Arizona Daily Wildcat: A Penny a Paper Project Description

**Impact!** Few things on campus other than the Arizona Daily Wildcat are shared daily by so many students – the Wildcat is carried to classes, to dorm rooms, to lunch and beyond. It weaves together the entire campus community. Produced by students for students, it is the only source of news for students unfiltered by the administration, by politics, by special interests. The Daily Wildcat is the students’ voice.

The Arizona Daily Wildcat is asking for a student services fee award of $55,500 per year for 3 years as a subscription subsidy – one penny per student for each of the 150 issues/year we publish. This is an ideal way to help the Wildcat while letting it sustain its independence – receiving funds in exchange for its service to the students. A subscription subsidy is not an unusual request. Attached is a list of some schools who receive funds from a student fee/bulk subscription subsidy.

The Daily Wildcat has always paid its own way, supported by students selling more than $1.3 million in advertising a year. But because of the current severe economic downturn, ad sales have dropped by more than 20%. **Without the fee award, the Wildcat faces cutting its press run, cutting student job opportunities, and having limited resources to evolve into the news organization of the 21st century:** a convergence of print and online, of delivering news and information by word and video, through paper, pixels, texting, twitter and the newest technologies being developed as you read this.

A bulk subscription award would be used to subsidize the printing of the Wildcat (between $330,000 - $350,000 per year). This would in turn free up funding to help us prevent other cuts.

**Student Priorities:** Although the Student Services Fee Evaluation said that students get most of their news online, respondents were most likely thinking in terms of national news. The Wildcat did its own survey in Fall 2008 which showed that 81% of undergrads read the printed Wildcat (Attachment I). This statistic shows that the Wildcat is a priority for students.

The subscription subsidy will also support student priorities by helping the Wildcat provide student on-campus jobs. The Wildcat currently employs more than 125 students in reporting, photography, technology, ad sales, management, graphic design, accounting and office work. Our 2009-2010 student wage budget is $330,000. Additionally, the subsidy will allow us to provide increased opportunities for student development and new media training.

With a subscription subsidy the Wildcat will have the financial space to achieve these outcomes:

- Publish and distribute the Daily Wildcat widely throughout campus
- Maintain student job opportunities
- Have the flexibility over three years to gradually evolve the Wildcat into a 21st century multi-media news organization that serves the entire student population by:
  - Providing student training opportunities and exposure to multi-media journalism, including bringing in “new media” consultants
  - Buy computers, software, video and other equipment for multi-platform news delivery

The first two items can be easily measured. The last will be an ongoing work in progress, with the goal of the Wildcat making visible progress in becoming an integrated multi-media news organization over the next three years.

Thank you for your consideration.
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Attachment I

In December 2008, an email was sent from the Registrar’s office to all undergrads with a request to complete an online survey about the Daily Wildcat.

2,617 responses

Class breakdown:

Freshman: 21.7%
Sophomore: 24.2%
Junior: 25.6%
Senior: 28.5%

Results:

81% read the printed version of the Wildcat at least once a week, more than half read daily.

The most read parts of the Wildcat are:

Opinions – 89.8%
Page 2 – 89.8%
Sports – 79.9%
Comics – 79.9%
Crossword & Sudoku – 67.9%
Police Beat – 65.7%

We asked the question: “When you are looking for information on campus events or activities, which source of information do you use most often?”

The Daily Wildcat and Wildcat Online combined had the highest number of responses, more than either “Friends” or “Facebook.”

Attachment II

Below are a few of the university student-run newspapers that reported receiving student fee/bulk subscription funding. (Figures are 2007-2008 totals)

Arizona State $52,000
Univ. of Washington $260,000
Univ. of Iowa $390,402
Michigan State $454,500
Univ. of Texas $320,097
Univ. of Oklahoma $170,028