

FAQ

What is University Centers?

University Centers is the student union at UC San Diego, comprised of the Price Center and Student Center. As a student-centered organization, University Centers supports the UC San Diego community with quality facilities, services and programs that foster and enrich the campus experience and student learning. University Centers is the heart and soul of the UC San Diego campus... a place where you can eat, shop, play, relax, meet, study, socialize, and connect.

What is UCAB?

University Centers is advised by the [University Centers Advisory Board](#) (UCAB). UCAB is a student-chaired, student-majority board consisting of student representatives from each of the six colleges (1 each), Associated Students (1), Graduate Student Association (2), Student Affirmative Action Council (1), students at-large(2), plus the Vice Chair and Chair. The board also includes a representative of UC San Diego faculty (1), staff (1), and alumni (1).

The purpose of UCAB is to assure that University Centers achieve its mission and be a unifying force among students, faculty and staff for social, cultural, intellectual activities, and to provide services and opportunities that broaden interpersonal relationships and self-enhancement within a large university.

Who runs University Centers?

University Centers is advised by UCAB, but a team of student and professional employees manage day to day operations of the facilities, services and programs. The team enjoys a 3:1 student to professional ratio, which supports the student union philosophy of providing students with learning opportunities and participation in managing their student union. As a student-focused organization, our student team members play a valuable role and hold positions within every department throughout the student union, such as custodial, facilities, tech services, event services, business office, human resources, marketing, graphics and information technology.

Who develops the budget of University Centers?

UCAB approves the annual operating budget and is consulted on all major budget decisions. The University Centers budget can be viewed online: <http://ucenbudget.ucsd.edu>

Where can I review a copy of the University Centers budget?

The University Centers budget can be viewed online: <http://ucenbudget.ucsd.edu>

How is the University Centers funded?

University Centers is a student fee-funded department and is not eligible for state funding for the operation, maintenance, renovation, or repair of the facility. Its primary sources of income are the University Centers Fee (68%); revenues generated from retail operations (27%); and revenues generated from conference services, ticket sales, and short term investments (5%).

How much is the student fee? Why should students pay for University Centers?

UC San Diego students pay \$76.50 a quarter (fall, winter, spring) for their student union facilities, services and programs. Students who take summer courses pay \$38.25 for summer session.

What is the status of the University Centers budget?

The University Centers annual budget is in a deficit situation. Operating at a deficit means that more funds are being spent than income/revenue coming in. For YOUR student union, the goal is not to make money, but to provide quality facilities, services, learning opportunities, and community involvement that supports your educational goals and personal development. For the past few years, University Centers has budgeted to use money from its reserves to cover the operating deficit, however, this is not a sustainable

solution. While University Centers has a reserve, it is not sufficient for addressing long-term operational and facility maintenance needs.

What is a reserve, and does University Centers have one?

A reserve fund is like a savings account, which can be used to save up for future planned expenses and to use in an emergency situation. As an example, a roof with a ten-year life span is easier to budget when you can save a little every year for ten years to cover the eventual expense.

University Centers has reserves, but there is not enough to address immediate and long-term needs. The reserve is split into two accounts, which would ideally total between \$5-6 million to cover debt service requirements, emergencies, facility repair and replacement needs (maintenance) needs and planning:

The first reserve is the **Operating Reserve**. It is calculated at 25% of the debt service payment (included in the bond covenant) + 25% of non-fee income (3 months operating), which currently totals approximately \$2 million. This reserve meets our debt-service obligation and provides an operating safety net. This reserve is adjusted annually to meet the above formula.

The second reserve is the **Plant Repair and Replacement Reserve**. It is the remainder of any carry-forward balances (unspent expenses and surplus income), after the operating reserve obligation is met. With the long-term facility repair and replacement needs of University Centers, the reserve should be between \$3-4 million each year to accommodate the estimated projects in any given year.

Why doesn't University Centers raise the rent for the food vendors like Burger King and Tapioca Express?

University Centers does raise the rent for retail vendors, per lease agreements which include an annual rent increase based on the Consumer Price Index. Vendors also cover direct costs of utilities, trash, common area maintenance, and bussing.

Why doesn't University Centers get more vendors?

University Centers continues to look for suitable vendors to add to the diverse offering of services already existing, but University Centers is YOUR student union, not a mall. It's a place to provide conveniences that students want which helps keep fees relatively low, and not take away from the spaces provided for student services, activities, and programming.

What measures has University Centers taken over the past few years to improve the budget situation?

University Centers, in consultation with the University Centers Advisory Board (UCAB), has taken several measures to reduce deficit spending. In addition, adjustments were made to fee-for-service programs to offset expenses. Decisions about what measures to take were based on student priorities and their usage of programs, services and facilities. Expenses related to facility maintenance were also considered.

- The hours of Price Center East were reduced. Price Center East remains open 24 hours Monday – Thursday, but closes at midnight on Friday and Saturday (previously 2:30am), and midnight on Sunday (previously 24 hours).
- Funding for University Centers programs, including concerts and events held at The Loft, Pub Stage Room, PC Theater, and PC Ballrooms was reduced.
- Vacant positions, unless linked to an essential service or revenue generation, remain vacant.

- Funding for student employee positions was reduced (cuts to programs and services resulted in fewer student hours).
- The Commuter Student Services office was closed, though online services such as the Off Campus Housing Directory remain available.
- Facility maintenance and repairs have been postponed, unless linked to life safety, accessibility, system failure, or revenue generation.
- Funding for facility repairs, replacements and renovations were deferred through the deferral of several projects.
- The temporary closure of the Crafts Center was extended when funding could not be secured to reopen the space and program.
- Reservation fees for off-campus users were increased.
- Fees for sound and lighting services were increased for all users. These fees had not increased over a five year period.

What additional measures are being considered to improve the budget situation?

University Centers and the University Centers Advisory Board continue to consider options to reduce deficit spending and address long term facilities planning. Further reductions to the University Centers budget may be necessary if the budget shortfall cannot be addressed. The following measures will be considered:

- Facility hours may be further reduced. For example, Price Center and Student Center may close earlier, or be closed on Saturday or Sunday.
- Reservation times for meeting rooms may be restricted to standard business hours.
- Reservations for meeting and event spaces may be limited to end by 8pm.
- The number of computers available in the Price Center and Student Center computer labs may be reduced as aging and failing equipment will not be replaced.
- Funding for concerts and events at The Loft may be reduced or eliminated.
- Funding for University Centers programs, including concerts and events held at the Pub Stage Room, PC Theater, and PC Ballrooms may be further reduced or eliminated.
- Funding for student employee positions may be further reduced.
- Facility maintenance and repairs will continue to be postponed.
- Vacant positions, unless linked to an essential service or revenue generation, will remain vacant. Availability of services will be reduced, and cleanliness and maintenance of facilities will suffer.