University of Washington, Seattle
Services & Activities Fee
Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request

Unit Leads

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Budget Request Highlights

In this section, please list all line items for any changes in request amount greater than $1000, along with a short description of each line item and the amount requested. For all other changes under $1000, please list the total summed figures in a final "miscellaneous expenses" item at the bottom. Please ensure that all the SAF funded line items below and previous SAF allocation total add up to the requested amount. Our goal with this section is to provide an overview of the current financial state, along with any changes in SAF funding that are being requested this year.

Each unit's FY27 request may only represent a maximum increase of 6% or $38,000 over the unit's allocation for FY26 (whichever is higher in context of the unit's FY26 allocation).

While we would love to fund everyone's full request, SAF is financially constrained by the Washington State Legislature. RCW 28B.15.069 limits the amount that the Services and Activities Fee (SAF) is allowed to increase each year. For FY27, the SAF amount can be increased by a maximum of 4%. Requests beyond the maximum increase will be returned to units for corrections/updates.

Our unit's request in FY23 was **$3,778,015** and our award was **$3,052,599**.
Our unit's request in FY24 was **$3,296,807** and our award was **$3,109,501**.
Our unit's request in FY25 was **$3,358,261** and our award was **$3,266,423**.
Our unit's request in FY26 was **$3,445,436** and our award was **$3,427,415**.
Our request for FY27 is **$3,564,512,** which represents a **4% ($137,097)** from FY26**.**

In this section, please break each increase into its own sections (e.g. wage & benefits changes, increases in current employee hours/FTE, funding new positions, etc.). Example sections have been provided (you may delete the example sections).

Wage & Benefits Increases **$137,097**

We are projecting a 2% increase for professional staff and a 2% increase for classified staff. We are also projecting a 3.5% increase to minimum wage in January 2027, coupled with the 2.6% increase to minimum wage in January 2026. These wage and benefit increase costs, along with increases to operational expenses, will exceed $137,097 but will be balanced by increased self-generated revenue. One example is a planned 2% increase to IMA Membership fees in September 2026.

Full Budget Overview & Justification

In this section, you will have the opportunity to explain your request in greater detail via the guiding question(s) below. You are encouraged to use graphs, charts, or other visual tools. Your goal for this section is to provide the SAF committee (and the public) with sufficient (and substantive) context and justification for the use of these funds.

1. **How are expenditures distributed across the programs and/or services your unit offers? Please provide a general overview of how much spending is allocated to each category of expense, such as staffing, materials, etc., as is applicable.**

Recreation's budget reflects our mission to provide high-quality, accessible programs, services, and facilities that support student well-being, community connection, and learning outside the classroom. Because our work is people-centered and service-driven, the majority of expenditures are invested in staffing.

Approximately 61% of Recreation's total expenses support salaries and wages, ensuring we are able to staff programs safely and effectively while providing meaningful employment and leadership development opportunities for students. Of this total, 45% supports student and temporary staff and 55% professional and classified staff. An additional 17% of expenditures are allocated to employee benefits, which helps us recruit, retain, and support a stable and experienced workforce. The remaining 22% of the budget is dedicated to supplies, equipment, and other operational expenses that enable day-to-day programming, facility operations, and participant experience.

Fiscal responsibility and alignment with our mission are shared across the organization. Each area of spending is overseen by a program manager or a member of the Recreation Executive Team, providing thoughtful stewardship of resources and ensuring expenditures directly support program quality, safety, and long-term sustainability.

2. **Please give a summary elaborating on how SAF Funding has been used to support students** (*Please refer to dollar amounts in this discussion when possible*).

    a. In what ways has SAF funding been essential to supporting your unit's on-going services and role in the university? Please provide at least one specific example of a program/service.

Student Activities Fee (SAF) funding plays a critical role in UW Recreation's ability to serve students as a foundational wellbeing and engagement resource on campus. During the 2024–2025 academic year, UW Recreation engaged 28,490 unique UW Seattle students—49% of the student body—through facility access. This level of engagement underscores the extent to which students rely on Recreation services as part of their daily campus experience.

A primary way SAF funding supports students is through sustained investment in our facilities, such as the Intramural Activities (IMA) Building, Outdoor Courts and Outdoor Fields, Golf Range, and Waterfront Activities Center (WAC). which operates more than 100 hours per week during the academic year. The IMA serves as a central hub for student wellbeing, physical activity, and community connection. According to UW Recreation Survey data (2025), students most frequently engage with the IMA through general facility use (69%), IMA pool use (31%), and IMA Climbing Spaces (17%). However, many participants also enjoy recreating at our Outdoor Courts (23%), Outdoor Fields (21%), WAC (18%) and Golf Range (9%). For programs that happen at these facilities, the most popular programs used by students were Intramurals (31%), Fitness & Wellness (18%), and Friday Night Activities (12%).

SAF funding directly supports the student impact of these services by covering a significant portion of staff wages required to operate programs and maintain extended building hours, as well as the goods, supplies, and operational costs essential to daily use. In addition, SAF resources contribute to custodial and maintenance services that ensure the facilities remain safe, clean, and accessible for all students. Without SAF funding, UW Recreation would not be able to sustain the level of access, operational capacity, or consistency that students have come to depend on as part of their university experience.

b. How have your unit's services and programming changed over time, and how have you adapted the use of SAF funding?

UW Recreation continuously evolves its services and programs to respond to changing student interests, access needs, and wellbeing priorities. As student expectations shift, SAF funding allows us to adapt how resources are used while maintaining consistent service levels and minimizing additional financial burden on students.

In the past year, we have reallocated SAF-supported resources to enhance both access and experience within our core facilities.

These investments reflect a shift in how SAF funding is applied—prioritizing high-impact improvements without increasing the overall SAF request. When operational costs rise, particularly wages, UW Recreation continues to offset expenses where possible through modest program pricing adjustments. At the same time, we work to reduce barriers for students by leveraging the Student Recreation Fund, which provided $23,840.40 in awards to 329 unique students in fiscal year 2025.

UW Recreation also actively seeks complementary funding sources to stretch SAF dollars further. Recent examples include the use of Student Technology Fee grants to support facility and program enhancements, including technology-forward equipment and upgrades to the IMA entry gates. Together, these strategies allow UW Recreation to remain responsive, equitable, and sustainable while continuing to meet the evolving needs of the student body.

Additional examples of leveraging other resources to stretch SAF funding while meeting student needs include adding massage chairs and nap pods to support student recovery and stress management; investing in new fitness equipment to meet demand and safety standards; and acquiring 12 sport wheelchairs for use in the intramural area, expanding opportunities for inclusive recreation and adaptive sport participation. We also installed turnstiles at the IMA entrance to improve member access, traffic flow, and accountability, enhancing both the student experience and operational efficiency.

c. Are there programs/services that SAF has funded in the past that your unit no longer provides?

There are not any programs/services that SAF has funded in the past that we no longer provide.

d. Are you currently using your unit's allocation for new programs or services that were not originally requested as an item in your SAF budget request?

We are not using our allocation for any new programs or services that were not originally requested.

3. **What is the nature of your reserves/fund balances? For what purposes do you hold reserves? How were they accrued?** (Reserves/Fund balances are termed and considered differently in every unit. If you are unsure of what these terms mean or would like clarification on anything, please reach out and ask.)

UW Recreation maintains reserve balances to support long-term capital and lifecycle needs for its facilities. These funds are not discretionary and are used for predictable, high-cost projects that cannot be covered by annual operating budgets.

A portion of the reserves originated from unspent funds from the 2003 IMA Building project and was designated by University leadership for future capital needs. Another portion was established through land exchanges and fund transfers with Intercollegiate Athletics as Recreation expanded its footprint, though that portion has now been spent on the ongoing docks project. The final portion of reserves is created from occasional revenue surpluses combined with salary savings. Historically, interest earnings helped sustain these reserves; however, policy changes from 2020 now require a drawdown-only approach.

These reserves support essential capital projects such as hardwood floor resurfacing in the IMA Building and replacement of outdoor turf fields, etc. While SAF historically provided consistent annual capital support ($100,000–$200,000), recent variability in capital funding and the loss of interest revenue have made long-term capital planning more challenging.

Budget Breakdown

In this section, please include a breakdown of your requested revenues/expenses for FY27 your unit's budget for FY26, and your unit's actuals for FY25.

The template and instructions can be found here: SAF FY27 Budget Breakdown.xlsx

Budget Breakdown

Operating Revenues	FY27 Request	FY26 Budgeted	FY25 Actuals	Notes
SAF Funds	$ 3,564,512	$ 3,427,415	$ 3,266,423	
Core Funds	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Grants	$ -	$ 236,780	$ 223,030	STF; CIDF
Other Student Fees	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Auxiliary Revenues	$ 4,019,810	$ 3,727,569	$ 3,652,310	
Total Revenue	**$ 7,584,322**	**$ 7,391,764**	**$ 7,141,763**	
Change From Previous FY (%)	**2.61%**	**3.50%**		

Operating Expenses	FY27 Request	FY26 Budgeted	FY25 Actuals	Notes
Salaries & Wages				
Permanent	$ 2,570,568	$ 2,323,135	$ 2,275,154	
Student/Temporary	$ 2,063,495	$ 1,909,889	$ 1,782,373	
Retirement & Benefits				
Permanent	$ 902,980	$ 813,471	$ 735,359	
Student/Temporary	$ 371,434	$ 290,274	$ 409,946	
Supplies and Materials	$ 835,996	$ 943,748	$ 388,619	Additional spending for deferred maintenance projects in FY26 and FY27
Professional & Purchased Services	$ 780,748	$ 862,179	$ 642,235	FY26 increase due to insurance payments for FY24 and FY25
Travel	$ 59,101	$ 23,521	$ 31,312	
Utilities				
External Funding Allocations				
Capital Projects/Expenditures				
Other Operating Expenses		$ 225,547	$ 217,267	STF
Total Expenses	**$ 7,584,322.00**	**$ 7,391,764.00**	**$ 6,482,265.00**	
Change From Previous FY (%)	**2.61%**	**14.03%**		

Fund Balance	FY27 Request	FY26 Budgeted	FY25 Actuals	Notes
Unallocated				
Allocated	$ 1,000,000	$ 5,318,928	$ 5,318,928	Restricted are Gifts earmarked for the Shell House project (projected to finish spending in FY26, though some spending could happen in FY27 that is not reflected here) and Rec Clubs specifically. Allocated are funds for the earmarked for the dock project, and potentially some deferred maintenance, depending on the project costs.
Restricted	$ 514,423	$ 514,423	$ 10,215,497	
Total Fund Balance	**$ 1,514,423.00**	**$ 5,833,351.00**	**$ 15,534,425.00**	
Change From Previous FY (%)	**$ (0.74)**	**$ (0.62)**		
Total Change From Previous FY ($)	**$ (4,318,928.00)**	**$ (10,360,572.00)**		
Total Change From Previous FY (%)	**25.96%**	**36.02%**		

Information on Other Revenues:

If you have other sources of revenue, please give an overview of those anticipated revenues (including new sources) and how you expect them to change in the coming years. If relevant, include a breakdown of services & positions funded by SAF vs other revenues.

N/A

Additional Questions

1. **The following questions will help us understand your unit's priorities.**
    a. **How would you adjust your operations if you did not receive your full FY27 request? Please elaborate on the potential impact on staffing and services.**

If Recreation should not receive our full request, we have two options: raise prices for some niche programmatic offerings or eliminate aspects of the program. For example, the "IM Pass" for Intramurals increased to $35 to account for staffing wage increases in fiscal year 2026. If we receive less SAF funding, we will need to either raise prices beyond $35 or cut offerings for things like the historically popular "IM Champs" t-shirt, niche tournaments to serve distinct student needs, or rental of Alaska Airlines Arena and Husky Stadium for championship games. Likewise, for the climbing program, we would either cut programmatic offerings that teach students how to safely climb outdoors or raise prices. The UWild First Year Adventure trips offered in partnership with the Office of First Year Programs are the highest cost service within that program. To make it work with less SAF Funding, we would raise prices, or reduce the number of trips offered, either strategy would result in reaching fewer students with fewer programs.

    b. **What if you received 4% less than your FY26 allocation? Please elaborate on the potential impact on staffing and services.**

In addition to the changes outlined in Question 1a, we would need to consider reducing operating hours at Crags Climbing Center, WAC Boat Rentals, and the UWild Gear Garage. We would also need to explore adjustments to pool operations, including the possibility of closing the pool during select low-usage periods of the day. While these hours are typically slower, they remain important to our users, and any reduction would have a noticeable impact on access and service levels. These options would need to be carefully evaluated alongside staffing capacity, student experience, and continued tradeoffs related to pricing, staffing, and capital and maintenance investments.

    c. **What student services/programs are integral to your mission that you would not cut even if you received an amount less than your FY26 allocation? Why?**

In our UW Recreation Survey (2025), participants were asked "Which of the following, if any, UW Recreation offerings have you participated in? (select all that apply)." In a sample set of 1,628 respondents for this question, folks selected IMA General Use (69%), IMA Pool (31%), Outdoor Fields (23%), Outdoor Courts (21%), Intramural programs (20%), and Fitness & Wellness programs (18%). These data mirror our participation data available from facility access swipes and program registrations, as well as trends in the 2023 and 2024 surveys. Based on these data points, we would prioritize the peak IMA Building and Pool operating hours, the core of Fitness & Wellness and Intramural programming, and maintaining access to outdoor fields and courts.

2. **If you are projecting a net deficit for your overall FY27 budget, please provide additional context for this net deficit (e.g. reallocation of carryover funds from previous fiscal years, extraordinary expenses necessary to meet operational needs, etc.) and how this might impact your operations.** *(Optional – Answer "N/A" if not relevant to your unit)*

N/A

3. **What is one program/service your unit would like to work towards building to enhance students' out-of-class experience at the University? How much would it cost?**

Informal recreation at UW includes things like using the IMA Building, Outdoor Fields and Outdoor Courts without instruction or organized programming. As highlighted in response 1c above, this sub-offering of UW Recreation accounts for our most heavily used service. In addition to our participation data, research in the field of recreation demonstrates that informal recreation is important to students. For example, 68% of students report that recreation facilities influence their decision of which school to attend and 74% state that recreation facilities influence their decision to continue attending their chosen institution (Forrester, 2014). Participants in informal recreation activities such as swimming, running and weightlifting report a greater sense of belonging through connecting to their physical campus environment, meeting new people, getting involved, and forming friendships (Eubank & Devita, 2023).

University of Washington survey data illustrates that our informal recreation fitness offerings are in desperate need of updates:

"**If you were improving or expanding recreation facilities, which of the following would be important to you?" (UW Recreation, 2023)**

- (611 respondents) **"Additional resistance training equipment"**
- (192 respondents) **"Additional multi-purpose rooms for functional training"**
- (142 respondents) **"Additional cardiovascular training equipment"**
- (60 respondents) **"Adding a boutique/specialized group fitness space"**

"**Which of the following factors, if any, impede your use of campus recreation facilities, programs, and/or services?" (UW Recreation, 2023)**

- (300 respondents) **"Facilities are too crowded"**
- (85 respondents) **"Facilities do not have the right equipment"**
- (52 respondents) **"Facilities are too outdated"**

"**If you were improving or expanding recreation facilities, which of the following would be important to you?" (UW Recreation, 2023)**

- (169 respondents) **"Additional open and/or park space"**
- (173 respondents) **"Outdoor fitness space"**
- (119 respondents) **"Ropes course"**
- (93 respondents) **"Additional fields"**

If we had the chance to dream big with financial resources, we would invest in upgrading our informal recreation offerings through new equipment purchases and facility upgrades and expansion.

4. **How does your unit ensure that student fees do not subsidize non-student, academic, research, and other costs that are the primary responsibility of the University and its colleges?**

We ensure that student fees do not subsidize non-student uses in several ways. For example, there is no direct SAF operations funding support for the Golf Range and Waterfront boat rentals. At these facilities the general public pay the highest fees, the faculty/staff pay a fee approximating 75% of the general public fee and the students are accorded a fee that approximates 50% of the general public fee.

There are rare cases of academic classes using space in our facilities, and when that happens, they are charged rental fees to cover any costs.

5. **What active roles do students and their views play in your unit's decision making?**

Students play an active and ongoing role in our unit's decision-making. Students are embedded across all program areas, and managers regularly connect with them to gather input and identify ways to support and improve their respective areas. We engage student employees through our Student Employee Leadership Board, which provides structured feedback, perspective on operations, and ideas for enhancement. In addition, we regularly solicit feedback from our broader student membership through surveys, which helps inform program adjustments, service levels, and future planning. Together, these touchpoints ensure student voices meaningfully shape decisions across our unit.

6. **How are you utilizing the SAF logo? In what ways do you spread awareness of your affiliation with SAF? Attach an example if applicable.**

Utilizing and promoting the SAF logo is an ongoing and intentional focus for our Marketing team. We make a conscious effort to consistently include the SAF logo on our website, in print marketing and to prominently feature it on our digital displays, increasing student awareness of SAF's role in supporting Recreation programs and services.

7. **When projecting out 1-3 fiscal years, what challenges, if any, do you foresee for your unit (policy changes, financial, etc.)? How could SAF be helpful in navigating these challenges?** *(Optional – Answer "N/A" if not relevant to your unit)*

We have an aging infrastructure. We have over $1.7M in deferred capital maintenance across the many buildings and outdoor facilities we manage for student use. To offset the continually rising wages in Seattle for both our 400+ student employees and our permanent staff, we must rely on our facilities to generate revenue from non-student memberships and facility rentals. However, doing so with facilities that have outdated amenities and are behind on maintenance is increasingly unsustainable. That challenge is compounded by the fact that we are not meeting the students' identified goals of improving facilities, which we know is crucial for student wellbeing based on the literature highlighted in this document (Forrester, 2014; Eubank & DeVita 2023), as well as student responses for UW Recreation Surveys (2023, 2024) and the UW Tri-Campus Wellness Week Report conducted by the ASUW Office of Student Health Relations (Cleveland, 2024).

Washington State minimum wage and overtime eligibility threshold continues to grow each year, impacting Recreation's budget forecast and projected costs. Recreation is an employer of a wide range of employee categories – including one of the UW's biggest employers of students – and rising cost of living in Seattle means that Recreation's ability to recruit and retain employees will be impacted. As we mentioned above, staffing costs comprise the greatest portion of our budget and it is staff who clean, repair, offer programs and services, and ensure safety.

Looking ahead, if we do not have the capacity to thoughtfully plan ahead for both capital improvements and growing costs of staffing, the student experience – our highest priority - will suffer.

Our partnership with SAF has been incredibly important to Recreation over many years, through the 2003 IMA project, the recent Locker Room and Pool renovation project, and the upcoming ASUW Shell House project among a multitude of other programs and services. Our experience is that long-term partnerships result in major beneficial outcomes for students.