from Music and Dramatic Arts to answer any questions the committee had regarding the fee. On March 7th, the requested information was received, and the committee met with two representatives from Music and Dramatic Arts on March 8th. After reviewing public information and information provided by Music and Dramatic Arts, the committee convened to weigh the value of the programs and services provided by the Performing Arts Required Student Fee. The opinions expressed in this report are reflective of the majority opinion of the committee.

Opinion

After reviewing all information provided, the committee would like the LSU Board of Supervisors to reconsider the existence and uses of the Performing Arts Required Fee. It is the opinion of the committee that the fee is not being used for its defined purpose, nor does the current use of the fee serve the entire student population as it should. Instead, we believe the fee (excluding the Black Box Communications account) serves more as an education support for the College of Music and Dramatic Arts, and therefore should not be imposed on the entirety of the student body.

Concerning the original stated purpose of the fee, as it stands the Union Program Board does not exist today. The usage of the fees is determined exclusively by students and administration from the College of Music and Dramatic Arts. We have been provided with information that the board did at one point exist with administrators and student representatives from Student Government, the Union, Black Box Communications, and the College of Music and Dramatic Arts. However, sometime between now and whenever the board did exist, oversight of the fee went exclusively to the College of Music and Dramatic Arts. The committee finds this to be out of line with the Executive Summary of the Board of Supervisors, which dictates that the fee should be spent with approval from either the Union Program Board or Student Government representation. Additionally, the Executive Report states that fee collections would be maintained in an account of the LSU Union, which is not the case. We believe that the shift from this fee being determined by representatives across campus to exclusively the College of Music and Dramatic Arts has played a role in the fee currently benefitting students in that college more than the student body as a whole, and we believe that the events behind this shift should be ascertained in order to prevent future irregularities.

After reviewing attendance numbers provided by the College of Music and Dramatic Arts representatives, the committee believes that the student attendance numbers do not show that the student body is being served well by this fee. Although we recognize that some events do lend themselves to having a higher attendance than others, we find that the number of students who attend each event when compared to non-students show that this fee is not primarily serving the student body. Additionally, we are unsure what percentage of students at these events are enrolled in the College of Music and Dramatic Arts. Given the amount of advertising that is sent out to the student body for these events, we are not confident that the majority of students for many of these events (excluding the few larger shows) are non-Music and Dramatic Arts affiliated students. Many general education classes also require students to attend multiple of these events, which also leads to the inflation of attendance numbers. Additionally, for all of these events students did pay a ticket price ranging from eight (\$8.00) to fourteen (\$14.00) dollars, which the committee does not feel is justified if the student body is already paying for these programs through a fee.

Concerning the Black Box Communication Studies account, we have not found that the money is being misused in any way, given that their events are free to students and they are putting in efforts to increase their advertising to non-Communication Studies affiliated students. We believe that regardless of whatever form the reconsidered fee takes, that the funding for the Black Box Communications account should be protected.

Although the committee does feel that this fee, aside from the Black Box Communication expenditure, as it stands is not appropriate for the student body to pay for through a fee, we do not want the programming partially subsidized by

this fee to end. We would prefer to see greater advertising efforts, given that their ticket revenues are much more than their revenues from the fee (\$570,852.83 versus \$295,510.44 in the 2016-2017 year). Additionally, because this fee currently does serve primarily to subsidize the education of Music and Dramatic Arts students, we propose that the College of Music and Dramatic arts should provide funding for at least a portion of this programming to replace the funding from the Performing Arts fee.

These are the reasons that we urge the LSU Board of Supervisors to reconsider the existence and use of this fee in the context of current and intended implementation.

Jack Green,
Co-Chair of the Student Fee Value Assessment Committee

PARAGRAPH 4: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE THAT A REFERENDUM SHOULD BE PLACED BEFORE THE LSU STUDENT BODY IN THE FALL OF 2018 TO URGE AND REQUEST THE LSU BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SHOULD RECONSIDER THE PERFORMING ARTS FEE, AND

PARAGRAPH 5: BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED THAT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION BE TRANSMITTE TO THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND DRAMATIC ARTS TOD QUEEN, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS JASON DRODDY, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER DAN LAYZELL, AND THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AND

PARAGRAPH 6: THIS RESOLUTION SHALL TAKE EFFECT UPON PASSAGE BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY (ONE HALF PLUS ONE) VOTE OF THE LSU STUDENT SENATE AND SIGNATURE BY THE PRESIDENT, UPON LAPSE OF TIME FOR PRESIDENTIAL ACTION, OR IF VETOED BY THE PRESIDENT AND SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED BY THE SENATE, ON THE DATE OF SUCH APPROVAL.

APPROVED:

JAMES J. MICKLER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

JASON J. BADEAUX
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

DATE: _____

DATE: _____