**SFAC Continuity Report 2016-2017 Academic Year**

I write this letter as a measure of continuity to help your council understand the undertakings of our SFAC 2016-17 Council and my vision as SFAC Chair. If you have any questions about the content of this report, please contact Ashraf Beshay (2016-2017 SFAC Chair) at ashrafbeshay@g.ucla.edu. Any inquiries about the current work of the committee can be directed to sfacchair@saonet.ucla.edu.

**SFAC Priorities and Ongoing Campus Issues**

This year, our council worked multiple tasks to address our goals for SFAC. Budget presentations were continuously made to ensure that our committee was fully aware of the nature and size of our budget, allowing us to make recommendations that are fiscally responsible. Some of our greatest priorities were to: 1) create a new funding process that equips SFAC with more data and information to base our recommendations upon, 2) develop a strategy for consideration of permanent funding requests, and 3) improve student representation through student engagement in our funding process. These following topics, as well as other items of business from the academic year, are discussed in greater length in this report:

1. **Unit Review and Funding Recommendation Process**

This year, one of our greatest endeavors this year was re-envisioning our funding process to capture the strengths of our current one while adding more aspects to it that makes it more comprehensive and fair. Our council abandoned the traditional funding process that invited Unit Directors for short presentations and Q&A sessions. Instead, we elected to visit all the SSF-funded sites to assess the services and see the spaces that we fund firsthand. This allowed representatives to review funding materials prior to the visits to ask pertinent questions that would assist with subcommittee recommendations. The process has been greatly fruitful as we were able to better appreciate the impact of these services and to evaluate their need for support.

1. **Permanent budget and funding requests**

Our council accepted permanent funding requests that were submitted by Student Affairs for multiple positions that fell under SSF-funded units such as the Community Programming Office and Bruin Resource Center. SFAC requested the prioritization of these requests by Student Affairs in the case of not being able to fully fund them based on budget limitations even if inclined to. A subcommittee was created to examine the budget and offer a recommendation on permanent budget allocations and it was determined that all positions could theoretically be funded if SFAC wishes to do so. The committee then reviewed each request separately and made decisions based on the position’s history, with a more favorable view of positions that have existed for longer, and the unit’s need and reliance on the position for critical operations. Additionally, the need for the service supported by this position was taken into consideration.

A major funding decision that SFAC made was to providing over $1 million in staff funding for CAPS. The decision came as the positions were unionized and in need for permanent funding to remain. The funding recommendation was made with the agreement that the future council will review this case more thoroughly and work with Student Affairs to examine ways to shift these positions to permanent funding from an alternative source. According to the information we were provided, this could be a possibility in the next three or four years. It will be crucial to investigate this case due to the magnitude of its request.

1. **Council on Student Fees (CSF)**

This year, the UCLA SFAC Chair and Vice Chair served as the representatives to CSF and provided updates to SFAC on all CSF proceedings. CSF focused on three campaigns 1) UC Referendum Campaign, 2) Course Materials Fee Review, 3) Student Mental Health. Many of the issues that concerned our council last year, leading to a considering of our withdrawal from CSF, were the expensive membership dues paid to CSF and lack tangible results from the work done on council. The primary concern was addressed as our representatives lobbied to cut the budget, which led to a great decrease in membership dues. The second concern was addressed through the UCLA SFAC Chair’s leadership of the UC Referendum Campaign, which showed great promise and real potential for making change on our UC campuses. The campaign will continue next year with the goal of reaching its completion by June 2018. During summer, UCLA hosted the CSF meeting.

1. **Recommendations (See recommendation letters to Chancellor for more details)**
2. Benefit Shortfall and Cost of Living Adjustments

Funding benefit shortfall and cost of living adjustments (COLA) for full-time staff support with SSF funds for the 2015-2016 was a priority for SFAC. Understanding that a large portion of SFAC funds are allocated to full-time contract staff, SFAC understood the importance of supporting this expense and wanted to recommend the best option to the Chancellor given budget forecasts. SFAC recommended that permanent SSF funds be used to cover benefit shortfall and COLA for the two upcoming years. However, this was a decision made based on availability of funds and budget flexibility. Each council should conduct thorough budget reviews before making this decision. It is important to reserve permanent funding for programs and positions in future years.

1. Early Childhood Education

Reviewing the request for UCLA’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, it became clear that the service is not making enough impact for the cost it requires. SFAC still continues to provde a $10,000 subsidy for each one of the 43 or so students. The unit is not meeting the existing need, as many student parents remain on the waiting list for over a year. Additionally, an internal probe into the inner workings of ECE revealed troubling findings regarding the organization of the unit. For these reasons, SFAC did not recommended to fund the increased funding request from ECE. Instead, SFAC recommended a continuing allocation of temporary funding for 2017-2018. Additionally, SFAC recommended that ECE and Student Affairs develop a proposal that uses SSF funds more effectively.

1. Transfer and Veterans Resource Center

SFAC has gladly funded the Transfer and Veterans Resource Center, which opened July 2017. Engaging with the transfer and veteran communities has made it abundantly clear to myself that there is an immense need for this space to exist, which would also alleviate some of the pressure on the Bruin Resource Center. Though SFAC acknowledges the importance of the service, the council should engage in a conversation with administration very early on in the year to secure outside funding that is more sustainable than the allocated temporary funds. This conversation must be had as quickly as possibly as council will be busy with considering the funding requests as soon as they start coming in.

1. **Transfer Student Representation**

This year, as SFAC Chair, I was invited to the Transfer Student Leadership Coalition to encourage transfer students to be involved on SFAC. A clear barrier to transfer involvement was communicated by the board, which was the 2-year appointment nature of the position. Though there are times that SFAC representatives graduate early and a one-year term is available to complete the appointment, this is clearly an unsustainable way to get transfer students involved in our council. Transfers represents around a quarter of the UCLA undergraduate student population, and their needs are unique. To promote inclusion of this community, a discussion regarding whether one of the undergraduate positions should become a one-year appointment was had. There are pros and cons to the idea. Though it would certainly be open to transfer students if it were a one-year appointment, there will be some loss of continuity and institutional knowledge. Therefore, this year’s council recommended that the 2017-18 SFAC fully considers the option of adding a one-year undergraduate and one-year graduate position that would allow for more students to have a voice on the board, while maintaining balance between graduate and undergraduate students. Additionally, the one-year graduate appointment would serve students seeking a Masters degree and who usually complete the program in two years, similar to transfer students. This seems to be a perfect solution to a problem that has been discussed for a while now; SFAC should give full consideration to this solution.

1. **Bylaw Amendment**

A key decision that the council made this year was passing a bylaw amendment to address a recusal process that existed for many years, whereby members employed by a unit recuse themselves during the preliminary discussions of that units’ funding requests and are then invited back into the discussions to share their thoughts, ask or answer questions, provide their own recommendations, engage in a conversation with all of council, and finally exercise their full voting rights. The process was formalized and submitted to the Chancellor in a bylaw amendment. However, the Chancellor indicated that the 2017-18 SFAC should conduct a review of this amendment. I would advise that a subcommittee be created with undergraduate, graduate, and administrative representation to undertake this task. It will also be critical to bring in new representatives’ voices into this conversation to listen to more perspectives on this issue.

1. **Student engagement**

A main goal that I had set for our council was to bring some of our conversations out of SFAC and into the student body sphere to gain more input and be better representatives of our constituents. After all, the entire purpose of SFAC is to translate student input into funding recommendations and decisions. To a great extent, this goal was accomplished through two presentations SFAC representatives made to USAC and GSA. Two undergraduate and two graduate representatives coordinated these presentations. It was a good opportunity to invite members of these councils to share their opinions on what the campus climate is like and what resources we need to invest in. This was also a great measure of accountability to our appointing bodies. I would advise that SFAC continues to thing about the goal in mind and strategize early in the year to be able to accomplish this goal through the agreed upon methods; I would certainly recommend that SFAC organizes a town hall and invites student leaders into the conversation.

These are all the tasks that we have worked on. Thanks to the hard work of all the representatives of our 2016-17 Council we made great progress and provided very thoughtful recommendations to the Chancellor. I continue to be hopeful that future SFAC councils will make great accomplishments in future years.

Sincerely,

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Ashraf Beshay

SFAC Chair 2016-17