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Secrecy Shrouds $12 Hike

By Irene McKnight

The MSC Board of Trustees unanimously passed a set of three resolutions Thursday night which will consolidate a new Athletic Activity Fee and the familiar Student Union Building Fee under a new heading. The new fee will take effect in September of 1977 and will result in a $6 per semester bill increase for MSC students.

The triplicate resolutions will reduce the Student Union Building Fee (SUB) to $2 per credit with a maximum of $24 per semester. MSC students presently pay $2.50 per credit with a maximum of $30 per semester for SUB.

A Student Center Annex Building Fee will be added to the MSC fee structure and will result in a fee of $1 per credit with a maximum of $12 per semester. The total fee will be renamed the Student Buildings Fee at a consolidated rate of $3 per credit with a maximum of $36 per semester. Therefore, students who now pay $30 per semester will pay $36 per semester beginning in September of 1977.

The change in fee structure was approved by the Board for the construction of a Student Center Annex and athletic fields in the MSC quarry area. The fees were consolidated for “payment and administrative purposes” to aid the MSC administration.

Elliot Mininberg, Vice President for Administration and Finance, spoke in favor of the resolutions at the Board meeting. He was questioned by various members of the SGA administration and by other members of the audience at the open meeting.

Most of the speakers at the meeting questioned Mininberg’s secrecy concerning student monies prior to the Board meeting. SGA President Maryanne Preztunik spoke with mixed feelings about the increase as the Board’s first speaker.

Preztunik was informed about the increase approximately two months ago, according to her own assessment and that of Mininberg. Mininberg requested that Preztunik keep the issue secret and not to inform other students about the proposed change in student fees.

“As an individual who has been very much informed of the varying reasons why there will be a fee increase, I realize the necessity of such action and believe that the increase is in the best interest of students,” Preztunik said.

She added that she would have liked “somewhat greater publicity about the increase for the benefit of the former student body.”

SGA President-elect Jose Fuentes was not informed about the increase until twenty-four hours before the open meeting. He stated that, since the new administration of SGA will be responsible for explaining the increase to students who return in the fall, his administration should have been informed about the resolutions.

Fuentes added that he felt the resolutions should be tabled at the present time.

Mininberg argued against tabling the resolutions. He stated that postponement of the vote would make it almost impossible to include the increased fee in the bills that will be sent to MSC students in July.

“Frankly”, Mininberg stated, “it’s true that the new SGA administration was not exposed to the fee change. The reason for the limited exposure was that we didn’t wish to make this a campaign issue for the SGA elections. We felt that this would have been destructive to the campaign and might have had an influence on the results.”

Board Chairman Gerald LeBoff stated that “we would have been delighted to hear your opinions (students) but a month might be too long.”

Barry Friedman, an alumnus of MSC, questioned Mininberg about alternatives to the proposed resolutions. In his answer, Mininberg said, “You’ll have to forgive me if some of my statements are biased in a personal manner. To the extent possible, I felt that I acted as openly as I know how with the existing SGA administration.”

Other students and faculty members spoke in favor of tabling the resolutions until the newly elected SGA administration is given time to discuss the proposal with their constituency.

Board member W. Lincoln Hawkins said that he felt the new proposal represented “a beautiful long range plan.” He stated that he was looking at the plan in terms of 30 years and beyond “a little embarrassment concerning the new SGA administration and the student body.”

Board member Melvin Haunser stated that the newly elected SGA administration had no reason to complain about the withheld information because “they didn’t exist then and really don’t officially exist now.”

Ben Minor Interim Faculty Representative to the Board, asked the Board for the reason that they were talking about the proposal in an open meeting. “The Board has acted in bad faith.” Minor stated.

“You (the Board) come here with a resolution to that problem and you want to delay,” he added.

Mininberg asked the Board to vote on the resolution immediately. He stated that he would come back to the Board with a revised plan if the new administration of the SGA introduced concrete arguments against the increase in fees.

