

ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE (AFAC)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2022-2023

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

In AY 2022-2023, AFAC held a total of 9 regularly scheduled meetings via zoom and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's [Senate Bylaw II.IV.2](#).

Areas of focus this year are described below.

Institutional Student Debts

AFAC authored a memo proposing major changes to UC Merced's intentional student debt policies following more than a year of study and consultation. The proposals, ultimately adopted by the Chancellor and the CFO, included:

- Cancellation of around \$1 million in institutional student debts incurred during the pandemic.
- A two-year extension of the existing two-year pause on use of for-profit debt collectors for debts owed to UC Merced.
- Changes to drop-for-nonpayment policies to prevent future disputed institutional student debts.
- Expansion of programs to help students resolve outstanding balances and re-enroll.

Expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness

AFAC Chair Eaton partnered with UCOP leaders, UC Irvine law professor Dalié Jimenez, and UCOP law professor Jonathan Glater to organize an unprecedented campaign to enroll UC employees in expanded public service loan forgiveness (PSLF) programs. AFAC Chair Eaton received a commendation letter from Academic Senate Chair Susan Cochrane. The effort:

- Enrolling 11,300+ UC employees in the expanded (PSLF) waiver program.
- Organized the largest virtual townhalls in UC history with 5,000 UC employees joining.
- Secured a national policy change to allow the Department of Education to accept applications from more than 4,000 UC employees who would have lost some relief because UCOP was not able to complete employment certifications by the federal PSLF waiver deadline. Tens of thousands of others beyond UC likely benefited from the policy change.

UC High School Ethnic Studies Admission Requirement

Transmitted a memo to BOARS re: Support for A-G High School Ethnic Studies Admissions Requirement that was endorsed by UC Merced's full Divisional Council. BOARS went on to endorse implementation of the new Ethnic Studies admissions requirement.

Campus Review Items

AFAC reviewed and commented on the following proposals for 8 new majors, minors, and undergrad programs:

- Proposal for a New Aerospace Engineering (AE) Minor (10/31)
- Proposal for a B.S. in Chemical Engineering (11/2)
- Proposal for a B.S. in Biochemical and Biomolecular Engineering (11/2)
- Proposal for a B.A. in Data Science and Analytics (3/27)
- Proposal for a B.S. and Minor in Data Science and Computing (4/25)
- Proposal for a B.S. Degree in Public Health (4/28)
- Proposal for a B.A. and Minor in Environmental Humanities (4/28)

- Proposal for a SSHA Cognitive Sciences Honors Program (4/28)

AFAC focused on how the new majors/minors would increase enrollment numbers at UC Merced and strongly advocated for a plan from the Chancellor and EVC/Provost for the addition of new majors and resourcing of faculty lines and new support.

Systemwide Review Items

AFAC reviewed and commented on:

- Proposed New Senate Regulation 479 (Cal-GETC) (9/26)
- Proposed Amendments to Senate Regulations on Undergraduate Admission (2/14)

Other Correspondence

AFAC took the following actions on the following items:

- Reviewed and approved 16 Admission by Exception Application Reports.
- Endorsed updates to Bioengineering (BioE) and Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) admissions criteria (10/12)
- Endorsed Fall 2023 Admissions Selection Criteria (10/28)
- Endorsed proposed revisions to A by E Admissions Criteria (10/28)
- Offered support on the Registrar’s Office request to UGC regarding Air Force ROTC Degree Credit (10/31)
- Endorsed updates to Environmental Systems Science (ESS) admissions criteria (11/29)
- Offered comments on GC’s proposed Policy for the Establishment of Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs (2/24)
- Endorsed GC’s proposed Policy for the Establishment of Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs (6/16)

Guest Consultations:

AFAC was joined by the following guests:

- UC Irvine Professor Dalié Jiminez joined the October 28, 2022 AFAC meeting to report on the negative consequences resulting from collecting students’ institutional debts, including the inability for students to reenroll in courses or the negative impact it has on their credit, etc.
- The following guests joined the November 18, 2022 AFAC meeting to discuss Enrollment Targets and UC Debt Free:
 - Juan Villegas De Santiago, Associate Director-Recruitment and Relations With Schools And Colleges
 - Sheila Xiong, Assistant Director of Transfer Initiatives
 - Dalié Jiménez, UC Irvine Director of Student Loan Law Initiative
 - Shawn Brick, UCOP Director of Student Financial Support

Participants discussed the main goal to offer students an incentive to work part-time to cover the remaining cost of their education (also known as self-help) rather than borrowing funds after grants, scholarships, parent contributions, etc. have been applied.

Also, in January 2022, the Governor released his budget and entered a compact with the UC System with the goal to create a debt free education. A small group of students from under resourced high schools and Community Colleges who received zero contribution from their families were identified and awarded the self-help of \$7,900 for AY 22-23.

- Consultation with BOARS Work Group Leads Christine Hong and Wallace Cleaves, and BOARS Analyst Ken Feer at the March 16, 2023 AFAC meeting to provide additional information on the fourth

draft of the A -G Ethnic Studies Requirement proposal, available here. The guests explained the new definition of ethnic studies and encouraged AFAC's support in including an ethnic studies course in the A-G admission requirements.

- SNS Dean Dumont and Dr. Margo Vener joined the April 6, 2023 AFAC meeting to provide an update on Medical Education and AFAC's role in the admission process.

Respectfully submitted,

AFAC members:

Charlie Eaton (SSHA), Chair, BOARS Representative

Mike Cleary (SNS), Vice-Chair

Sapana Doshi (SSHA)

Mariaelena Gonzalez (SSHA)

Yang Lor (SSHA)

Joel Spencer (SoE)

Siddaiah Yarra (SoE)

Ex officio, non-voting members:

Dustin Noji, Director, Admissions and Outreach

Ruben Lubers, Assistant Director, Admissions and Outreach

Jill Orcutt, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management

Ron Radney, Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships

Student Representative:

Ailyn Palancares, ASUCM Representative

Staff:

Melanie Snyder, Senate Senior Analyst