

The Regents of the University of California

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

January 24, 2024

The Public Engagement and Development Committee met on the above date at the UCSF-Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco campus and by teleconference at 1021 O Street and 1430 N Street, Sacramento and Corral del Risco, 63727 Nayarit, Mexico.

Members present: Regents Chu, Hernandez, Kounalakis, Raznick, Reilly, Sarris, and Tesfai; Chancellor Hawgood; Staff Advisor Mackness

In attendance: Regents Lee and Robinson, Regent-designate Beharry, Faculty Representative Steintrager, Staff Advisor Emiru, Assistant Secretary Bricker, Deputy General Counsel Woodall, Provost Newman, Interim Senior Vice President Reese, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 3:40 p.m. with Committee Chair Reilly presiding.

Committee Chair Reilly shared that University researchers recently created a brain implant that helped a paralyzed woman speak for the first time in 18 years, used artificial intelligence (AI) to identify wildfires, and developed a new variety of avocado. She announced a new series of presentations that would explore the impact of AI on communities in California and how UC uses its research in AI to inform policymaking.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of November 15, 2023 were approved, Regents Chu, Hernandez, Kounalakis, Raznick, Reilly, and Tesfai voting “aye” and Regent Sarris abstaining.<sup>1</sup>

**2. UPDATE FROM THE INTERIM SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

This item was deferred.

**3. UCSF BENIOFF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING INITIATIVE: ADVANCING RESEARCH TO INFORM POLICYMAKING TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS**

---

<sup>1</sup> Roll call vote required by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act [Government Code § 11123(b)(1)(D)] for all meetings held by teleconference.

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Chancellor Hawgood introduced UCSF Professor of Medicine Margot Kushel, M.D. and briefly described her work and research, which included experience at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFGH) treating patients who experienced housing insecurity and homelessness or struggled with addiction. Dr. Kushel also served as Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations, which was dedicated to improving health and reducing health disparities, and as Director of the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative (BHHI), which provided research on homelessness to local, State, and national policymakers and practitioners. Dr. Kushel's research examined efforts to end homelessness and mitigate the effects of housing instability on healthcare outcomes. She has regularly briefed State legislators, testified at public hearings, provided counsel to mayors and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), and spoken to the press. State Senator Nancy Skinner named Dr. Kushel the 2021 "Woman of the Year" in California's ninth Senate district. Last year, BHHI released "Toward a New Understanding, the California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness" (CASPEH). This was the largest representative study on homelessness in the U.S. since the mid-1990s.

Dr. Kushel shared that BHHI, which grew from an existing research policy program, was initially funded with a \$30 million donation from Marc and Lynne Benioff. The program now received funding from not only the Benioffs but also the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), State and local government contracts, foundations, and the Office of the President (UCOP). Central to the four pillars of BHHI, policy, research, education, and communication, was community engagement. BHHI engaged in strategic science, a form of research that identifies change agents, develops questions, produces scholarship, and communicates findings.

CASPEH came about when Secretary Mark Ghaly, M.D. of the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) asked BHHI to provide information that would inform State funding to address homelessness. BHHI then convened advisory boards with representation from local, State, and federal levels, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and USICH, as well as individuals who were currently or recently homeless. These advisory boards helped develop BHHI's research plan, survey instrument, and interview guide; they also helped analyze findings and disseminate those findings back to policymakers and communities. BHHI conducted interviews from October 2021 to November 2022. The study found that 48 percent of single, homeless adults were over 50 years of age, and 41 percent of this group became homeless at 50 or older. Twenty-six percent of those interviewed identified as Black; 12 percent identified as Native American, Alaskan Native, or indigenous; and 35 percent identified as Latino(a). Ninety percent lost their stable housing in California, 75 percent became homeless in the same county where they had last been stably housed, and 19 percent entered homelessness from institutional settings such as incarceration or drug treatment. Forty-nine percent had been non-leaseholders and 32 percent had been renters. Six months prior to experiencing homelessness, the median monthly household income for these individuals was \$960;

Dr. Kushel noted that the median monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the state was about \$1,500. When asked about what might have prevented their homelessness, 70 percent of respondents believed that \$300 to \$500 per month, 82 percent believed that a one-time payment of \$5,000 to \$10,000, and 90 percent believed that a housing voucher would have helped them stay housed. Thirty-five percent reported illicit drug use at least three times per week, and 48 percent reported either current illicit drug use, heavy episodic alcohol use, hallucinations, or a recent psychiatric hospitalization. Dr. Kushel explained that this figure would help the State determine who would need services and a rental voucher. Eighty-nine percent reported that high rent was one of the most important barriers to regaining housing. The report recommended increasing access to affordable housing, expanding targeted prevention, providing support that matches behavioral health needs, increasing household incomes, increasing outreach and service delivery during homelessness, and embedding a racial equity approach to service delivery.