Board member Stephen Weiss suggested that a vote be taken on the resolution contingent on Mininberg’s statement concerning tabling the resolutions at a further date if it was determined that the fee increase was not in the best interest of students.

Fuentes agreed with Weiss’ suggestion and a vote was taken.
Board Secrecy Stirs

President-elect Fuentes

By Irene McKnight

Jose Fuentes, SGA President-elect, expressed outrage at the secrecy of the decision of the Board of Trustees to reconstruct MSC's Student Center fees. He claims that if he has anything to do with it, students will not be forced to pay more money next semester without participating in the deliberative and decision-making process.

Fuentes and the rest of the newly elected SGA administration were given 24 hours notice to scrutinize the new proposal before the Board meeting. Fuentes had no explanation for the fact that Maryanne Preztunik, SGA President, did not enlighten the new officers about the proposal. "I am a member of her (Preztunik's) cabinet but my jurisdiction does not deal with this area," the SGA Vice President for Academic Affairs noted. "I can't explain decisions made by Preztunik," he added.

Fuentes will speak to the Board if they hold a special meeting Thurs., May 26. By questioning the secrecy and the legality of the decision, Fuentes hopes that the new proposal will be tabled. In terms of the decision's legality, Fuentes cited the case of a Rutgers student (Star Ledger, 5/12/77) who prompted a judicial decision which states that "student fees would not be used to finance facilities other than Student Centers."

Fuentes said, "I question the fact that the Board has decided to build a sports complex with student money." He noted that the Board could table their plan. After tabling it, they could decide to reconsider the proposal, to amend it or to totally reject it. Fuentes added that this would not be the first time that the Board chose this route after making a decision.

The recent referendum involving the Montclair Athletic Commission (MAC) split represented an example of "tied tables" to Fuentes. "We went through an enormous amount of trouble to explain our position regarding the MAC split to the Board," Fuentes said. "Later, when they made a decision regarding our money, we were not even consulted."

In a position paper distributed by Fuentes regarding the Board's decision, Fuentes said that the new SGA administration will be responsible for explaining the increase to students when it takes effect in September of 1977. He added that for this reason, the 24 hour notice was not fair to the SGA-elects who will take office on Wed., June 1.

The next meeting of the MSC Board is now scheduled for Thurs., June 9. However, the meeting might be rescheduled to Thurs., May 26, which coincides with Preztunik's graduation.

For the present, Fuentes' main objective is to "stop the proposal here and now." If a special meeting is held, Fuentes will speak to the Board as a student rather than as SGA President since his term begins on Wed., June 1.

Fuentes compared the decision to raising taxes without consulting the taxpayers. However, if the Board's Thursday night activity has taught Fuentes anything, it's this. "The worst thing in the world is ignorance," Fuentes said. "This would never have happened if we had known about it."

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Jose Fuentes

RESOLUTION

CONSOLIDATING THE STUDENT UNION AND STUDENT CENTER FEES
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

WHEREAS: The MSC Board of Trustees has approved a proposal to establish a Student Center Annex which will require a lease and charge a fee for this construction as required to meet an estimated $250,000 per year.

WHEREAS: By separate resolutions, the Board has established a Student Union Building (SUB) fee and the establishing of a separate fee for the SUB.

WHEREAS: Collection of these two fees as a single fee would result in an efficient, administrative manner, be it therefore

RESOLVED: That the existing SUB fee be reduced by 50 cents per credit hour from $2.50 per credit hour to $2 per credit hour.

RESOLVED: That a Student Center Annex Fee of $1 per semester credit hour for full-time undergraduate students, effective Thurs., Sept. 1, 1977.

RESOLVED: That the existing SUB fee be reduced by $2 per credit hour, effective Thurs., Sept. 1, 1977.

RESOLUTION

REDUCING THE STUDENT UNION FEE

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees has approved a proposal to establish a Student Center Annex which will require a lease and charge a fee for this construction as required to meet an estimated $250,000 per year.

WHEREAS: By separate resolutions, the Board has established a Student Center Annex Fee of $1 per semester credit hour for full-time undergraduate students and a separate fee for the Student Union Building (SUB) fee.

WHEREAS: The projected financial requirements for both fees are approximately $250,000 per year.

WHEREAS: By separate resolution, the existing SUB Fee of $2.50 per credit hour to $2 per credit hour, maintaining adequate revenues for amortization of required student facility charges, be it therefore:

RESOLVED: That the existing SUB Fee be reduced by 50 cents per credit hour, effective Thurs., Sept. 1, 1977.

RESOLUTION

REQUESTING REVISION OF THE SGA STUDENT CENTER FEES
AND EMBROIDERY FOR ADMINISTRATION

WHEREAS: The effectiveness of the existing student government has not fully responded to the demands of the student body.

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees has recommended a reduction in the SGA Student Center Fees to $2 per semester credit hour for full-time undergraduate students and to $2 per semester credit hour for part-time undergraduate students.

WHEREAS: The SGA has voted to extend these fees to all undergraduate students and to increase the fee by an additional $2 per semester credit hour for full-time undergraduate students.

RESOLVED: That a Student Center Fee of $2 per semester credit hour for full-time undergraduate students, effective Thurs., Sept. 1, 1977.
Prez Takes Last Stand

By Barbara Ponsi

Thursday night, the Board of Trustees voted to increase the Student Union Building (SUB) fee $12 ($6 per semester), effective this fall and Maryanne Prezturnik, SGA President, was one of the only people at the meeting pushing for it. The fee increase will reportedly be used to finance the construction of a Student Center annex and 30 acres of new outdoor recreational fields.

The annex will house new athletic facilities and several offices which are presently located in Life Hall. However, the proposed plans do not clarify whether students will essentially be paying for a relocation of administrative offices or if their money will go for totally student-oriented facilities such as student activities offices and possibly a movie theater and a bowling alley.

On Friday, Prezturnik said she realized the proposals that the plan raised following extensive discussions with Katie Mulheren, SGA Treasurer, Jose Fuentes, SGA President-elect and Jules Korzeniowski, SGA Treasurer-elect, all of whom spoke against the fee increase at the Board meeting.

She admitted that she had been pushing for a plan which she did not know enough about, although she insisted that she believed she had been acting in the best interests of students at the time.

"On Thursday night, I believed the resolution should be passed. We have a space problem on campus and if there was any delay in the proposal being enacted, it would have meant a year's delay for the plan and I didn't think it was worth it," she explained.

Prezturnik has since written a letter to Gerald LeBoff, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, saying she made a "mistake" in urging the Board to pass the resolution and asking that a special meeting be held on Thurs., May 26 for the Board to reconsider their decision and hopefully move to table it.

"I believe that what has been done can be undone," she said confidently.

Despite Prezturnik’s contention that she had the students’ best interests in mind, the only two students who were aware of the fact that the Board would be considering a SUB fee increase for the proposed construction were herself and Mulheren, up until the day before the Board meeting when the newly elected SGA officers found out about it.

Elliot Mininberg, Vice President for Administration and Finance, sent Prezturnik a copy of the proposals in mid-April but asked her to keep it quiet until he was able to present them to the Board, she explained.

"It was just a courtesy," Prezturnik said. "I respect the requests of other people. I thought that he (Mininberg) meant he would discuss it with the Board informally and I didn’t know that it would come up at this particular Board meeting until I got the agenda two days earlier."

Pretzturnik outlined the series of events that led to the actions taken at Thursday’s Board meeting:

In mid-April, Mininberg sent her a proposal which called for a $15 increase in the SUB fee. "I was very much against it," Pretzturnik said, "as much as I believed that the development of the quarry was in the students' interests. I had a discussion with him (Mininberg) and told him that while I thought the $15 figure was too high, I could see a $10 increase being justified."

