

Proposal to Create an Orientation Week Fee

Draft 7 – February 1, 2011

This proposal is being tabled by Interhall Council and is endorsed by the Centre for New Students.

Consultations

- Student Executive Council: Reviewed, Feedback Integrated
- Orientation Week Advisory Committee: Reviewed, Feedback Integrated
- Director, Student Life: Reviewed, Feedback Integrated
- Associate Vice-President (Student Affairs): Reviewed, Feedback Integrated

Preamble

In the summer of 2010, a meeting of Student Executive Council following the SLIC Conference (Student Leaders Interacting & Collaborating) considered the issue of financial pressures affecting Orientation Week. Specifically, the group discussed the impact that financial constraints are having on student groups and the Centre for New Students with regards to their ability to deliver new and innovative programming. The needs, interests and concerns of new students continue to evolve over time, and combined with our own desire to improve the Orientation Week experience, issues around financial resources is a continuing source of difficulty.

At the present time a significant portion of the Orientation Week planning cycle is dedicated to negotiating cost-sharing agreements for everything from salaries for the Orientation Team to feeding the Orientation Volunteers. In addition, the 2009/10 Centre for New Students base budget for Orientation Week was permanently reduced by \$10,000 in support of the University's deficit reduction strategy. To balance this out, the pressure for additional fundraising revenue jumped from approximately \$7,000 per year to \$17,000 per year. Furthermore, 2010 was the first time new students were required to purchase a ticket in order to gain admission to a core central event (Move-in Night), which was the result of a new programming model created by O-Week stakeholders that cost \$66,745 to implement.

The funding constraints that result in numerous one-time charges being levied to new students throughout the week is of growing concern to all Primary Student Organizations and the Centre

for New Students. Unfortunately, approximately 45% of operating costs for centrally administered programs and services must be secured on an annual basis due to rising costs and the absence of stable base funding. Likewise, a growing portion of many student organizations' annual budget is now earmarked for Orientation programming, resulting in less funding being available to implement events and activities throughout the year. Many universities in Canada levy an Orientation fee that is larger than the one proposed here as a means to provide stable funding (see Appendix A). In order to simplify the process of paying for Orientation Week, eliminate the need for most individual groups to charge students for on-campus events and activities, and improve opportunities for innovation in the future, we recommend that a referendum question be put to students during student government elections in the winter 2011 semester.

Rationale

1. Beyond funds that are earmarked for events at the student government and/or organizational level, each year Primary Student Organizations contribute approximately \$3,000 toward the Orientation Week program for core, centrally managed resources including barbecues, radios, OV T-shirts and support from the Orientation Team. The Orientation Fee proposed here would generate stable and predictable funding each year for Orientation Week and its related programs.
2. At the present time a significant amount of revenue comes from one-time sources such as advertising, grants and soft-dollars and considerable planning time is consumed by soliciting these funds. Spending less time on fundraising frees up Orientation Week organizers to focus on improving the quality of programming.
3. This fee would provide an opportunity for student groups to apply for financial support in order to run new and innovative events that respond directly to the emerging needs of our entering student population. Smaller groups with limited budgets would have access to seed money to run events. Larger groups would be encouraged to offer more innovative activities that meet a broader range of needs. Greater creativity would be promoted by reducing financial barriers that often prevent groups from executing innovative ideas. Perhaps most importantly, students who have traditionally felt under-represented in Orientation Week would see improved opportunities to participate.
4. There is considerable concern among stakeholders about ensuring that meaningful Orientation Week programming is available to meet the transition needs of new students without having a financial barrier at the door. However, the reality is that at present certain

events are possible only if funding is secured from multiple sources in advance, if students purchase tickets beforehand or if they pay an admission fee. Likewise, students who don't have cash on hand to pay for meals at several events miss out on important opportunities to connect with their communities (a critical transition need).

