

The Regents of the University of California

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

November 15, 2017

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met on the above date at UCSF – Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco.

Members present: Regents De La Peña, Elliott, Lansing, Mancia, Monge, Newsom, Pattiz, Pérez, and Tauscher; Ex officio member Kieffer; Advisory members Graves and White; Chancellors Block, Christ, Wilcox, and Yang; Staff Advisor Main

In attendance: Secretary and Chief of Staff Shaw, General Counsel Robinson, Provost Brown, Vice Presidents Brown, Budil, Ellis, and Holmes-Sullivan, and Recording Secretary McCarthy

The meeting convened at 1:25 p.m. with Committee Chair Pérez presiding.

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

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of September 13, 2017 were approved.

2. **CAMPUS VERIFICATION PRACTICES AND POLICIES: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC VERIFICATION TASK FORCE**

[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.]

Provost Brown reviewed the University's academic verification process for new undergraduate students. At the September Committee meeting, Chancellor Gillman described an incident of the past summer involving UC Irvine's withdrawal of admission of 498 new students for failure to provide required information to confirm their academic qualifications and his subsequent reinstatement of those admissions. The current discussion would provide an interim report on the work of the Admissions Verification Task Force, whose charge was to review and recommend policies and best practices for the academic verification process across UC's nine undergraduate campuses.

Mr. Brown highlighted three major Task Force findings. First, verifying students' academic qualifications for admission to UC is important to ensure the integrity and fairness of its highly competitive admissions process. When students apply to UC, all application information is self-reported. Regents Policy and Academic Senate guidelines obligate admissions officials at each UC campus to secure necessary official documents to verify the academic qualifications of all new students. However, campuses have discretion

in implementation. Second, campuses have a vested interest in their admitted students and want to enroll them. However, the Task Force also found that the verification process had sometimes been used as a way to manage campus enrollment and may have communicated that student applicants were unwanted, the opposite of a welcoming message. For example, part of the criticism of UC Irvine's verification practices stemmed from a belief that the campus held new students to a standard that in any other year would not have been applied.

Committee Chair Pérez expressed concern that these statements did not align with the fact that the majority of UC Irvine's admittees whose offers of admission had been withdrawn had their offers of admission reinstated. Also, Chancellor Gillman's apology and comments at the Committee's September meeting clearly indicated his commitment that UC's overall values should drive these considerations. Mr. Brown agreed, adding that the audit of UC Irvine's academic verification practices confirmed that UC Irvine had used the academic verification process as an enrollment management tool. Committee Chair Pérez suggested that the Task Force's characterization be aligned with the prior discussion.

Mr. Brown reported that the Task Force developed nine recommendations, seven for the fall 2018 admission cycle and two that could be implemented later after further study. The recommendations represent best practices already employed by most UC campuses, but perhaps unevenly. Systemwide adherence to these practices would provide greater consistency and public transparency.

The Task Force recommended that campuses not use the academic verification process to manage campus enrollment. Campus admissions personnel had agreed that using the academic verification process to manage enrollment would be ineffective, as the summer was far too late to make substantial changes in enrollment. It also would be inappropriate, as UC wants to enroll the students it admits. Another main Task Force recommendation is that campuses consider alternative sanctions before withdrawing an offer of admission, such as placing a hold on enrollment. The Task Force found that all UC campuses take intermediary steps before withdrawing an admission offer.

Committee Chair Pérez asked about a statement in the materials indicating that submission of an I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, is one indicator, among others, of an admitted student's intention to enroll, even if the student had not yet submitted academic verification information. He questioned if this was an appropriate document to list, particularly when UC wanted to communicate that it was not considering immigration status in admission decisions. Mr. Brown said that this was meant only as an example of a way a student could signal interest in enrolling, not that the I-9 was a requested document. Associate Vice President Handel agreed that the reference to the I-9 should be removed, to avoid sending a misleading message. Mr. Brown agreed.

Mr. Brown said another Task Force recommendation was that notifications of withdrawal of admission should include clear instructions and deadlines for appeal. Mr. Brown had reviewed the Task Force's recommendations with President Napolitano, campus chancellors, and campus admissions directors.

3. **REPORT OF THE TOTAL COST OF ATTENDANCE WORKING GROUP**

[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.]

Provost Brown noted that three Regents on the Committee, Regents Monge and Ortiz Oakley, and Committee Chair Pérez, served as members of the Total Cost of Attendance Working Group. Vice President Holmes-Sullivan, who chaired the Working Group, commented that the cost of an education goes well beyond tuition and fees. The total cost of attendance includes room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses. The Working Group examined not only how UC estimates the total cost of attendance for undergraduates, but also how UC assists students and their families to pay for those costs, closely reviewing UC's financial aid policies. The Working Group met six times starting the prior April. The Education Financing Model (EFM) is used to implement the Regents' policy on undergraduate financial aid. While UC has a very strong record of serving low-income students, the Working Group examined all aspects of UC's current strategy and identified eight recommendations to improve the EFM.

