

Lake Shore Center Chicago Recreation and Fitness Facility

Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council

Recommendation:

The Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council recommends that Northwestern University:

- Designate Lake Shore Center as the recreation and fitness facility for the faculty, staff and students on the Chicago Campus.¹
- Provide an 85% subsidy of facility fees to underwrite the cost of staff and faculty membership fees. Students remain at no charge.
- Create an affiliate fee structure for staff employed at affiliate organizations such as the American Bar Association and Northwestern Memorial Hospital.
- Stipulate that the general public pay the entire membership cost.
- Not implement a “Charter Membership”.

The Chicago Campus contains one third of the staff and faculty of Northwestern University and merits a recreation and fitness facility equivalent to their Evanston counterparts. The university should provide a subsidy to help cover the operating costs for the recreation facility on the Chicago campus as it does for the Evanston campus.

History:

Lake Shore Center is a building operated by Dorms and Commons for students who are enrolled in the Law School or Medical School. It has recreation and fitness facilities located with the building. These facilities include:

1. Gym
2. Weight room with approximately 12 pieces of equipment with 6 weight benches and a variety of free weights
3. Cardiovascular equipment: 2 treadmills, 2 stairmasters, 2 recumbent bicycles, 4 regular stationary bicycles, and an elliptical walker.
4. 4 racket ball courts
5. 6 lane swimming pool

¹ For staff on the Chicago Campus, Lake Shore Center is commonly thought of as their Chicago recreation facility. This is reinforced by the fact that Lake Shore Center is referenced in the Staff Handbook on pg. 70 as part of the recreation facilities the University offers to its employees. However, according to Lake Shore Center Management, it is not officially designated by the university as a recreation facility.

6. Men's and women's locker room

These facilities are spread over several floors, from the basement to 4th floor of a very old building. Recent improvements to the facility include a new women's locker room. Improvements in progress include expanding the cardiovascular equipment and weight room into a renovated area in the basement. Lake Shore Center purchased equipment from a health club that was going out of business to provide additional weight machines and aerobic equipment to furnish the remodeled and expanded facility.

Controversy:

With all of the improvements at Lake Shore Center, the costs have increased for Dorms and Commons. According to Dorms and Commons management, Lake Shore Center is not a designated recreation facility for Northwestern University and the cost for its operation falls solely on Dorms and Commons. This department does not receive any subsidy from central administration as do the recreation facilities on the Evanston campus. To cover their costs Dorms and Commons must increase the fees to the staff, faculty and general public who use the facility (students remain at no charge) to cover their costs. The proposed increase is the issue. The previous rate to use Lake Shore Center was \$95 per year.

Below are the proposed rates. Charter members are long-standing members with 5 or more years of being members of the club. These individuals will retain their lockers as well. All other members will pay the stated price as indicated.

- Charter Membership \$250 (includes locker)
- Racquetball/Squash membership \$200
- Regular Membership \$350
- Locker rental \$100
- Swimming membership \$200
- Affiliate Membership \$600 (couple price)
- Guest passes \$8 per day.

Issues with the proposed rate structure:

1. The large increase that is being proposed. Going from a \$95 per year fee to \$450 is a huge increase that is not justified and will discourage current members from continuing and new staff and faculty from joining.
2. Chicago and Evanston staff should have equal access and reasonable fees for recreation and fitness facilities. The current fee for staff and faculty to

participate at SPAC is \$215 per year.² We are all part of Northwestern University and should be treated in a similar manner. The university should fulfill their "...commitment to developing strong minds in a healthy body, membership fees are partially subsidized as follows according to affiliation"³ to the Chicago Staff and Faculty as they are provided to the Evanston Staff and Faculty.

3. If the general public are going to be invited to join (or continue in their membership since there are many non-Northwestern individuals using the facility) they should be pay a higher rate than a Northwestern person. Under the current plan, all Lake Shore users (NU and non-NU alike) pay the same rate. It is not appropriate to use Northwestern funds to subsidize non-Northwestern usage. The fee for the general public should be equal to the full operating cost of the facility, as it is at SPAC in Evanston.
4. There should not be a "Charter" membership. It is not a fair system to have staff and faculty paying different fees for the same usage.

² At SPAC staff and faculty pay 15% of stated fees, University provides a 85% subsidy, for a cost of \$215 / year, see the <http://www.nwu.edu/fitness-recreation/members/pricing.html> for a complete description of the fees

³ <http://www.nwu.edu/fitness-recreation/members/pricing.html>