Claudine Sipili, Co-Chair of the BHHI Lived Expertise Advisory Board, emphasized the importance of partnering with those who had lived experience in research, but that this did not come naturally to government agencies and academic institutions. Individuals who have experienced homelessness brought a perspective and a profound understanding of the daily challenges that such a population faced. The Advisory Board worked to ensure that the dignity of those who were interviewed or approached for the study was prioritized, and Ms. Sipili believed that this made a considerable impact on research outcomes. Serving as an Advisory Board member gave her a sense of community, empowerment, and value, which she would not have obtained in a classroom setting, and this has motivated her to use her voice to drive policy change regarding homelessness in Santa Clara County.

Corrin Buchanan, Deputy Secretary for Policy and Strategic Planning at CalHHS, noted that the study's trauma-informed approach came from including those who had experienced homelessness. Dr. Ghaly's request for this study came from a desire to learn about the drivers of homelessness in order to better address it. Ms. Buchanan opined that CASPEH has achieved these aims and shared examples of how it has been used by CalHHS and others across State government. The study showed how quickly housing could be lost and that one must design programs that could be embedded into the existing social safety net, which could help more vulnerable people. In response to data on homelessness following exits from institutions, the State planned to provide more comprehensive discharge planning through Medi-Cal, the first such effort in the nation, and would connect individuals to health services, social supports, and housing. These data demonstrated California's behavioral health needs and gaps in care and were driving the development of a mental and substance use system that provides care outside of the clinical setting and includes housing in the path to recovery. With its concrete data and insights from qualitative interviews, CASPEH was also helping the State engage in federal advocacy.

Dr. Kushel stated that BHHI has maintained constant engagement with its government partners. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, BHHI was called to join the Emergency Operations Center Program to help develop Project Roomkey, which provided 25,000 units of emergency shelter. Later, BHHI performed widespread COVID-19 testing at homeless encampments, provided rapid testing at all San Francisco homeless shelters and created

nationwide guidelines for this activity, and brought the Tenderloin district in San Francisco to vaccine equity with the rest of the city. At the request of then Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff, BHHI generated a report with findings and recommendations regarding oversized vehicles which are used as dwellings, and this was shared with all East Bay mayors and has guided policymaking. Since 2013, BHHI has studied aging and homelessness with funding from the National Institutes of Health. CASPEH has been covered by media over 1,000 times, and BHHI has released 30 op-eds on homelessness, given public talks, hosted monthly webinars, and engaged in other forms of public communication. Dr. Kushel has met with mayors from across the country, gave frequent testimony at the State Capitol, and spoke to members of the federal government.

Regent Sarris shared that, while Native Americans made up three percent of the population in California, 12 percent were homeless. He had observed the rise of methamphetamine use in Native American communities over generations and the damage it has done to health outcomes. Given how much homelessness has been attributed to its use, he asked whether there was consideration about how this population could be housed. Dr. Kushel acknowledged that the methamphetamine crisis was particularly difficult to address; there was no effective medicine for it. For most people, substance use was a response to trauma, and BHHI learned that methamphetamines helped individuals stay awake and curbed feelings of hunger. Progress is difficult when people are still experiencing homelessness and when ongoing physical and sexual assault reintroduces trauma. Healing was possible, but people needed hope, security, and trust. There was much research and discovery in progress on how to heal that trauma and how to treat such a challenging addiction.

Regent Hernandez recalled his experience working as a psychiatric technician at a State hospital. He observed the defunding of State hospitals and the deinstitutionalization of patients, many of whom became homeless. He opined that homelessness should be addressed by identifying the root cause, such as economic reasons, addiction, mental health issues, or a combination of the three. Regent Hernandez suggested providing resources so that relatives could provide care to homeless individuals with mental health needs. Dr. Kushel took the view that deinstitutionalization was the right decision but noted that funds were not diverted to other programming. Assertive community treatment programs, which have been effective for those experiencing homelessness and severe mental illness, offered housing, supportive services, and autonomy, and they were less expensive to run than psychiatric hospitals. Dr. Kushel stated that solutions were known but were not resourced. BHHI conducted a seven-year study of some of the most impaired individuals from Santa Clara institutions, offering them a 50 percent chance of housing in return for participating in a study. BHHI found that 90 percent of participants were successfully housed, and spent 90 percent of their nights housed, after which they began to accept drug or mental health treatment and their psychiatric and emergency department use plummeted.

Regent Raznick asked about homelessness among foster youth and veterans, noting the lack of understanding about the complexity of homelessness. Dr. Kushel replied that up to half of young adults leaving the child welfare system would experience homelessness, citing their early childhood trauma and their lack of a support network. She noted programs at the California State University and UC that support former foster youth. There was

political will to solve homelessness for veterans. The federal government followed an evidence-based approach of providing housing first and then robust services, integrating health systems into the housing response, which has reduced veteran homelessness by half over the last decade. Dr. Kushel saw this as a proof of concept for strategy.

Regent Kounalakis stated that, during the last five years, the State has become more engaged with homelessness, an issue that had mostly fallen on Counties to address in the past. She shared that BHHI research supported the basis of Proposition 1, which would be on the March 2024 ballot.

Regent Tesfai asked if there was analysis on investments that could prevent homelessness and the resulting cost savings. Dr. Kushel replied that the individuals interviewed for CASPEH described a series of events that led to losing housing and its aftermath, and stated that several hundred dollars could have helped them pay rent or other expenses. It was a challenge to identify people most at risk of becoming homeless and to target resources. Ms. Sipili stated that there were both individual and systemic precipitants of homelessness, and the State lacked a solid safety net for people to regain footing and provide housing for themselves. Ms. Buchanan added that, not only was there a need for more affordable housing, but investments were also needed to make rent more affordable. CASPEH provided the State with new data on the impact of rental assistance. The State was considering new programs that would provide rental assistance payments through the California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, the child welfare system, and Medi-Cal.

Committee Chair Reilly asked what top changes in investment the State was making in response to the study. Ms. Buchanan replied that the State was making new investments in prevention, in assisting those exiting institutions, and in behavioral health and housing. For instance, CalHHS invested in the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program, which paid for interim housing and rental assistance toward long-term stability. Ms. Buchanan reiterated that the study is being used to advocate for federal resources.

Committee Chair Reilly asked Dr. Kushel what in the study was most surprising and what made her the most optimistic about the ability to solve or seriously curtail homelessness. Dr. Kushel replied that pregnancy findings were most surprising. Among women 45 years of age and under, 26 percent were pregnant when they were homeless; among women 18 to 24 years of age, 40 percent were pregnant when they were homeless. These findings demonstrated pregnancy as a high-risk period as well as the utter failure of systems. She was most optimistic about the process by which the study was conducted; over 13 months, BHHI worked with those who had experienced homelessness to gain entrée into communities across the state. The study illustrated the humanity of and talent within the homeless population.

#### 4. **UC IMPACT: A NEW DIGITAL RESOURCE**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

This item was deferred.

5. **UC STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UPDATE AND  
ADVOCACY OUTLOOK**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Committee Chair Reilly introduced and invited Student Observer Chely Saens, who uses they/them pronouns, to make remarks.

Student Observer Saens addressed item P4, *UC State and Federal Governmental Relations Update and Advocacy Outlook*. Currently a UC Advocacy Network (UCAN) Student Ambassador, Student Observer Saens urged UCAN to prioritize the following items that were missing from the State budget proposal. First was full funding for the Cal Grant Equity Framework. Student Observer Saens shared that the Cal Grant has had a transformative impact on their own educational experience and created opportunities. The Cal Grant Equity Framework could help those who would not have pursued higher education without financial assistance and ensure equal opportunity regardless of students' socioeconomic background. Second, they called for advocacy for the California Student Housing Revolving Loan Fund Program so that UC could continue to build student housing. Student Observer Saens also urged the Regents to look into existing UC student programs, such as Campus Advocacy, Resources, and Education (CARE) and Collegiate Recovery Programs. Issues of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and substance abuse were particularly prevalent on college campuses. Student Observer Saens also wished to work with the University to advocate for the fulfillment of the funding Compact.

Interim Senior Vice President Michael Reese stated that, prior to the establishment of the UC Advocacy Network (UCAN), the University engaged in advocacy in fits and starts due to a lack of funding and a lack of understanding that UC faced new political realities in the wake of term limits in State government. Since 2017, UC has built a successful, sustained, and consistent grassroots program in UCAN, which currently had about 50,000 advocates.

Associate Vice President Chris Harrington stated that the U.S. Congress and the Biden administration began the 2024 federal fiscal year without an agreement on the federal budget. The federal government has operated with a number of continuing resolutions for the last several months, and an omnibus bill or another continuing resolution was needed in order to maintain government operations beyond early March. In a January agreement between Congress and the White House on topline budget numbers, non-defense discretionary programs, which were important to UC, were not funded at higher levels, but this was realistic given the current political situation. President Biden's FY 2025 budget would likely be delayed. Congress must complete work on the FY 2024 budget; begin work on the FY 2025 budget; and attempt to reach a deal on supplemental funding for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan and on border security. Aside from the budget, Federal Governmental Relations (FGR) was monitoring legislative and advocacy efforts that would affect UC research; federal investments in basic needs; efforts to regulate higher education programs

through the rulemaking process; proposals and regulations affecting student-athletes, including name, image and likeness; investments in and regulation of artificial intelligence (AI); Title IX and its impact on antisemitism, Islamophobia, and the protection of undocumented communities. FGR was preparing advocacy days, congressional briefings, and other events in Washington, D.C., such as the first joint advocacy day for the UC Student Association (UCSA) and the UC Graduate and Professional Council (UCGPC), as well as hosting vice chancellors of research and leaders in areas such as engineering, humanities, agriculture, and health. This year, FGR was on track to engage and support nearly 600 UC advocates in the Capital.

Associate Vice President Kathleen Fullerton noted that the State Legislature reconvened this month and highlighted what State Governmental Relations (SGR) anticipated this year. SGR was monitoring Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 6, ACA 14, and Senate Constitutional Amendment (SCA) 8, which would all require UC to adopt the State's labor standards; two athletics bills, as well as bills related to AI and housing. Governor Newsom's proposed State budget would defer the funding Compact's five percent increase to 2025–26, when UC would be made whole; this was a departure from what had been done in the past. SGR would continue to advocate for additional funding for UC Programs in Medical Education (PRIME) and aimed to arrange many meetings between UC advocates, such as President Drake, Provost Newman, and Associate Vice President of Employee and Labor Relations Melissa Matella, and members of State government. SGR recently hosted the UC Legislative Roundtable for legislators with a UC campus or medical center in their districts and was slated to cohost a legislative reception next week with the Regents and the Office of the President (UCOP). UC Faculty Office Hours was a forthcoming program through which members of the UC community could offer their expertise regarding legislators' bill ideas. Efforts through UCAN were ongoing.

Nicole Carlotto, Director of Communications and Advocacy at FGR, explained that the University evolved an existing initiative, UC for CA, into the UC Advocacy Network (UCAN) by changing UC's approach to grassroots advocacy, adding strategies, shifting to an opt-in model, leveraging data to inform best practices, and improving user experience with technology.

Erin Baum, Associate Director of Advocacy and Institutional Relations at SGR, stated that UCAN's roughly 50,000 advocates engage in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. on issues such as education affordability, healthcare access, and vulnerable student populations. UCAN's digital nature reduced barriers to engagement for advocates. Of those who shared their affiliation, alumni comprised the largest segment. Ms. Baum recognized Regents Ellis and Raznick and Regents Emeritae Pouchot and Timmons for making advocacy a priority for the Alumni Associations of the University of California (AAUC). Students were often some of UCAN's most passionate and persuasive advocates. While UCAN has grown in complexity, formal advocacy campaigns remained at its core. UCAN provided advocates with templates for emails and talking points for telephone calls and worked with systemwide partners to provide unique messaging, such as featuring student voices in the "Double the Pell" campaign. In 2023, one of UCAN's most successful campaigns was for full funding in the State budget. UCAN scheduled calls to action around legislative

hearings and deadlines, and legislators heard from advocates about 2,000 times last year. UCAN then shared the results of these efforts with advocates.

Ms. Carlotto described one of UCAN's major federal campaigns to protect federal financial aid and student support programs from proposed cuts, which combined emails and telephone calls. To date, more than 800 advocates have contacted their members of the U.S. House of Representatives. UCAN worked closely with campus partners to share student stories and developed short videos for social media. Ms. Carlotto shared one such video with the Committee. UCAN also partnered with UC Health to highlight the University's work to end healthcare disparity. This campaign focused on familiarizing advocates with the UC Health enterprise, and nearly 900 advocates signed a pledge to participate.

Ms. Carlotto noted other forms of UCAN engagement last year. UCAN welcomed new members of the State Legislature and the California congressional delegation via social media; worked more closely with UC alumni associations, partnered with members of the UC community, and launched a page on the social media site LinkedIn.

Ms. Baum stated that partnerships across the system enabled UCAN to vary its message and reach new audiences, expand educational content, and feature a diverse range of voices. This helped increase pride in and identity with the University. She introduced student advocate Kyle Johnson, who filmed a promotional video for UCAN.

Mr. Johnson, a UC Davis transfer student, shared that the promotional video he filmed aimed to inspire other students to engage in advocacy and stressed the need to build a more robust and extensive advocacy network. Through its partnerships, UCAN has worked with students to convey their messages and to fight for issues affecting both students and the UC system. UCAN has helped Mr. Johnson develop his own talking points and messaging and has made participation, such as attending UC Day in Sacramento, easy despite his busy schedule. He underscored the need for a student presence, particularly an underrepresented student presence, in higher education advocacy, as students could communicate the impact of complex policy decisions in their daily lives and advocate for their needs. He expressed excitement to continue this partnership.

Ms. Carlotto stated that, in 2024, UCAN planned to advocate against funding cuts in light of the State budget shortfall and to continue to push for strong federal investments. She announced the relaunch of the UCAN Student Ambassador program, in which a small cohort of undergraduate students learn about advocacy and government relations and engage in advocacy in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

Ms. Baum stated that growing rates of engagement was a priority, and UCAN's systemwide partners demonstrated audience growth potential. UCAN has observed increases in rates of engagement and new membership during campaigns and when information is shared. Ms. Baum underscored investing and partnering with UCAN, which had limited resources and reach into the broader UC community. Ms. Carlotto invited the Committee to join UCAN and to follow the program on various social media platforms.



Regent Raznick shared that participating in UCAN was fun, simple, and satisfying. He asked how UCAN planned to expand marketing and the pool of contacts. Ms. Baum replied that UCAN could share information with existing audiences stewarded by its systemwide partners, which presented the greatest growth potential. UCAN could also recruit from alumni and student associations. Regent Raznick asked if UCAN has worked with campus departments to communicate with interested parties. Ms. Baum stated that UCAN did engage campus governmental relations directors and social media teams during campaigns but recognized that there was room for improvement.

Regent Raznick asked State and Federal Governmental Relations to suggest best practices that AAUC could add to an advocacy toolkit it was developing.

Regent Tesfai asked about UC's State and federal funding prospects. Ms. Fullerton projected that this would be a challenging year. SGR was advocating for what the Governor proposed: no cuts this year and funding promised next year. The Regents had originally approved a State Budget request with a five percent increase, PRIME funding, and capital investment, but SGR was no longer pursuing capital investment and instead focusing on PRIME programs. Ms. Fullerton was hopeful but realistic. SGR would have a better sense of prospects in May, after tax revenues come in. Mr. Harrington agreed that this was a challenging time and projected that 2025 would be more challenging for federal advocacy. He saw opportunities for collaboration with agency partners and advancement on issues such as research security and name, image, and likeness for student-athletes. FGR had a strong partnership with the U.S. Department of Education regarding student aid.

Committee Chair Reilly invited Ms. Baum and Ms. Carlotto to provide the Regents with an update on UCAN next year.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff