

The Regents of the University of California

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

May 17, 2011

The Committee on Educational Policy met on the above date at UCSF–Mission Bay Community Center, San Francisco.

Members present: Regents Island, Johnson, Kieffer, Lansing, Lozano, and Mireles; Ex officio members Gould, Torlakson, Yudof, and Zettel; Advisory members Hallett and Simmons; Staff Advisors Herbert and Martinez

In attendance: Regents Crane, DeFreece, De La Peña, Hime, Makarechian, Newsom, Ruiz, Schilling, and Varner, Regent-designate Pelliccioni, Faculty Representative Anderson, Associate Secretary Shaw, General Counsel Robinson, Chief Investment Officer Berggren, Provost Pitts, Executive Vice Presidents Brostrom and Taylor, Senior Vice Presidents Dooley and Stobo, Vice Presidents Beckwith, Darling, Duckett, Lenz, and Sakaki, Chancellors Birgeneau, Block, Blumenthal, Drake, Fox, Kang, Katehi, White, and Yang, and Recording Secretary McCarthy

The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. with Committee Chair Island presiding.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of March 17, 2011, and of the joint meeting of the Committees on Long Range Planning and Educational Policy of March 17, 2011 were approved.

2. REMARKS OF THE PROVOST

Provost Pitts noted that the Regents would be engaged in discussions around challenges the University confronts in the face of dramatic reductions in State funding. He emphasized the critical importance of sustaining the quality of the University's academic enterprise.

Provost Pitts stated that the reputation of the University of California rests on the academic excellence of its dedicated and talented faculty. UC faculty are at the heart of what makes the University the state's powerful economic engine. UC faculty research creates hundreds of startup ventures that employ many thousands of Californians. For example, UCSF alone has spawned about one hundred private startups. UC faculty are responsible for breakthroughs in medical care that cure diseases. In the past month, surgeons at UCLA performed the first hand transplant in the western United States. UC faculty discoveries and inventions in agriculture allow the farmlands of California to provide food for the United States and the world.

Provost Pitts stated that his knowledge is based on his more than three decades as a member of the UC faculty, and on his regular contact with chancellors, provosts, and faculty from all ten campuses in his current role as Provost. He noted that faculty currently speak to him of their frustration that many undergraduate classes and labs have become significantly more crowded. Faculty recruitment efforts designed to perpetuate UC's greatness have been cut back. The number of teaching assistants has declined, resulting in students' receiving less attention in the classroom. The scope of courses being offered is being sharply curtailed. Taken in the aggregate, these changes have taken a punishing toll on the University's academic excellence and promise far greater harm in the future if this downward spiral is not reversed.

Provost Pitts stated that many institutions of higher learning in this country and beyond, aware of UC's budget reductions, have escalated their campaigns to recruit UC's superb faculty. Provost Pitts asked the Regents to use every means possible to assure that UC can retain the academic excellence for which it is known worldwide.

3. **CREATING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CAMPUS COMMUNITIES: A LOOK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA'S LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) STUDENT POPULATION**

Provost Pitts introduced California State Assembly Member Marty Block, elected in 2008 to represent the 78th District, former Assistant Majority Whip, and current Chair of the California State Assembly Committee on Higher Education. Prior to his 26 years at San Diego State University as a dean, director, and professor, Assemblyman Block was a director of student legal services and history teacher in Illinois. His extensive background as a respected community volunteer and advocate for education has earned wide acclaim from all communities in his diverse district.

Provost Pitts reported that his office has been in communication with Speaker of the California Assembly John A. Pérez for several months about the current item. He noted that Speaker Pérez sent his apologies for not being able to attend the Committee meeting because of obligations in Sacramento.

Assemblyman Block expressed his pleasure in speaking to the Committee on behalf of Speaker Pérez regarding the creation of safe, inclusive learning environments for UC students. He reported that Speaker Pérez has received the Governor's May budget revise and is working hard for funding for the University of California.

As Chair of the State Assembly Committee on Higher Education, Assemblyman Block stated that the safety and security of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students are serious concerns in California, given what is known about suicide rates, bullying, and other security concerns. On November 23, 2010, following the tragic suicide of Rutgers student Tyler Clemente, Speaker Pérez wrote to UC administration to inquire about policies intended to address the support structure for historically marginalized student populations, including LGBT students. Assemblyman Block stated

that he and Speaker Pérez were encouraged by UC's strong responses to mitigate intolerance and discriminatory activities, and to promote safer and more inclusive learning environments on California campuses.

However, Assemblyman Block noted that tragic incidents continue to occur, and the racist, homophobic, sexist, and anti-Semitic incidents at various California campuses in the past year are cause for concern. He acknowledged that President Yudof and the Regents have taken major steps to address conditions that could allow such incidents to happen on UC campuses, but stated that continued vigilance in monitoring and reporting such incidents is necessary. The recent suicide of UC Merced student Adam Wood is a tragic example of the need to monitor and assess support structures for all UC students. In order to reach their potential, students need environments that are safe and secure, and access to support services.

Assemblyman Block stated that, in the midst of current devastating budget cuts, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the policies, programs, and services UC promotes to provide a safe and hostility-free environment for students, including LGBT and other historically marginalized students. Determining how the University can respond to specific needs of LGBT students, making necessary changes, and monitoring progress can improve campus climate and hopefully prevent tragic incidents at California's universities.

Provost Pitts affirmed that creating safe campuses, particularly for underrepresented students, is one of the University's main goals. He reported that campuses have been actively engaged in these efforts.

Vice President Sakaki provided an update on UC's efforts to ensure an equitable and supportive community for its LGBT students and on the special needs of these students. She recalled that in the past spring several incidents occurred across the UC system that targeted LGBT students and other underrepresented communities. Also, the past fall, a series of LGBT youth suicides took place across the nation, including the tragic suicide of the Rutgers student following an egregious breach of his privacy. In response to those incidents and because of UC's own desire to maintain supportive and equitable campus environments, UC has taken a number of deliberate actions.

The University strengthened its student code of conduct to clarify that no student should fear for his or her physical safety. Campus administrators can now apply stronger sanctions when a student's conduct targets someone based on race, sexual orientation, or membership in any other protected class. For example, graffiti targeting a LGBT student would carry a higher level of punishment than general vandalism defacing university property.

Ms. Sakaki stated that, although social media have made some students' lives more public, students should nonetheless have a reasonable expectation of privacy. To that end, the University is in the process of creating a privacy policy to address recordings and photographs taken in a private location without a person's explicit consent. More

generally, the University needs to encourage civility and respect in personal interactions within the UC community. UC's Statement of Ethical Values and Principles of Community are introduced to students when they apply for admission and then discussed with them during new student orientation.

Turning to the needs of LGBT students, Ms. Sakaki noted that UC began collecting data on LGBT undergraduate students in 2008 through the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), most recently administered in the past year with more than 74,000 students responding systemwide. Findings showed that approximately six percent of UC undergraduates identified themselves not as heterosexual, but as a member of a minority group in terms of their sexual orientation, with another one percent saying they are unsure or still questioning; this percentage is consistent with national estimates that between five to ten percent of the population is LGBT. Ms. Sakaki stated that UCUES surveys only undergraduate students and that similar data is not available regarding UC graduate students, faculty, or staff.

UCUES also revealed that LGBT students reported feeling depressed, stressed, and upset more frequently than their heterosexual peers. Ms. Sakaki characterized this finding as disturbing, but understandable, given the challenges that these students face, such as the possibility of losing family emotional or financial support. The survey also revealed that LGBT students often feel that their sexual orientation is not respected on campus. The past fall, the campus climate reporting system documented 19 cases of bias based on sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression. Students with multiple underrepresented identities, such as gay students of color, face particular obstacles that often are unrecognized and unreported. LGBT students face difficulties in maintaining academic success while dealing with bias. These challenges can lead to harmful behaviors, such as increased rates of smoking or alcohol use. The UC Student Mental Health Oversight Committee has identified LGBT students as a higher risk group for mental health concerns.

Ms. Sakaki stated that campuses address the special needs of LGBT students through a variety of promising practices that support visibility, create a sense of community, and dispel misconceptions, such as retreats, "lavender graduations," Out and Proud Awareness Week, and transgender film festivals. Other campus support services include counseling, crisis intervention, and Safe Zone training for faculty and staff. Alumni organizations also play a role in advancing the success of LGBT students at UC; currently gay alumni groups on several campuses award competitive scholarships, and provide students with opportunities for networking and mentorship.

Ms. Sakaki noted that, in response to the student suicides of the prior fall, a national movement called "It Gets Better" emerged, inspiring more than 10,000 videos, including submissions from UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Riverside, and UC San Diego. She showed UCLA's video, featuring Chancellor Block.

Ms. Sakaki confirmed that there is progress toward making UC campuses more equitable and inclusive, with support from the University's top leadership, although much remains

to be done. To ensure progress, the University would continue to promote policies that encourage a positive campus climate. Campus climate surveys would continue to contain questions regarding issues for LGBT students. The University would continue to gather better data regarding the mental health needs of LGBT undergraduates and explore opportunities to enhance services to address those needs. This summer, the UC President's Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture and Inclusion would release a report on the mental health, academic support, and campus climate needs of UC's LGBT undergraduates; a second report examining the needs of LGBT graduate students, faculty, and staff would be released shortly thereafter. Both reports would include information on promising practices and recommendations. Ms. Sakaki offered to arrange a Safe Zone training, designed to raise awareness about how to make places more welcoming for LGBT individuals, for any interested Regent. She emphasized that decisions involving support for vulnerable campus populations must be based on campus principles and values, particularly during difficult financial times.

Directing his comments to students, Regent DeFreece stated that his experience has demonstrated that it does "get better." He recalled his experience as a privately gay UC Berkeley resident advisor dealing with an incident of intolerance toward a gay student resident. He noted his pride is being a member of the Board of Regents and alumnus of UC Berkeley, and encouraged current LGBT students to remain committed to their education.

President Yudof commented that the University is working on legal approaches to protect all students regarding privacy issues such as unauthorized, nonconsensual dissemination of private films and videos.

Regent Mireles noted that, while UC students may be relatively fortunate compared to those at other universities, LGBT students continue to face tremendous challenges. He commented that Adam Wood, the 19-year old openly gay UC Merced sophomore who committed suicide, was widely well-regarded by his classmates. Regent Mireles reported that gay men between the ages of 16 and 23 have the highest suicide rate of any demographic group and that UC LGBT students have a significantly higher rate of reported depression than the general student population, indicating the continuing need for student mental health funding.

Regent Crane stated that he considers this issue very important and expressed his support. He stated that the "It Gets Better" campaign is very effective and encouraged the dissemination of its message to students before they reach college.

Faculty Representative Anderson recalled that much progress has been made in campus climate for LGBT people during his tenure at UC. He thanked President Yudof for his response to the suicide of the Rutgers gay undergraduate and for his inclusion of LGBT issues on the agenda of his Advisory Council on Campus Climate. He noted the importance of LGBT people coming out in order to provide role models for younger members of the community.

Regent Torlakson stated that climate issues go back to the roots of the home and early childhood environment. He reported that he is working with K-12 superintendents, other administrators, and school boards on these issues of hate and prejudice, so that students could be better prepared before they come to the University.

Regent Newsom expressed his support for a celebration of diversity, rather than a mere tolerance.

Staff Advisor Herbert asked whether groups working with both physical and mental student health at the campuses are getting together to share best practices. Ms. Sakaki responded that there is a Student Mental Health Oversight Committee and that the campuses' health directors meet regularly to share promising and best practices.

Chancellor Drake noted that his campus was made more welcoming in the past year through the relatively simple change of converting 22 bathrooms to gender-neutral, after it became known that this was a need of the transgender community.

Provost Pitts acknowledged that problems of intolerance and diversity can never be completely solved, and therefore require constant work. He thanked President Yudof for forming the President's Advisory Council on Campus Climate in the prior year, and the chancellors for their leadership on their campus climate councils and their quick responses to incidents of intolerance. The University's leadership has proactively communicated its belief in tolerance and celebration of its diverse students.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Attest:

Associate Secretary