

UC Irvine Student Fee Advisory Committee

2021-2022 Annual Report

Introduction

As per Regental Policy 3101: The University of California Student Tuition and Fee Policy, the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) on each UC campus is assigned the role of providing recommendations on the use of Student Services Fees (SSF) and each year's Student Services Fee as set by the Regents. In accordance with this charge, the UC Irvine SFAC provides the following recommendations on incremental SSF budget allocations, a summary of recommendations for proposed 2022-2023 Course Materials and Services Fees (CMSF), and recommendations on the language included in the proposed compulsory campus-based student fee referenda which were to be included on 2022 spring student elections ballot.

I. Incremental Student Services Fee Revenue Recommendations:

SSF Allocation Recommendation Process

SFAC identified six areas of focus in this year's funding requests, consistent with past student survey data and committee deliberations. These priority themes were: Career & Professional Development, Academic Engagement, Student Life, Campus Climate, Health & Wellness, and Equity & Achievement. These pillars were shared with prospective units within the application materials to ensure that they could better align their requests with the purpose and ambitions of the SSF.

To facilitate the review, each SFAC member individually reviewed all the proposals and provided an initial ranking. The full committee then reconvened to review each proposal individually, giving first consideration to requests that had received the highest average score.

Recommended SSF Allocations

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the SFAC was charged with making recommendations on total permanent allocations of \$269,360 including \$250,000 in new SSF funding for 2021-2022, plus \$19,360 in permanent funds remaining from the 2020-2021 cycle. In 2021-2022, the committee received funding allocation proposals from various campus units totaling \$673,958 in budget requests. The decrease from previous years was highlighted in many applications, with various units prioritizing items vulnerable to cuts or that would become harder to self-finance due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With total requests outpacing the committee's available budget, it was inevitable that many of the applicants would not receive additional SSF

funding for 2021-2022 via the SFAC’s budget recommendation process. The following recommendations, listed below in order of highest priority, are for requests the committee considered as high-priority and true to what SFAC-recommended SSF funding is intended for: to fund services and activities that are not essential to the core academic function of the campus, but are deemed important and complementary to the university experience.

Table 1: 2021-2022 SFAC SSF Funding Recommendations Rank Proposed Allocations

Rank	Proposed Allocation	Recommended Funding
Student Affairs: Latinx Resource Center		
1	Permanent funds to increase five Student Assistants (SA) positions to meet minimum wage (\$3,900); pay for 5 SA positions to attend a 20-hour multi-day training (\$1,800), and 2-3 summer SA positions 5-10 hours/week (\$3,000), and to fund the 2 DREAM Project Fellows (DPF) positions (\$9,000), which is 2 annual stipends of \$4,500 each in order to continue growing capacity of the center and provide consistency.	\$17,700 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Womxn's Center for Success		
2	Permanent funding for 1.0 FTE Student Life Development Specialist 2 (\$44,982) to support and develop programming, the student program interns, and the student community; to expand the Womxn's Leadership Seminar Program (\$6,000) and the Womxn's Month Programs (\$6,000). This funding will enable the center to offer these programs and educational events monthly rather than on an annual basis.	\$56,982 (perm), plus benefits
OVPTL: Peer Academic Advising		
3	Permanent funds for the continued support of Peer Academic Advising positions (PAA) for all schools and advising departments. Funds allocated will go towards the difference between PAA’s current permanent allocation, and what will be necessary to support the same number of PAA positions with the minimum wage increase.	\$21,120 (perm), plus benefits

Student Affairs: Dream Center		
4	Permanent funds for one 1.0 FTE Academic Achievement Counselor 2 which will allow the center to permanentize the position, which remains temporary through August 2022. This position will provide programming support for 75 events per year, coordinate fellowship distribution for 50 students, and will help lead the annual UCI Undocumented Student Conference.	\$49,000 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Campus Organizations & Volunteer Programs		
5	Permanent funding to cover the minimum wage increase for student staff who have played a critical role in all COVP endeavors. Funds will help supplement past SFAC allocations for training and program support for 3 student staff in the summer and throughout the academic year.	\$13,000 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: UCI CARE		
6	Permanent funds for three student staff who support departmental initiatives and programming.	\$12,000 (perm), plus benefits
OVPTL: Student Success Initiative		
7	Permanent funds to support the minimum wage increase for 13 peer educators and 23 mentors who serve traditionally underserved students.	\$41,760 (perm), plus benefits
Peer Mentoring Program for Mathematical, Computational, and Systems Biology Gateway Program (School of Biological Sciences)		
8	Temporary funds to support student stipends for the peer mentoring program. This is designed to enable the recruitment and retention of mentees and mentors.	\$3,216 (temp), plus benefits

Student Affairs: Campus Recreation		
9	Temporary funds to support the Wellbeing Fee Waiver Fund. This will provide fee waivers to students with the goal to eliminate financial barriers to participation in Campus Recreation fitness, wellbeing, and recreational sports programs.	\$23,582 (temp)
Student Affairs: Sustainability Resource Center		
10	Permanent funds for the reclassification of the director position.	\$16,000 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Veteran Services Center		
11	Permanent funds to support the Veterans and Military Families Graduation Recognition Program, which recognizes graduating military-connected students, veterans, reservists, National Guard, active duty, and dependents.	\$15,000 (perm)
	Total Permanent Funds	\$242,562
	Total Temporary Funds	\$26,798
	Total Recommendations	\$269,360

The rationale for each funding recommendation is as follows:

1. Student Affairs: Latinx Resource Center (17,700 permanent, plus benefits)

As a recently designated ‘Hispanic Serving Institution,’ UCI has increased specific programming and staffing to support and recognize this vital portion of our community. SFAC found that providing funds that will go towards the Center’s student assistants and DREAM Project Fellows will have a catalytic effect on the community’s inclusion at UCI and provide student jobs on campus.

2. Student Affairs: Womxn's Center for Success (\$56,982 permanent, plus benefits)

The Womxn's Hub has grown more prominent in its place at UCI to foster gender equity by developing various social justice initiatives, which have gained the support of many students. Although SFAC prefers the opportunity and budget efficiency of student internships over FTE positions, we felt compelled to fund one 1.0 staff position as the center continues to grow. Additionally, we believe the Womxn's Leadership Seminar Program and the Womxn's Month Programs are vital conduits for students to get involved with the center's various resources.

3. OVPTL: Peer Academic Advising (21,120 permanent, plus benefits)

We are recommending funding to maintain the current PAA program, however, we opted not to support the expansion of the program. We find that UCI over relies on the PAAs to perform basic curricular functions, some of which are better served through an improved digital interface within the UCI Registrar's page. The previous Provost opted to indefinitely postpone funding a project that would have allowed the Registrar page to enable each student portal to show which major and degree requirements have been fulfilled by which course in their academic history. This is an incredibly common feature that would help every student. By implementing these changes, the burden placed on the PAAs would be lessened and we anticipate the need and reliance on PAAs to decrease and be closer to our peer institutions. We strongly encourage the Provost's Office to adopt this cost-saving change.

4. Student Affairs: Dream Center (\$49,000 permanent, plus benefits)

The Dream Center has become widely recognized for supporting some of the most vulnerable students on campus. For this reason, we recommend the permanent funding of one 1.0 FTE which will permanentize this position and aid in the programming support for 75 events per year and the annual UCI Undocumented Student Conference. In addition to this, this position will coordinate fellowship distributions to over 50 students.

5. Student Affairs: Campus Organizations & Volunteer Programs (\$13,000 permanent, plus benefits)

The Campus Organizations & Volunteer Programs oversees 600+ campus organizations at UCI. The committee felt strongly that the addition of student staff positions to help aid the Anteatr Involvement Fair would not only aid student development of effective communication and collaboration skills but also contribute to a broader sense of inclusivity at UCI. Additionally, given the rise in the minimum wage, SFAC thought it was vital to ensure current positions had enough funding to cover this gap.

6. Student Affairs: UCI CARE (\$12,000 permanent, plus benefits)

We remain committed to ensuring students have the opportunity to grow career skills that will enhance their job prospects post-graduation. We recommend the funding of the UCI CARE student staff positions as the center is committed to hiring students for an entire academic year to ensure in-depth training and the fostering of leadership skills. Furthermore, CARE provides support for students at one of their most vulnerable times. For these reasons, we highly recommend the funding of this proposal.

7. OVPTL: Student Success Initiative (\$41,760 permanent, plus benefits)

The Student Success Initiative put forth a very strong proposal that demonstrated the need for additional funding to cover the minimum wage increase for more than 44 student staff positions. These student staff service thousands of students at UCI and often assist underserved students including transfer students, first-generation/low-income students, former foster youth, and undocumented students. Their breadth and impact on-campus is remarkable, thus rightfully receiving our recommendation to fund this proposal.

8. Peer Mentoring Program for Mathematical, Computational, and Systems Biology Gateway Program (\$3,216 temporary, plus benefits)

The committee was impressed with the thoughtfulness of this proposal and believes the Peer Mentoring Program will provide a space for graduate students in the interdisciplinary Mathematical, Computational and Systems Biology Gateway Program to connect, share resources and create a strong sense of community. Since this is a new program, SFAC recommends temporary funding and would encourage the applicants to reapply for SFAC funding in the next Academic Year with a detailed program evaluation. Such metrics can include the number of student participants throughout the year, tangible skills fostered by mentors, and pre and post-surveys of mentees on their perceptions of resources on-campus as well as the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program from the perspective of the mentors.

9. Student Affairs: Campus Recreation

We are recommending partial, one-time funding for the Campus Recreation's Wellbeing Fee Waiver Program. The committee was excited to see the holistic approach Campus Recreation has taken to ensure fitness, well-being, and recreational sports programs are accessible to all students on campus, regardless of financial standing. Since this is a new program, the committee recommends temporary funding and encourages Campus Recreation to apply to SFAC next year with student evaluations and financial reporting on the program.

10. Student Affairs: Sustainability Resource Center (\$16,000 permanent, plus benefits)

The Sustainability Center continues to provide resources, education, and programs that further allow students of UCI to become more involved and aware of environmental issues. Given how broad SRC's impact is on campus and the wide array of tasks and responsibilities placed on the Program Coordinator, we recommend the reclassification of the Program Coordinator to Director. This partial funding will ensure staff are treated equitably and will enhance their ability to positively impact our campus community.

11. Student Affairs: Veteran Services Center (\$15,000)

We are recommending permanent funding for the Veterans and Military Families Graduation Recognition Program. This program will help recognize graduating military-connected students as they meet their educational goals. The application highlighted the strong interest of the military-connected community to be honored for their military service and the sacrifices of their military-connected families. We recommend this funding as it will benefit this growing but, as quoted from their application, "largely misunderstood population" on-campus.

II. Course Materials and Services Fee (CMSF) Recommendations

In addition to reviewing SSF funding requests, SFAC also convened to review and recommend various CMSF requests from different academic units. The applications need to justify why a new cost is warranted and demonstrate a substantive level of student consultation. SFAC understands that several units opted to hold some requests from the past year due to the concern that even a modest CMSF increase would have an outsized impact on many students and their families due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciated and concurred with that approach. This year, SFAC was persuaded about the efficacy of the four (4) CMSFs presented after additional conversations with the applicant academic units. The CMSF SFAC recommends are ENGR 7A/B & MSE 60. The CMSF SFAC did not recommend are ENGR 54 & MSE 190.

- 1) **ENGR 7A/B:** The application demonstrated why a fee was appropriate, highlighted why other funding sources were no longer available to the department, and adequately consulted with students who took the course series. Given that the fee has not been raised in years and that inflation has been particularly high as well as students' positive opinion of the course, SFAC felt comfortable recommending this CMSF.
- 2) **MSE 60:** The application demonstrated how effective the course has been for students and highlighted students' approval for a \$5 increase. Although there was not a clear breakdown of expenses provided by the department, SFAC felt encouraged to support the fee increase

as student feedback conveyed how important this course was for student development. For these reasons, SFAC felt comfortable recommending this CMSF.

- 3) **ENGR 54:** The application demonstrated why the fee was appropriate, however, SFAC was not convinced that all avenues to keep costs at a minimum for students were explored. Furthermore, although student opinion demonstrated the effectiveness of the course, student opinion was strongly against a fee increase. Given this, SFAC did not recommend this fee proposal.
- 4) **MSE190:** The application demonstrated the need for a new fee for this course, however, no student feedback was provided. In consulting with the department it was made clear that no student survey was conducted. SFAC strongly values student feedback and did not recommend this proposal for this reason.

SFAC does not always recommend CMSF applications but felt comfortable recommending this application. The committee remains committed to monitoring CMSF increases in the best interest of the relevant student bodies. For this reason, SFAC strongly values the contributions of student feedback and in-person discussions with school representatives to aid the committee's understanding of the merit behind each CMSF request.

III. Spring 2021 Student Fee Referenda Recommendations

The committee reviewed and provided feedback to three referenda for the 2022 spring elections ballot.

First, SFAC reviewed and provided feedback to the Merage Student Association (MSA) who proposed raising their existing fee. SFAC ultimately recommended the inclusion of this referendum on the 2022 Spring election ballot with suggestions.

Second, the committee reviewed and provided feedback to the undergraduate student government on the draft language for the proposed student referenda for the Womxn's Hub fee and recommended the inclusion of the referenda on the 2022 spring elections ballot with suggestions.

Third, the committee reviewed and provided feedback to the undergraduate student government on the draft language for the proposed student referenda for the New U fee and recommended the inclusion of the referenda on the 2022 spring elections ballot with suggestions.

IV. Moving Forward

Considering the changing fiscal landscape of UCI, SFAC hopes to be a greater resource to the Provost and EVC, the Budget Office, Student Affairs, and campus units as administrators continue to explore efficient budget allocations. SFAC is experienced in administering scarce resources and believes that its track record of recommendation illustrates its ability to understand the most crucial investments in student services and the student experience.

SFAC feels strongly that UCI's adaptation during the 2021-2022 academic year has highlighted opportunities for a greater efficiency of resources that can deliver a better learning and living experience to students. As we noted in previous years with the PAA Advisors, strategic adaptation within a hybrid learning environment can better connect students, especially marginalized students, with the information and resources they need to thrive. We encourage the Provost's Office to engage with the 2022-2023 SFAC, ASUCI, and AGS to identify these opportunities to help propel UCI into its brilliant future.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve our student body and the UCI campus in this way.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hallak
Chair, UCI Student Fee Advisory Committee

Sarah Alkhatib
Vice-Chair, UCI Student Fee Advisory Committee

2021-2022 SFAC members