

Organizational Activities Fee Review Committee Final Report

Activities and Athletic Fees Three Year Review:
2013-2014

**Submitted Unanimously
April 13, 2014**

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Executive Summary

At present, the Activities Fee is divided as follows:

\$25.20 (60%) to the Student Activities Board,
\$7.55 (18%) to the Funds Allotment Council,
\$2.00 (5%) to Student Senate,
\$7.25 (17%) to the Collegiate Readership Program,

for a total of \$42.00 per student per semester.

The 2013-2014 OAF Review Committee has met successfully over the course of the Spring semester and brings to the attention of Student Senate these recommendations regarding the use and allocation of student initiated fees:

1. the Funds Allotment Council (FAC) should receive a \$2.00 per student per semester (\$4.00 per year) increase in funding, to be diverted from the surplus in the Collegiate Readership Program,
2. the Student Activities Board (SAB) should receive a \$1.50 per student per semester (\$3.00 per year) increase in funding, also to be diverted from the surplus in the Collegiate Readership Program,
3. the Student Senate (Senate) should receive no change in funding,
4. the Collegiate Readership Program (CRP) should receive a \$3.50 per student per semester (\$7.00 per year) decrease in funding, subsidizing increases to FAC and SAB, and
5. a new CSI Fee should be instituted at \$3.00 per student per semester (\$6.00 per year).

This accompanying report contains a detailed account of the review process and justification for each of the recommendations presented.

Introduction and Purpose

Student initiated fees are those fees assessed to students that were voted on and approved by the student body. These fees currently account for roughly \$1,085,232 in annual receipts or \$184 per student. These funds are used for student based services and organizations. Currently student initiated fees fund the Student Activities Board, the Funds Allotment Council, Student Senate, the Collegiate Readership Program and the Student Athletic Fee.

The Organization Activities Fee (OAF) Review Committee convenes once every three academic years for the purpose of auditing and reviewing how student initiated fees were spent. The 2013-2014 academic year OAF Review Committee is comprised of 8 voting members consisting of a student at large acting as chair, three additional students at large, one representative each from the Student Activities Board (SAB), the Funds Allotment Council (FAC), and Student Senate, and one student athlete.

The OAF committee is tasked with examining the expenditures of student initiated fees. The role of this committee is to ensure that student fees are being spent in a responsible and practical manner in a way that best serves the student body. This charge manifests itself in the form of official recommendations made in reference to each of the groups under review. Recommendations are made in this report in such a way as to mirror the ballot language requested by the Committee for when the recommendations are voted upon by the student body. As per the 2010-2011 OAF review, this year's Committee did not make an official recommendation on the use of the Athletic Fee, which will be a responsibility of the next OAF committee. Still, as to not completely abandon that sector of student initiated fees, the report includes a brief summary of the Fee and its recent usage.

Methodology

Given the time constraints placed on the Committee this review cycle, organizing and executing research endeavors required substantial forethought and decisive action. The Committee met twice monthly during the period of the review (roughly late January to early April) to discuss independently assigned tasks and to agree upon final recommendations. Sometimes, meetings included special presentations from faculty members affected by OAF's work. Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Gilchrist, appeared at two meetings and Dave Rector, Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Planning, was due to present but had to attend to a family emergency.

To supplement individual research on each of the fee-based organizations, OAF held hearings at which members of the Committee could ask specific questions regarding the usage and appropriation of student funds. It was at these hearings that each organization made its respective funding request. The hearings ran smoothly and without event.

As an additional supplement, student opinion on the subject matter for OAF was measured by means of a survey sent out to the entire body. After kept live for 10 days, the survey was closed with 552 respondents. These data proved to be the most useful in determining the Committee's stance on the proposed CSI Fee which will be discussed further in its respective section of the report. The survey provided many more insights regarding student opinion, and the members of FAC, SAB, and Senate are encouraged to view the results. The data will be made public on Truman's survey website, Student Senate's website, and a physical copy will be kept in the Senate office.

After finalizing the official recommendations, the Committee met one final time to review facts and finish formatting the report, readying it for submission.

Funds Allotment Council

I. Background

Truman State University's Funds Allotment Council (FAC) was established as an independent council of Student Senate in the Spring of 1993 and currently has the responsibility of granting funds to student organizations hosting events on Truman's campus. FAC's mission as stated is:

“The Truman State University Funds Allotment Council is dedicated to the intellectual and social development of students and to enhancing their entertainment opportunities. The Council expresses this commitment through the financial support of activities that are organized and sponsored by chartered student organizations. The Council will strive to fund a variety of activities sponsored by a variety of organizations that will provide potential benefit to all members of the Student Association and the larger university community. In order to accomplish its mission, the Council will attempt to balance the many needs and desires that are inherent in a liberal arts and sciences learning community in order to provide a slate of activities that furthers the mission of the university.”

FAC's purpose is to fund events that not only possess the entertainment value to draw a large number of students, but also contain educational value that contributes to the university's liberal arts and sciences mission.

In order for a student organization to gain money from FAC, that organization must first demonstrate significant preparation and a high probability of executing a successful event that meets the provisions in the Council's mission statement. FAC divides its funding allocations between on-campus events (FAC groups) and Inter-Collegiate Activities (ICA) groups. Throughout the semester, a funded organization works closely with a Council liaison to ensure that allocated funds are used responsibly. The Council is made up of a voting body of nine officers and a body of affiliate members with no voting privileges. Some of the officer positions are elected by the student body during general elections, including the Chair, while others are filled by an application and appointment process.

II. Evidence

FAC has traditionally been able to fund only a fraction of the requests it receives from student organizations. Presently, FAC continues to face many obstacles in its funding processes. While the requests in the amount requested for funding varies each semester, FAC consistently is only able to fund about 40 percent of total requests. For Fall 2013, FAC received funding requests in the range of \$120,000. After making initial cuts, FAC brought the total number of requested funds to \$76,195. However, Total Acquired Funding (TAF) for that fall semester were \$50,155, meaning FAC had to make further cuts of at least \$25,646.

During its presentation to OAF, the Funds Allotment Council expressed concern over the rising price of travel costs. FAC stated that the inflation in gas prices was

leading to student organizations requesting higher amounts of funding in order to bring speakers and performances to Truman's campus.

III. Request

FAC formally requested an increase of \$3.00 per student, per semester in order to meet a greater percentage of its funding requests. Additionally, FAC requested that it be allowed to change its constitution and begin offering funding for off-campus, non-competitive activities.

IV. Recommendation

Overall, OAF is impressed with FAC's process for allocating funding to student organizations in a responsible manner. FAC has demonstrated continued dedication to its constitution and mission statement. FAC continues to make their funding process more transparent and accessible to students by keeping its website up-to-date with relevant information.

OAF strongly recommends that a proposed increase of funding in the total amount of \$2.00 per student, per semester or \$4.00 per year be diverted from the Collegiate Readership Fee. This will allow for FAC to have additional funds to meet increased travel expenses and keep pace with overall inflation.

In addition, OAF recommends that a proposed change to FAC's Constitution allowing for the funding of off-campus, non-competitive events be put on the ballot this spring. OAF believes that FAC being allowed to fund off campus unique experiences will have a positive effect on the Council, student organizations, and on Truman's campus as a whole.

Student Activities Board

I. History and Background

The Student Activities Board has been an organization at Truman State University since 1977. Originally a sub-committee of the Student Senate, the Student Activities Board became a separate entity with the goal of providing entertainment programming for the student body. Until 1992, the Student Activities Board operated at a standard \$25,000 annual budget, funded entirely by the university. Students were given the option of purchasing a \$10.00 card that would allow for reduced admission fees to S.A.B. events. In the 1992-1993 school year, a group of Student Activities Board members proposed that the best way to provide and fund quality programming to the student body was by adding a mandatory student activities fee to the annual tuition. In April 1993, a proposition passed that added a \$9.00 student activities fee, with \$6.50 allotted directly to the Student Activities Board. Currently, the Student Activities Board only receives university funding for the University Speaker, an event co-sponsored by the university that, in purpose, is meant to be an educational event for the betterment of the student body. This funding amount varies from year to year.

The Student Activities Board may have no more than 35 active members at any given time, and no less than 30. All members have voting power in board meetings, excluding the president. 4 members serve on the executive committee annually, and the remaining 31 are divided amongst five sub-committees. A chairperson for each committee is selected by the newly elected executive committee each spring to serve the following school year. The committees include Comedians and Films, Productions, Concerts, Communication and Development, and Special Events. The Comedians and Films committee is responsible for all programming related to comedic performers and movie showings, as well as for planning a homecoming week event. The Productions committee is responsible for showcasing student talent and planning small on-campus events. The Concerts committee is responsible for any non-student musical performances, typically including a large fall and spring musical act, and smaller coffeehouse events. The Communication and Development committee is responsible for maintain a relationship with the student body and planning promotional events. The Special Events committee is responsible for programming any event that falls outside the bounds of the other four committees. Any non-executive member or non-chairperson may additionally assume non-standing or appointed positions, decided by the newly elected executive committee as the same time that chairpersons are selected. These positions include Parliamentarian, Senate Representative, Lyceum Representative, Final Blowout Committee Chair, and O.A.F. Representative every third year. The Parliamentarian also serves as the Constitutional Revision Committee Chair in the spring semester.

II. Request

SAB has continued over the past three years to provide quality entertainment for the campus student body. They have followed through and made their entertainment survey results available online. It's clear to see SAB continues to pull top choice entertainers from the survey as well. Their recent year budgets are posted online, but not their constitution or bylaws as per the previous OAF committee's recommendations. This convening of the OAF committee does not deem it of much importance for SAB to post

their by-laws and constitution online but we do recognize that posting these documents online would make them more accessible to the student body. High accessibility and transparency should be of importance due to the large amount of funding SAB receives from the student activity fee. That being said, this committee does not feel the need to recommend this change, but it would be in good taste of SAB to follow through with this past recommendation. In acknowledgment of SAB's request for a slight increase of funding this committee recommends such an increase to offset the rising costs of basic expenditures. This rise should not necessarily be in response to falling enrollment rates due to the fact that predicting rises and falls of enrollment rates is outside the scope of this committee.

III. Recommendation

We request that the Student Activities Board receive \$1.50 more per semester (\$3.00 per year) to help offset the rising costs of travel for performers, Sodexo, printing services, and to account for inflation, as it has been several years since the Student Activities Board has seen any increase in the fee. This increase would come directly from the diverted funds of the Collegiate Readership Program.

Student Senate

I. Background and Structure

Instituted in 1920, Student Senate's constitution affirms a continual commitment to the betterment of the University Community from the perspective of the Student Association. Student Senate strives to actively work towards the fulfillment of the University's mission by representing the views of the Student Association through legislation and committee work, and by facilitating communication and mutual understanding between students, faculty, staff, and administrators. In order to accurately represent student concerns the body utilizes regular office hours, open meetings, and online surveys to assess student opinion. Student Senate currently operates on budget financed by a \$2 a semester refundable student fee.

Student Senate consists of an executive board, up to 25 voting senators elected by the Student Association, appointed non-voting associate members, and organizational representatives. The body utilizes a committee structure of Primary and Secondary Standing Committees. The Primary Standing Committees are aimed at addressing specific issue areas and include Student Affairs, External Affairs, Environmental Affairs, Diversity, and Academic Affairs. Secondary Committees include, but are not limited to Parking Appeals, Purple Friday, Grants and Sponsorships, and the Athletic Fee Accountability Committee. The Purple Friday and the Grants and Sponsorships Committee are recent additions and were added since the 2011 OAF report. Prior to 2011, Purple Friday was a separate student/faculty organization committed to supporting Truman pride and spirit. Purple Friday was absorbed by Student Senate in order to improve its funding and efficiency. The Grants and Sponsorships Committee was added in 2011 in order to increase Student Senate's visibility and provide funding for events and organizations unable to meet FAC funding guidelines. These and other secondary Senate committees include both Senate members and outside student representatives.

II. Evidence

The regularly updated Student Senate website (senate.truman.edu) contains the following public documents and information:

- The revised Constitution of the Student Government
- The revised Standing Rules for Student Government
- The Senate code of Ethics
- Passed resolutions with vote totals from the years 2006-2014
- General meeting and Executive Committee meeting minutes from 2006-2014
- An updated list of current members
- Links to student services: Parking Appeals form, Recycling Bin request form etc.
- A student comment form
- An updated calendar featuring all Student Government meetings and upcoming events

The Truman Index devotes a section dedicated to the Senate business of the week, and has regularly reported on Senate's activities since the last fee review.

