**It’s a difficult decision**

By Joanne Lui

The 2007-2008 school year was a tumultuous one for University President John D. Welty. It started with a string of multi-million dollar verdicts in various athletics department lawsuits that had many calling for Welty’s resignation. It ends with Welty’s decision to increase the IRA fee after weeks of student debate. The Collegian sat down with Welty to discuss why he made this decision, and what he thinks this year has meant.

**Lui:** How do you plan on making your decision regarding the IRA fee increase?

**Welty:** I have spent considerable time reviewing both the IRA requests that have come in for various academic activities and projects and looking at several years now where there’s not been sufficient revenue to fund those projects. And also, with regards to athletics I reviewed thoroughly the commission on athletic financing report that was issued earlier this year.

Then, in addition to that, I reviewed some of the long-term projections for the athletic budget, so this is a tremendous amount of data and really multi-year points that need to be reviewed as we make that decision.

**Lui:** Why did you decide to make that decision?

**Welty:** Some of the club projects that couldn’t be funded because requests for funds are almost four times as great as the dollars that are available from that part of the budget. With regard to athletics, it’s clear that ... most [mid-size Division I programs] depend upon a significant student fee in order to operate. With the increase of $22 for athletics in our case it still will be well below the average fee that comparable institutions charge.

**Lui:** What would you say to students who say that a majority of students voted down the increase in the referendum?

**Welty:** I think that, first of all, it’s important that I don’t take the issue of raising student fees lightly. It’s a difficult decision.

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**Weltys approves $52 fee increase**

By Megan Bakker

Students will see a $52 hike in their student fees next fall, now that university President John D. Welty has signed the new Instructionally Related Activity (IRA) Fee.

The fee will be split, with $32 going to fund athletics and $20 going to fund other academic projects, such as student clubs, conferences and field trips.

Much of the athletics money will fund the two new women’s sports: swimming and diving, and cross country.

However, Dean of Student Affairs Paul Oliaro, Ph.D., said that the $52 still places the emphasis on athletics to raise a majority of their money through ticket sales and community fundraising.

“There’s no quick fixes,” Oliaro said, adding that all revenue streams are necessary to fund a quality program.

Welty said that increasing the athletics money is mostly “an issue of fairness.”

“The community has provided significant support for that program over the years; therefore, if we’re going to continue, everyone has to pay part of the cost of the program,” Welty said.

However, many students still feel that they shouldn’t be the ones to fund an athletic program they don’t use.

“I don’t think it’s fair. I’m being forced to pay more for programs that I’m not using,” said Alejandro Romero, a sophomore and psychology major.

“Fees have been going up already and I don’t think it should go up even more.”

Hector Cerda, a senior and liberal studies major, spearheaded a student group that pushed to open the Campus Fee Advisory Committee meeting.

He said that he was “upset but I wasn’t surprised.”

Cerda said that he felt “robbed” that the committee recommended the $52 hike – an $18 decrease from the initial $70 proposal that students voted on in April.

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Professor suspended for alleged gun threats

By Kyle Lazarus

The university suspended a Fresno State professor of education in late February after two students said he threatened to bring a gun to class and begin shooting. An investigation is ongoing.

Fresno State President and John D. Welty suspended professor Joe Parks after student Francisco Escutia complained to the dean of the school of education, Paul Beare. University Police contacted Escutia about his complaints.

Escutia told the University Police Department on Feb. 13 that Parks had made the comments the day before.

Escutia, in an interview with The Collegian, said he told University Police that Parks lectured in a teacher preparation class on Feb. 12 about a school shooting and allegedly said, "I wish I could bring my s--- and shoot all of you." Parks immediately said afterwards that he was kidding. Escutia explained that he interpreted the expletive as referring to a gun.

Escutia said that during the first couple weeks of class, Parks mentioned that he had a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

"This was very alarming," Escutia said.

According to Escutia, the fifth week of the semester was when Parks allegedly made the remarks.

According to an article in The Fresno Bee, Parks did talk in class about when he would carry a gun for protection while researching in Los Angeles.

On Feb. 15, University Police met with another student, who sided with Escutia. Pete Arquijo, 32, of Clovis said that Parks said something similar to what Escutia claimed.

"The issue that I raised, with the director of Curriculum and Instruction, was not due to fear of an imminent threat, since that is not my place to determine," Arquijo said in an e-mail to The Collegian. "My primary concern with his statement was not in the context of any controversial less-subjects regarding gun violence in modern schools, nor was there any objective being discussed that day which had any remote connection to his statements. Escutia did not approach Parks about

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