

SENATE RESOLUTION #2139

Title: A Call for Trustee Intervention in Rising On-Campus Living Expenses

Date: February 20, 2006

Authors: Senator Chollak; Student-at-Large Chollak

Sponsors: Senators Chollak, McNiven, Wilson

1. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming is an institution which has a well
2. deserved reputation for excellence in academics; and
3. WHEREAS, compared to many other institutions, UW has worked hard to
4. keep tuition rates low; and
5. WHEREAS, tuition is just one component of the total cost of school; and
6. WHEREAS, the cost of housing and board has increased a total of 24% over
7. the past 5 years; and
8. WHEREAS, the average national inflation rate for similar costs of living has
9. been 2.2% over the same time period; and
10. WHEREAS, student aid is not always adjustable to meet these rising costs;
11. and
12. WHEREAS, a 2003 study commissioned by the city of Laramie shows the
13. community to offer some of the state's most expensive cost of living while at
14. the same time offering some of the lowest wages available (see Addendum
15. A); and
16. WHEREAS, a comparison of similar university communities shows how the
17. ability of students to pay their own way while in school varies from
18. community to community (see Addendum B); and

19. WHEREAS, these factors have combined to create a situation where many
20. students must seek public assistance in order to pay their way through
21. school; and

22. WHEREAS, this reality has created a situation whereby the taxpayers of
23. Wyoming are being charged twice due to the fact they pay for the bulk of the
24. costs associated with the University and at the same time must subsidize many
25. of the students who live there through public assistance programs; and

26. WHEREAS, the same conditions have contributed to creating a drain on
27. available public assistance to those living in poverty in the Laramie
28. community, but who are not inside the University community; and

29. WHEREAS, the River Village community was created in the 1900's in an
30. effort to provide more housing for the growing numbers of families attending
31. the university; and

32. WHEREAS, many families have been pushed out of that community because
33. of the ever rising costs of the facility; and

34. WHEREAS, many international students do not enjoy the option of moving
35. off campus because they do not possess certain rental requirements such as a
36. Social Security Number or references from previous landlords; and

37. WHEREAS, the solution has been to make these properties available to
38. single students as well as families leave for more affordable housing units;
39. and

40. WHEREAS, many of these families have sought assistance through Public
41. Housing and Section 8 programs; and

42. WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the Cheyenne Housing Authority's Debbie
43. Stamm (see Addendum C) that University Apartments are ineligible to
44. qualify for these programs because they are considered to already be
45. subsidized by the state through appropriations to the University, regardless
46. of the fact that they are self-sustaining; and

47. WHEREAS, even if Cheyenne Housing were to reverse their decision in this
48. matter, these units would cost too much to be eligible for the program; and

49. WHEREAS, Residence Life and Dining Services has been working to
50. upgrade the residence halls to make them comparable to similar facilities at
51. comparable institutions; and

52. WHEREAS, these renovations are actually having the affect of reducing the
53. number of available on-campus units; and

54. WHEREAS, while these upgrades are being made, the Summit View
55. Complex is over 50 years old; and

56. WHEREAS, many of these units use utilities inefficiently because they were
57. built with little or no insulation, their windows and doors do not seal
58. properly and other complaints which have not been fully addressed; and

59. WHEREAS, rising utility costs are being blamed for the bulk of the
60. increase; and

61. WHEREAS, many of these concerns were raised during the last major room
62. and board increase in 2001; and

63. WHEREAS, many of those concerns have been ignored or delayed; and

64. WHEREAS, according to statements made by Ms. Beth McCuskey,

65. Director of Residence Life and Dining Services (RLDS) to the Non-
66. Traditional Student Council during a January meeting, no concrete plans
67. exist to replace the Summit View units, and nothing beyond minimal
68. maintenance is expected to be committed, because of their profitability to
69. the department; and

70. WHEREAS, Ms. McCuskey admits the high profitability of the Summit View
71. complex is a major part of the funding for renovations in other areas of
72. RLDS; and

73. WHEREAS, much of the blame for this reality is due in part to a philosophy
74. enacted by the University Board of Trustees to make certain departments self
75. sustaining; and

76. WHEREAS, RLDS is called upon to provide services above and beyond the
77. requirements of private landlords including large support staffs, dozens of
78. student employees, programming for younger students and a range of services
79. not found in other housing complexes; and

80. WHEREAS, such conditions put the University at not only a competitive
81. advantage, they place the University in the position of having to charge more
82. to sustain such services; and

83. WHEREAS, despite these conditions imposed by previous Boards of
84. Trustees, RLDS holds a current reserve account of \$3 million; and

85. WHEREAS, the bond debt for the River Village complex will expire in
86. 2007; and

87. WHEREAS, this will bring a significant influx of funds into the coffers of

88. RLDS; and

89. WHEREAS, no evaluation of alternative sources of funding for RLDS

90. appears to have been conducted other than raising the rates of the customers

91. who use these services; and

92. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming has sought capital facilities funding

93. for other projects on campus with great success, but student living facilities

94. have not been included in recent requests; and

95. WHEREAS, at a January meeting of the Board of Trustees, Chris Boswell,

96. Chief of Staff to Governor Dave Freudenthal, suggested the university pursue

97. this avenue for funding other university needs; and

98. WHEREAS, it would seem that an evaluation considering the possibility of

99. increasing energy efficiency, the effectiveness of services provided and their

100. related costs, a reasonable period of input for student comment, and other

101. areas which are under the control of RLDS should be conducted before

102. student costs are increased; and

103. WHEREAS, all of these concerns have been previously shared with various

104. administrators, but with little action being taken in their regard; and

105. WHEREAS, "The purpose of the Student Government of the Associated

106. Students of the University of Wyoming is to serve our fellow students in the

107. best manner possible through accurate representation, professional interaction

108. with campus programs and organizations, and responsible, effective

109. leadership." (ASUW Mission Statement, Rules and Procedures, Article II,

110. Section 1.B); and

111. WHEREAS, ASUW believes it to be imprudent to involve the Board of
112. Trustees in trivial matters; and
113. WHEREAS, this particular issue has the potential to affect the lives of the
114. students who attend UW and will influence the choices students make in their
115. higher education.
116. THEREFORE, be it resolved that ASUW calls upon the UW Board of
117. Trustees to reject the portion of the 2006-2007 fee book pertaining to
118. increases in room and board; and
119. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that an evaluation of the Department of
120. Residence Life and Dining Services be conducted to consider areas where
121. inefficiencies may exist and how they can be addressed; and
122. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that the University of Wyoming
123. reevaluate its philosophy of charging department to be self-sufficient,
124. particularly when those departments are forced into a position of charging
125. students a burdensome rate in order to continue their services; and
126. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that the UW Board of Trustees consider
127. the possibility of seeking funding for new and upgraded on-campus housing
128. from the Wyoming State Legislature.

Referred to: withdrawn by author

Date of Passage: _____ Signed: _____
(ASUW Chairperson)

“Being enacted on _____, I do hereby sign my name hereto
and approve this Senate action.” _____

ASUW President

You replied on 12/1/2005 3:02 PM.

Nerlene Jene Chollak

From: Debbie Stamm [dstamm@cheyennehousing.org] **Sent:** Thu 12/1/2005 2:20 PM
To: Nerlene Jene Chollak
Cc:
Subject: RE: Section 8 Funds and University of Wyoming
Attachments:

Sorry it has taken some time to get back with you. These units would not be eligible for housing assistance. It is because the University is already receiving state and federal money for their programs. If the government allowed the use of vouchers for subsidy it would be a "double dipping" situation, they would receive additional money for programs the University was already funded for. This is the information we have collected from HUD. I hope this explains the answers to the questions you had. Let me know if I can be of further assistance. Again, I am sorry it took me some time to get the answer, but I had look it up and ask some questions at HUD.

From: Nerlene Jene Chollak [mailto:JENECHOL@uwyo.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2005 12:15 PM
To: Debbie Stamm
Subject: FW: Section 8 Funds and University of Wyoming

Debbie,

I am following up on our phone call of 11/28/2005. Thank you for your information on Section 8 funding. As President of the Non-Traditional Student Council, I am following up on an inquiry from students as to why they cannot use Section 8 funding for University of Wyoming owned apartments.

Many families who live in University Apartments while waiting for section 8 funding are forced to move their families off campus when their section 8 funding comes through. There is some concern that the University simply does not accept Section 8 funding, even if the apartment is cost eligible. The University has responded to our request to accept section 8 by stating that the CHA has deemed the University as ineligible to receive funding for the reasons outlined in the email attached.

The apartments I am referring to are regular multifamily buildings that have a variety of designs including 2-3 bedroom townhouses, multilevel 8 plexes, and single story apartments. All apartments include kitchens and private baths. Here is the link to the main page of the University Apartments website <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/reslife%2Ddining/Apartments/default.asp>. If you look at the map and the floor plans, you can see that these are regular apartments and not dormitories.

Is there another reason why these are ineligible to receive Section 8 funds?

Your clarification on this matter would be very helpful.

Thank you,

Jene' Chollak

President

Non-Traditional Student Council

at the University of Wyoming

From: Nerlene Chollak [mailto:chollakj@yahoo.com]

Sent: Mon 11/28/2005 11:55 AM

To: Nerlene Jene Chollak

Subject: Re: Section 8 Funds

Dave Hennings <Hennings@uwyo.edu> wrote:

Jene,

In response to your question about Section 8 Housing Vouchers, I contacted the Cheyenne Housing Authority (307)634-7947 for clarification. They affirmed the State interpretation of following federal regulations includes on-campus apartments as "dormitories", and are thus ineligible housing for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. This is consistent with information I received following my inquiry about five years previously. CHA staff told me they received notification last Friday that additional language further clarifying § 982.352 is being distributed to HUD offices, and they agreed to send me a copy once it is available to them.

Beth is presently out of the office for a couple of weeks, and will be able to respond to questions following her return.

I will see you at the next non-trad council meeting.

Dave

PART 982--SECTION 8 TENANT BASED ASSISTANCE: HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Subpart A

§ 982.3 HUD

§ 982.352 Eligible housing

(a) Ineligible housing. The following types of housing may not be assisted by a PHA in the tenant-based programs:

(4) College or other school dormitories