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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, October 29, 2007

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STUDENT GOVERNMENTS ANNOUNCE STUDENT FEE REDUCTION

Berkeley — On Monday, October 29, 2007, the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) and the Graduate Assembly (GA) will announce that for the first time in UC Berkeley's history students have successfully lobbied the administration to reduce student fees. This effort will save students more than \$130,000 over the next two years.

When the student-approved Class Pass Fee referendum went into effect during the 2006-07 academic year students expected to soon receive access to a service called TransLink, which would allow student IDs to be used as access cards on any public transportation system in the Bay Area. However, even though the student body has been have been charged approximately \$66,000 each year for the TransLink service, it is still not available to students. Last week, the University administration finally agreed to remove the fee until the service is implemented, which is thought to be at least two years away.

“When students elected me last spring, they did so under the premise that I would work to lower their student fees, and the removal of this TransLink fee is a tangible step in that direction,” said ASUC President Van Nguyen. “We must do whatever we can to make college more affordable so that higher education is accessible for all students.”

The ASUC Senate, the Delegate Assembly (the GA's legislative body), and the Committee on Student Fees and Budget Review (CSFBR) crafted a letter to the administration requesting the temporary reduction. Nguyen, GA President Joshua Daniels, and CSFBR Chair Chandresh Patel then personally lobbied the administration on the issue. After some initial disagreements, the administration agreed with the students and the Chancellor approved the reduction.

“This is how the student-administration relationship is supposed to operate,” said Daniels. “Students identify a problem and bring it to the administration's attention. The administration listens, ensures that the students' arguments are valid, and then approves the students' request. Chancellor Robert Birgeneau, Vice Chancellor Nathan Brostrom, Associate Vice Chancellor Ron Coley, and Parking and Transportation Director Noel Pinto responded in exactly this way to our concerns.”

According to Candace Nisby, chief of staff to Nguyen, this is the first time that a student fee has gone down as a result of students' lobbying efforts. “It is important for students to realize that they have the power to make change on this campus, and the ASUC is the agent through which change happens,” she said.

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