

[Admissions and Financial Aid Committee \(AFAC\)](#)

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, December 9, 2022**  
**9:00am – 10:15am**

**Zoom Information:**

<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/89268355138>

Meeting ID: 892 6835 5138

One tap mobile: +16699006833,,89268355138# US (San Jose)

**I. Consent Calendar – Chair Eaton - 9:00am – 9:05am**

- A. The Agenda
- B. [November 18 meeting minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

**II. Chair’s Report – Chair Eaton – 9:05am – 9:15am**

- A. December 6 Divisional Council Meeting

Discussions were held regarding SSHA and the proposed Gallo School of Management. The pre-proposal is currently undergoing an informal review with the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA). SSHA Dean Gilger has been in communications with Chancellor Munoz and EVC/Provost Camfield regarding an inclusive process for the faculty in SSHA who would not migrate into the new School of Management.

Additional discussions were held regarding the creation of new Schools. A new School Process Work Group was formed, and members agreed to include UGC and CAPRA representation on the Work Group.

- B. December 1 meeting with VPDUE Frey and Financial Aid and Admissions Leadership to discuss the effects of the strike on students’ financial aid.

Chair Eaton expressed his appreciation for the financial aid staff and their efforts to ensure minimal impacts on students’ financial aid. An email will be sent to students with guidance for final grading.

- C. December 2 BOARS Meeting

Chair Eaton reported that the meeting was very informational. No action or voting

items were documented. Discussions were held regarding the strike, and the Systemwide Senate Chair shared information consistent with local campus updates in that UC Merced is not encouraging an imminent settlement to the strike.

### III. Update on Students' Institutional Debt – 9:15am – 9:45am

On April 15, 2022, AFAC transmitted a [memo](#) to the Senate Chair with a request that Divisional Council endorse recommendations to UC Merced Leadership for reducing adverse student impacts and administrative burdens associated with the new Academic Activity Policy. Financial Aid Director Radney provided a response to AFAC's April 15 memo, available [here](#).

On October 28, 2022, Chair Eaton and member Spencer provided an update on students' institutional debt, and today they will further discuss the issue. AFAC members consulted with UC Irvine Professor of Law Dalié Jimenez and tasked Chair Eaton and member Spencer with drafting a memo regarding updated AFAC recommendations, available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members to review Chair Eaton's and member Spencer's draft memo and recommend additional comments, if any. Members are to vote on the memo. Upon approval, AFAC analyst will transmit the endorsed memo to DivCo.

Chair Eaton provided a brief summary of his and member Spencer's memo describing the following five recommendations:

1. remove third-party debt collectors.
2. cancel approximately 50% of the outstanding institutional debts that have some association with a change that was made to UC Merced's drop for nonpayment policy during the pandemic to meet enrollment targets.
3. use Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) as a source of revenue in place of collections on cancelled debts.
4. ending the enrollment and charging of students who have not paid fees by the drop for non-payment deadline.
5. require exit counseling and written student notification on institutional debts.

AVC Orcutt is also interested in pursuing an option for administrative withdrawal.

Deputy Financial Aid Director Heather Nardello clarified that the Financial Aid Office currently offers entrance and exit counseling; however, it would be difficult to require exit counseling because many students leave without notice; it would be nearly impossible to require a student who leaves the university to seek exit counseling. She recommended softening the language from "require" to "strongly recommend".

Chair Eaton has implemented a practice of reaching out to his students to let them know of the financial aid repercussions for not attending their classes. If the reason is due to COVID, there is a waiver that students can submit.

A member inquired about the university's capacity and resources for in-house collections. Chair Eaton has been in communications with CFO Schnier, and UC Merced has been making in-house collections. Deputy Director Nardello also reported that the university is unable to make 100% in-house collections due to understaffing. She also mentioned that UC Merced does not provide a payment plan solution to students with an outstanding balance and who are not enrolled in the university. Another idea would be to let students with an outstanding balance re-enroll at UC Merced and work out a payment plan with them. One of the current roadblocks that many students are facing when enrolling in the Degree Completion Program is having to pay off the full amount of their outstanding balance prior to enrollment.

**Action:**

- AFAC members endorsed Chair Eaton's and member Spencer's draft memo (6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 1 member not present during voting) pending Chair Eaton's and member Cleary's collaboration to incorporate language related to exit counseling and outreach to students who withdraw from the university.
- Chair Eaton will revise the draft memo and invite member Cleary to review the revised version prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair for DivCo's review.

**IV. Strike Update and Discussion of Member Concerns – 9:45am – 10:05am**

Updates on the strike and guidance to faculty are available on the Senate website, [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Today, Chair Eaton will provide additional updates on the strike and discuss members' concerns.

A member noted that the new deadline for submitting dissertations from January 14, 2023 to December 9, 2022 has greatly impacted the faculty who are serving on dissertation committees. Asking students to postpone their dissertation until the Spring semester would require them to pay for another full semester of tuition.

Another member shared their concerns regarding grade submissions and its effect on students. Several other UC campuses have shared statements about how students will be affected in terms of their financial aid, graduation, or that they do not have anything to worry about. Providing reassurance to students is important, and the member feels that the administration is not providing them with any information. Associate Director Lubers noted that this is also problematic for transfer students because the transcript deadline for transfer admits is January 10, 2023. In this case, a public announcement would be helpful because a student could reference it if the January deadlines are not met.

Chair Eaton shared UC Santa Cruz's website which includes information related to financial aid. – <https://advising.ucsc.edu/faqf2022grades.html>. Chair Eaton mentioned that EVC/Provost Camfield is interested in making a similar statement that would be reassuring to most students. Chair Eaton also favors UC Santa Barbara's statement:

“In the event that a final grade for a course is not recorded, we are developing contingency plans to ensure that this would not impact your financial aid, athletic eligibility, prerequisite requirements, and/or the completion of your degree. If it becomes necessary to implement these plans, we will provide you with more information. The continuity of your education is our utmost concern.”

Chair Eaton also noted that EVC/Provost Camfield feels constrained in expressing his opinions about reaching a settlement on the strike. UCOP has authority over the strike and negotiations, and UC Merced’s administration is at a disadvantage being the newer campus and needing more revenue support compared to other more mature campuses.

**V. Debrief on November 29 Meeting with Director Noji and Associate Director Lubers – 10:05am – 10:10am**

Director of Admissions Noji, Associate Director of Admissions Lubers, Senate Executive Director Paul, and AFAC Analyst Snyder met on November 29, 2022 to explore ways to streamline the review of A by E reports. The Office of Admissions provided a set schedule for the AFAC review of A by E reports, available [here](#).

Discussions also included the Office of Admission’s plan to propose revisions to the A by E [review guidelines](#), as well as the possible establishment of an ad-hoc AFAC (sub) committee that would be exclusively tasked with the review of A by E reports.

Director Noji reported on the proposed timeline for upcoming review of A by E reports in order to reduce the number of emails sent to the membership. He also noted that he has plans for revising the systemwide BOARS A by E review guidelines to include a subcommittee of AFAC to review A by E reports with possible compensation, rather than the entire committee being tasked with each review, as well as removing non-residential students from the committee review process to reduce the volume of nonresident reviews that are included with the A by E reviews.

**VI. Any Other Business – 10:10am – 10:15am**

No new business was discussed.

**VII. Informational Items** will be regularly uploaded on the “Informational Items” AFAC Box Folder [here](#).