STUDENT FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

A-239 Murphy Hall

Thursday, April 11 2013

**Attendees Present:**

Graduates: Meg Babakhanian (Chair), Alison Winje, Randy Mai, MaryTheresa Pendergast

Undergraduates: Darren Ramalho, Jas Kirt, John Joanino, Mallory Valenzuela

Administration: Kathleen Copenhaver, Associate Registrar

Christine Wilson, Director of the Graduate Student Resource Center

Nancy Greenstein, Director of Police Community Services

Faculty: Kym Faull, Semel Institute professor

Ex-Officio: Rebecca Lee-Garcia, Academic Planning and Budget

Guests: Janina Montero, Vice Chancellor – Student Affairs

Monroe Gorden, Assistant Vice Chancellor – Student Affairs

**Absent:**

SFAC Advisor: Marilyn Alkin, Special Assistant – Student Affairs

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

**Handouts:**

* Agenda for April 11
* Draft minutes from April 4
* 4 Course materials fees fund application from EEB
* List of Student Affairs courses
* Guidelines for implementing the student service fee
* Unit review responses

**Approval of Agenda:**

* A motion was made by ***Alison Winje*** and seconded by ***Kathleen Copenhaver*** to approve the agenda. This vote was unanimous.

**Review of the Minutes:**

* A motion was made by ***Mallory Valenzuela*** and seconded by ***Nancy Greenstein*** to approve the agenda. This vote was unanimous.

**Course materials fee discussion**

* ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** presented four applications for lab materials fees from the Department of Ecology and Evolutional Biology. The fees would go towards purchasing lab animals, field trips, and materials. The rationale for all four fees was the same: a combination of increased demand for courses and rising costs mean that the department can no longer supply the materials they did in the past. The proposed fee amounts range from $10-35.
* ***Nancy Greenstein*** inquired about what the return rate was on the survey that was distributed to students.
* ***Mallory Valenzuela*** made the point that members of the previous year’s SFAC had been against departments continually instituting and increasing fees year after year, as it just seemed that it would never end. She wondered when the point would be that fees would hold steady. ***Kathleen Copenhaver*** pointed out that their budget has been cut, and that all of the departments’ budgets have been cut drastically over the last few years, and that they can no longer pick up these incidental costs.
* Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** asked if there were other options aside from charging students more fees. ***Christine Wilson*** responded that the only other option was to eliminate field trips, lab components, and the other incidentals that the fees would cover, have virtual labs on-line, have more lecturers teach courses instead of faculty. Costs would have to be cut in other areas, or students would have to be excluded.
* Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** remarked that the fees did not seem exorbitant. ***Mallory Valenzuela*** pointed to the student surveys, and felt that there did not seem to be much support for the fees from the student population. She also pointed out that not every student benefits equally from the fees in all cases, as not every student conducts a project that requires extra materials that the fee would pay for.
* ***Alison Winje*** stated that the students may have a skewed view of what these materials actually are, as some students associate materials with chemicals, lab animals, etc. but they can also include software and hardware that needs to be purchased every several years, such as computers. There were comments on the reliability of surveys based on the number of people who chose to respond
* ***MaryTheresa Pendergast*** pointed out that the survey only asks about fees, rather than the field trips. ***John Joanino*** said that based on the polarizing opinions in the surveys, it may not be fair to charge every student when not every student uses the materials. ***Alison Winje*** said that this fee may apply to more materials than just the ones used during their individual projects. She believes that the committee needs more information on what materials exactly they are referring to in the survey, and more specific information on what the fees will be used for. ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** will return to the department and ask for more clarification about what the fees are used for, and for greater justification of the fees.
* Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** advised the committee to not combine all four fees as one, but to consider each individually in fairness to the department. The committee will vote on the fees at the next meeting.

