

Administrative Procedure

Student Services Fees (SSF)



Related Policy: Board of Regents [Student Services Fee](#)

Campus Process Owner: Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life in consultation with Vice Chancellor for Finance and Campus Resources

Date Revised: 11/18/2024

Date Effective: 4/19/2024

Committee

The Student Services Fees Review Committee (SSFRC) is the Student Services Fee Committee of the Rochester campus as mandated by the regents and administrative policy noted above. It is composed of three UMR students, one UMR staff representative, one UMR faculty representative, and the Assistant Director of Student Activities and Living Learning Communities, ex officio/non-voting.

The selection of a Chair facilitator is conducted in the fall, the SSFRC accepts self-nominations for the role of Secretary. Every member of SSFRC will be expected to attend each meeting. However, if one has a legitimate conflict or other reason why one cannot attend, the Chair must be notified. All other absences will be considered unexcused and any member of SSFRC who accumulates more than two unexcused absences in a year will no longer be eligible to serve on the committee. The committee will be supported by university staff, specifically, the Administrative Associate for Student Life and Student Services.

**Note: UMR One Stop will ensure student committee members demonstrate payment of the SSF each semester of their appointment (excluding summer session), as all student members must do so.*

Procedures

The UMR procedures follow the University of Minnesota Administrative Policy: [Student Services Fee](#). Administrative Units will utilize the below process. [Student Groups will use the fund request process outlined by the Rochester Student Association \(RSA\)](#). During deliberations that take place during the Fall and Spring semesters and outside of this timeframe, the below must be adhered to:

- ☐ Students must be involved in any proposal that comes before the Student Services Fees Committee.
- ☐ The committee, in collaboration with the University administrators, will disseminate the timing and process each year related to fee requests/changes.
- ☐ All budgets and financial records for all organizations, departments, or programs that receive the student fees listed below shall be available for student inspection.
- ☐ All financial records must be provided in a timely manner to the committee, as specified in the application form.

- ❑ All units and organizations applying for student service fees must demonstrate that they have procedures in place to ensure accountability.
- ❑ All units and organizations must adhere to University policies and procedures for expenditures, fundraising, and safeguarding funds.
- ❑ Membership in the units and organizations requesting student service fees and access to programs and services must comply with the University of Minnesota's Equal Opportunity Statement.
- ❑ All units and organizations applying for student services fees must complete the request form(s) and adhere to established deadlines.
- ❑ The SSFRC will hear presentations by students and staff representing units/organizations and provide feedback and recommendations to the Assistant Vice Chancellor (VC) for Student Life. Based on feedback from the committee the VC for Student Life will make decisions on requests and forward funding recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor (VC) for Finance and Campus Resources for inclusion in the University's proposed annual operating budget. The Board of Regents approves final SSF recommendations as part of the University's annual operating budget.

NOTE: Partisan political student groups are not eligible to apply for and/or receive general student services fees. "Partisan political student groups" are organizations affiliated with and in support of a registered political party or candidates for election. Such groups may seek funding for their nonpartisan political activities (e.g. candidate forums available to all qualified candidates, nonpartisan education programs, etc.) through other University grant and student funding programs. No registered student group may use University funds for partisan activity (defined as any activity in support of a registered political party) or on behalf of a candidate for public office in a political campaign.

Exceptions can be granted by the SSFRC to address special circumstances or opportunities that annually funded groups were not funded for. Under no circumstances will an exception be granted to provide greater funding due to poor fiscal management by any group.

Timeline

- ❑ In the fall semester, a call to the campus community will be made for volunteers to apply to serve on the committee. The VC for Student Life and the President of the Rochester Student Association review applications and select members. Staff and faculty roles serve two-year terms (staggered).
 - ❑ 3 students
 - ❑ 1 staff
 - ❑ 1 faculty* selected via the faculty committee assignment process - if none are assigned, then a second staff member may be added
- ❑ In mid-October, annual fee proposals/application materials are due as SSFRC reviews requests in November.

- ❑ In mid-November, the Senior Director of Finance & Facilities and the VC for Student Life consult on the status of fee budgets.
- ❑ In late November, proposals and application materials are due to the SSFRC for review.
- ❑ In early December, a pre-fee proposal is used for estimating the UMR Cost of Attendance.
- ❑ In mid-December, the SSFRC votes on the final proposal, which is then submitted to the VC for Student Life.
- ❑ Groups may appeal the SSFRC recommendations to the VC for Student Life.
- ❑ In early-January recommendations are sent to the VC for Finance and Campus Resources.

Decision Making/Appeals

Annual Fee Applications for funding email requests (in writing) to the SSFRC:

- Groups requesting funding will be invited to attend regular SSFRC meetings to answer committee questions, clarify, and/or add additional detail to their request.
- SSFRC decisions will be based on the following criteria:
 - Accessibility to students
 - Fiscal responsibility
 - Contribution to the sense of belonging and inclusion
 - Value to the student body
 - Quality of programs/services
- Groups may appeal the SSFRC recommendation to the VC for Student Life. Appeals must demonstrate and provide evidence that the SSFRC did not follow its own procedures in formulating the recommendation, or that the SSFRC decisions were biased.
- SSFRC recommendations by the VC for Student Life to the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Campus Resources for input and inclusion into the campus budget process. The Chancellor will review the fee proposals and they will be submitted as a recommendation to the Vice President for Students Affairs (UM Twin Cities) for eventual approval by the Board of Regents.
- Awards are for the fiscal year following the application.

Fees covered by this procedure include (as of July 1, 2024):

UMR Student Services fee, which includes the following components:

- Rochester Student Association
- Student Activities Board
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation
- International Program
- Intercultural Initiatives
- Student Leadership/Career Development

Viewpoint Neutrality (adapted from the Center for Campus Free Speech, Guide to Student Activity Fees)

In the context of collecting and allocating student fees, “viewpoint neutrality” means ensuring that there is no bias toward any particular viewpoint. Because student fee-funded activities involve a wide range of projects and programs that can require vastly different levels of funding, “neutrality” is not measured by the particular outcome of funding allocations, but by the process by which those decisions are made. The goal is to have a process that is neutral and bias-free, not to create an artificial ‘balance’ of views and activities. It is easier to describe the elements an allocation system may not have to prevent bias rather than to design a bias-free system. The key elements are:

- Funding decisions may not have any relationship to the particular viewpoint of the group or activity. Funding requests are based on criteria that are neutral toward the views of the organization.
- Funding may not be contingent on a particular level of support or popularity of an organization, although the amount of funds to be allocated to an organization may take into account student involvement in the organization.
- Criteria used to evaluate funding proposals must be consistently applied.