Report on financial impact of maintaining Stern Center pool, closing pool, and ending swim team & club/recreational/instructional swimming
March 30 2015, Faculty Senate Budget Committee

N.B.  • The Budget Committee’s charge includes the entire College budget, not just Academic Affairs.
  • The Athletics Department falls within the College’s Auxiliary Services; its funding comes entirely from student fees and from income from ticket sales, concessions, broadcast fees, and the like. Money cannot be moved around between Auxiliary Services and other budgets.
  • While an Athletics Department budget decision will not directly affect Academic Affairs, student fees for Athletics and Student Activities do have an impact on the overall budget. These fees are included in the tuition and fees that all students must pay. The College is limited in how much it can increase this total cost from year to year. For the past several years, SC legislators have informed the College that this total cost may not be increased more than the increase in cost of living. So these various budgets, while separate, affect one another. If the Athletics fee went up, for example, that would limit the amount the College could increase its tuition, whereas if the fee were lowered, the College could charge more for tuition without raising the total “all-in” cost beyond what we’re allowed.

Budget Committee Findings

In December the Committee contacted Steve Osborne (Executive VP for Business Affairs) and Sam Jones (Associate VP for Budgeting and Payroll Services) to request information on the changes to the College’s Athletics budget and the budgets of other units that will be affected by the closure of the Stern Center Pool, the cancellation of the swim team and club swimming, and the lack of access to an on-campus pool for recreational and instructional use.

Sam Jones has informed us that the decision to close the pool and end the program was made because repairs to the Stern Center pool would be too expensive to maintain. Athletics Director Joe Hull announced the closing of the swim program and the pool in a memo dated November 7, 2014, in which he stated that the cost to replace the HVAC alone would be 1.5 million.

We did not get a figure on the total cost of repairing or replacing the pool, or the cost of renovating that space in the Stern Center for some other purpose.

When we asked what would happen to the money that had been budgeted for maintaining the pool and for running the swim program, Sam Jones informed us, “The current athletics swimming budgets of $417,702, will be used, in part, to honor the scholarships of the current students in the swimming program. Any residual will remain on the athletics side of the budget since the funding is from the athletics fee, a portion of the total tuition and fees paid by all students.”

We also asked about the money that would have been used for the Swim Club. Sam Jones informed us that the amount they received last year was $2500 and that this year that money would be available for other student activities clubs who apply for funding. We asked about swimming instruction that might be affected by the pool closure, but Sam had no information on this.

We could not figure out how much has gone to maintaining the pool in the past. We assume that maintenance costs may have come from the Physical Plant’s operation and maintenance budget. We also think the closing of the pool could also affect the Campus Recreation Services budget. We have not been able to get any more information on where any of the other money that would’ve been spent on the pool or swim activities will be spent once the pool closes. Table 1 provides some information on the budgets of all these departments and any associated fees.

The Athletics fee has risen $210 since 2011-12, when it represented 10.3% of the total bill all in-state undergrads paid; in 2014 the fee was 11.4% of the total. (See Table 1.)

In that time period, the total all-in fee to in-state undergraduates has increased $942. (See Table 2.)
The Athletics Fee increase from 12-13 to 13-14 is partially in response to C of C joining the Colonial Athletic Association.

Other important contextual information:

- The fee for the College’s Capital Improvement fund, which services the College’s debt on building renovation and construction, has increased from 1354 to 1562 per year, a $198 increase or 14.6%.

- Fees for Student Health Services have gone from 140 to 146, a $6 increase or 4.2%.

- Fees to cover our IT infrastructure have increased, which has helped the College catch up with the escalating costs of this very large expense.
  - Costs of our IT infrastructure were once offset, though by no means covered, by a “student computing fee” of $50. This fee had remained $50 for a number of years while IT costs escalated dramatically.
  - In 2013-14, first-year students were charged a technology fee of $130, an $80 increase or 160%; upperclassmen were charged $170, an increased of $120 or 240%. The technology fee did not increase in 2014-15.