

The Regents of the University of California

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASIC NEEDS**

November 12, 2019

The Special Committee on Basic Needs met on the above date at UCSF–Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco.

Members Present: Regents Butler, Cohen, Leib, Park, Um, and Weddle; Chancellor May; Advisory members Bhavnani, Muwwakkil, and Stegura

In attendance: Secretary and Chief of Staff Shaw, Deputy General Counsel Woodall, Interim Vice President Gullatt, Vice President Nation, Chancellor Wilcox, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 4:30 p.m. with Committee Chair Weddle presiding.

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no speakers wishing to address the Committee.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of September 17, 2019 were approved.

3. **ADDRESSING STUDENTS' BASIC NEEDS ACROSS CALIFORNIA: COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

[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.]

Interim Vice President Gullatt introduced Lea Jarnagin, Interim Systemwide Director of Student Wellness and Basic Needs Initiatives at the California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor, and Colleen Ganley Ammerman, Specialist in Student Services at the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor's Office, both of whom would present information about the California Higher Education Basic Needs Alliance (CHEBNA).

Ms. Jarnagin explained the circumstances that led to the establishment of CHEBNA. CSU, CCC, and UC had collaborated informally since 2014 to address students' basic needs insecurity. In 2015, CSU Chancellor Timothy White commissioned a basic needs study known as Phase 1, in which students with basic needs insecurity reported high levels of stress and the need for single points of contact on campuses. CSU published Phase 2 in January 2018 and Phase 3 in April 2019. The findings called for sustaining resources and

increasing student support. Professors Rashida Crutchfield and Jennifer Maguire conducted the studies. Following the findings, all 23 CSU campuses now had food pantries and food distribution programs, CalFresh application assistance, and staff who manage programs and connect students to resources. Many CSU campuses also offered emergency funds, emergency housing, and housing vouchers. CSU has also begun Educational Advisory Board data collecting at some campus food pantries. The Center for Healthy Communities at CSU, Chico held the 2019–21 California Higher Education CalFresh Higher Education prime contract, which supported campuses from all three segments of California higher education. The inaugural CHEBNA summit would be held in 2020.

Ms. Ammerman stated that CCC students' basic needs insecurity had been addressed locally by faculty, staff, and students in the past but that State awareness had since grown. With support from the Legislature, the CCC Chancellor's Office commissioned the first Basic Needs Survey, which was modeled from CSU and CCC surveys. About 40,000 students from 57 colleges participated. Fifty percent of those surveyed reported food insecurity, 60 percent reported housing insecurity, and 19 percent reported having been homeless in the last year; about one million CCC students regularly experienced food and housing insecurity. CCC credited its CHEBNA partnership not only for a successful survey but also for joint advocacy to the Legislature that secured food and housing resources for all three segments for the past three fiscal years. All 114 CCC campuses now provided food pantry services, with a majority of campuses providing CalFresh enrollment support. Fifty campuses were developing basic needs resource centers, many of which were modeled after centers at UC and CSU.

Regent Cohen asked to learn more about the CalFresh prime contract at CSU, Chico and how UC campuses were involved. Systemwide Basic Needs Committee Co-Chair Tim Galarneau replied that the prime contract between Chico and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) helped campuses improve CalFresh enrollment messaging, streamlined technical elements of enrollment, and provided data on CalFresh's impact on higher education populations. Systemwide Basic Needs Committee Co-Chair Ruben Canedo added that this CalFresh prime contract was the first that focused on the college student population. Four UC campuses were subcontractors. A statewide work group for improving public assistance for college students planned to release a CalFresh outreach toolkit. CHEBNA was working with third-party entity to create materials directed toward students. The CSU, Chico prime contract focused on County engagement. Ms. Ammerman added that the prime contract allowed subcontractors to be reimbursed using federal funding.

Regent Um asked what programs and practices one segment had that others wished to implement. Ms. Ammerman responded that CCC learned about research and survey best practices through these partnerships and tried to model its food pantries after those at UC. CHEBNA has also helped segments learn which counties had better CalFresh approval rates and why. Segments were learning from each other and no longer working in isolation. Mr. Canedo praised CSU's basic needs communication strategies, marketing, and internet presence. He credited Ms. Ammerman's advocacy for CHEBNA's focus on former foster

youth and emotional support for students. Trust has been built, and collaboration among the segments has expedited leadership buy-in and approval of programming.

Regent-designate Stegura asked about best practices for removing food insecurity stigma. Ms. Ammerman replied that the CCC system has tried to normalize CalFresh by likening it to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and created posters and decals with non-stigmatizing language for use at all CCC campuses. Regent-designate Stegura asked whether there was peer-to-peer outreach. Ms. Ammerman responded that CCC had multiple peer ambassador programs. One such program was recently launched in the Sacramento Valley. CCC also had ambassadors for student mental health. Mr. Canedo added that one survey showed that students learned about CalFresh and food pantries primarily through word of mouth. He underscored the importance of improving messaging, marketing, and normalizing these services. Mr. Galarneau noted that there was an institutional shift in basic needs discourse over the last four years and that data reflected the positive impact of the shift. Branding has been improving at the campus level. He called for more student leaders to be basic needs advocates. Mr. Canedo stated that students reported that basic needs services have increased their sense of belonging and feeling that UC cared for them.

