

Counseling, Health & Wellness Services
Request to Increase Health and Wellness Fee for 2022-2023
Date: 5/16/22

Recommendation

This is to recommend increasing WWU's mandatory Health Services Fee \$21 per quarter for students taking 6 or more credits, effective Fall Quarter 2022. This represents an 18% increase from \$117 to \$138 per quarter or \$63 per academic year (from \$351 to \$414 per year).

The proposed \$21/qtr. fee increase would generate an estimated \$858,480 in revenue for FY23.

- \$598,740 would be used to fund increased expenses across all Counseling, Health & Wellness departments.
- \$259,740 would be used to replace reduced Health Service Fee revenue due to decreased enrollment.

This fee increase is expected to fund essential core functions while alternative revenue sources are being explored. It is anticipated these alternative revenue sources will reduce the fee burden on students and provide sufficient funds to minimize the need for future fee increases.

Background

The mandatory student Health Services Fee represents 95% of the Student Health Center's revenues and 47% of the Counseling & Wellness Center's revenues annually. This fee is the critical funding source used to support health related services to Western students by providing comprehensive medical, mental health and wellness services.

Historically Western's fees have been consistently lower than those for other IHE's in Washington. For the 2021-2022 academic year, Western' health fee was 40% lower than WSU and nearly 50% lower than Evergreen.

In addition, the WWU Health Fee has only increased \$11/qtr. (from \$106 in 2017 to \$117 currently). As a percentage, this represents an average increase of 5.5% over the past two years. This fee increase has not been sufficient to keep up with the 4.5% annual increase in healthcare costs combined with the cost-of-living adjustments of 5.9% in 2021.

Costs have also been impacted by the COVID pandemic, the dramatic increase in demand for mental health services, reduced enrollment over the past few years, increasing costs of departmental goods and services and the highly competitive market for medical and mental health personnel.

What Will the Fee Increase Pay For?

- It will address cost of living salary and benefits increases for classified and pro staff.
- It will bring professional development and continuing education allowances in line with national standards.
- It will expand recruitment efforts to meet behavioral health, medical and accreditation staffing needs.