In attempts to increase public awareness, Senate has utilized social media outlets including a Facebook page (Truman Student Government) and a Twitter (@Truman StuGov) to dispense information about upcoming events, funding decisions, and votes. These social media outlets are updated approximately every other week.

Since the last OAF report, Student Senate has sent out multiple student surveys to the entire student association. These surveys asked students to provide input on various issues, and gave students an additional forum to provide feedback for their student representatives.

Student Senate continues to acknowledge and work to alleviate the disconnect between Senate and the Student Association. In an attempt to foster interest and understanding of Student Senate, a Senate Truman Week program has been implemented. Since 2012, Student Senate members have returned to campus early and volunteered at Truman Week events including Dawg Fest, Opening Convocation, and College Cup challenges. All incoming Truman students have received Student Senate giveaways (cups, water bottles, lanyards etc.) with Senate's website and social media information that were placed in their rooms prior to move-in. For additional student outreach, the 2013-2014 Student Affairs Committee passed out hot chocolate on the quad and asked students about campus issues and concerns. Student Senate has also worked with other organizations to sponsor larger student events including Student Appreciation Week, Earth Week, and Purple Friday Bashes. While the exact success of these efforts remains to be determined, Student Senate has attempted to address the 2010-2011 OAF report's concerns.

The 2013-2014 OAF committee sent out survey questions about Student Senate in order to measure the Student Association's understanding and support of Senate. Students were asked to answer the following questions:

(For questions using a scale, 5 was the greatest, with 1 being the least)

- 43.11% of surveyed students rated their understanding of Student Senate and its mission as a 1 or 2. 31.88% expressed a median understanding of 3. Only 25% of students stated rated their understanding as a 4 or 5.
- 14.67% of students stated that they could name the President of the student body.
- Only 33.15% of students responded that they planned on voting in the next Student Senate election.
- 29.17% of students rated their Student Senate satisfaction as below average (1 or 2). 48.91 ranked their satisfaction as average (3). 21.92% of students reported that their satisfaction was a 4 or 5.

III. Request

Student Senate requested no change in their current level of funding.

IV. Recommendations

The OAF committee recommends no change in Student Senate's current level of funding.

Previous OAF reports, including the 2010-2011 report have repetitively noted chronic problems with Student Senate's awareness and involvement. The OAF committee continues to recommend that additional efforts should be made to increase student understanding and participation in student government. The OAF committee recommends that Student Senate allocates a portion of its current funding towards visible events and programming that work towards these goals.

Additionally, the OAF committee directs that Student Senate strives to improve student government election participation and voter turnout. As part of an active campus, Student Senate should have regularly competitive fall and spring elections. Student Senate should make an effort to increase voter turnout by utilizing social media, tabling, and organization visits to encourage students to vote.

The current OAF committee notes some serious issues with Student Senate's involvement in the OAF review process. No formal materials (besides previous OAF reports) are available to assist Senate in the formation and approval of the fee review. Currently Student Senate is responsible for the formation of the OAF committee, financing the review process, and for the formal approval of the report. Although Student Senate does not appear to have received preferential treatment by the OAF committee in the past few years, this complicated involvement could be ethically compromising. Senate's current responsibility over the formation, funding, and approval of the OAF review is problematic for a process that is supposed to be impartial. The OAF committee formally recommends the creation of a special committee consisting of members of all the fee based organizations and student body representatives in order to evaluate this process and make suggestions for future committees. Future committees should work to write formalized standing rules for the OAF review process, and provide recommendations to improve the impartiality of the committee.

Collegiate Readership Program

I. Background

The Collegiate Readership Program was initially envisioned in Fall 2003 and first implemented as a trial in Spring 2004. After receiving an overwhelming positive response from the student body, Senate decided to make the CRP a permanent endeavor. Today, Truman receives copies of the *New York Times*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and the *USA Today* at discounted prices, as is only billed for each paper that is missing from the stand at the end of the day. At the beginning of the program, Senate had budgeted \$9 per student per semester (a total of \$104,400 per year) for its operation beginning in the 04-05 school year. Substantial surpluses in the account reveal that \$9 is far above the actual cost per student. Since 04-05, the amount spent on the program has steadily decreased, leaving larger and larger balances in the account at the end of each year. The program has historically cost about \$8.50 per student per semester (previous OAF report) and is currently funded at \$7.25 per student per semester, as per recommendation of the previous OAF committee, in order to drain the surplus more quickly. As of the beginning of March, only \$32,000 had been used this year. The campus liaison at USA Today believes we will not spend more than \$45,000. The program has seen a slight, but noticeable decline in participation over the course of its life, but Truman students still read over 800 papers per day.

II. Evidence

By then end of academic year 2013-14, the CRP account surplus will reach \$120,000. In addition, the Committee has reason to believe that this account surplus was never actually drained as a result of the previous OAF cut. This claim is supported by the fact that the account has only increased in value since the program's inception. Further investigation has revealed that while cuts were recommended in the previous OAF report, the information was never passed on to USA Today because, during a phone conversation with the liaison, she noted that the program was still funded with an allocation of \$104,400 per year- the same as it had been when the CRP was originally instituted. With this in mind, it is necessary to recalculate the cost per student of this program. Taking into account the harsh winter (as per recommendation from the USA Today liaison), and simultaneous rising prices of the USA Today (\$0.07) and the New York Times (\$0.10), a safe estimate for next year's readership cost is about \$62,046.40 (Mary Ramatowski, USA Today).

Assuming enrollment remains constant at 5898 undergrads, the CRP will actually cost \$5.26 per student per semester in 2014-15. Truman is expecting a decline in enrollment, so if 5400 was used as an estimate for the number of undergrads, the CRP would cost \$5.75 per student semester. Even so, this test reveals that the program is being funded at levels that are far beyond its actual cost. If in fact the CRP is being funded at \$7.25 per student per semester as the last OAF report recommended, the account will be generating a surplus anywhere between \$1.99 and \$1.50 per student per semester.

III. Recommendation

OAF believes this sort of surplus is unacceptable, but it should be dealt with in a cautious manner as to not run the risk of overdrawing. The Committee believes a safe target is to cut the surplus by 55% by the next time OAF meets (in 2016-17). This would mean \$22,000 of the CRP should be subsidized by the surplus each year until the 2016-17 year. For the next three years, then, the CRP should cost students \$3.75 per semester. This is a \$2.00 decrease from the program's actual cost or a \$3.50 decrease from what the fee was this year, assuming the last OAF committee was correct in its measurement.

It is OAF's recommendation that FAC receives an additional \$2.00 per student per semester and SAB receives an additional \$1.50 per student per semester, and that these increases both be diverted from CRP funding. Thus FAC funding will increase by \$4.00 per year and SAB funding will increase by \$3.00 per year, for a total increase of \$7.00 per year, which matches the \$7.00 per year decrease from the CRP.

In addition, OAF recommends that the current funding levels for the CRP be officially confirmed before implementing the fee adjustment. See the afterword for more information.

Student Athletic Fee

The Athletic Fee was passed in April 2007. The purpose of the fee is to support Truman athletics by improving the athletic facilities on Truman's campus. At the time of the proposal, the quality of Truman's athletic facilities lagged far behind those of other comparable programs. Since the fee was passed, many improvements have been made to Truman athletic facilities. Many of these improvements not only benefit Truman athletic programs but also benefit the student body through intramural sports and academic uses, while enhancing the experience for fans at athletic events. An example of an improvement and the benefits that can impact students outside of the athletic department is the installation of field turf in Stokes Stadium. The new turf has allowed the stadium to be reserved by student organizations, used for intramurals, used for rainy practices by the football team (preventing an invasion of the rugby and Frisbee practice areas) none of which was possible before the installation of the turf. The improvements can also impact the university's recruitment of potential students and student-athletes alike, as a University's facilities and sports teams can be an important factor in the decision making process of which university to attend for many students.

The Athletic Fee has not changed since it was originally passed (\$50 per semester for each Truman student enrolled in six or more credit hours).

