

ASWWU Government Official Referendum Proposal

Referendum Title: Viking Athletics Fee

WWU Department or Program responsible for implementation of proposed action: Western Intercollegiate Athletics

WWU Department/Program Staff Contact: Butch Kamena

WWU Student (or Student Group) Proposing Referendum: Student Athlete Advisory Committee – Elizabeth Swift

ASWWU Elected Sponsor: Ruby Stegeman, AS Executive Board Vice President of Activities

Date(s) Referendum Proposal to be officially presented to ASWWU Governing Bodies:

- ASWWU Executive Board: 3/5/2026
- ASWWU Senate: 3/4/2026

Proposed General Election Ballot for Referendum (e.g Spring 2026): Enter

Official Final Draft Referendum Information Packet (what will be available to voters if passed to go on ballot):

Note: all information below is exactly as submitted in final draft by referendum sponsor and support program staff.

1) Official Ballot Question:

Shall Western Washington University, beginning Fall Quarter 2027, charge all students enrolled in six or more credits at the Bellingham campus an Athletics fee initially set at \$80.36 each Fall, Winter and Spring Quarter, and by vote of the Athletic Fee Oversight Committee may be increased by up to 4% per year without a vote of general ASWWU membership? If this referendum is approved, and the S&A Fee Committee so recommends, the Western Washington Board of Trustees will be asked to approve reducing the S&A fee by \$53.57 per quarter per student, beginning Fall Quarter 2027, and removing the Department of Athletics from the S&A fee allocation process, in hopes of providing increased funding to all current S&A fee recipients. The net impact to full-time student fee payers is an increase of \$26.79 per quarter. If the Western Washington Board of Trustees does not approve such, this referendum and associated fee will be void.

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2) Official Referendum Statement of Support (250 words or less):

The ballot proposal would remove the Athletic Department from the Services and Activities Fee process and replace those funds with a separate Athletics Fee set at \$80.36 a quarter in starting Fall 2027. This proposal would provide increased funding not only to athletics, but to a wide range of student groups and activities funded by the S&A fee, including the WWU Associated Students, DRAC, Sport Clubs and Intramurals, the Centers, and Student Engagement. Rising costs are limiting what these groups can do, forcing a reduction in services. Taking Athletics out of the S&A fee and adjusting it downward will allow funding to all groups, including athletics, to increase by up to 12%. For athletics, a specific fee would be similar to what is already in place at Central Washington University and would increase funding, which presently is below the average of both NCAA Division II and the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. The benefits of athletics are wide-ranging. Department events provide a place for campus engagement, where campus groups can set up information tables, be recognized and promoted through specific group nights, and have their programs promoted through social media platforms widely seen both inside and outside the WWU community. The introduction of an athletic fee and reduction of the S&A fee would lead to a total fee increase of about \$26 a quarter for full-time students. The benefits will reach not just athletics, but a wide range of diverse student groups impacting the entire WWU community. Please vote YES.

3) Official Supporting Documentation (additional details)

Subject to the approval of WWU's Board of Trustees, this referendum proposes to separate the Department of Athletics from the group that receives Services & Activities funding, and create a separate ASWWU Athletic Fee, thus increasing funding for both Athletics and the groups remaining in the S&A fee process. Upon the passage of this referendum, a separate athletic fee set with a baseline of \$80.36 per quarter, and increasing consistent with increases in the S&A fee, would be implemented beginning Fall Quarter 2027, and the Athletic Department would withdraw from the S&A fee group, with the hope that any funding previously allocated to Athletics would be distributed among other groups.

4) Official Fiscal Note (required for any student-voted Fee referendum)

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The projected fee revenue would be \$3,013,500 for FY28. The projected revenue is based on \$80.36 per quarter with a student count of 12,500. There will be an annual inflationary adjustment each year, consistent with the S&A Fee inflationary adjustment.

The fee will support the needs all 15 intercollegiate athletic programs at WWU and will provide revenue to support the goods and services (uniforms, equipment, game operations, insurance, etc.), travel, student employees, with any remainder supporting non-state funded coaches and support staff that work with students daily.

Men's Sports:

Cross Country
Soccer
Basketball
Indoor Track & Field
Outdoor Track & Field
Golf

Women's Sports:

Cross Country
Soccer
Volleyball
Basketball
Indoor Track & Field
Outdoor Track & Field
Golf
Softball
Rowing

FY25 BUDGET ACTUALS (Operating Budget Only)

Revenue

S&A Fee Allocation	\$2,247,482
Other Revenue	<u>\$1,262,940</u>
Total Revenue	\$3,510,422

Expenses

	\$4,084,304
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (573,882)

FY26 BUDGET PROJECTIONS (Operating Budget Only)

Revenue

S&A Fee Allocation	\$2,278,063
Other Revenue	<u>\$1,341,603</u>

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	Total Revenue	\$3,619,666
Expenses		\$4,119,602
	Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (499,936)

5) If the referendum is proposing a student fee, what will the fee oversight structure be?

ASWWU Government would be authorized to create an AS committee to conduct quarterly reviews of athletics fee spending to ensure alignment with the intended use of athletics fee funds.

Commented [AL1]: Is this the same as the Athletics Fee Oversight Committee?

Intended use: The fee will support all 15 intercollegiate athletic programs at WWU and will provide revenue to support the goods and services (uniforms, equipment, game operations, insurance, etc.), travel, student employees, with any remainder supporting non-state funded coaches and support staff that work with students daily.