

Admissions and Financial Aid Committee  
(AFAC)

Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 14, 2021

1:00-2:30PM

**I. Chair's Report – Abbas Ghassemi – 5 min**

A. BOARS Meeting (May 7, 2021)

- a. Discussions regarding the BOARS draft letter to California State Auditor (CSA) about admission selection requirement, specifically articulating a priority order for how campuses would decide which applicants they would admit, rather than vague or general characteristics that are considered when evaluating applicants.
- b. Discussions related to remote instruction, vaccination requirement, and hybrid course offerings in Fall 2021. What are the impacts, who are the impacted communities, and what are the potential approaches for problem resolution? If a student enters a classroom without a mask and the instructor feels that they need protection, what is the process for conflict resolution? The UC system is an in-person university system. Online instruction should only occur as an exception.
- c. PIQ Plagiarism (Personal Insight Questions). The PIQ detection process requires the staff to identify items indicated by the applicant after manually reviewing their application. For example, if an applicant indicates that they are the captain of a soccer team, they can be asked to verify statement. The PIQs are emulated from a repository, and the process is similar to the recent discussions regarding Chegg, where students were alleged cheating. The PIQ detection process is being implemented so that when items are emulated and appearing in three or four other applications, the UC can verify statement as part of the UC admissions decision.
- d. Discussions regarding the UC Ethnic Studies course for Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC); the admissions process for community college admissions and transfer students.

B. DivCo Meeting (May 14, 2021)

- a. The Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) minor was approved at the DivCo level.
- b. The UC Debt Free Pathways memo that member Eaton initiated and was discussed at DivCo has been transmitted to the Board of Regents for consideration at their May 12-13 meeting.
- c. Negotiations with the Association of American Educators (AAE) have failed.

UC Merced is highly impacted, having a significant number of Unit 18 lecturers that are involved in the Writing program. A strike in September/October 2021 is anticipated.

- d. The language included in the AFAC bylaws regarding the term of service of the AFAC Chair was unclear. The request to change the term of service of the AFAC Chair from two years to one year was approved at the May 4 Meeting of the Division, along with changes to other Merced Division bylaws.
- e. Discussions were held regarding the Strategic Plan. Members of DivCo provided comments about focusing on research, the role of the faculty, and the interaction between faculty, specifically related to the mission and vision of the university.

## II. Consent Calendar – 5 min

### A. The Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Note: the April 9 meeting minutes will be circulated for review via email.

## III. System Review Items – Chair Ghassemi – 10 min

### A. [SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) Vaccination Policy](#)

This policy would require students, faculty, academic appointees, and staff who are accessing campus facilities at a UC location beginning this Fall to be immunized against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss and endorse this proposal.

Deadline: May 17, 2021.

A member noted that, pursuant to [California Senate Bill 277](#), the Personal Belief Exemption for vaccines was eliminated, and recommended that the proposed Vaccination policy mirror California's legislature law.

Chair Ghassemi suggested other members read the policy and provide any additional comments.

Action:

- AFAC members review and provide any additional comments by the end of the day.

Deadline: May 17, 2021.

### B. [Presidential Policy – Fee Policy for Graduate Student in Absentia Registration](#)

The revisions of the policy would permit Deans to establish “a local campus region within which in absentia registration will not be considered” instead of limiting eligibility to students studying outside of California.

**Requested Action:** AFAC to discuss the proposed revisions.

Deadline: May 24, 2021.

Members felt that this policy did not have a direct impact on AFAC. If members have any comments, it was suggested to provide them by Wednesday, May 19, 2021, otherwise AFAC will decline to opine.

Action:

- Two members noted that they have no comments.
- If Chair Ghassemi has any comments, he will provide them by Wednesday, May 19, 2021.

#### **IV. Admissions by Exception – Dustin Noji, Director of Admissions – 25 min**

##### A. [A by E Applications Report](#)

**Requested Action:** Members to review and approve the report.

The latest version of the A by E Applications Report that needs review by AFAC members is linked above. This list includes the regular A by E files, not exceptional cases. This process will likely continue through the summer. Director Noji asked the committee to review the report similarly to how it has been reviewed in the past and provide him with a recommendation to approve or deny the list as a whole.

Action:

- AFAC members review the A by E Applications report and provide their recommendation by Thursday, May 20, 2021.

##### B. [Extreme and Unusual Case](#)

**Requested Action:** Members to review and indicate approval or denial of the extreme and unusual case.

The student in this Extreme and Unusual Case is missing four semesters of course work, and the Office of Admissions normally admit those who only miss three semesters.

Action:

- AFAC members unanimously approved the Extreme and Unusual Case.
- Director of Admissions will be notified of approval via email.

#### **V. Other Business? – 5 min**

Director Noji inquired about the best procedure for AFAC members to review A by E Application Reports. It was suggested to send the reports to Melanie and Fatima, who will then coordinate with the committee. A member noted that it would be helpful to include “AFAC” in the subject line and mark the email high priority for any AFAC-

related business.

A member asked when the current term ends and the next term begins. The current term ends on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 and the next term begins on Wednesday, August 18, 2021. Appointment letters to AFAC members will be distributed by the end of May 2021.

Members collaborated and compiled a list of top priorities for AFAC Fall 2021:

- Boundary conditions for reviewing and approving A by E applications.
- Explore ways to improve connection/communication with the Enrollment Strategy Committee.
- The involvement of AFAC in regard to transfer students.
- Review of the Transfer Selection Criteria. Jill and Dustin can provide a presentation on yield and recruitment strategies.
- Invite Director of Institutional Research, Gary Lowe, to a Fall meeting to discuss graduate student indebtedness and regression modeling to better understand recruitment and retention metrics.
- Growing undergraduate degree programs.

Action:

- AFAC members review the list of priorities above and send any revisions or additional items to be included in the list by Friday, May 21, 2021.
- Priorities will be discussed at the May 28 Divisional Council meeting.

## **VI. Informational Items**

### **A. [\(Academic Council\) Suspension of Admission by Examination](#)**