

The Regents of the University of California

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASIC NEEDS

September 15, 2020

The Special Committee on Basic Needs met on the above date by teleconference meeting conducted in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-29-20.

Members Present: Regents Butler, Leib, Muwakkil, Park, and Stegura; Advisory members Gauvain and Zaragoza; Chancellor May

In attendance: Regent Reilly, Regent-designate Lott, Faculty Representative Horwitz, Secretary and Chief of Staff Shaw, Managing Counsel Shanle, Vice President Gullatt, Chancellor Larive, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m. with Special Committee Chair Muwakkil presiding.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of July 28, 2020 were approved, Regents Butler, Leib, Muwakkil, Park, and Stegura voting “aye.”¹

2. SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASIC NEEDS REPORT

[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 Muwakkil noted that this was a discussion of the Special Committee’s draft report and invited members to share their comments and recommendations.

Vice President Gullatt stated that the draft report was based on the presentations to the Special Committee and discussions since it first convened in January 2019. The report included findings, recommendations, and goals discussed in previous meetings. Regents’ suggestions of sharing best practices, addressing acute basic needs issues of vulnerable populations, exploring the role of County governments, and expanding definitions were included among the draft recommendations. The final report would be presented to the Special Committee at the November meeting.

Committee Chair Muwakkil asked about automatic enrollment of qualified students into CalFresh or other food aid. Executive Director of Student Financial Support Shawn Brick replied that the University could not enroll students into CalFresh because it was not a UC program. Earlier this year, UC worked with the California State University, the California Community Colleges, and County offices to develop a form letter that could be automatically generated when a student is approved for work-study. According to the

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

California Department of Social Services (CDSS), this letter would meet the work-study requirement for CalFresh eligibility. Committee Chair Muwwakkil asked if this had been implemented and what the results were. Mr. Brick responded in the negative, stating that CDSS had to finalize the form letter. He did not anticipate problems with implementation at campus financial aid offices and said that he would reach out to his contacts at CDSS for a status update and could follow up with the Committee by the November meeting.

Regent Park praised the draft report, noting the background information and ambitious goals. UC should help students up to the point of CalFresh enrollment. She questioned how there could be a goal of increasing enrollment by 50 percent if the draft report stated that it was difficult to determine how many UC students were enrolled. She suggested basing the enrollment goal on the total number of eligible UC students instead. Mr. Brick stated that the estimated number of eligible students was based on the number of students who met the requirements for applying for CalFresh. UC could use as a baseline measurement data collected from the study it was conducting with the California Policy Lab (CPL), which would be receiving data from CDSS, the California Student Aid Commission, UC, and the California Community Colleges. CPL would develop a more nuanced estimate of those who qualify, which would be compared with the number of students who enroll. UC could use either number as a metric to measure its progress. Regent Park asked that the goal-setting approach chosen in the final report be more refined.

Regent Park noted that the report might be used more as a reference document and suggested that each section include an introduction that would frame the section and explain the reason for a particular goal. Ms. Gullatt stated that, given the length of the report, an executive summary or synopsis might also be useful.

Regent Leib asked whether there were staff on campus who worked with County governments and how they could be included in basic needs efforts. Chancellor May replied that, in addition to Government and Community Relations staff, there was a staff member at Aggie Compass, UC Davis' basic needs center, who interacted with the County on basic needs issues. Chancellor Larive stated that UC Santa Cruz's Government and Community Relations staff interacted with City and County government. The campus had an outsized impact on the small population of the City and County of Santa Cruz, and basic needs staff engaged with Second Harvest Food Bank and other organizations. Regent Leib asked how campuses were spreading the word about this work. Chancellor May replied that this was part of the basic needs center's outreach to the student body. Regent Leib asked that the report include the fact that each campus had staff that engaged with County governments. He emphasized the importance of helping students access County resources. Ms. Gullatt responded that this would be emphasized in the report. Committee Chair Muwwakkil expressed his appreciation for Regent Leib's efforts in bridging the gap between UC and County resources.

