

The Regents of the University of California

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASIC NEEDS

January 21, 2020

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

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

In attendance: Regent Reilly, Secretary and Chief of Staff Shaw, Chief of Staff and Special Counsel Drumm, Vice President Brown, Interim Vice President Gullatt, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 5:00 p.m. with Committee Chair Weddle presiding.

Committee Chair Weddle introduced Student Observer Senuri Boralessa, a UCSD undergraduate student studying human biology and global health. Ms. Boralessa works as a Basic Needs Assistant at the Hub Basic Needs Center (Hub) and has seen multiple student parents visit the Hub, balancing coursework with childcare and multiple jobs. She suggested that all basic needs centers carry childcare supplies and also a separate space for parenting students. Basic needs center staff were not trained to take care of children, and childcare services were not affordable. Ms. Boralessa helped develop a basic needs peer educator program and envisioned peer educators collaborating with early academic outreach programs that have already identified high school students in need. Ms. Boralessa called for more affordable housing options and for transportation to be provided to students living farther from campus. She noted that housing in diverse neighborhoods may help students feel a sense of belonging.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of November 12, 2019 were approved.

2. APPROACHES TO SUPPORTING THE BASIC NEEDS OF PARENTING STUDENTS

[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 sharing statistics about parenting students. According to the UC Undergraduate Experience and Graduate Student Well-Being Surveys, parenting students made up 1.3 percent of UC undergraduate students and about 12 percent of the graduate student population. Among undergraduate parenting students, 39 percent were from underrepresented groups (URGs), and 28 percent of graduate parenting students came from URGs. Eighty percent were transfer students.

Kiyoko Thomas, Basic Needs Manager at UC Berkeley, stated that she oversaw basic needs programs and services and acted as a case manager for students with complex needs like emergency housing and financial crises. UC Berkeley connects parenting students to food assistance, security deposits, emergency rental assistance, and case management. Access to childcare, transportation, proximity to campus, and affordability are considered when seeking housing for these students. There are limited family-friendly housing options that become more limited in the summer, with limited vacancies in nearby hotels. UC Berkeley wished to increase the number of available temporary housing spaces, minimize transitions, and provide a more appropriate environment for parenting students and their families.

Ron Williams, Director of Independent Student Programs at the Centers for Educational Equity and Excellence (CE3) at UC Berkeley, introduced some of those programs: the Berkeley Hope Scholars for foster youth; the Cal Veteran Service Center; the Re-Entry Student Program for older and formerly incarcerated students; and the Student Parent Center. Parenting students may identify with several of these groups. Each CE3 program works closely with the campus basic needs center so that students have access to a full array of resources. In order to better understand the needs of parenting students, childcare should be viewed as a basic need. Access to childcare affects engagement much like food or housing insecurity would.

Mariah Lyons, Director of Slug Support at UC Santa Cruz, stated that Slug Support addresses basic needs issues and connects students to other campus resources, such as mental health services, Educational Opportunity Programs, and financial aid, for long-term success and in emergencies. It also advocates for more funding for parenting students from the financial aid office. Slug Support connects parenting students to community resources such as childcare agencies and voucher programs, as well as food support such as grocery cards, direct financial awards, and CalFresh application assistance. Slug Support also helps with budgeting and gaps in rent. UCSC's student parent meal program, which provides ten free meals for students and their dependents per quarter, could be expanded next academic year. Still, many facets of higher education were not designed with parenting students in mind. UCSC aimed to streamline student parent demands, provide networking and peer interaction opportunities, and cultivate a deeper sense of belonging.

Regent-designate Muwwakkil asked about the value of the UCSC childcare voucher and whether many student parents make use of it. Ms. Lyons replied that the childcare voucher program is a Santa Cruz County program; the voucher can be used at the childcare center on campus. Regent-designate Muwwakkil asked if there were any resources on campus that assist with childcare. Ms. Lyons stated that UCSC's childcare center has a standing waitlist at all times of the year. Openings are prioritized for families with vouchers.

Regent-designate Stegura noted that parenting undergraduate students work more hours than undergraduate students without children. She asked what percentage of parenting undergraduate students had work-study jobs as opposed to off-campus jobs, which require more time and money for transportation. Vice President Brown replied that parenting undergraduate students often live farther from campus. She would look at the survey data to determine whether these students were working on campus.

Faculty Representative Bhavnani asked whether campuses could provide childcare for short periods of time so that a student could attend a lecture. Mr. Williams connected the need for childcare with the number of hours that parenting students work. Without counseling, parenting students could earn enough money to negatively affect their financial aid eligibility and need holistic advising. While it is not the only solution, a community of parenting students that look after each other already exists. Ms. Bhavnani suggested that a campus could hire qualified people to provide childcare for short periods of time. Drawing from her experience as a former child psychologist, she noted that this could provide a varied social environment for the child. Systemwide Basic Needs Committee Co-Chair Tim Galarneau added that this was proposed but was outside of the scope of innovation grants in State funding. The campuses were interested in developing it and it could be explored further. Ms. Bhavnani stated that this effort could be quickly put into practice.

Regent Butler asked about the experience for parenting students who are formerly incarcerated. Ms. Thomas responded that solely addressing food or housing needs would not enough in these situations. These students need holistic, long-term case management to minimize fatigue from navigating multiple issues, such as determining resource eligibility while meeting the requirements of a probation officer.

Regent Butler, noting that the formerly incarcerated were not allowed certain public benefits, asked whether legislative advocacy was needed to break those barriers. Mr. Williams used the example of veteran students, who were ineligible for CalFresh. Veterans benefits were regarded as total resources under CalFresh. He needed to search for examples affecting formerly incarcerated students. Systemwide Basic Needs Committee Co-Chair Ruben Canedo added that formerly incarcerated students are not a homogenous group. Addressing the basic needs of formerly incarcerated students is a priority for the Systemwide Basic Needs Committee this year. Mr. Williams stated that, even if formerly incarcerated students have a good college experience, they worry about finding a job and providing for their children after graduation.

Regent Reilly asked whether parenting students self-identify on campus or beforehand. Ms. Brown replied that survey responses came from students who were on campus. Regent Reilly stated that, if UC knew in advance, the parenting students could receive a welcome package detailing available resources or could be invited to an event to meet other student parents. Mr. Canedo stated that students were hesitant to disclose that they were parents in their applications because they were afraid that it would affect financial aid awards. UC should communicate better with parenting students. Mr. Canedo noted that students could become parents after entering the University. Students agreed that better data collection was needed. He was confident that needed data is being collected in a way that was sensitive to the concerns of the community.

Ms. Bhavnani shared that that the Academic Senate is working with Underground Scholars and that the Senate's Educational Policy Committee is exploring issues related to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated students. UCLA and UC Irvine were working with currently incarcerated students.

Regent-designate Muwwakkil underscored that the availability of resources on campus could affect whether people choose to attend or work at the University. He wished to learn more about logistical barriers to expanding existing childcare resources on campuses.

Regent-designate Stegura asked about data on retention, time-to-degree, and choosing to attend graduate school because of the security it provides among parenting students. Ms. Brown replied that undergraduate student parents had a higher grade point average than non-parents but had longer time-to-degree. Graduate student parents and non-parents' data were more comparable.

Committee Chair Weddle commended the work of Mothers of Color in Academia for their advocacy of parenting students and invited the presenters and members of the working group to return for a follow-up presentation.

3. **PRE-COLLEGE BASIC NEEDS OUTREACH AND PREPARATION**

[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 she oversees Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (SAPEP), which stands for the portfolio of programs that prepare California students for postsecondary education and success in the workplace. Campuses include basic needs in their pre-college outreach through workshops on resources and financial aid opportunities. Toolkits and curricula are available for SAPEP and other programs systemwide. The Office of the President (UCOP) plans to implement a new systemwide basic needs website for current and prospective students.

Regent Leib noted that UC spends far less money on SAPEP programs than before. Ms. Gullatt stated that funding for SAPEP has gone from about \$85 million in the early 2000s to about \$22 million today. Regent Leib asked whether the SAPEP acronym could be changed to something more memorable as it could change the conversation, especially with the Legislature. Ms. Gullatt explained that SAPEP is budgetary portfolio; each program has a distinct, recognizable name. SAPEP is easy to identify when having a budget conversation.

Regent Park recalled that the California Community College system renamed the Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver to California College Promise Grant. She stated that financial literacy at UC must include an accurate depiction of housing costs. The University should provide prospective students with realistic information.

Regent Um asked how financial aid and financial literacy were differentiated. Ms. Gullatt explained that financial literacy refers to budgeting and planning for a good financial life, while financial aid refers to the process of applying for aid. Regent Um stated that student loans are a form of financial aid but also an aspect of financial literacy. He asked whether this was communicated. Ms. Gullatt responded in the affirmative. Families must understand the difference between a grant, a scholarship, and a loan. There is some overlap.

Regent Um asked about the measure of success for a SAPEP program, adding that it would be important for seeking future funding. Ms. Gullatt responded that the Office of the President measured the outcomes of individual programs as part of due diligence for State funding. UCOP designed those outcome measures. Committee Chair Weddle underscored the importance of consistent measures for all the different outreach programs systemwide in order to determine best practices and how to leverage limited resources.

Regent-designate Stegura suggested that there be tools explaining the actual, expected contribution to students and parents that would remain accessible after students enroll.

Regent-designate Muwwakkil stated that these efforts help diversify the University. He agreed that metrics are important, as determining whether best practices translate systemwide. He asked what a systemwide toolkit for financial literacy would be like. Ms. Gullatt stated that the toolkit could be a variety of things. UCOP has worked with groups like uAspire to determine best methods of outreach. The toolkit could include visual aids or curricula and lesson plans within existing workshops. She welcomed his input. Regent-designate Muwwakkil noted that outreach to traditional and transfer students would differ and that UC should invest in more holistic outreach. Systemwide Basic Needs Co-Chair Ruben Canedo added that campus basic needs staff have welcomed collaboration with UCOP. He was pleased that Regent Thurmond and Chief Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction Lupita Alcala were proponents of these efforts before working at the California Department of Education. Mr. Canedo agreed that outreach should be nuanced to better serve students who face the most challenges. Committee Chair Weddle added that this toolkit could help the state and the U.S.

4. **UPDATE ON EXPLORING HOUSING INSECURITY AMONG UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA STUDENTS**

[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.]

UCSF Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Suzanna Martinez provided an update on preliminary findings presented at the July 2019 Regents meeting. She reported that her survey of housing and food insecurity among students has since been finalized and measured current living situation, homelessness, housing insecurity, and food insecurity. Students from all ten campuses reviewed the survey. Aside from food and housing, Phase 2 findings defined basic needs as sleep, stability, hygiene, and transportation. Housing security meant having stable and safe housing with a place to shower, sleep, and study. In reality, a cascade of events affected students' main priority—their studies. Living farther away from campus resulted in long, costly commutes and social isolation. Working many hours also impeded studies. First-generation students reported not having the guidance to succeed. Student parents were working and studying full-time. Affording food after paying rent was difficult, and food pantries were first-come, first-served with limited hours. These findings support the need to measure students' experiences with housing insecurity.

Vice President Brown stated that Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) at the Office of the President (UCOP) was working with Ms. Martinez to incorporate these questions into the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) and Council of Graduate Studies survey, both to be released in the spring. This exercise will help shape future data validation efforts, and questions will be included in the Graduate Student Well-Being Survey. The UC Information Center may feature a separate dashboard for basic needs survey data.

Regent Um stated that housing insecurity is a harder issue to address because of the lack of available housing on campuses. He asked whether survey data could show the effectiveness of building more housing. Increasing aid would not help if there is no housing. Ms. Brown replied that the new questions will provide a better understanding of housing insecurity; previous questions were about homelessness. Students will be asked when in the year they experienced housing challenges. Ms. Martinez added that one reason why the new study was proposed was because the original questions were too broad. Students are unlikely to regard themselves as homeless. Regent Um suggested asking students whether they searched and were unable to find housing. Systemwide Basic Needs Co-Chair Ruben Canedo added that UC should determine whether on-campus housing is affordable and whether students in on-campus housing need it the most. UC must consider what it was doing with existing housing, and new housing must be affordable and equitable. Systemwide Basic Needs Co-Chair Tim Galarneau stated that an increase in resources does not necessarily guarantee that those who need them will get them. Off-campus housing is a complex issue. The California Higher Education Basic Needs Alliance (CHEBNA) will need to work creatively on find solutions. Committee Chair Weddle was comforted knowing that many Special Committee on Basic Needs members would be serving for many more years and can keep working to improve housing insecurity.

Faculty Representative Bhavnani noted that students who could afford housing might still have great needs. She cautioned against making assumptions about students who could afford housing.

Committee Chair Weddle praised the student engagement involved in developing these survey questions and hoped UC would continue to take this approach for other research. Validating questions with focus groups took longer, but there were demonstrated benefits.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff