



Budget Request Form FY2011

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: *Offices of the Dean of Student Life*

| SSFAB Use Only | |
|----------------|----|
| YES | NO |
| | |

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Full permanent funding for an additional Students' Attorney (funding for a paralegal (@ 50% of attorney) was approved last year, but a paralegal is not sufficient to meet the needs for provision of Student Legal Services)

General Description:

One licensed attorney fully funded by Student Service Fees is available in Student Conflict Resolution Services as Student Legal Services (SLS) to provide legal information and advice to students. Information and counseling are available regarding a variety of legal matters including landlord/tenant disputes, consumer protection, auto accidents, family, criminal, and business law. Services are available FREE to currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University. Student Legal Services is limited in matters of litigation and cannot represent, nor advise students against Texas A&M University or another Texas A&M student.

Request Type: Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

General Questions:

How does this increase impact students, and what motivated this request (needs, strategic planning, etc.)?
As one of the larger institutions in the Big XII, Student Legal Services is woefully understaffed by comparison. (See information provided.) This is a service most universities provide. Currently the (one) students' attorney is able to see over 1200 students each year for one-on-one consultation. However, the current attorney's schedule is at capacity and he is unable to see any additional students or to provide much outreach generally on legal issues in a proactive or preventive posture. Two attorneys in Student Legal Services (SLS) would double the opportunities available for students to meet with an attorney as individual crises arise and/or for student groups to hear from a licensed attorney on matters of legal consequence to them. SLS would be able to do more outreach education, develop additional web-based resources, provide programs and information generally, attend more student meetings, and present seminars with the goal of preventing students from even facing legal problems. Currently, there are not even community resources to serve students with a modest cost, much less at no charge.

How do other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, membership dues, etc.) been considered? Please explain.

A fee for service has been considered, but is counter to best practice at benchmarking institutions and students polled responded that it would "chill" the environment for seeking much needed legal advice.

Currently, the Students' Attorney (Student Legal Services) is funded through Student Service Fees at 100%. Funding for a paralegal was approved last year as a compromise to the request for an attorney, however, a paralegal cannot provide legal advice; their purview is more of the paperwork associated with supporting an attorney's caseload. Since SLS does not offer document preparation (for legal matters) or representation, a paralegal is of little/no value to students or to the provision of legal services. Student Life, therefore, has put forward remaining funds in an interim year to fill the attorney position. All efforts will be made to demonstrate the need for two full-time attorneys to provide appropriate Student Legal Services to Texas A&M University students.

Generally, what assessment tools will you use to evaluate this program/service?

Statistics are kept to track exact numbers of students benefiting from the legal services. And that will certainly continue. Supervisors continuously review and monitor the program. Before website revision, the counter allowed that the website on Minor in Possession received 12% of all Student Life related hits, a substantial number for one service among a department of 7 focused program areas. So additionally, continuing website tracking will be configured. Anecdotally SLS receives feedback from student clients after resolution of matters.

Funding Description:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Total Estimated Cost | |
| Salaries and benefits | \$76,500.00 |
| less paralegal position | -\$46,200.00 |
| | |
| <i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i> | |
| TOTAL SSFAB INCREASE REQUEST | \$30,300.00 |

SSFAB Comments/Notes:

STUDENT | SERVICE | FEE | ADVISORY | BOARD