5. Orientation Week faces a significant logistical problem around mealtimes, particularly early in the week. It is not feasible to rely on regular campus cafeterias while offering robust, engaging programming.
6. It is easier for incoming students to budget for the cost of Orientation Week if the fee is presented to them up-front. Centrally collecting the fee also reduces the need for handling many thousands of dollars in cash during the week.
7. Over the last couple of years corporate sponsors have been invited to campus to promote their products and services in exchange for revenue that is critical to our programs. It is recognized that many students feel uncomfortable with the intrusiveness of this corporate presence. The proposed fee would curb the need for CNS to rely on corporate sponsors who set-up booths on campus in order to market themselves to new students.
8. Stable base funding for core components of Orientation Week would be guaranteed on a year-to-year basis for the Orientation Volunteer Program; the water tanker for refilling reusable bottles; production of the *Orientation Guide*; equipment rentals including radios, barbecues, a sound system, temporary barriers, golf carts and the truck used for equipment delivery.
9. The fund generated by the Orientation Week Fee would help to facilitate a more environmentally friendly Orientation Week by providing the financial resources necessary to eliminate bottled water and disposable or non-biodegradable dishes and utensils throughout the week. Pilot projects over the last couple of years included having a water tanker on campus and distributing reusable bottles to OVs. However, neither of these initiatives have continuing funding and we still produce significant waste on move-in day in order to keep students, their families and OVs who are working in remote locations well hydrated. More work also needs to be done on reducing waste produced at meals.

Referendum Question

Given that incoming students cannot vote because they have not yet been admitted to the University, it is proposed that the following question be put to all first year undergraduate students who were new in fall 2010, in absentia of the incoming class:

Do you agree to an Orientation Week fee of \$58 that is charged only to new, semester-one students and increases annually at the rate of inflation, for the purposes of eliminating most O-Week user fees, providing the cost of six meals per student, offering a concert, improving the quality of the week and reducing corporate sponsorship?

Orientation Week Program Budget

Expenses	Amount
1. Orientation Team Salaries, Benefits & Training	\$56,750
2. Programming (Move in Night, Pep Rally, Walk-in Movie, Concert)	\$17,000
3. Move-in Day BBQs	\$8,500
4. Move-in Night Dinner	\$48,000
5. Sunday Breakfast/Lunch, Monday Breakfast/Lunch	\$70,000
6. Resources (safety, rentals, water truck, etc.)	\$15,000
7. O-Guide Design and Printing	\$10,000
8. OV food, recruitment, shirts, water bottles	\$20,000
9. Innovation Fund	\$24,000
Total	\$269,250

Explanations

1. The Orientation Team includes five individuals who receive a salary based on \$12/hour on a part-time basis in the winter semester, full-time in the summer and part-time again for the month following Orientation Week. Costs for these positions also include a mandatory charge of 4% for vacation pay and 9.25% for benefits. \$750 per year has been allocated to training for this team.
2. This cost includes performers and equipment used specifically for these events. It is based on average costs for these events over the last two years. Total cost for move-in night in 2010 is reflected in line items 2, 4 and 6.
3. This is based on the current costs incurred by Interhall Council to operate these barbecues. To date, a nominal fee (approximately \$5.00 per person) has been charged to new students when they attend these barbecues.¹
4. Hospitality Services estimates a cost of approximately \$10 per individual for this meal. This includes the requirement of feeding volunteers and staff who support the event

¹ Note that under this new fee, a system will be implemented to manage access to meals such that only those who are eligible are permitted to eat for no additional cost. For example, this might involve wristbands or tickets.

and all food costs. Given the large number of barbecues that serve hamburgers during the week (including the move-in day barbecues), it is imperative that this meal offer something different. Vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options are standard at all centrally-coordinated events, as well as accommodations for common food sensitivities.

