

What's Happening to Your Student Activity Fee?

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Every other Tuesday, nine people convene in a small room camouflaged behind the walls of the Lion's Den. They are there to discuss the allocation of funds collected through student activity fee. Not many people are aware of this committee, but its function is essential to the campus community. Sitting on the Committee are co-chairs Anton Shuford and Barbara Daniel, Raquel Arredondo, Jeff Bauer, Tracey Dinh, Salm Evans, Martin Ranalli, John Terrell, and Kristy Watkins. One spot remains to be filled and any interested students should speak to a committee member.

Each semester, every full-time student is charged an activity fee of \$25 and a prorated amount for part-time students. The summer fee is less and optional to the campus in 1998. Delco has decided to collect the fee along with the Dubois, Fayette, and University Park campuses. This fee is included in the tuition bill, so many students may be unaware that they are paying this fee to begin with.

The Allocation Committee decides where the money goes. How they decide that depends upon the campus community. For example, one decision was for the newly formed hockey club. At first, members of the club put forth their own money in order to play. They spent what they could on equipment, rink time, and other expenses involved with organized competition. They soon realized, however, they could not continue competing with other area teams unless they received some funding. They then submitted a

written proposal to the Allocation Committee, stating how much they needed and why.

When the Allocation Committee met, they carefully looked over the proposal and voted on whether or not to grant the funding. Several things were considered, such as exactly how beneficial to the campus the club was, how many students were involved in the club, and how likely the club was to endure in popularity in the future. There are also technical items that the Committee requires in order to make the best decision, such as a specific budget for the club's expected expenses and receipts from previous expenses. Although the Committee will probably grant a certain amount to the club, the final decision is pending upon a more clear and concise proposal.

This is perhaps one of the biggest problems that come up for the Committee. How the student activity fee is spent is a serious issue. The Committee wants to insure that the money is going to proposals most beneficial to the students and not wasted. Consequently, any one or any organization in the campus community can submit a proposal, but not all proposals are approved. Usually, the ones that are passed show that the money will benefit a good portion of, if not the entire campus. Such proposals have included ones that brought speakers to the campus, sent campus leaders to conferences, provided sport equipment and facilities for athletes, supported parties and festivals, provided food during an event, and, even, helped support on-campus

counseling services.

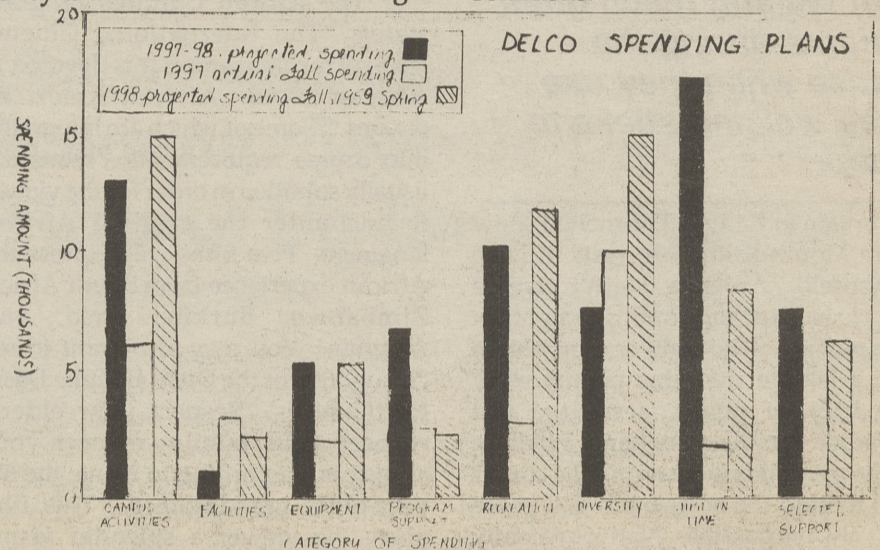
Although it seems as if it is entirely up to the Committee to decide where the money goes, it is really up to the students. A survey for student input was given out in the February 10th edition of the *Lion's Eye*. The budget for the activity fee is broken down into seven categories: campus activities, equipment, facility upgrades, program support, recreation, diverse populations and issues, and selected support services. Students were asked what percentage of the entire budget should go towards each category.

The Committee used the results of the poll to help them project a spending budget for the next three semesters. For instance, most students suggested that a good portion be put into campus activities that include money for organizations, publications, and programs. As a result, the committee looked at previous spending habits and concluded that most of the money did and should continue to go

towards campus activities. The projected amount for the current 1997-1998 school year is about \$13,605, about 20% of the budget. Considering the student polls, the committee will continue to allocate at least 20% again next year.

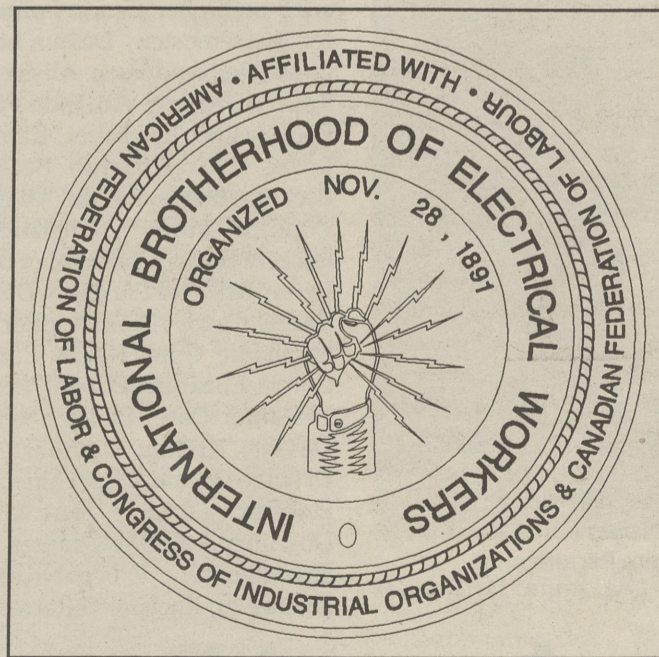
The Committee realizes that there is a definite need for the money on campus. The problem is that most students are not aware of its existence or how to tap into it, so some of the money goes unused.

A detailed report of the results of the survey and a copy of the projected spending plan is available to anyone in the library at the front desk. Also, anyone in the campus community may attend the biweekly meetings from 4:30-5:30 p.m. The next meeting will be March 3rd. Allocation proposals are available from the SGA Office in the Lion's Den, the Student Life Office on the 2nd floor of Commons, or Raquel Arredondo in room 138 Commons.



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