Highlights from an account from Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering in 2007 on the state of Truman's facilities and equipment (before the Athletic Fee was enacted)

- The small size of many of Truman's facilities, especially the weight room, led to teams vying for the use of such facilities and using inadequate space and equipment for their practices.
- The poor conditions of practice fields in the past made some of them too hazardous to use and led to teams seeking alternative fields, in one case leading to hard feelings between the football team and rugby club team, since the football team got priority to use the field that was originally designated for rugby.
- The poor conditions of the wrestling team's facility in 2007 caused a serious health risk as old, poorly maintained mats likely caused 8 cases of staph infection, 4 cases of impetigo and 2 cases of herpes in that year alone.
- The poor lighting in some of the practice facilities has made those facilities inadequate for use by the volleyball team.
- There are no restroom facilities available near the baseball, soccer and tennis facilities.
- Truman's teams have been using transportation that is not considered adequate for the team members and all of their equipment.

Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering has provided access to how the money raised from the fee has been used since it was passed in 2007. Some of the improvements listed on the sheet include:

- Lights at Stokes Stadium \$341,391

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- Misc. safety items \$2,450
- Turf installation at Stokes Stadium \$647,346
- Annual maintenance of turf field \$4,995
- Backstops/divider curtains in Pershing gym \$126,589
- Small Gym Wood Floor/main floor maintenance \$71,445
- Track/field - repairs to hammer cage, hurdles \$13,861
- Annual maintenance/curtains and backstops \$2,324
- Annual maintenance/cleaning/add rubber \$19,945

The document also includes approved upcoming projects and an up to date account of the total income brought in from the fee and total expenses from the projects that have been taken on since 2007.

The \$100 fee itself has been necessary for Truman to catch up to other Athletic programs and continues to be important in the maintenance and continued improvement of athletic facilities.

CSI Fee

I. Background

This year's OAF committee was given the unique opportunity to assess the implementation of an additional CSI Fee upon request from Dean Gilchrist. The purpose of such a fee is to supplement the operating budget of the CSI and its staff. This supplement would come mostly in the form of subsidizing staff salaries, although not increasing them. The rationale behind this fee being a student initiative is the astronomical amount of time and energy that CSI staff invests in the operation of fee-based organizations. Dean Gilchrist originally proposed a \$10 per student per semester fee.

II. Recommendation

On the whole, OAF agrees with the Dean in terms of the spirit of the fee. Additionally, every fee-based organization was asked if they thought the CSI was deserving of such a supplement and the Committee was met with a resounding affirmative. All the organizations, like members of OAF, had misgivings about the \$10 amount. After measuring student opinion through the survey, OAF feels a \$3 fee per student per semester is much more reasonable. This fee, like the others OAF reviews, should be revisited during the next cycle and reassessed accordingly.

Afterword

On Collegiate Readership

The CRP is inherently an awkward program. There is no faculty member in total control of what goes on and this distribution of responsibility makes it difficult for a student to figure out the true state of things in just a few months. For this reason, someone who has the power to appoint an official CRP person should do so. This individual would need to know everything there is to know about the contracting, the billing, the current account balance, and the estimated surplus/deficit. It is incredibly difficult to forage for this information from four or so sources of varying authority that have a nasty tendency of contradicting each other. Knowing the state of the internal organization of this program, it makes sense that the CRP is also the most fiscally inefficient when it comes to student utility. The \$120,000 surplus is evidence of that, combined with the poor readership percentages reported on the survey. It is the hope of the Committee that the recommended reallocations of the activity fee will solve this problem, although it must be reassessed in three years and adjusted accordingly.

On a positive note, USA Today is working on a mobile, electronic subscription program which can accompany the current CRP. Not many of the details were released to OAF, but the program is set to go live at select campuses within the next two years. The first two years of the program would cost \$7,500 per year, increasing incrementally to a cap of \$15,000 per year by the fourth year of the program. USA Today is interested in having Truman be a pilot school for the program, as OAF supports giving it a try should the opportunity arise.

Concluding Remarks

There are several facets of the OAF review process that need fine-tuning and several still that need major overhauls. Appending them in their awful glory to the end of this report will not do justice to their arguments, nor will it be as effective as simply having the conversations necessary to make change happen. A majority of the Committee is not graduating this semester, so there are plenty of resources available. Overall, the review experience was a daunting task but when spread out upon the members of the Committee, finishing each piece on time became much easier to bear. The Committee would like to especially thank Dean Gilchrist, Dave Rector, Laura Bates, Rachelle Williams, and Shelby Sims for their parts in contributing to this report, as well as all the leaders in the fee-based organizations who provided access to important reports and answered questions during hearings.