Regent Weddle asked about how CCC addressed students sleeping in their vehicles. Ms. Ammerman stated that State Assembly Bill 302, which did not pass, would have required the CCC to open parking lots for such students. She believed the bill was well-intentioned but did not include details for safe implementation and financial resources. Some schools had now added policies for implementing parking programs. If such a program were funded appropriately, Ms. Ammerman would personally be in support of it.

Regent Leib asked whether basic needs information should be on individual campus websites or centralized in an Office of the President website. Mr. Canedo responded that the capacity to build and maintain websites varied by campus. UC was working toward a systemwide basic needs website. Mr. Canedo suggested that UC create basic needs branding as CSU has done. Mr. Galarneau added that feedback had been collected from the campuses and a systemwide basic needs website was being planned. Campuses were shifting online information from food insecurity to basic needs. Regent Leib agreed that a systemwide approach would be helpful, particularly for transfer students.

#### 4. **INTERSECTION OF BASIC NEEDS AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH**

[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.]

Interim Vice President Gullatt stated that recent State funding for student basic needs would go toward establishing a holistic crisis resolution protocol but could not be used for general mental health services. Campuses have been pursuing other resources to fill this and other gaps in services.

UC Merced Basic Needs Coordinator Bavneet Kaur explained that the Merced campus faced a unique challenge in terms of basic needs and mental health given its location. There were limited transportation options and healthcare providers. At UC Merced, the majority of students identified as Hispanic or Latino(a) and first-generation college students, with many coming from low-income households. Nearly 600 undocumented students were enrolled at UCM, the highest percentage in the system. Many students did not come from families that discussed mental health and therefore did not prioritize seeking help. Students might not inform parents of their financial struggles due to guilt or existing challenges at home. To cope, students might make poor food choices, which research has linked to depression. UCM viewed mental health and health services as a basic need and was considering collaboration with outside experts and adding food and housing insecurity questions to mental health evaluations. Ms. Gullatt added that student basic needs efforts were relatively newer than student mental health efforts.

Regent Cohen noted previous discussions about Proposition 63 funds and asked whether UCM has accessed this money and what systemwide progress has been made in the last year. Ms. Kaur replied that she would return to the Regents with a response. Ms. Gullatt added that the Office of the President (UCOP) was exploring this under Regent Leib's guidance. UC had received some Proposition 63 funds in the past but was now more intentional in its pursuit, considering partnerships beneficial to both UC and the counties. UCM Interim Director of Counseling and Psychological Services Tania Gonzalez stated that Merced County had one psychiatric facility that only accepted Medi-Cal and Central California Alliance for Health patients and provided very limited services to UCM students. In the last academic year, UC Merced had about 50 California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150 psychiatric holds for students. Student transportation options were limited. Regent Leib stated that he anticipated a report on Proposition 63 funding at an upcoming Health Services Committee meeting. UC received some money from statewide Proposition 63 funds, which was a very small portion of the \$2.4 billion pool. UC Merced was prioritized to receive this funding because of its high need. Regent Leib wished to see more counselors on campuses.

Regent Um cautioned against minimizing UC's mental health needs by regarding the recent State funding for basic needs and rapid rehousing as covering mental health. He underscored the need for a larger agenda for mental health issues. Ms. Gullatt suggested that the Special Committee address this in its final report and include the recommendation that basic needs required a more holistic approach than a transactional one.

Committee Chair Weddle asked whether the mental health challenges of students experiencing basic needs insecurity were unique. Ms. Gonzalez replied that student data showed that UCM had the highest percentage of students reporting depression, suicidal ideations, and loneliness. The campus had not determined the cause for this and wished to gather more data about food insecurity. Typically, students with basic needs insecurity have sought help for other things, but basic needs issues would later arise in conversation.

Faculty Representative Bhavnani commented that mental health should not be linked exclusively to basic needs insecurity and could come from situations such as academic

stress or a family history of abuse. She noted that there were students who had no financial need and struggled with mental health. Ms. Gonzalez responded that she envisioned caseworkers who worked with students to determine their basic needs insecurities, including the need for mental health services, and assisting them in obtaining services. Ms. Kaur stated that some of the State funding for basic needs would be used to support financial wellness and program coordinators.

**5. UPDATE ON 2019-20 CAMPUS BASIC NEEDS SPENDING PLANS**

[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.]

Interim Vice President Gullatt began the presentation by stating the four principles guiding the allocation of funding for basic needs: a baseline level of support to each campus; further funds allocated based on the number of food or housing insecure students; new practices innovated; and accountability. In order to receive its allocation, each campus provided three-year spending plans. A competitive grants program has been established to fund programs above the base allocations.

UC Irvine Basic Needs Director Andrea Gutierrez explained that the campus has funded two full-time equivalent (FTE) positions at UCI's basic needs center. Student have been very involved in this process, with student leaders meeting weekly to discuss the proposed allocation, students providing feedback and proposing changes, and student representation at budget meetings. For the past three years, the UCI basic needs center has hosted local high school and community college students in workshops and training sessions. With the allocation, UCI has plans to hold basic needs summits for teachers and counselors from local school districts and to hire more clinical social workers, a rapid rehousing case manager, and more basic needs staff.

UC Riverside Assistant Vice Chancellor of Health, Counseling and Wellness Denise Woods-Bevly began her remarks by thanking Regents Cohen and Leib for visiting the UCR food pantry. She stated that 53 percent of UCR students were Pell Grant recipients. Fifty-three percent of undergraduate students and 37 percent of graduate students experienced food insecurity at the Riverside campus, and five percent of all UCR students experienced housing insecurity. Highlights from UC Riverside's proposed spending plan included extending food pantry hours; connecting students to CalFresh, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other programs through improved relationships with County partners; collaboration with community housing partners; and engaging UCR's campus basic needs committee. The campus envisioned a basic needs model that prioritized prevention and early intervention.

Regent Butler asked whether the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) and Graduate Student Well-Being (GSWB) survey were evaluated as the best tool for determining the number of students in need. Ms. Gullatt agreed that these surveys were a blunt instrument but currently the best available tool. The survey findings would be refined using better data. The baseline level of support for each campus was important because

these surveys likely underestimated need. Regent Butler underscored the importance of finding the best tool and stated that the available resources were not proportionate to the number of students in need.

Regent Butler asked whether there would be a review process and annual adjustments to the campuses' three-year spending plans as students' situations change. Ms. Gullatt responded that campuses could make marginal adjustments but the criteria have not been defined. She could take this as a suggestion from the Special Committee.

Regent Leib mentioned UCLA's aggressive mental health outreach to entering students and asked whether UC could use a similar approach to determine food and housing insecurity. Ms. Woods-Bevly replied that UC Riverside did not perform an assessment of entering students but did have conversations with students about available services at the new student orientation. Speaking about her experience at California State University (CSU), she stated that the student application asked students about interest in CalFresh in order to destigmatize health-seeking behaviors and share information about resources. CSU campuses engaged in more targeted outreach from those responses. Regent Leib suggested that these interventions could be more effective than student surveys and added that the CalFresh benefit should be maximized. Ms. Gutierrez stated that, while UC Irvine did not have an assessment tool, basic needs staff were involved in orientations, resource fairs, and welcome week activities. Staff also provided workshops throughout the summer. Regent Um added that the basic needs staff presence at welcome week was important.

Regent-designate Muwwakkil asked whether campuses had methods for eliciting stakeholder information more quickly than conducting a survey. Devon Sakamoto, UC Riverside Director of The Well, replied that UCR's basic needs working group met monthly and engaged students and departments working with higher-need populations. Regent-designate Muwwakkil asked how stakeholders learned about The Well. Ms. Sakamoto stated that The Well reached out directly to higher-need populations and that student word of mouth was also effective. Student leaders have approached The Well with input. Ms. Gutierrez added that UCI basic needs staff have offered tours and presentations to other campus department staff and have become a resource to those staff.

Regent Cohen commented that success meant that all students' basic needs insecurities would be met and that basic needs centers would no longer be needed; this was a longer-term goal. He asked how success would be measured at the end of three years. Ms. Woods-Bevly responded that, while more awareness has been raised, basic needs issues have existed for a long time. People have been hesitant to provide data about their struggles. She suggested looking at institutional research data regarding graduation rates and connections between students and campus nexus points such as food pantries. Data should be consistent and measured by the same metrics systemwide. In her view, success could be interpreted through the relationship between students using basic needs resources and graduation rates. Ms. Gullatt added that the University wished to see graduation and completion rates improve, especially among underrepresented minority students, first-generation students, and Pell Grant recipients. Committee Chair Weddle noted that basic needs and UC equity goals would be discussed at an upcoming Special Committee meeting.

Regent-designate Stegura asked for the presenters' thoughts on the pressure to serve many students broadly rather than serving fewer students at a greater depth. She asked for the statistics of students who regularly visited food pantries as opposed to one-time visitors. Ms. Sakamoto responded that UCR has tried to strike a balance by allocating half of its rapid rehousing budget to emergency housing vouchers, which serves more students, and the other half to long-term housing interventions, which serves fewer students. Ms. Gutierrez added that the food pantry was an entry point for other services. New visitors to UCI's basic needs center completed an intake form that would lead to referrals to housing or CalFresh support. UC Irvine had begun to prioritize clinical case management for more in-person support. Ms. Woods-Bevly emphasized the importance of maintaining County relationships in order to build sustainability of services. For instance, drawing down more CalFresh dollars would relieve pressure on campus food pantries.

Committee Chair Weddle closed the discussion by thanking the presenters for highlighting students' roles as decision makers and expressed her hope that student involvement remain a core value in basic needs efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff