



The Center for
College
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PRESS RELEASE

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**FUNDING THE ARMS RACE: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENT
ATHLETIC FEES**

Washington, DC – A new study from the Center for College Affordability and Productivity (CCAP), to be released Monday, January 31, 2011, reveals that growing fees used to subsidize intercollegiate athletics may not have the support of the students who pay them. Surveying nearly 1,000 students at Ohio University, a fairly typical state university, the study suggests that students are largely ignorant and hostile to athletic fees. Furthermore, the study finds that:

- Although intercollegiate athletics (ICA) at Ohio University received 40 percent of “general fee” revenues, a majority of students did not know that ICA received any general fee support at all;
- Over 70 percent of students favored ICA receiving modest to little general fee support, instead of it being the most important use of those funds;
- Over 78 percent of students regarded ICA as an “unimportant” or “extremely unimportant” factor in deciding to enroll at Ohio University;
- 63 percent of respondents favor reducing the fee devoted to ICA, while 18 percent favor leaving it the same. Fewer than 10 percent of students favored a healthy (\$30+ a year) increase in the fee to maintain ICA’s current status;
- These general findings largely corroborate an April 2009 study performed by Katherine Ott surveying students at the University of Toledo;
- The authors call for further research of this issue nationwide and endorse the recommendation of the Knight Commission urging greater transparency in ICA’s financial reporting.

General fees continue to rise nationwide and funneling money from tuition-strapped students to athletic programs is an allocation that many students do not support. Richard Vedder, CCAP Director, says in the study’s introduction, “The results...suggest the efforts of students, faculty and other educational reformers to rein-in ICA costs... are important and more necessary than ever.” To the extent that student attitudes at Ohio University are indicative of students at other universities, the findings of this study could have broad national implications for higher education.

For more information, contact either of the study’s co-authors, CCAP Administrative Director Matthew Denhart (matthew.denhart@gmail.com) or Ohio University Assistant Professor of Sport Administration, David Ridpath (ridpath@ohio.edu). An embargoed (until 12:01 AM, January 31, 2011) copy of the report can be can be downloaded at:

http://www.centerforcollegeaffordability.org/uploads/Funding_the_Arms_Race.pdf.

The Center for College Affordability and Productivity is an independent, non-profit higher education research center based in Washington, D.C.

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