5. Average costs to date are \$25,000 for each of the two lunches, and \$10,000 per day for the two breakfasts.
6. In 2010, these costs were broken down as follows:
 - Bleachers - \$1,200
 - Water truck, testing and cups - \$4,355
 - Barbeque rental - \$999
 - Golf carts - \$2,147
 - Radios - \$2,388
 - Truck rental and gas - \$1,090
 - Cell Phones - \$425
 - Speakers and Audio Equipment - \$2, 174
 - Rain gear, traffic cones, signage and safety vests - \$943
7. The cost of printing the Orientation Guide has fluctuated from year to year based on market conditions. A competitive bidding process is undertaken each year. This amount is based on average costs to date.
8. The average cost per individual Orientation Volunteer for food, training, T-shirts, water bottles and recognition was about \$27 in 2010.
9. Approximately 10% of the projected amount that is to be collected from students for the Orientation Week Fee would be dedicated to the annual Innovation Fund.

Protocol

This fee will be collected by Student Financial Services in the same manner as other mandatory student fees and shall be allocated to the following groups:

Amount²	Purpose	Organization
\$ 8,500	Move-in Day Barbecues	Interhall Council
\$20,000	Breakfasts Sunday & Monday	Interhall Council
\$25,000	Sunday or Monday Lunch ³	College Governments ⁴
\$25,000	Monday or Sunday Lunch ³	Central Student Association
\$24,000	Innovation Fund	Determined by application. Funds disbursed by CNS on behalf of Innovation Fund Committee.
Balance	O-Week Operating Costs	Centre for New Students

In the event that any student organization is unwilling or unable to implement the events described above, the Innovation Fund Subcommittee (described below) will approve an alternate event organizer on recommendation from the Centre for New Students. All organizations receiving funds from the Orientation Week Fee as described above must submit a final report to the Orientation Week Advisory Committee not later than the last day of classes in the fall semester.

Annual increases of the existing Orientation Week Fee normally will be limited to the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI) annual average for Ontario. In exceptional circumstances, up to a further 5% may be approved at the discretion of the Student Services Fee (SSF) Committee. Taking this matter to the SSF Committee will help to ensure such decision-making is at arm's length from those who might have a vested interest in the outcome.

Annual increases will be distributed evenly across each of the parties described in the allocation table above. Any organization that does not use the full amount of their allocation for the

² Note the description for annual increases described below.

³ Lunches hosted by the College Governments will be on a different day from that of the CSA lunch.

⁴ The specific division of this amount will be determined by an estimate of the proportion of students in each college, rounded to the nearest percentage point. Although these numbers are not final until the fall semester, a determination will be made based on the available data on the first business day in July of each year.

purposes described in this table, must return the surplus to the Centre for New Students in order to be added to the next year's Innovation Fund. Any organizations that go over budget on these expenditures are solely responsible for covering the shortfall.

The Innovation Fund must be maintained at a minimum of 10% of the expected total revenue for any given year plus any surpluses carried forward from the previous year. If there is any difference between the budget for the Innovation Fund and 10% of the actual amount collected from the Orientation Week Fee in that same year, then the balance will be carried forward for the next year's Innovation Fund.

Disbursement of the Innovation Fund shall be to groups whose proposals are approved by a subcommittee of the Orientation Week Advisory Committee (OWAC). The Innovation Fund Subcommittee shall be comprised of the following members:

- A minimum of seven individuals and a majority of students
- A former Orientation Team member or Central OV
- A member (or former member) of the executive of a Primary Student Organization who has been involved with planning and implementing O-Week events
- At least one student who is in or has just completed her/his first year
- A representative of the Centre for New Students (ex-officio)
- A university staff member who does not work in the department of Student Life
- A faculty member or program counsellor

The process for nominating a slate of members for the Innovation Fund Subcommittee must be approved by OWAC. Within this process, student groups represented on OWAC must be satisfied (by consensus) that student interests are adequately represented on the Innovation Fund Subcommittee.

Individuals or groups associated with any proposal must recuse themselves of decision-making in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

The principles for making decisions about which programs are to be supported by the Innovation Fund shall include:

- a) New or creative ideas;
- b) Endeavours that increase the participation of student organizations or populations that have traditionally not been involved in Orientation Week, or that have only been marginally involved;

- c) Initiatives that are collaborative in nature;
- d) Programs that address the transition needs of incoming students, with priority given to those that address a previously unmet need; and
- e) Other priorities as determined by consensus at OWAC.

