

Student Referendum: Make a Change

The annual UC Santa Cruz student elections are upon us. From May 15 through May 22, students can vote online on referenda that would provide funding to various organizations. Learning Support Services, athletics, physical education, and Graduate Student Government all have measures on this year's ballot.

The need for these referenda comes from the university's lack of financial support for these programs. Every year, underfunded organizations ask students to raise student fees to fund the organizations.

Many of these programs simply cannot survive without a monetary boost, and the university is not going to give it to them, forcing the organizations to ask students to reach into their already-light pockets and add on to their exorbitant fees.

This process should not be necessary. The university should step up and provide adequate aid to these organizations. It is true that this process is not unique to UCSC, but referenda at other schools are often attempts to augment programs, not last resorts to keep them alive. If the university provided proper funding, the referenda would be a luxury, not a necessity.

If all four measures pass, students' fees will increase next year by \$20.64 per quarter. Currently, California residents

are paying \$7,962.29 in fees for the 2006-2007 school year. Of that figure, \$6,141.00 are registration and educational fees. The remaining \$1,821.29 are distributed among 22 other organizations and causes. If everything passes this year, that

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number would rise to 26. Since the university is not going to step up and support these programs, UCSC's student body must make the decision of whether or not to support them.

Last year, five of the eight referenda passed, but only 29.78% of eligible voters cast ballots. This is clearly a breakdown of the democratic process. Out of nearly 13,000 undergraduates at UCSC, only 3,800 participated in the election. This number needs to change. Students should take

advantage of the opportunity they have to make a difference in the university's finances. Whether or not students support the measures on the ballot, they should take the time to vote; the future of these programs is in their hands. The university has already made decisions about these organizations. Now it's time for the students to do the same.

A chief concern that the organizations proposing referenda have is that not enough people will vote. Even if a measure receives a majority of the vote, it cannot pass unless the minimum participation requirement is met. For a student body with the reputation of being politically minded, UCSC students are surprisingly apathetic and inactive when it comes to elections. That can change this month. Students do have a voice, and they can use it.

The bottom line is that the university should be supporting these organizations, but they aren't. It is up to the students to determine whether or not these programs can receive a minimum financial boost. Some students may be in favor of the referenda; some may oppose them. But regardless of their stances, everyone should come out and vote.

To vote in the election, go to <http://elections.ucsc.edu/> between May 15th and 22nd.

Breakdown of Undergrad Student Fees

University Registration Fee: \$735

Educational Fee: \$5,406

College Student Government Fee: \$30

Student Programs Fee: \$153

Campus Sustainability Program Fee: \$18

Engaging Education Program Fee: \$12.60

Community and Resource Empowerment: \$15

Student Facilities Fee: \$90

Seismic Safety Fee: \$75

Student Life Facilities Fee: \$90

Transportation Fee: \$246.99

OPERS Fitness Facilities Fee: \$45

Campuswide Student Government Fee: \$21

Campus Childcare Fee: \$24

Intramural and Sports Club Team Activities: \$6.75

Recreation Programs: \$12

Health Insurance (waivable): \$925

Other: \$36

Dispelling Popular Myths About Immigration

The United States of America is a country built on immigration. However, those in charge of determining the fate of present and future immigrants seem to be working from a script of rhetoric and doctrine that completely violates the foundations of our country. This rhetoric, vicious and indignant in its execution, vilifies foreigners and spins a hateful web of xenophobic paranoia, describing cartels near the border, millions of jobless Americans, and an unsafe atmosphere to live in because of these scary people from a distant land.

However, ridiculous costs and hoops that would-be immigrants must jump through are what push many to enter the country in a illegal and dangerous manner. These attempts cause many people to die trying to cross the border and creates a reality of increased costs, immigration raids, and about 12 million people living in secret.

The costs associated with undocumented immigration mostly stem from money paid out in social services to these immigrants, who do not pay taxes. Though the massive business they create pays sales tax and partially recoups the costs, liberalization of immigration policy would let them participate more, work for higher wages, spend more money, and pay taxes, compensating for the services.

We at *City on a Hill Press* seek to dispel and clarify some common fears and myths concerning immigration, documented and otherwise, to better allow the free exchange of ideas without being bogged down in partisan subjectivity.

Myth: Immigration is bad for the economy.

Fact: Over the past 30 years, California has seen a growing working immigrant body, culminating in immigrants making up over one quarter of the labor force.

California has also seen massive economic growth, and according to the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit think tank, immigration has "contributed to California's faster economic growth compared to the rest of the country." In addition, stable immigration reduces poverty. According to a 2005 report from the California Regional Economies Project, "The poverty rate declines as the immigrants' length of residence in the U.S. increases."

Myth: Immigration leads to increased crime.

Fact: Native-born men are actually five times *more* likely to go to jail or prison than foreign-born men, according to a 2007 UC Irvine study. "Even as the undocumented population has doubled to 12 million since 1994, the violent crime rate in the United States has declined 34.2 percent and the property crime rate has fallen 26.4 percent," the study found.

In the last two years, May Day has shown something phenomenal. Last year over a million people demonstrated, and this year the only dampening factor to these numbers came from fear of the government attack-dog policies: immigration raids and deportation.

These overwhelming numbers calling out for immigration reform demonstrate the spirit of the new generation of Americans, people who want nothing more than to come to this country and work to support themselves and their families.

Corporations seeking cheap production costs exploit undocumented immigrants coming into the country, and consumers who like their tomatoes cheap sign off on these practices.

These people should be given the right to enter the country as true workers, live open lives, and fully realize the so-called American Dream we keep hearing about.