

## **Harriman, Rheannon AVED:EX**

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**From:** Colin Fowler <Colin.Fowler@nic.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 5, 2015 4:33 PM  
**To:** Lemmer, Nicola I AVED:EX  
**Subject:** NIC Learning Resource fee  
**Attachments:** Fee Issue Paper to AVED.docx

Hi Nicola, I've attached a short summary paper regarding the proposed Learning Resource fee at NIC. The fee has been endorsed by our Senior Leadership Team, and will now go to the Board at their next meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup>. I know this isn't as much lead time as you would probably want us to provide, but SLT just provided their approval yesterday, and it has to go to the November board meeting to ensure we can get it in the course calendars for next September. It also needs to be set up in our registration system – and needs to be included in our FY 16/17 budget. The Board doesn't meet again until January – and a decision at that time would be too late for a Sept 2015 implementation date.

However, as I understand it the Ministry simply wants to provide input and feedback, and not approval of the fee – as that is a Board decision. So any input and feedback we receive is certainly welcomed, and will be helpful. It doesn't necessarily need to be provided before the Board meeting.

I've done a scan of the fees at other Colleges, and most of them have special purpose fees such as this. NIC currently doesn't have any of these fees.

Thanks!

Colin

**Colin Fowler, CPA/CMA**  
Director, Finance  
North Island College  
Ph: 250-334-5000 Ext: 5211

# LEARNING RESOURCE FEE

November 4, 2015

## Background

Fees for some post-secondary services are levied by all institutions. Examples of fees levied by all institutions in one form or another are Application fees, Assessment fees and Lab fees. Recently there has been new fees added by Post-Secondary institutions as a result of increased demand for broader student services. Examples in the College sector include a Student Activity Fee (Okanagan, Selkirk), Technology Fee (CNC, NWCC, Okanagan), Building Fund fee (Langara, NWCC, Okanagan), and a Learning Resource Fee (Selkirk). NIC doesn't levy any of these fees.

## NIC Activities to Date

Adding a Learning Resource fee has been approved by the College's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), based on an analysis by a working group that included a cross-section of staff and faculty from the College community.

The working group determined that there were a number of student services that should be enhanced to meet demand, but currently lack a steady funding source in order to do that. A summary of these programs is as follows:

- Peer Tutoring. This service has been funded with one-time or short-term funding sources for the last 3 years (e.g. similar to a pilot project) which ends in 2015/16. Peer tutoring has been very successful, and using the Learning Resource fee to fund Peer Tutoring will ensure it can continue and even expand to fund the "Write Away" program through BC Campus;
- Learning Commons – A Learning Commons that is staffed by students would augment Peer Tutoring by providing a place where students can tutor and learn from other students. This would include a Math tutor to help ensure it is a resource that Trades students could utilize;
- Back Office costs related to these services – mainly Technology support – would be funded from the Learning Resource fee;
- Counselling Services for students could be enhanced to meet current demand – which is a growing cost pressure for the College.

## Recommendation

When this issue goes to the Board on November 26, 2015 the recommendation will be to add a Learning Resource fee levied at \$5.00 per credit. The fee would apply to students in credit courses leading to a credential. This excludes Continuing Education and Elder College programs.

## Harriman, Rheannon AVED:EX

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**From:** Nielsen, Melanie AVED:EX  
**Sent:** Friday, November 6, 2015 2:33 PM  
**To:** Lemmer, Nicola I AVED:EX  
**Subject:** RE: NIC Learning Resource fee

Hi Nicola,

A few general comments on the submission. I really like how it lays out the additional services the college will be able to offer students as a result of these fees. It is not positioned as a way to increase revenues but rather as a way to enhance services for students. It's also a single fee for services that all students can access (though it would be worth asking the question about students at smaller campuses or online who won't have the same access).

In terms of what it does to overall fees, they're higher on some, lower on others. No real concerns from my point of view.

| Tuition & fees             | NIC Current | NIC Proposed | Camosun College | Selkirk College | CNC     |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Application fee            | \$25        | \$25         | \$39.41         | \$36            | \$40    |
| UT Arts                    | \$2,795     | \$2,945      | \$3,640         | \$2,792         | \$3,024 |
| HCA                        | \$2,810     | \$2,960      | \$2,550         | \$2,541         | \$3,606 |
| Carpentry Foundation       | \$2,750     | \$2,900      | \$2,760         | \$2,500         | \$2,098 |
| Social Services Worker     | \$3,540     | \$3,690      | N/A             | \$3,918         | \$3,121 |
| Business Admin Certificate | \$2,795     | \$2,945      | \$3,100         | \$3,595         | \$3,014 |

Melanie

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**From:** Lemmer, Nicola I AVED:EX  
**Sent:** Friday, November 6, 2015 9:59 AM  
**To:** Nielsen, Melanie AVED:EX  
**Subject:** FW: NIC Learning Resource fee

Hi Melanie, can you please review this submission and do a comparison of a couple programs (tuition plus all fees) for NIC vs. some comparable institutions? Thanks.