Specific criteria for the selection of successful proposals will stem from these principles and will be set by the Innovation Fund Subcommittee.

All other funds will be administered by the Centre for New Students with input from the Orientation Week Advisory Committee (OWAC). An annual accounting of the budget and expenditures related to this fee will be made available to OWAC, and a summary will be publically posted on the Centre for New Students website. In addition, on an annual basis CNS will make use of at least one other form of media to communicate with first year students about how the fee has been used.

All groups receiving funds from the Innovation Fund must submit a written final report to the Innovation Fund Subcommittee not later than the last day of classes in the Fall Semester. Any unused funds must simultaneously be remitted to the Centre for New Students to be reallocated for the subsequent year's Innovation Fund.

Any organization receiving funds from the Orientation Week Fee, whether through the Innovation Fund or otherwise, and who fails to implement events in the agreed upon manner or that fails to adequately account for these funds shall be reminded of their obligations under this protocol. Failure to comply over multiple reminders, or in extreme circumstances, may result in a recommendation by the Innovation Fund Subcommittee to prevent access to these funds in a subsequent year. Prior to any such recommendation, organizations must be given every reasonable opportunity to remedy the situation.

At any time, a referendum question can be called to challenge this fee. There are three mechanisms by which such a referendum can be pursued:

- a) A petition signed by 10% of semester-one and -two undergraduate students;
- b) A motion approved by a majority of members at a CSA Annual General Meeting; or
- c) A motion passed by the Boards of a majority of Primary Student Organizations.

Such a referendum question would be put to the undergraduate student population during the next general election for student governments in the winter semester. The wording of the referendum question must be approved by the CSA Board of Directors in the usual manner.

Appendix A

Comparison chart of Orientation Fees at Ontario Universities (in progress)

University	Fee Amount	Any Meals Included	Activities Included	Large Activities Included	Swag Included	Other
Brock	\$75	Y	Y	Concert, Big BBQ party	Y	Discounts for events throughout year
Carleton	\$90-125	Y	Y	Concert		
Lakehead	\$20	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Laurier	\$130-135	Y	Y	Y (Day at Bingeman's)	Y	
McMaster	\$130		Y	Concert	Y	
Nipissing	Yes					Details being explored
Ottawa	\$90	Y	Y	Y	Y	Fee varies by faculty
Queens	\$105	Y	Y	N	Unknown	Varies by College
Ryerson	None	Y	Y	2nd City show	N	
Toronto	\$75-115	Y	Y	Y	Y	Varies by College
Trent	\$84	N	Y	N	N	
Waterloo	\$101	Y	Y	N	N	
Western	\$75	Unknown	Y	Y	Y	
Windsor	\$50	Y	Y	N	N	
York	\$100	Y	Y	Y	Y	Run by individual Colleges
Average Fee	\$90	Y	Y	Type Varies	Varies	

Other Ontario Universities that do not have Orientation Fees: OCAD University, Algoma, Laurentian, UOIT.

Appendix B

Results from Student Voice Survey

During the fall 2010 semester, the following informal poll was taken of first year students as a part of a larger evaluation survey relating to Orientation programs. 1,463 individuals responded to this item. It is important to note that this question was conducted ‘cold’ – that is, no campaigning either in support of or opposition to this idea was used to frame the context of students’ responses.

The results suggest that new students are divided with regards to this question. No doubt additional information would help to persuade some students to reconsider their position. For example, it costs approximately \$27 per Orientation Volunteer to run this program. In addition, this proposal offers substantial benefits over and above the \$25 per student that was charged in 2010 for move-in night programming alone.

Nevertheless, the results presented here require careful consideration. As a result of these findings, the referendum question has been modified to split the fee into two payments with the hope that this will make it more palatable. It is also hoped that a vigorous ‘yes campaign’ that helps to educate students about the importance of this fee will work to enhance the number of favourable votes.

Q27. Student leaders and the university are considering asking the student body for an Orientation Week fee rather than paying here-and-there throughout the first few days for various activities.

Would you agree to pay between \$45 and \$55 as a one-time fee charged to all incoming students in order to cover the cost of Orientation Week, including all activities on the first night (including dinner), all daytime activities throughout the week and at least three other meals?

<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Response</u>
699	47.78%	Yes
764	52.22%	No

Appendix C

Orientation Week Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Orientation Week at the University of Guelph is designed to assist students in their transition to university life and study and to expose them to a wide range of social, academic, cultural and co-curricular programs and services. The Week is implemented by more than 100 stakeholders from almost every aspect of the University. In this context, the Centre for New Students works on behalf of the university community to advocate for a developmental perspective, coordinate efforts, promote collaboration, improve efficiencies, protect resources and promote safety.

Mandate:

In keeping with the Orientation Week Mission and Objectives, the Orientation Week Advisory Committee (OWAC) advises, shares information and provides counsel to the Centre for New Students in order to ensure that Orientation Week meets its goals and objectives, and provides a safe, inclusive, enjoyable week and a seamless learning environment for new students.

More specifically, the role of OWAC is to advise on:

- Overarching goals, objectives and priorities that are addressed through Orientation Week initiatives.
- Improving the *process* by which consultations take place about sensitive matters.
- Improving equitable and efficient participation by all stakeholders who have an interest in Orientation Week.
- Clarifying and expanding interpretation of the experiences of new students, volunteers, event planners and service providers in relation to Orientation Week.
- Fostering a dialogue about the needs of new students, particularly with regards to all aspects of the transition to university life.

Membership:

OWAC will be comprised of the following members:

- Coordinator, Orientation Programs
- Manager, Centre for New Students

One Student Representative from each of:

- Central Student Association
- Interhall Council
- College Governments
- Senate Student Caucus
- Special Status Organization (see note)

Note: The Special Status Organization representative should not be an executive or board member of any of the other groups on this committee and a different organization should be represented each year on a rotating basis. As defined by the Student Organization Policy, this

includes the C.J. Munford Centre, the International Student Organization, OPIRG, Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment & Diversity, and Guelph Queer Equality. The person serving in this position should preferably be a University of Guelph student.

One Staff Representative from each of:

- Student Housing Services
- Associate Vice-President Academic's Office
- The Library
- Athletics
- Wellness Centre
- Human Rights and Equity Office

Meetings:

- Meetings will occur twice in the Fall Semester and twice in the Winter semester. Additional meetings can be called between April and September as needed.
- Committee Members shall be reminded about the meeting a MINIMUM of three working days prior to regular meetings
- Minutes will be taken at all meetings and will include a summary of major issues discussed. Typed minutes will be sent to the committee following each meeting.
- Special meetings may be called by the Chair, as required.
- Meetings will be Chaired by a member of OWAC who is not a staff member of Student Life. The role of the Chair is to ensure that a variety of voices and opinions are heard, and that meetings are conducted in an efficient and respectful manner.
- It is expected that stakeholders who participate in OWAC will ensure that issues discussed at meetings are brought back to their respective organizations, discussed as needed and feedback reported back to the Centre for New Students. Organizations may want to establish a standing agenda item for Orientation Week issues.
- Stakeholders are asked to invite staff of the Centre for New Students to attend their respective organization's meeting(s) any time it would be helpful in order to discuss Orientation Week issues in more detail.
- The Committee seeks to ensure that a diversity of opinions and perspectives are heard and respected at all times in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Orientation Week.
- Although this is not a decision-making body per se, there are some occasions where a clear sense of direction is required and under such circumstances the committee seeks to build consensus.

