

Office of the President

**TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of November 14, 2018

**REVIEW OF CALIFORNIA BUDGET ALLOCATION: HUNGER FREE CAMPUS
FUNDING**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UC Global Food Initiative, now in its fourth year of operation, has demonstrated an effective partnership between the University and the State in addressing critical student needs. A coalition of students, faculty, administrators, and higher education advocates, often with assistance and direction from the Office of State Governmental Relations, has communicated with the California State Legislature on student basic needs, especially in relation to food security. These efforts and a genuine interest from legislators in supporting UC students, led to the introduction of multiple policy bills, two of which became law. In addition, in two consecutive years the State has provided the University with additional funding to address student hunger issues.

BACKGROUND

Global Food Initiative and Student Hunger

In 2014, UC President Napolitano and UC's ten chancellors launched the Global Food Initiative (GFI) to address one of the critical issues of the current time: how to sustainably and nutritiously feed a world population expected to reach eight billion by 2025. In 2015, the GFI conducted the first UC systemwide Student Food Access and Security Survey. The survey found that 48 percent of UC's undergraduate students and 25 percent of its graduate students experience food insecurity, which is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as reduced food intake or disrupted eating patterns at times and/or reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet due to limited resources. In addition, the study found that 57 percent of UC's food insecure students were new to food insecurity, suggesting that students who are on their own for the first time may require financial literacy training and additional information about economic and food access resources, financial aid, and making healthy choices on a limited budget. In response to this study President Napolitano allocated an initial \$75,000 per campus to immediately support student food access and enhance existing food security projects.

In 2016, to support the development of a holistic basic needs model, President Napolitano committed an additional \$3.3 million over a two-year period, distributed equally at \$151,000 per

campus. Examples of campus efforts to address student hunger include: CalFresh, which is the State of California's nutrition assistance program, outreach and enrollment sessions; new and renovated campus food pantries; campus farms and gardens; financial skills workshops; cooking demonstrations; and hiring of staff and student interns to contribute to programming, case management, advocacy, and planning. Each campus now has its own Basic Needs Committee comprised of UC students, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as community subject-matter experts who work and learn together.

Legislative Efforts to Address Student Hunger

During 2016 UC's Office of State Governmental Relations (SGR), along with students, conveyed information on GFI programs and the Student Food Access and Security Survey to Legislators and their staff. In early 2017 four policy bills were introduced in the California State Legislature to address student hunger in higher education. These included two bills by Assembly Member Weber: AB 1894, which requires UC on-campus food vendors to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program, allowing students to use CalFresh benefits to purchase meals at those facilities; and AB 214, which requires the Student Aid Commission to provide written notice to recipients of Cal Grant awards who qualify for participation in the CalFresh program. UC adopted a support position on AB 214, and SGR testified in support of the bill in policy hearings. The other policy bills introduced were AB 453 by Assembly Member Limón, which would have established the "hunger free campus" designation, and SB 1275 by Senator Stern, which would have established the Plan Against College Hunger Act of 2018, requiring the California Student Aid Commission to provide awards to eligible students equal to the amount of the cost of a meal plan covering ten meals per week. Of these four policy bills, AB 1894 and AB 214 were passed and enacted into California Code. However, the language from AB 453 was incorporated into a 2017 budget trailer bill.

In addition to the various policy bills seeking to address the student hunger issue, the California State Assembly Committee on Budget heard testimony about UC student hunger issues in May 2017. SGR testified on behalf of the UC at that hearing. In the Budget Act of 2017, the Legislature provided \$2.5 million to the University of California to continue addressing student hunger concerns. In addition to the funding provided, a budget trailer bill, SB 85, adopted language from the "hunger free campus" policy bill by Assembly Member Limón and required each UC campus receiving funding to develop free-food pantries, assign a campus employee to help students enroll in the CalFresh program, and develop methods to allow students to donate unused meal plan credits to needy students.

In 2018 the California State Legislature continued to support UC students by providing an additional \$1.5 million for Hunger Free Campus efforts. These funds will be divided evenly among the ten UC campuses. In addition, the Legislature passed a budget trailer bill, AB 1809, which requires the University to prepare a systemwide report by February 15, 2019 on Hunger Free Campus efforts, and requires the State Department of Social Services to consult with specified stakeholders with the goals of improving coordination between the segments of public postsecondary education and CalFresh administering agencies, and improving access to CalFresh for low-income public postsecondary students.

2017 Hunger Free Campus Funding Impact

Each campus was awarded equal allocations of \$250,000 from the \$2.5 million provided in the Budget Act of 2017. This Hunger Free Campus funding was directed at four specific areas: emergency meals, CalFresh outreach and enrollment, infrastructure, and supplemental staffing support.

(1) **Emergency Meals:** Drawing from UC data, Hunger Free Campus funding was invested in supporting students with the largest personal, policy, and institutional barriers to support their basic needs. Support for target student populations included investing in more than 40,000 dining meal vouchers as well as increased sourcing of prepared meals and fresh, healthy, and diverse food offerings for pantry and distribution services across all ten campuses resulting in more than 14,500 unique students served over the past four months.

(2) **CalFresh Outreach and Enrollment:** UC has worked in concert with the California Department of Social Services' CalFresh program leads, as well as intersegmental partners at California State University and the California Community Colleges, to improve and increase CalFresh undergraduate and graduate student awareness, understanding, applications, and enrollment. To date each campus has activated financial aid messaging to inform all CalFresh qualifying students of in-person events, advising, and online enrollment options. In conjunction with county and non-governmental organization CalFresh enrollment partners, UC has established a peer-based student enrollment and advising program at each campus. To date, UC campuses have enrolled and renewed more than 8,000 students in CalFresh.

(3) **Infrastructure:** UC campuses have also invested in program-specific equipment and infrastructure in order to increase the availability of farm-to-pantry nutritious food. Campus investments ranged from refrigeration for increased fresh food offerings to food recovery and mobile distribution carts, as well as supplemental pantry and food provisioning transportation services. All campuses have achieved a baseline of managing a fresh and healthy choice based pantry that may also include supplemental food distribution to events and secondary sites. Further, campuses are managing usage data to track the number of students served. As noted above more than 14,500 unique students have benefited from Hunger Free Campus funding.

(4) **Supplemental Staffing Support:** In order to increase the scale and scope of direct services, campuses added additional part-time staff, student interns/leaders, as well as graduate student research appointments to participate in the Hunger Free Campus programming services. At the same time, funding from President Napolitano has allowed for the ongoing systemwide coordination of these efforts, including an annual in-person meeting and monthly conference calls. Campuses have also contributed dedicated staff time to support Hunger Free Campus efforts and have deeply appreciated the Legislature's support for UC students.

In 2018 the California State Legislature again supported UC students by providing an additional \$1.5 million for Hunger Free Campus efforts. These funds will be divided evenly among the ten UC campuses. Food access workgroups at each campus are currently writing the plans for how these funds will be directed to provide the greatest benefit to students at each campus.

Looking Ahead

SGR, in collaboration with students, faculty, staff, administration, and community experts, works with the UC Office of the President, campuses, and students to advocate for the University's policy and budget priorities in Sacramento. With the financial support of the State, the University has been able to launch or expand nutritious and choice-based food pantries on all UC campuses; increase access to food provisioning and preparation workshops and services; expand Swipe Out Hunger programs that allow UC students to donate excess meal plan dollars to students in need on all campuses; establish collaborations with State and county offices to register students for CalFresh; and enhance financial aid communications about housing and food costs, among other support services. In order to ensure that UC students receive an excellent education unhindered by concerns for basic needs SGR intends to continue and expand the powerful coalition of UC advocates in Sacramento.

Key to Acronyms

GFI	Global Food Initiative
SGR	UC's Office of State Governmental Relations