Regent-designate Zaragoza suggested a having a conversation about whether basic needs centers were receiving sufficient funding for all the services that had been mentioned. She also suggested that the report specify the barriers that UC sought to remove through Cal Grant reform. Age and grade point average (GPA) requirements remained barriers to

accessing the Cal Grant, and poverty affected GPA. Mr. Brick stated that the Cal Grant reform recommendations issued by the California Student Aid Commission earlier this year included eliminating the age, time out of high school, and GPA requirements. The report meant to reference this. Because UC students were admitted with a minimum 3.0 GPA, eliminating the GPA requirement would have little effect on them, but it would affect students from other segments of higher education. Regent-designate Zaragoza reiterated her suggestion that barriers to the Cal Grant be discussed in the final report.

Regent-designate Zaragoza suggested that access to technology be included in the definition of basic needs. This issue was not exclusive to the pandemic but had become highlighted as a result of it. For example, students were using libraries for internet access and not just for research, and campus programs lent laptops to students. This was a particularly important issue, given that financial aid information was being disseminated online.

Regent Stegura suggested that the report include information about campus food pantries and food insecure students who do not qualify for CalFresh. A recommendation should be added to study food pantry resources and to determine how to bolster them. The basic needs centers she visited were not staffed or open for sufficient, regular hours. Ms. Gullatt replied that the report would include a comprehensive perspective on food support.

Regent Butler praised the authors of the report and the Regents who helped build the report's outline. She asked how UC could ensure that this report, which discusses the support required for the existential needs of students, be widely distributed and read. In her view, a different kind of distribution and engagement plan was required. Committee Chair Muwakkil asked about the optimal means of dissemination. Ms. Gullatt replied that dissemination would begin with the systemwide basic needs community, which worked to elevate the visibility of basic needs and incorporate research, policy, and advocacy in its approach. UC could task the Systemwide Basic Needs Committee with developing an engagement plan. The report could be presented in a series of webinars. She would invite Special Committee members to participate in the engagement effort in order to lend credibility and authority to the recommendations. Committee Chair Muwakkil suggested that this be discussed at the next Committee meeting. Chancellor May suggested partnering with campus public affairs offices to produce a video or other content for a broader audience. It would take more time and cost more but would be well worth it.

Staff Advisor Tseng asked which of the resources discussed were available to staff. She expressed her wish to partner with the Committee on training staff to better address the basic needs of both students and staff.

Regent Reilly praised the authors of the draft report and commended the specificity of the goals. She asked if campuses had tried to include student meal sponsorship in their private fundraising efforts. Chancellor Larive replied that all campuses were engaged in private fundraising for student needs. UC Santa Cruz actively fundraised for its Slug Support program, which helped students with basic needs or unexpected needs, and even more so during the pandemic. Regent Reilly asked Chancellor Larive how much UCSC raised for

basic needs. Chancellor Larive replied that she could return to the Committee with this information. UCSC was launching its Giving Day September 30, in which student success and student support figured prominently, and held a fundraising drive for students, staff, and faculty left homeless by recent wildfires. Other campuses also had annual giving days. Chancellor May stated that UC Davis had a relief fund that addressed basic needs, wildfires, and COVID-19, and provided several hundred laptops to students during remote learning. The campus fundraised for these needs regularly and received a six-figure amount this year.

Regent Reilly asked if students were informed of these resources during orientation. Chancellor May responded in the affirmative. Chancellor Larive added that students might not initially need those services during orientation, so ongoing communication was needed. Regent Reilly stated that the student testimonials in the report were very compelling.

Regent Park suggested engaging UC's visual and performing arts students in the dissemination effort. She also suggested developing a detailed implementation plan with scheduled check-ins by the November or January meeting. Ms. Gullatt replied that a high-level plan could be presented. Committee Chair Muwwakkil stated that he would reach out to Ms. Gullatt regarding logistics.

Faculty Representative Gauvain suggested including recommendations for students. Students participating in certain programs could share information with other students.

Regent Stegura suggested that the implementation plan include sharing this report with State legislators. UC might need to ask for more basic needs funding after the pandemic, which could help basic needs centers and food pantries stay open longer.

Faculty Representative Horwitz suggested disseminating the report via a social media campaign, adding that this could be a good project for visual arts students.

Committee Chair Muwwakkil suggested that the report show how the State basic needs funding was used and what changed as a result of that funding. Ms. Gullatt replied that UC was required to report basic needs outcomes to the Legislature, which could be summarized in the final report. She could also share the legislative report with the Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff