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Georgia Southern University Students Vote to Support Three Proposed Student Fees

SEPTEMBER 28, 2012



A record number of Georgia Southern University students cast their ballots to support three new proposed student fees during an online vote this past week.

A record turnout of more than 9,390 students, nearly 55 percent of eligible students (students who paid Student Activity Fees this semester), voted to approve three fees including: a fee to fund an expansion of Allen E. Paulson Football stadium (\$25); a fee to fund Georgia Southern's potential move up to the Football Bowl Subdivision (\$75); and a fee support for Sustainability and Green efforts on campus (\$10).

The University will now forward the proposed fees to the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents for their review and consideration.

"This past week a record number of Georgia Southern students voted on three proposed student fees and to express their support for the future direction of this great University," said Dominique Quarles, president of the Student Government Association at Georgia Southern. "The University asked us for our opinion and the results speak for themselves."

"This has been a student-led process from the beginning, and we are exceptionally proud of the effort our Student Government Association has made to provide objective information and encourage their fellow students to vote. This entire process is another example of the student-centeredness of Georgia Southern," said Georgia Southern University President Brooks Keel, Ph.D. "Whether it in the area of academics, research, sustainability,

economic development or athletics, our goal is to take Georgia Southern University to the next level," said Keel. "From what I have been told, this is one the largest turnouts for a student vote on our campus."

While there has been much discussion about the two athletic-related fees, Georgia Southern University leaders were particularly impressed with the high vote of confidence that the sustainability efforts fee received. The proposed \$10 fee passed with 7,018 students (74.9%) voting in favor. This past year, Georgia Southern was nationally recognized for its efforts when it was named to the Princeton Review's Guide to 322 Green Colleges, recognizing the University's commitment to sustainability and green initiatives.

"Georgia Southern students have a desire to make a difference in the world. They want to improve their surroundings and are very aware and interested in topics concerning the environment," said Keel.

Next Step

The student vote is just the first step in the process. The University will now forward the proposed fees to the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents for their review and consideration. If approved, the expansion fee and sustainability fee will go into effect Fall 2013. If approved, the "FBS fee" will not go into effect until Georgia Southern University is offered and accepts an invitation to join an FBS conference. Timing for implementing the "FBS fee" will be dependent upon when the University receives an invitation from an FBS conference.

By the Numbers: Student Fee Vote Results

Expansion of Allen E. Paulson Football Stadium Fee (\$25)

- Total Voters: 9,390
 - Yes: 6,612 (70.4% of the vote)
 - No: 2,778 (29.6% of the vote)

Fee to Fund Potential Move Up to the Football Bowl Subdivision Fee(\$75)

- Total Voters: 9,390
 - Yes: 5,748 (61.2% of the vote)
 - No: 3,642 (38.8% of the vote)

Sustainability Efforts Fee (\$10)

- Total Voters: 9,390
 - Yes: 7,018 (74.7% of the vote)
 - No: 2,372 (25.3% of the vote)

About the Fees:

Expansion of Allen E. Paulson Football Stadium Fee (\$25)

This fee will support a \$25 fee to increase the seating capacity of Allen E. Paulson Stadium by more than 6,300 seats. The new addition will add an upper deck to the student/visitor side of the stadium. Currently, the stadium has 4,000 seats dedicated for student use. With more than 20,000 students attending Georgia Southern again this fall, only 25 percent of the University's student body was able to be provided with a seat during home football games. By increasing the capacity of the stadium now, Georgia Southern will be well positioned for a future move to the Football Bowl Subdivision or FBS. The new seats, which this fee will fund, will be dedicated for student use each home football game.

In addition to football games, the expansion will also provide additional seating for graduation ceremonies and special events. The stadium currently seats a total of 14,444 people. Each spring, the stadium is filled to capacity and beyond with more than 23,000 family members and friends attending its annual undergraduate commencement ceremony. In addition, the University hosts a variety of other events at the stadium including last spring's concert of The Band Perry and The Fray.

Note: Once the total cost of construction has been fully paid, this fee will no longer be assessed to students.

Fee to Fund Potential Move Up to the Football Bowl Subdivision Fee(\$75)

This fee will fund a University FBS Athletic Operations Fee. Georgia Southern recently expressed interest in moving up to compete with other major universities in the Football Bowl Subdivision series. This \$75 fee will support Georgia Southern Football's move to a new level of competition as well as a move to a new athletic conference. In order to make a move to the FBS, two things must happen. First, the funding for such a move must be in place and second, the University must be invited to join a new conference.

Georgia Southern Athletics strives to compete and succeed at the highest possible level and gain national recognition for our teams, student-athletes, coaches, and Georgia Southern University. The University's student athletes maintain integrity and sportsmanship and work hard to exceed the NCAA

academic standards and Georgia Southern graduation rates. This fee will allow for the addition of new student-athlete scholarships to meet the minimum football requirements for the FBS classification, for women's athletics and the addition of another women's sport which would be required.

Because the state of Georgia does not fund athletic department operations, this fee will ensure that the University has the necessary funding to make a move up when a conference invitation is presented. There are no plans to charge students for individual game tickets during regular season play and the FBS fee will only be assessed if Georgia Southern is invited to join a new conference at the higher level of competition.

Sustainability Efforts Fee (\$10)

This \$10 fee will support Sustainability and Green initiatives on campus. For the second straight year Georgia Southern was named to the Princeton Review's Guide to 322 Green Colleges, recognizing the University's commitment to sustainability and green initiatives.

The Sustainability fee will go toward sustainable projects on campus such as retro-fitting buildings, low-flow shower heads, re-lamping, etc., to make the University more water and energy efficient. It will also aid in promotional efforts to encourage a green lifestyle across campus. Additionally, the fee will go toward environmental education, bringing in influential outside guest speakers like Majora Carter and Ed Begley, Jr., who have spoken in the past at Georgia Southern. The fee will also aid in hiring personnel for the Center for Sustainability.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 120 degree programs serving more than 20,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. In 2012, the University was named one of the Top 10 most popular universities in the country by *U.S. News & World Report* and is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered approach to education.

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Congratulations to #GeorgiaSouthern @GSCOSM alumnus Nick Wiley ('83) who was recently named the chief conservation officer of @DucksUnlimited! ow.ly/BhVW30hkDJR



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