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LOUISIANA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

TO: Dr. Monty Sullivan
LCTCS President

FROM: Dr. Emily Campbell *EC*
Interim Chief Enrollment Management Officer

Joseph F. Marin *JFM*
Chief Operations Officer

SUBJECT: Student Referendum for River Parishes Community College

DATE: 09/12/2017

FOR BOARD ACTION

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board authorize the Student Government Association of River Parishes Community College (RPCC) to conduct a referendum to assess a \$15.00 per student activity fee each semester, beginning in the 2018 spring term.

Background: The students at RPCC have expressed interest in creating student engagement activities such as spring/fall festivals, cultural events, guest speakers, intramural sports, art shows/exhibits, and community service projects. Students have also requested funds from the SGA to assist with expenses incurred during travel to academic conferences. The Student Government Association (SGA) of RPCC recognizes that current fiscal realities prevent RPCC from utilizing state dollars to support these activities, and have petitioned college leaders about establishing a self-assessed, \$15.00 per student activity fee to support these activities.

This is a student-led initiative. As such, RPCC's SGA will educate the student body about the proposed referendum, the goals of the proposed fee, and the fiscal impact to the students. The campaign will be led by officers of the SGA and will include a plan of sharing information via the college's website and social media outlets. Information will also be communicated via student email, Canvas, and posters/flyers. The referendum will be discussed at monthly SGA meetings. All votes on the proposed referendum will be collected during the fall 2017 term. The SGA will make every effort to have a voter turnout greater than 50% of the student population.

Per LCTCS Policy #2.012, colleges must obtain approval from the Board prior to holding a formal referendum with financial implications. The Board approves whether a referendum vote can happen, and the student body of RPCC will decide whether the proposed fee will actually be assessed. RPCC has provided all materials required by LCTCS Policy #2.012 (enclosed herein).

The ballot language will be as follows:

Do you approve of the creation of a \$15.00 Student Government Association fee, effective spring 2018? It will give the SGA the opportunity to do many things such as: sponsoring fall and spring festivals, intramural sports, cultural events, various local community service projects, providing limited school supplies for students on campus, funding student travel and many other student related activities. If approved by the students of RPCC, the fee will be implemented in spring 2018.

- NOTE:
- 1.) All RPCC students will be assessed the \$15.00 per semester.
 - 2.) The charge will only be assessed during the fall and spring semesters.
 - 3.) The fee will be collected and managed by RPCC's Business Office.

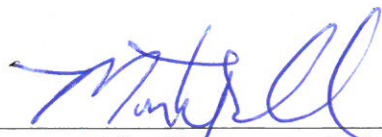
YES, I approve a \$15.00 per semester Student Government Association Fee.

NO, I do not approve a \$15.00 per semester Student Government Association Fee.

History of Prior Actions: N/A

Fiscal Impact: It is anticipated that the new student activity fee will generate approximately \$39,000 per year in new resources to support new student engagement activities.

Benefits to the System: If ultimately approved by the student body, this student activity fee will provide RPCC students with an opportunity to support new student engagement activities with restricted student fees. RPCC's SGA feels that increasing student engagement outside of the classroom would be a powerful tool in improving retention and completion rates at the institution as students who are invested in their school are more likely to stay until graduation.



Approved for Recommendation to the Board
Dr. Monty Sullivan, President

Date

River Parishes Community College

Referendum for a Student Government Fee

Request for Approval from LCTCS Board of Supervisors

The Need for the Referendum:

River Parishes Community College (RPCC) is currently one of the only schools in the LCTCS system not collecting a Student Government fee. As the student population at RPCC continues to grow, the Student Government Association has had an increasingly difficult time sponsoring and leading college-wide activities due to a lack of funds. In March 2017, the challenges became more acute when, because of restructuring, the college took on two new campuses—one in Reserve (formerly under SCL Technical College) and the other in Plaquemine (formerly under BRCC). In order to meet the needs of our growing student population, the SGA needs a new, dedicated source of revenue and is proposing the creation of an SGA fee to be assessed on all students in the fall and spring semesters. After researching what other schools in the system are charging as well as taking into account the size of our institution and the demographics of our students, the Student Government Association has decided that a \$15.00 flat fee per student would give the SGA the opportunity to serve students in important and perceptible ways without being too financially burdensome.

With the revenue generated from this student-assessed fee, the SGA would be able to continue improve the student experience at RPCC. The revenue will provide support for the development and expansion of extra and co-curricular activities, social and cultural educational events, student engagement and leadership development programming, and student organizations. The SGA would like to host guest speakers, provide travel assistance to academic conferences, develop an intramural sports program, support art shows/exhibits for our art students, and increase participation in various campus service projects.

Increasing student engagement outside of the classroom would be a powerful tool in improving retention and completion rates at the institution. When a student is invested in his or her school, he or she is much more likely to stay until graduation.

Language of the Referendum on the Ballot:

Below is the exact wording of the referendum as it will appear on the ballot:

Student Government Association Fee

“Do you approve of the creation of a \$15.00 Student Government Association fee, effective spring 2018? It will give the SGA the opportunity to do many things such as: sponsoring fall and spring festivals, intramural sports, cultural events, various local community service projects, providing limited school supplies for students on campus, funding student travel and many other

student related activities. If approved by the students of RPCC, the fee will be implemented in spring 2018.

- NOTE:
- 1.) All RPCC students will be assessed the \$15.00 fee per semester.
 - 2.) The charge will only be assessed during the fall and spring semesters.
 - 3.) The fee will be collected and managed by RPCC's Business Office.

____ Yes, I approve a \$15.00 per semester Student Government Association Fee.

____ No, I do not approve a \$15.00 per semester Student Government Association Fee.

Publicizing and Explaining the Referendum Issue to the Students before the Vote:

The Student Government Association will use a variety of methods to publicize and educate the students about the referendum. It will use the school's website, social media outlets, student email, Canvas, and poster/flyers to disseminate information about the referendum. The SGA will ensure that students know the reasons for the proposed new fee and the fiscal impact on them. The SGA will also reserve time at their monthly meetings for open discussions about the referendum.

The Student Government Association will make every effort to have a voter turnout greater than 50% of the student population.

Financial Impact if the Referendum is Passed:

Using enrollment numbers for the last two semesters at RPCC, the new Student Government fee would raise approximately \$39,000 per year.

Appeals Process for Appealing the Referendum Result:

Appeals can be submitted to the Vice Chancellor of Student Services within two weeks of the vote to determine if the vote was valid, with formal appeal to the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration to determine if a second vote is necessary.

Certification by the Chancellor for this Item:

This referendum proposal has the approval and support of Dr. Dale Doty, the Chancellor of River Parishes Community College.