Director of Student Financial Support Christopher Carter advised that the Working Group's recommendations could be implemented separately or together. The Working Group reaffirmed support for the systemwide nature of UC's undergraduate financial aid program. The group delegated further exploration of some more detailed matters to the EFM Steering Committee. The Working Group devoted considerable attention to its recommendation that UC should promote students' use of summer classes and the ability of students to use Cal Grants during the summer. Implementation of this recommendation would require statutory change and additional State resources. Most of the recommendations could be implemented through a cooperative effort involving the EFM Steering Committee, Office of the President staff, and campus staff.

Committee Chair Pérez thanked Regents Monge and Ortiz Oakley for their participation on the Working Group, adding that the perspectives of campus staff and student representatives were very helpful. Creative thinking at UC Santa Barbara about multi-year financial aid awards had proven to be fruitful and should be considered for other campuses.

Chancellor Block commented that completing a degree in three years is an effective way to reduce costs. He asked if efforts to increase opportunities for students to graduate in three years had been successful and noted that taking summer classes was a necessary component. Ms. Holmes-Sullivan agreed that taking summer classes was a way to shorten students' time to degree and reduce costs. She confirmed that other working groups had been examining options for completing an undergraduate degree in three years.

Regent Newsom asked for more detail about multi-year financial aid and advocating for summer Cal Grants.

UC Santa Barbara Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships Michael Miller commented that traditional financial aid programs determine student need year-by-year, meaning that

low-income students must commit to attending UC knowing how they will pay for only one year. UCSB's past financial aid records showed that 96 percent of students with financial need as freshmen had no variation in their financial need over the four years of their undergraduate education. Through the UCSB Promise Scholars Program, started as a pilot program three years prior, the campus promised students \$120,000 worth of grants and scholarships over four years. The program targeted UCSB's neediest students, with average family incomes of about \$25,000, and currently helps about 275 students. The students are doing very well academically and are on track to graduate, some in three years. The program promotes summer attendance and includes a study abroad experience. These students are provided with wrap-around services, such as direct access to faculty and research opportunities, and are supported with program services as soon as they are on campus. A similar program for UCSB transfer students was started two years prior, providing them \$60,000 in aid over two years. Mr. Miller emphasized that this extremely successful program does not cost UCSB any additional money, since students would already qualify for this assistance. Promise Scholars wraps four years of assistance into a package, letting students know that UCSB will support them and is committed to them for four years. UC Merced Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Charles Nies said the Merced campus would also implement this program in the fall of 2018. Regent Newsom commented that it would seem straightforward to offer students the aid to which they are entitled.

Regent-designate Graves stated that from his service on the California Student Aid Commission he learned that it often takes a long time for students to receive Middle Class Scholarship funds and asked how that process could be improved. Mr. Carter responded that the Middle Class Scholarship was a last-dollar program, so the award amount depends on what other aid a student would receive that could offset eligibility for a Middle Class Scholarship. In 2017-18, UC campuses considered notifying students earlier about Middle Class Scholarship awards, in late March with regular financial aid awards. However, the Governor's budget in January proposed eliminating Middle Class Scholarship funding. The program was ultimately not eliminated and UC intends that March 2018 financial aid notifications would include potential Middle Class Scholarship eligibility, so that students would have this information before making their enrollment decisions.

Regent-designate Graves urged UC financial aid staff to cooperate with Student Aid Commission efforts to simplify and consolidate various aspects of the financial aid process. It would be beneficial to students if the currently complicated system of various awards were consolidated into one award.

Regent Newsom expressed support of these efforts, which would only provide students the aid to which they are already entitled.

Committee Chair Pérez asked what could be learned from the success of the UC Santa Barbara multi-year aid pilot program, particularly ways in which offering students four-year awards improved their quality of life.

Mr. Miller commented that the UCSB program carried the risk of a student's eligibility shifting in some way. The existing pilot program involved students with the most need; Mr. Miller thought it would be more challenging to apply to students from middle-income families. In UCSB's Promise Scholars program, 87 percent of the students are first-generation college students from families with average incomes of \$25,000, putting the students at high risk of dropping out. When these students are offered four years of aid and the assurance that they can stay for four years, it is a powerful message that changes the students' mental outlook. Students who encounter typical challenges are motivated to stay in school because they do not want to walk away from this financial aid. The retention rate of students in this program is extremely high.

Committee Chair Pérez noted that the UCSB program was an intervention that improved the experience of these students without having a high cost.

Faculty Representative White commented that, while UC has unused capacity during its summer sessions, the current funding model of charging per unit for summer courses disincentivizes students. In addition, under current campus departmental funding models, many departments lose money throughout the academic year and earn money from summer sessions. To make use of the extra capacity offered by summer sessions, these business models would have to be addressed.

Ms. Holmes-Sullivan agreed. The Working Group saw its recommendation to increase the use of summer sessions as an important one, but complex to execute because of statutory issues and campus funding models. Advocacy from the Regents would help. Mr. White offered the Academic Senate's assistance in addressing related curricular issues, but thought the campus fiscal issues would be more difficult.

Committee Chair Pérez commented that some UC campuses had been considering ways to increase accessibility of summer session. Legislative action would be needed to have Cal Grants available for use in summer session, as Pell Grants are because of recent action on the federal level.

Chair Kieffer expressed support for advocacy for those legislative efforts. He asked Mr. White about the relevant departmental funding models. Mr. White commented that educational resources on UC campuses were stretched very thin. The per-unit fees students currently pay for summer session courses, while a disincentive for students, provide support to academic departments that provide the teaching.

Chancellor Wilcox commented that this funding model stemmed from the longstanding academic tradition that summer session was treated differently from the rest of the academic year. Campuses handle summer session separately in many ways, for instance in their budget processes and recruitment of instructors. Universities nationwide are examining strategies to make summer sessions more compatible with the rest of the academic year.

Chair Kieffer stated that increasing the use of summer session would require a cooperative effort from UC campuses, UC administration, and the Legislature.

Regent-designate Graves asked if students in the UCSB pilot program are required to undergo financial aid verification every year, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and supplemental forms. Mr. Miller confirmed that the Promise Scholars students had to reapply each year for financial aid and if they are selected for verification by the federal verification process, the campus is required by law to verify their applications. The campus does not use the verification process to admit students to the Promise Scholars program, but rather uses key indicators to identify its neediest students. Regent-designate Graves noted that the verification process can be a barrier to students receiving their aid, in the length of time from when a student receives a verification notice, submits supplemental forms, and until those forms are verified. Mr. Miller added that the FAFSA application is available earlier, on October 1, which has been a major change for campuses, enabling campuses to inform continuing students of awards much sooner. Mr. Nies emphasized the importance of providing wrap-around services, as UCSB does, to help students navigate the processes to access available resources. Mr. Miller agreed that personal support for these students is crucial.

Regent Newsom asked how much federal and State financial aid for which students qualified was not being used. Mr. Carter responded that if a student did not complete a FAFSA and therefore did not receive awards such as Cal Grant, Pell Grant, and institutional aid linked to that application, that student would likely not enroll at UC. Mr. Nies added that campuses can reallocate aid to enrolled students who appeal for more aid. Regent-designate Graves commented that there are enrolled students who fill out the FAFSA, but do not complete the verification process.

Committee Chair Pérez added that students from middle-class families may enroll at UC, but may not be receiving all the aid for which they qualify. In addition, there are other services related to the total cost of attendance that are not traditional financial aid, for which students could be eligible, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or services for students who have children, who are veterans, or who have a different immigration status. Aligning these services would be beneficial.

Regent Monge suggested exploring the role UC's financial aid departments could play by prescreening students for eligibility for these State and federal benefit programs, and providing enrollment support.

Mr. Miller added that the CalFresh program provides students with \$194 per month for food. The biggest pipeline for students into the CalFresh program is qualifying for the federal work/study program. UCSB added information on its financial aid award letter informing students that they may qualify for the CalFresh program with a link to that application. The number of students at UCSB qualifying for CalFresh is increasing and that assistance has been instrumental in combating student food insecurity.

Regent Monge proposed exploring the public assistance programs most frequently used by UC students, the types of eligibility information those programs request, and whether it overlaps with information UC already collects, to inform students of other types of available aid.

Committee Chair Pérez suggested having UC's legislative advocacy groups press for legislation that would provide presumptive eligibility for students for more than one type of assistance with a single application, for instance that a student's financial aid application would presumptively qualify that student for CalFresh. Regent Newsom added that County services might also apply.

Regent Tauscher commented that, based on a student's application, UC may be able to project a student's maximum eligibility for aid from various jurisdictional levels, federal, State, county, or institutional, and create a box score for the student. First-generation college students often have no knowledge of how to navigate these procedures. The box score could serve as a basis for UC's assisting the student to reach out to the various sources of aid. Developing cross-populating forms would be helpful. Regent Tauscher expressed support for assisting students in a timely and friendly matter in securing all the aid to which they are entitled.

Regent Newsom asked about Cal Grant B. Mr. Carter said that Cal Grant B has a supplemental award in addition to its tuition award, but it does not cover tuition in a student's first year. It was more advantageous for UC students who are eligible for Cal Grant A and B, to use Cal Grant A, so that was UC's default. That could change in the future, if the supplemental award amount changes.

Ms. Holmes-Sullivan commented that the Working Group would take direction from this discussion and asked if the Committee prioritized any recommendations. The EFM Steering Group would resume its work, once the Total Cost of Attendance Working Group concluded its work. The EFM Steering Committee had representatives from all UC campuses and could help implement recommendations for the campuses. The Regents' prioritization of the Working Group's recommendations would also inform UC advocacy efforts.

Committee Chair Pérez thanked Ms. Holmes-Sullivan for her leadership of the Working Group and invited Committee members to provide her feedback about the prioritization of recommendations in addition to comments made during this discussion.

Chair Kieffer stated that the prioritization of the recommendations could be in the hands of Committee Chair Pérez and the Working Group, taking into account this Committee discussion.

Provost Brown said he was particularly interested in developing a process to streamline students' applications for various types of financial awards.

Committee Chair Pérez commented that this Working Group had uniquely engaged campus staff, Office of the President staff, Regents, and students in meaningful conversations. Student engagement was very helpful and productive.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff