Student Activities Fee increased to meet growing needs of program budgets

BY MATTHEW HAYES
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Last December, Holy Cross’ Board of Trustees met to approve the college’s budget for the 2002-03 academic year. Among the considerations involved in creating the budget was an increase in the Student Activity Fee, which was raised for next academic year by $20, making the fee $185. This is the first fee increase since 1997, when the fee was raised for the 1998-99 academic year.

Early this year the Student Budget Committee (SBC), realizing that more student groups were forming but the amount of money to be divided among the different groups was remaining the same, decided to ask for an increase in the Student Activity Fee for next year. Working with the Student Government Association (SGA) a revolutionary new plan for calculating the Student Activity Fee was devised, in which full fee would be tied to tuition. The original proposal was to peg the fee at 1 percent of tuition, thus raising the fee to $240.1 percent of the $24,000 each student pays to attend Holy Cross. The SBC/SGA had hoped this plan could be instituted incrementally over a period of about three years.

This plan was first presented to the Student Life Committee (SLC), which agreed with the spirit of the plan but believed the time frame for raising the fee to such a high level was too short. When the Financial Planning Committee (FPC) of Holy Cross met to create a budget to present to the trustees—who have ultimate financial power at the college—they decided to endorse a $20 raise instead of the plan proposed. This decision was made carefully, and the members of the FPC also had to consider the repercussions of raising the Student Activity Fee so drastically during difficult economic times.

The Student Activity Fee is used to fund virtually all student groups and organizations on campus, and this increase in funds will mean that the SBC will be able to better support many under-funded groups when it comes time for groups to appeal for budgets in May. Last year, with the $165 fee, the SBC had approximately $412,500 to allocate; with this increase, more than $462,500 can be used to fund student groups dorms, and club sports.

The proposal to tie the Student Activity Fee to tuition is not dead, however. By pegging the fee to tuition, the SGA and the SBC can eliminate the need to ask for an increase every few years when budgets become insufficient. The SBC would like to present this plan again next year to affect the 2003-04 budget if the state of the nation’s economy has sufficiently improved.

The $20 increase is a boon to the SBC, which in the last four years has seen an increase in the number of groups requesting funding and an increase in the amount of money desired by each group, reflecting a desire among many groups to become more active in providing programming for not only their own group members but also for the entire campus. Compared with similar small, liberal arts institutions, a $185 Activity Fee is still relatively low, considering the amount of organizations that are funded, but this higher fee puts the SBC in a position to allocate more resources to groups which have in the past been severely under-funded.

Judicial Affairs reviews and revises alcohol policy

BY KARA JACKMAN
CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

When fellow Crusaders returned to Mt. St. James after a month of rest and relaxation at home, they were not only greeted at college by friends but also by a new alcohol policy. The proposal to tie the Student Activity Fee to tuition is not dead, however. By pegging the fee to tuition, the SGA and the SBC can eliminate the need to ask for an increase every few years when budgets become insufficient. The SBC would like to present this plan again next year to affect the 2003-04 budget if the state of the nation’s economy has sufficiently improved.

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The overall spirit of the document allows students to make informed decisions before they act in the presence of alcohol. “Flexibility and latitude” giving students “the benefit of the doubt” whenever possible. “It is fair to go into practice not knowing what is going to happen. Now students can have an idea before they come in,” says Suri-ta. Some students, however, still have lingering questions about the effect which the new policy will have, especially with regard to punishments handed out under the old policy. Kate Myers ‘04 expressed a desire to, “see judi-cial affairs review the punishments of stu-dents already put on probation under the old policy.”

is exclusively for the parents of Holy Cross students. It has been designed to aid in discus-sions between the student and parent. Suri-ta says these suggestions for parents will help “provide support” they need while “teaching responsibility for actions and behaviors” for the students.

The good news for students and parents dealing with these judicial affairs issues is an-other new addition to the alcohol policy guidelines. The final section, “Suggestions for parents/guardians notified of misconduct” was first presented to the Student Budget Committee before Jan. 1, 2002.

“Yeah, it was one of those Christmas presents you don’t expect, or really know how to do with,” said Matt Hayes ‘03.

With the arrival of Ricardo Surita as Judicial Affairs Coordinator last November it was de-cided that changes in the old policy were dras-tically needed. Surita developed the new poli cy over break, which he believes will clarify and simplify the college’s stand about in- personal responsibility when drinking. Surita found that the old policies were confusing, and decided that, “If they were confusing to me, then surely they were confusing to the stu-dents.” He thus set out to re-define, clarify, and add new elements to the sanctions already listed.

After consulting with students, faculty and staff, changes which the parties believed would make the judicial affairs process “reflective and educational” were implemented. "It is unfair to go into practice not knowing what is going to happen. Now students can have an idea before they come in,” says Suri-ta. Some students, however, still have lingering questions about the effect which the new policy will have, especially with regard to punishments handed out under the old policy. Kate Myers ‘04 expressed a desire to, “see judici-alar reviews of the punishments of stu-dents already put on probation under the old policy.”