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Hi Nicola, I meant to send you this document too. Shows how much the average student will pay per term under 3 scenarios. We were exploring some different scenarios in terms of cost per credit – what we are recommending to the Board is \$5.00 per credit.

I am here all day but **s.22** next week. However, Carol Baert will be here next week and could answer any questions you might have.

Thanks!

Colin

| <b>Table 2</b>                     |  | <b>\$4.50 per credit</b> | <b>\$5.00 per credit</b> | <b>\$5.50 per credit</b> |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Estimated Cost to Student per Term |  |                          |                          |                          |
| Full-time: 5 3-credit courses      |  | \$67.50                  | <b>\$75.00</b>           | \$82.50                  |
| Part-time: 3 3-credit courses      |  | \$40.50                  | <b>\$45.00</b>           | \$49.50                  |
| Part-time: 2 3-credit courses      |  | \$27.00                  | <b>\$30.00</b>           | \$33.00                  |

**Colin Fowler, CPA/CMA**

Director, Finance

North Island College

Ph: 250-334-5000 Ext: 5211

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**From:** Colin Fowler [<mailto:Colin.Fowler@nic.bc.ca>]

**Sent:** Thursday, November 5, 2015 4:33 PM

**To:** Lemmer, Nicola I AVED:EX

**Subject:** NIC Learning Resource fee

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Thanks!

Colin

**Colin Fowler, CPA/CMA**

Director, Finance

North Island College

Ph: 250-334-5000 Ext: 5211

## **Cavallin, Sandra L AVED:EX**

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**From:** Buettner, Kathy AVED:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2015 1:27 PM  
**To:** Nielsen, Melanie AVED:EX; Cotie, Kate L AVED:EX  
**Cc:** Balicki, Greg AVED:EX; Cavallin, Sandra L AVED:EX  
**Subject:** RE: NIC  
**Attachments:** Agenda Item NIC Nov 2015.docx

Hi all,

I spoke with Patrick Barbosa from VIU and the item (Learner Resources Fee) he mentioned to you was actually in the agenda for the November 2015 Board of Governors meeting. I've attached a copy of the supporting documentation that was put forward at the October meeting of the NIC board. Based on the agenda, it appears as though the board was going to vote to approve this new fee.

I've attached a copy of the supporting documentation that was presented to the board in October. Link to the agenda below.

[http://www.nic.bc.ca/about\\_us/governance/bog/docs/agenda/2015-2016/20151126%20BOG%20AgendaSM.pdf](http://www.nic.bc.ca/about_us/governance/bog/docs/agenda/2015-2016/20151126%20BOG%20AgendaSM.pdf)

Thanks,

Kathy

Kathy Buettner  
Policy Analyst  
Strategic Policy and Initiatives  
Ministry of Advanced Education  
(250) 356-8012

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**From:** Nielsen, Melanie AVED:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2015 12:05 PM  
**To:** Buettner, Kathy AVED:EX; Cotie, Kate L AVED:EX  
**Cc:** Balicki, Greg AVED:EX; Cavallin, Sandra L AVED:EX  
**Subject:** RE: NIC

Thanks, and we did just (October, maybe?) approve at least one new fee for NIC.

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**From:** Buettner, Kathy AVED:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2015 11:42 AM  
**To:** Cotie, Kate L AVED:EX  
**Cc:** Balicki, Greg AVED:EX; Cavallin, Sandra L AVED:EX; Nielsen, Melanie AVED:EX  
**Subject:** RE: NIC

Sure, I'll see what I can find.

Kathy Buettner  
Policy Analyst  
Strategic Policy and Initiatives  
Ministry of Advanced Education

**From:** Cotie, Kate L AVED:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2015 11:41 AM  
**To:** Buettner, Kathy AVED:EX  
**Cc:** Balicki, Greg AVED:EX; Cavallin, Sandra L AVED:EX; Nielsen, Melanie AVED:EX  
**Subject:** NIC

Hi Kathy – was just talking some student union person at VIU. He mentioned that in NIC's Nov 11 board of governors meeting minutes they talk about introducing new fees - basically that AVED has indicated institutions can charge new fees and so they are going to immediately start a plan to figure out what they can do. Can you pull up those meeting minutes and get me what exactly they actually said? (this is a paraphrase from a student union rep at a different institution).  
Melanie copying you as well to bring you into the loop.

Kate Cotie, Director Strategic Policy and Initiatives  
Strategic Policy and Planning Branch  
BC Ministry of Advanced Education  
Phone: (250) 387-6197  
Email: [Kate.Cotie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Kate.Cotie@gov.bc.ca)

**Agenda Item:****Learner Resources Fee****Supporting material for agenda item*****Background***

Mandatory student fees established at public post-secondary institutions are within scope of the Province's Tuition Limit Policy (TLP). Since 2005, the TLP has limited increases to existing fees to 2%. Earlier this year the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) provided clarification to post-secondary institutions (PSIs) on how the TLP applies to mandatory fees. Under the TLP, PSIs can establish new mandatory fees in the same way that tuition can be set for new courses and programs. Once a new mandatory fee has been set, future increases to the fee are limited to the percentage increase set annually by the Ministry under the TLP.

Some institutions have special purpose student fees targeted to specific activities or costs. Examples include Technology Fees, Building Fund Fees, Activity Fees and Learning Resource Fees. NIC is one of the few PSIs in the Province that does not have any special purpose mandatory fees. After learning that it was possible to introduce a mandatory student fee under the TLP, we began looking at a strategy for implementing one.

In recent years there has been increased demand for broader student services to support student success and the student experience but years of decreased provincial funding has made it difficult to meet student demand in these areas. For NIC this has been exacerbated by our low tuition relative to other institutions.

Prior to the imposition of the TLP a number of institutions implemented significant tuition increases. At the time, the NIC Board was committed to keeping tuition low so when the TLP was implemented our tuition was "set" at that lower level. The result is that over the past ten years, the annual 2% increase has been applied to a smaller base than at other PSIs in effect widening the tuition gap and limiting our ability to add new services.

Early in our discussions we decided that a fee to provide additional resources to support student success would be a good direction. SLT asked Colin Fowler, Director, Finance to work with a cross-section of faculty and staff to consider what services could be supported by such a fee and how it should be applied. Separately and as part of the working group, Kathleen Kuhnert provided input from her perspective as Director of Student Services and Registrar.

Some of the principles the group developed or supported are:

- ☐ A new fee should focus on areas of College operations where services are either inadequate or do not have stable funding to meet demand.
- ☐ How a new fee is applied should consider that part-time students would likely use services less than full-time students. The fee should be structured to reflect that difference.
- ☐ Services and supports funded from the fee should be available to students at each campus.
- ☐ A new fee should be set to enable the College to provide a reasonable level of service. Because future fee increases are subject to the TLP, it cannot be phased in – it has to be set at an appropriate rate from inception.
- ☐ Services to be funded by the fee should be prioritized and built into the budget. Over time, services will be adjusted based on demand and available funding. Over time, services funded by

the fee may change as demand changes. ☐ While decisions on how to use the fee are College decisions, a mechanism for reporting back to students annually on how the funds were used should be developed.

The following is an initial list of initiatives that we anticipate funding from the fee. As we continue to work on an implementation plan other initiatives may be considered.

☐ Peer Tutoring/Write-Away: For the past three years, we have been piloting a peer tutoring program with a three-year commitment of special purpose provincial funding and this year introduced, as a pilot, the BC Campus “Write-away” program. The pilots have been very successful but we need on-going stable funding to keep these important student supports in operation.

☐ Development of “Learning Commons” that could provide additional math and English language support as well as IT resources to improve helpdesk and desktop support for student using computers in student computer labs or the library. Enhanced technology tools to help students with research projects.

☐ Counselling Services for students is an area of growing demand and more resources are needed – including counselling services in the summer.

☐ Student Leadership: this is another project that was launched last fiscal year as a pilot project. It has been very successful but needs on-going stable funding to continue.

☐ Campus Events/Life and Health and Wellness: initiatives to support student health and enhance the college experience;

Recommendations on implementation of the fee:

☐ The fee should be charged to students who are registered for post-secondary level courses/programs that have academic credit or equivalent such as Trades Foundation and Apprentice programs.

☐ The fee should be set at an amount per credit (or equivalent) so that part-time and full-time students pay an amount that is proportional to the number of courses they are taking.

☐ The fee should be \$5/credit.

☐ The fee should be effective for courses and programs offered in the 2016 Fall Term.

We estimate that the fee will add \$15 - \$75/term depending on whether a student is part-time. The average is likely to be \$50/term. Even with this additional cost, NIC tuition will still be the lowest on Vancouver Island and well below the Provincial Average – based on metrics used by the Ministry of Advanced Education to measure tuition costs at PSIs. And that is without taking into account that most institutions have similar fees. Total annual fee revenue is estimated to be ~\$300,000 – less than 1% of the annual budget.

It is always a difficult decision to increase costs for students. The College has been challenged for a number of years as demand for more student resources increased while funding has been cut. Introduction of this fee will enable us to provide needed services that will support student success.

**Recommendation:**

The Senior Leadership Team supports the proposal for a new mandatory Learner Resource Fee

as described above and recommends its approval to the Board.