Following the discussion, Mininberg sent Prezturnik a revised plan during the first week of May, which called for a $12 SUB fee increase. Pretzturnik called it a "compromise figure."

"I was in favor of the increase because I believed it would be used for student-oriented facilities," she said.

The actual resolution that the Board passed calls for a lowering of the present SUB fee, the institution of a Student Center annex construction fee and the subsequent consolidation of the two, amounting to a $6 increase per semester.

"If I had asked the Board to table the proposal I'm sure they would have," Pretzturnik said. She added that she believed she had been instrumental in getting the decision passed.

In architect's sketches for the proposed annex, several administrative offices in Life Hall are included.

"I believed it was an architect's schematic drawing and not an ironclad presentation," she reasoned. "I thought that the inside of the building was up for grabs but subsequent discussions have raised more than enough questions in my mind."

"Since I talked the Board into passing it, I think I can talk them out of it," she said.

Maryanne Pretzturnik
It Wasn’t 1984

In fact, it was only May 12, 1977 when students at MSC who attended the open meeting of the Board of Trustees were given a chance to realize that they have no power on this campus.

SGA President Maryanne E. Preztunik was elected by students last semester to represent them. Proper representation in any form of government is based on two important facts. Firstly, it is necessary for the public figure to speak to the people who are being represented. Secondly, it is necessary for the elected official to have allegiance to one group, i.e. the people who are represented.

It’s slightly difficult to represent your constituency properly when you neglect to talk to them. Preztunik, unfortunately ran into this problem. When she should have been informing students about a possible fee increase, she was busy keeping secrets with Elliot Mininberg, Vice President for Administration and Finance. This leaves any individual with the impression that Preztunik is more interested in making friends with administrators than in representing her constituency.

Mininberg pointed out at the Board meeting that it will be extremely difficult to bill students this year if his proposal is not passed immediately. Many things in life are difficult. Many students, in fact, will find it very difficult to pay more money in fees next semester for an annex that they will probably never see if they are on MSC’s four year plan.

Board Chairman Gerald LeBoff noted at the same meeting that he would have been “delighted” to inform students about the fee increase. We, also, would have been delighted to be informed about our money. Mininberg and LeBoff both stated that the information might have affected this year’s SGA elections.

Elections in the communist countries of the world might be affected by such incidentals as two people running for one office. If the average voter was equipped with ESP, Watergate might have affected the campaign of former President Richard M. Nixon. LeBoff went so far as to say that the information would have been destructive to the election and might have affected the results. It’s great to see that the administration is watching out for SGA elections. It’s not so great, however, to see that they are withholding information in order to affect election results.

SGA President-elect Jose Fuentes cannot be blamed for the secrecy involved in the new resolutions. He was informed about those resolutions approximately 24 hours before the meeting took place. One Board member went so far, in fact, to state that Fuentes and the rest of the newly elected SGA administration did not “officially exist.”

However, based on the administration’s activities over the last two months, it is unfortunate that the resolutions were passed. Mininberg stated that the resolutions will be redesigned if the new SGA administration presents some rational arguments against the new plan. It’s doubtful, though, that anything will be changed after it is passed.

Fuentes noted in an interview after the Board meeting that the incident provided him with a lesson. The lesson was that ignorance is one of the worst things in the world.

The meeting taught the MONTCLARION another lesson. We are sure that it is mere coincidence that the resolution was brought before the Board on the week following the MONTCLARION’s last issue. We are also sure that it is merely coincidental that the resolution was brought to the attention of students between SGA administrations. It is also coincidental that the resolution was passed directly after the MSC community voted to raise another student fee in the MAC referendum.

But let’s not dwell on coincidences. Instead we’ll dwell on lessons. Fuentes is probably right in saying that ignorance is one of the worst things in the world. The MONTCLARION once thought that ignorance was followed by apathy in unnecessary evils. Now we’re not so sure.
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Inside:

President and President-elect make their statements and The Montclarion reprints the texts of the resolutions.
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