Appendix D

Submission to CSA Standing Referendum Committee

CSA Elections Office – Referendum Question Submission Form

The Referendum Question Form must be electronically submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer for preliminary approval **by 4:30pm Friday, January 21, 2011**. Potential questions will then be examined by the Standing Referendum Committee (SRC) who will then make recommendations as to whether a question is fit to be presented to the student body based on its clarity and objectivity, as well as to determine the classification of the question, which will in turn determine funding (See CSA By-Laws 2.5.2-7). The SRC will grant preliminary approval by or before 4:30pm Tuesday, January 25, 2011. At that time, the SRC will also make available the Referendum Signature Form (EO-021). Only after receiving preliminary approval may the referendum team begin petitioning for signatures. The referendum team must submit the Referendum Signatures Form (EO-021) and re-submit the Referendum Question Form by **9:30 am February 11, 2011** for final approval by the CSA Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Referendum Question Form will **not** be considered for final approval without the submission of the completed Referendum Signature Form (EO-021). Campaigning can begin no earlier than Friday, February 11, 2011 **and** not before approval by the CSA Board of Directors and not before a refundable deposit of \$50.00 has been submitted to the CSA Front Office (see CSA By-Laws 2.5.5-6). Petitioning for signatures shall not be considered campaigning.

Name of Organization/Group/Individual(s): Interhall Council (with support from the Centre for New Students)

Contact E-mail address: ihc@uoguelph.ca

Contact phone number: (519) 835-9589

Preamble (not to exceed 200 words)

At present, the University of Guelph does not charge a mandatory Orientation Week Fee but rather, students pay a variety of user fees to access events such as move-in night activities and many barbeques, concerts and other programs.

The average orientation fee at 13 other Ontario universities is \$90 per student, whereas Interhall Council (IHC) is proposing a new fee of \$58 that would be paid with tuition and other student fees. This would make budgeting easier and ensure universal access to many activities that are intended to help you make friends and feel comfortable on campus.

A protocol has been established where students will provide direction for how the fund is spent and to ensure accountability. Funds would be distributed among IHC, the Central Student Association (CSA), College Governments and the Centre for New Students (CNS). It would also create an innovation fund that would be open to applications from anyone.

This initiative will ensure continued funding for the Pep Rally, the Orientation Volunteer program, resource and involvement fairs, and a variety of meals throughout the week. It will eliminate fees for programs that are intended for everyone, such as move-in night events and create a new free concert.

Question (not to exceed 75 words)

Do you agree to an Orientation Week fee of \$58 that is charged only to new, semester-one students and increases annually at the rate of inflation, for the purposes of eliminating most O-Week user fees, providing the cost of six meals per student, offering a concert, improving the quality of the week and reducing corporate sponsorship?

Is the fee being requested by the group/individual already existed in the student fee? **If so**, please fill out section (A); **if not**, please fill out section (B).

(B)

Amounts being requested: \$58

1. Do the charges apply to full time students, part time students, or both (PT/FT/both) Both
2. Please indicate which semester(s) this fee will apply (F/W/S or a combination) Fall
3. Is this fee indexed to the cost of living (Y/N) Yes
4. Is this fee specific to all undergraduates (Yes/No) if not, please specify what groups and colleges. No.

This fee will apply to all new, first-year, first-semester undergraduate students.

Date Received – For CSA Office use only

Signature of Primary Referendum Contact

(dd/mm/yyyy)

Signature of Front Office Manager

(dd/mm/yyyy)

CEO Signature

(dd/mm/yyyy)

I certify that all of the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge. Any misinformation, either willful or through negligence are grounds for penalty and/or disqualification at the discretion of the CEO, in accordance with **by-law #1** from **13.1** to **13.5**, and **by-law #2** from **5.1** to **5.12.1**. Furthermore, I also acknowledge that failure to submit this form, or any form to the elections office by the prescribed date. This form is to be submitted, in person, to the CSA (UC 274) front office by the prescribed deadline.

Jakki Doyle
CSA Chief Electoral Officer
CSA Elections Office
519-824-4120 ext 53887 – csaptm@uoguelph.ca

