

MEMORANDUM

SFAC Continuity Report 2019-2020

Following tradition, I am writing this report to help future committees understand the experiences of the 2019-2020 Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) and its vision for the academic year. The committee prioritized preserving professional staff, student staff, and direct student services. Our year will forever be notorious for not only for watching over 200,000 die in the US from a preventable pandemic, but also experiencing the racial injustices and rightful anger and pain erupt with the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and (too) many more. I can only hope that future committees strive to create an even more anti-racist, accessible, student-centered committee that uplifts the students systematically pushed to the margins. Let us not let the lessons of 2020 disappear in vain.

If any committee members have any questions about this report, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, Atreyi Mitra (the 2019-2020 SFAC Vice Chair and 2020-2021 SFAC Chair), at mitra.atreyi@gmail.com. Any other questions about SFAC should be directed to sfacchair@saonet.ucla.edu.

SFAC Priorities and Ongoing Campus Issues SFAC 2019-2020 Continuity Document

1) *Working with a small pool of temporary funds*

The temporary (non-recurring) Student Service Fee (SSF) funds that were available to the committee to recommend for allocation for the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 was significantly lower than in previous years -- only \$2m. By comparison, approximately \$6m in temporary SSF funds had been allocated for 2019-2020 and \$4m for 2020-2021. For about 8 years, the unallocated pool of SSF funds had grown to unprecedented levels due to both a steep increase in enrollment and three years of increases to the SSF (based on an agreement between the UC and governor) The period of increasing enrollment is over and temporary funds have been permanatized and used to transition some temporary-funded programs, services, and positions to permanent funding, as well as to cover the cost of merit and benefits increases for staff (these costs are set by the system). The committee had the very difficult job of deciding what to prioritize and what to cut from among numerous valuable programs and

services that had been receiving temporary funding for staff and programs (some for more than 6 years). Going forward it is unlikely that the SSF will ever accumulate such a large pool of temporary funds. It is also unlikely that the SSF will be raised in the current environment. Future committees will continue to have difficult decisions to make.

2) Unit review and funding recommendation process

a) Changes to orientation

Because of the small pool of temporary funds, the 2019-2020 SFAC Chair, Nicole Corona, stressed to new committee members as early as orientation of the difficult decisions that SFAC would have to confront in the coming year. I believe this frankness early on ensured the committee did not over allocate SSF funds as had been done in previous years. At the 2019-2020 SFAC Orientation, Nicole also emphasized the dire nature of the situation to the senior administrators who oversee units that have regularly requested and received temporary Student Services Fees. Nicole noted that the SFAC committee would not have the large amount of temporary funds to recommend for allocation as it had in previous years. This approach was one of many designed to lower expectations and limit new funding requests that could not possibly be funded from the available temporary funds.

b) Prioritizing funding requests for the 2021-2022 year over 2020-2021

In an attempt to adapt to the smaller pool of temporary funds, SFAC voted to prioritize funding requests for the 2021-2022 year over 2020-2021. This decision was largely motivated by the fact that the 2018-2019 SFAC, with the approval of Chancellor Block, had already allocated nearly \$4 million for 2020-2021. However, the committee decided not to prevent funding requests for the 2020-2021 academic year entirely, but made it clear in the call letter that the committee would only consider 2020-2021 requests for funds in dire circumstances. Nevertheless, units submitted requests for over \$1.5 million for 2020-2021. Ultimately, SFAC chose to recommend allocation of funds only for 2021-2022. These recommendations were approved by the Chancellor.

c) Not utilizing sub-committees for the unit review process and instead having committee members present on various units

The SFAC bylaws provide SFAC with the authority to decide each year how it wants to approach the unit review and funding request review process. During the time of excess temporary funding which produced a large volume of funding requests for the committee to review, SFAC

chose to utilize budget review subcommittees. In some years the subcommittees did an initial review and presented their recommendation to the larger committee, which undertook its own discussion of each request and voted on a funding recommendation. In 2018-2019, the subcommittees were allowed to determine whether to recommend funding for the proposals they were reviewing, and at what level. Without knowledge of how much funding was being recommended by other subcommittees for other requests, the result was a collective set of recommendations far too large for the existing temporary fund. Despite last minute cuts to entire categories of funding, the amount allocated left very little of the temporary pool available to continue to fund temporary requests. The 2019-2020 committee began the year with every committee member assigned to a subcommittee. As the year progressed, this decision was abandoned, partially because of time-constraints but also because of its limited effectiveness. Instead, every committee member was assigned several units' requests to review in-depth and present to the committee during the winter quarter. Rather than have unit directors come in and present to SFAC, the committee decided to email any questions that arose from this process directly to unit directors. The conversations that SFAC had during this time period were crucial in coming together to make recommendations during spring quarter. Unlike in prior year, the 2019-2020 SFAC not only finished early, but also did not overallocate the way past years have.

d) Using an Excel Sheet to individualize recommendations

To help speed up and individualize the process, as well as to ensure that members of the committee understood the difficult decisions that needed to be made, every committee member was given a spreadsheet with all of the requests and asked to make their own recommendations for funding that would total no more than \$2m. These personal decisions were based on the discussions that the committee had with each other on its priorities, but they also reflected the unique priorities and lived experiences of an incredibly diverse committee. In this spreadsheet, each member could choose to recommend to not fund, fully fund, or partially fund with some suggested amount. Nicole then led the committee through a process of finding consensus on each line item. Where there was a significant consensus on all the spreadsheets, Nicole asked for comments and then moved on. When the committee did not agree, the committee discussed further to reach compromises between its members.

e) Using lump sums

There were a number of instances where SFAC could not recommend continuing full funding for existing positions and services in a particular unit. While these positions and services were funded by temporary funds, they had existed long enough in some areas that a reduction in

temporary funds felt like a budget cut. When SFAC could not recommend funding for all of the ongoing requests made by a particular unit, SFAC often recommended a lump sum allocation that would allow the unit director to determine how to prioritize their reduced funding. SFAC did not feel its role was to determine how budget cuts (or what felt like a budget cut, even though this was temporary funding) should be implemented. The lump sum was not allowed to be used to fund expenses that fall in the categories that SFAC stated in the call letter that it would not consider for funding (e.g. speaker honoraria, professional development for career staff, travel).

4) SSF Temporary Allocations for FY 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

Through the recommendations and approval of funding allocations for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 by the 2019-2020 SFAC, there were a number of cases in which units had received funding for the students or professional staff responsible for executing programs without receiving any funding for the program itself. Some units notified us that this barrier had prevented them from implementing some programs completely. In response to their concern, an amendment to the bylaws was passed to give units directors the flexibility to reallocate SSF temporary funds that were at least partially funded for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 to allow for these programs to be implemented despite unanticipated impacts. However, the 2019-2020 SFAC believed that there should be a limit to this flexibility in that funds should not be reallocated between different years and should not be used to pay for honoraria, professional development and travel for career staff, or the purchase of additional equipment. The Chancellor in his approval letter to SFAC's recommendation in the change in the bylaws. He also clarified that if units are able to implement programs using less than the amount of funding allocated, they can carry forward those funds to use for similar programmatic expenses in future years, through the normal process.

5) *Changes to the SFAC Charter*

a) Transfer Student Inclusivity Amendment to Article II, Section B

Before the change to the SFAC Charter, students were only eligible to serve on the committee if they had two years of student eligibility remaining at the time of the appointment because the SFAC Charter mandated two-year staggered appointments (each student government nominated two students to two-year terms each year). Second year-transfer students were considered to have only one year of eligibility. Consequently, SFAC had been particularly inaccessible to transfer students leading to many capable transfer students prevented from being appointed. SFAC is committed to supporting all students and acknowledges the

importance of transfer student representation and participation on the committee. Consequently, the 2019-2020 SFAC recommended, and the Chancellor approved, an amendment to the Charter that would allow the Undergraduate Student Associated Council (USAC) to appoint an undergraduate transfer who is ineligible to serve for two years for a one-year term. If the transfer student's eligibility changes, they shall carry out their second year on the committee. If the transfer student's eligibility does not change, USAC shall appoint a one-year appointment to carry out the remainder of the two year term. This effort by the 2019-2020 SFAC allowed for two transfer students to be appointed for the 2020-2021 SFAC, a record. Given that transfer students represent nearly one-third of the undergraduate population at UCLA, an increase in transfer student representation is a momentous achievement. I hope that other SFAC's across the UC and future SFAC's at UCLA continue to value the presence of transfer students and the diversity of perspective they can offer.

b) Master Student Inclusivity Amendment to Article II, Section B

Following the transfer student inclusivity amendment to the SFAC charter, graduate students on the committee brought up that many masters students are in one- or two-year programs, preventing many masters students from serving on the committee. In an effort to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, the committee recommended, and the Chancellor approved, an amendment that would allow masters students who would otherwise be ineligible to serve on SFAC to have the opportunity to do so. The change to the charter allows the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to nominate a Master's student in a one-year program or in the final year of their two-year program to serve on SFAC for a one-year term. If the students eligibility changes, they shall be nominated to carry out their second year on the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC). The proposed change closely parallels the language of the transfer student inclusivity amendment to Article II, Section B.

c) Remote Participation Inclusivity Amendment to Article IV, Section I

Even before the Covid-19 outbreak, committee members on SFAC recognized how in person participation could create a barrier for some communities and individuals, including, but not limited to, members with dependents, members with disabilities, workers, commuters, and economically and socially marginalized members. The change to the charter allows all members to have the choice to participate remotely. It was made in an effort to increase accessibility and inclusion for all. Though the decision to offer remote access to meetings was made prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the transition to remote learning as a result of Covid-19, makes this amendment particularly relevant. Although some committee members had doubts about the efficacy of remote participation, the move to Zoom meetings for the entirety of Spring 2020

provides a case-study for the effectiveness of Zoom and fully remote participation. While we had transitioned to Zoom to maximize the safety of our committee members and to comply with UCLA safety regulations, this transition suggested that remote participation can be just as effective as in-person participation. For future committees, we reiterate the importance of thinking intentionally and earnestly about ways to make participation on SFAC maximally accessible and inclusive.

6) Early Care and Education (ECE)

As prior committees have reiterated over the years, SFAC strongly values the work of ECE. We recognize that access to childcare can improve retention and graduation rates for parenting students. However, very few students are actually able to access these childcare services. SAIRO data from 2018 suggests that there are over 800 parenting students at UCLA. And yet, only 40-45 are able to utilize these services, receiving a subsidy that made up the difference between the state grant funding available to some low-income parents and the cost of child care at ECE (approximate average of \$10,000 per student). The number of students who have the state grant that ECE admits to child care is limited by the funding provided from Student Services Fees. ECE receives approximately \$280,000 each year in permanent SSF funding. For the FY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, ECE's temporary funding requests totaled \$636,701. Given that this request comprised 30% of the \$2 million in temporary SSF funds and that the Chancellor had already approved the 2018-2019 committee's recommendation to provide \$453,784 to ECE for 2020-2021. We unfortunately were unable to consider anything even close to fully fund the request. Instead, we only advised the Chancellor to allocate a lump sum of \$165,000 to ECE, or only 26% of their request. ECE has expressed to us that with a reduced allocation, they would be unable to accommodate the current number of students receiving childcare subsidies. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to match even this amount in future years. We believe that there needs to be a change in the way childcare is approached at UCLA; otherwise, low-income parenting students will have to compete for an already limited number of subsidized child care services. SFAC urges ECE to work with both Student Affairs, the Administrative Vice Chancellor, and The Office of the Chancellor to find a more sustainable way to ensure that low-income parenting students are able to access affordable child-care at UCLA or in their communities.

7) Transfer Student Center and Veterans Resource Center Rent

SFAC strongly recognizes the need for both a transfer student center and veterans resource center. In July 2017 Student Affairs opened these centers in Kerckhoff Hall (moving them out of smaller spaces in the Bruin Resource Center) after entering into a rental agreement with

ASUCLA and renovating the space. Since that time, this space has functioned as a safe space for students to access a variety of essential services, study, and build community. While seeking to secure permanent funding for the annual rental payment, Student Affairs requested that SFAC recommend funding the rent from temporary SSF funds. SFAC chose not to recommend funding to pay the rent for this space for FY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. While this was an extraordinarily difficult decision, the request totaled nearly \$275,000 or over 13% of the \$2 million in temporary SSF funds. The Chancellor in his response upheld the recommendation not to provide SSF funding for the rent at that time; however, he emphasized that if SSF funds are unable to provide funding for an ongoing basis and Student Affairs is unable to utilize alternative funding sources, then Transfer Student Center and the Veteran Resource Center may be unable to continue providing their services in the space they now occupy. Consequently, if both continue to hold true in the future, it is likely that SSF funds will have to be the source of some or all of the cost of rent for this space. I want to reiterate that the small pool of temporary funds greatly limits SFAC's capacity to advise the Chancellor to fund the rent; the 2020-2021 SFAC will only have \$1.75 to work with, an estimate even lower than what the 2019-2020 SFAC had to work with. The committee recognizes the consequences of choosing not to fund the rent and I am relieved that the Chancellor and Student Affairs will be able to pay rent for the coming year. I hope that if and when SFAC chooses to recommend funding the request for rent, that the committee continues to be dedicated to funding student services for various underserved communities on campus and avoids cutting our invaluable staff and student workers as much as possible. It is also important to keep in mind that most university funds cannot be used to pay the rent for a student service (e.g. state funds cannot be used), and that the committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor, who may determine that the rent be funded whatever SFAC recommends.

8) Decision to not include 3% increase in merits for professional staff

SFAC was confident that due to covid-19 related financial losses, the UC Office of the President (UCOP) would not be authorizing the typical 3% merit pool that is used to provide incremental pay increases to non-represented staff. Therefore, when the committee did choose to recommend fully funding an existing staff position, it reduced the requested allocation to eliminate the 3% raise that had been anticipated. Rather than making a recommendation to use the the small amount of temporary funding that became available by eliminating the projected 3% merit increases, the committee chose to keep the remaining funding for the 2020-2021 SFAC, as it recognized that the committee in future years would have to make even more difficult decisions than the 2019-2020 had encountered.

9) Current Events

It would be remiss to not acknowledge the events that took place in 2020 that made the recommendations of this SFAC and future SFAC's even more difficult. Many students are struggling financially, academically, and emotionally with the transition to online learning following the global pandemic, particularly students with disabilities, low-income students, students struggling with basic needs, immunocompromised students, queer students, international students, and students living in unsafe households. Furthermore, worldwide protests about police brutality erupted following the ruthless murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. While the establishment of a Black Resource Center at UCLA and other changes by senior administrators are a step forward in addressing the inequities and injustices Black people experience in America, it will not sufficiently address their systematic marginalization historically, socially, economically, and politically.

With these events in mind, it is crucial that future committees pledge to combat systemic racism, center underserved communities at UCLA, and becoming anti-racist. To do this, the committee must take steps to address the systematic barriers that pervade UCLA and beyond - from white supremacy to occupying others' homeland. Future committees must actively work to acknowledge that these barriers exist both within and outside the committee and intentionally work to dismantle them.

Conclusion

In closing, this report provides a comprehensive accounting of the 2019-2020 SFAC's priorities and decision-making process. To write this report, I utilized and copy pasted directly small sections of letters that were written by the 2019-2020 Chair, Nicole Corona, and commented and reviewed by the entire committee. All of this work could not have been done without the invaluable insight of the committee and for that I thank Nicole, Paulina, KP, Denise, Janay, Brittnee, Jackie, Deb, Carina, Kevin, and Karen. I also want to thank Ellen for acting as our brilliant APB Advisor and both Kim and Michelle for their help with the SFAC minutes. And last but not least, thank you to Christine, our SFAC Advisor, for her never-ending insight and passion for this committee and from whom I received a lot of help on this report. I am so excited to see all that SFAC will accomplish in the years to come!

Sincerely,

Atreyi Mitra (she/hers)

SFAC Vice Chair 2019-2020

SFAC Chair 2020-2021