

## Policy Statement IV – Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees

**Adopted:** October 17, 2013

**Expires:**

**Motion from the 4<sup>th</sup> ULSU General Assembly meeting of 2013-2014:**

MOTION [20279GA]	<u>MSC: S. Glydon/K. Kalmar</u> BIMT the General Assembly ratify ULSU External Policy IV: Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees. Carried
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### Background

Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) refers to any fees which are charged to students, but which are stated to not be applied directly to the costs associated with that student's direct instruction. At the University of Lethbridge, Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees were put in place in 2002-2003, with the initial cost being \$10.50 per course<sup>1</sup>. Currently, these fees are unregulated, and as a result, institutions have the ability to raise these fees by however much and whenever they see fit, as witnessed by the recent increase of 300% (\$12.50 to \$37.50 per course) at the University of Lethbridge<sup>2</sup>. These fees directly decrease the accessibility of post-secondary education (PSE) for many students who cite financial concerns as the most prevalent issue when planning to undertake a post-secondary education, resulting in a differential accessibility, resulting in an decrease in participation by already underrepresented demographics<sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, many of the services which MNIFs subsidize in part are services which are also utilized by the university community, and are necessary for a well functioning University, such as the Registrar, and IT Services<sup>4 5</sup>.

WHEREAS the Alberta Government, in the Post-Secondary Learning Act, has defined tuition as "mandatory fees that are payable to the institution by students for materials and services that facilitate instruction in the courses."<sup>6</sup>

WHEREAS the University of Lethbridge has instituted Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees and The Students' Union opposes the introduction of these fees without prior student approval.

WHEREAS the process for approving mandatory non-instructional fees is lacking any student approval mechanism, and we believe that these fees should be put to student referenda.

WHEREAS the University of Lethbridge now has comparable fees to both the University of Alberta, and the University of Calgary, yet is not comparable in size nor in programs offered.

<sup>1</sup> REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE 2013-14 TO 2015-16 UNIVERSITY BUDGET, University of Lethbridge, 2013, pp.12

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> University Accessibility in Alberta, University of Calgary Students' Union, 1999, pp. 26

<sup>4</sup> Non-Instructional Fees - Student Service Breakdown, University of Lethbridge, 2013

<sup>5 5</sup> REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE 2013-14 TO 2015-16 UNIVERSITY BUDGET, University of Lethbridge, 2013, pp. 31

<sup>6</sup> Public Post-Secondary Institutions' Tuition Fees Regulation, Government of Alberta, Alberta Queen's Printer (Edmonton), pp. 2

WHEREAS there is currently no approval process for mandatory fee increases the ULSU would be willing to organize future referenda for the approval process of mandatory non-instructional fees.

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has mandated limits to post-secondary tuition to keep costs transparent and allow for fiscal responsibility when students are planning for post-secondary, as well as long -term predictability for those already in pursuit of a post-secondary education. MNIFs bypass these government mandates and place unforeseen burdens on students attending post secondary education.

WHEREAS the University of Lethbridge received an operating grant reduction from the Alberta government in the amount of 7.3% as a result of Budget 2013, they have increased the Student Service Fee by 300% resulting in students directly bearing 29.1% of the deficit caused by reduced funding<sup>7</sup>.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The University of Lethbridge Students' Union advocate for a policy that:

1. Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees are regulated and legislated;
2. Any Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees are approved by the University of Lethbridge student body through referenda;
4. Student fees go directly to supporting activities on campus that directly relate to the services they receive on campus, as opposed to supplementing the operating budget;
5. Students fees will no longer be used to subsidize the operating budget of the University of Lethbridge in the event of a deficit;
6. Results in the removal of Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees altogether.

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<sup>7</sup> REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE 2013-14 TO 2015-16 UNIVERSITY BUDGET, University of Lethbridge, 2013, pp.24