ASUA fee may fund free-ride program

By Natasha Bhuyan

A proposed activity fee isn’t on the ballot yet, but one organization is already eying the money.

Cats RIDDE, a program that would offer free rides home to intoxicated students, has been struggling for the funds it needs to pay for insurance and rental cars.

Jason Cobb, the president and co-founder of Cats RIDDE, said he hopes students vote for the $15 to $20 activity fee, which will be on a special ballot in April, because some of the money might fund his program.

If a $15 per semester fee were passed, it would generate more than $1 million.

“The national support for this program is awesome,” said Cobb, a molecular and cellular biology senior. “We just really need the community to rally behind us.”

Cats RIDDE, which stands for Cate Realizing the Importance of a Designated Driving Escort, would operate from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It is based on similar programs around the nation, such as Texas A&M’s CAR-POOL, Western Michigan University’s DriveSafe and the University of Georgia’s WatchDawgs.

“It’s all about keeping the community safe,” Cobb said. “You should never have to make the choice of

ALL THAT JAZZ

Crystal Stark, a music and music education senior, pulled out all the stops last night at the UA Jazz Two concert at Crowder Hall. Despite being sick with a cold, Stark performed two solo pieces.

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Athletes’ grad rate higher than UA’s overall

Scholarship athletes show promising graduation rates

By Jeff Sklar

Sixty-five percent of UA scholarship athletes who entered the university in 1997 graduated by last year, 18 percent more than the overall UA graduation rate.

The number is also 8 percent higher than athletic graduation rates in the previous year.

In 2002, scholarship athletes had a 60 percent graduation rate. Even that lay significantly above the overall UA graduation rate of 55 percent, which President Peter Likins has called an embarrassment.

“I think this 65 percent graduation rate is amazing given that our student body (rate) as a whole is 55 percent,” Likins said recently.

Later this semester, when the NCAAs releases graduation rates from universities across the country, the UA will learn how its most recent class of graduating scholarship athletes stacks up.

If past trends hold steady, the jump in the graduation rate could push the UA from eighth in the Pac-10 Conference, to ranking with the class of 2002, closer to the middle of the pack.

“We’ve been very fortunate,” said athletic director Jim Livengood. “We haven’t had very many people leave (early), that type of thing.”

Sixty-five percent of Arizona State University scholarship athletes who entered in 1996 graduated by 2002, putting ASU fifth in the Pac-10. Stanford University had the highest rate that year, at 84 percent.

But UA athletics officials also argue that the 65

UA prof, alum delegates for Dem convention

By Bob Purvis

PHOENIX — When Democratic delegates from across the country roll into Boston this summer for the national convention to select their party’s presidential candidate, not all the red, white and blue on the floor will be purely patriotic.

For at least two of the delegates headed out of Tucson, the colors will reflect their close ties to the UA.

UA management professor and Rep. Ted Downing D- Tucson, and aerospace engineering student Erik Trevino, will go to Beantown to represent Tucson at the Democratic Party’s most important gathering.

Downing will be sent on behalf of presidential candidate John Kerry, while Trevino, who took the semester off to work for the Wesley Clark campaign, will represent Clark.

Delegates are chosen by party committees within each congressional district. Presidential candidates are allotted delegates according to the number of votes they received in the state’s presidential primary by district.

By Sarah Stanton

The controversy surrounding “The Passion of the Christ” has yet to die down, nearly two weeks after it was released.

More than 100 people gathered in the Integrated Learning Center last night to express their anger, frustration or awe with the most controversial film of the year, released Feb. 25.

The panel discussion offered an important opportunity for interfaith religious dialogue, said Mark Krell, moderator of the forum and assistant professor of Judaic studies.

“This film really presented us with an opportunity for dialogue. People need to talk about it,” he said.

Robert Burns, the chairman of religious studies at the UA, said he felt the movie was positive because it promoted the reading of the Gospels.

“For Christians, I think it’s brought many Christians back to reading

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Man mamaries management

Lute wins would help NCAA seeding

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15 percent increase in rush pledges

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