**Compensation Policy Response and Discussion**

* The committee took a brief straw vote on continuing to fund credit bearing courses taught by student service fee funded units. ***Nancy Greenstein*** pointed out that it is not as simple as choosing to fund them as is or de-fund existing programs. She offered the option of grandfathering in existing programs for consideration, and also reminded the committee of the issue of how to deal with new requests for funding credit bearing courses
* There was some confusion about how the funds were being used to fund instruction. ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** clarified that if the teaching duties were written into someone’s job description, then instruction was being funded as a portion of that person’s salary. If the teaching duties were voluntary, and went beyond 100% of their job duties, then instruction was not being funded.
* ***Christine Wilson*** told the committee that she had had a discussion with Glyn Davies about this issue. She informed them that if a person has a 0% faculty appointment on 19900 funds (general funds), then this issue can be avoided as it will show up in the general ledger, even though no funds are being dispersed. ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** confirmed this. She pointed out that the Bruin Resource Center already follows this distinction, as 100% of their job duties are administrative and are paid out of 20000 funds. They have 0% appointments that are not salaried that are assigned to 19900 funds.
* ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** told the committee that their responsibility is to decide whether or not they can fund staff positions who spend a percentage of their assigned time teaching a course.
* ***Christine Wilson*** suggested to the committee that a possible solution could be to have all of these teaching appointments at 0%, as people truly are going above and beyond their job descriptions to teach these courses voluntarily. She pointed out that all of the staff teaching these courses are exempt, and not hourly, meaning that if they take on additional responsibilities they do not get paid any additional money.
* **Nancy Greenstein** asked if the courses being credit bearing was still an issue, and expressed a concern about how the committee would know if the person was really voluntarily teaching the course. ***Christine Wilson*** explained that in her position as Director of the GSRC, she can still participate in activities that are outside her written job description. For example, if she is interested in an undergraduate program she still has the ability to attend and be involved with it. She also participates in the SFAC, though it is not in her job description and she does not get paid for it.
* Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** asked if the Career Center was the only one that had a percentage of money going towards courses. ***Mallory Valenzuela*** answered that the percentage was not a percentage of money or salary, but a percentage of time. ***Mallory Valenzuela*** asked what the money was being used for, if not for courses. ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** responded that the money funds the people who work in the career center.
* ***Christine Wilson*** also informed the committee that no one is assigned to teach, they are only asked by the department if they would like to.
* ***Nancy Greenstein*** said that she believed the issue was whether or not instruction for credit bearing classes should be paid for out of SSF funds, and if the committee feels that they should not, then going forward that should be the interpretation of the policy, while grandfathering in existing programs.
* ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** reiterated to the committee that because this is such a gray area in the policy, whatever the committee decides they will have to stick to the same interpretation in the future.
* ***Kathleen Copenhaver*** stated that the problem seemed to lie in the instances where teaching is written into staff member’s job descriptions, not in situations where staff members teach on a voluntary basis.
* The entire committee reviewed the language in the student service fee usage policy. There was some confusion over how to define a “core instructional program.” ***Rebecca Lee-Garcia*** volunteered that she believes Glyn Davies defines a core instructional program as anything that appears on your transcript. Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** offered that ensuring that teaching is a 0% appointment on 19900 funds, and that teaching is over and above an employee’s 100% job duties may solve the problem.
* ***Christine Wilson*** informed the committee that in conversation with Glyn Davies, he had said he did not want the committee to recommend something the Chancellor would say no to. She believes that if people want to see the courses continue, SFAC will need to make sure that the budget office is on board with whatever their decision is before submitting a recommendation to the Chancellor.
* ***Meg Babakhanian*** summarized that the committee seems to support the courses that are offered, and wants to see them continue, and may either have to create an additional set of guidelines to ensure that teaching courses goes above and beyond 100% of instructor’s job duties, in addition to being voluntary. The two issues at stake are the definition of a core instructional program and student services fees going towards instruction.
* Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** presented some of the options the committee had discussed to VC ***Janina Montero*** and AVC ***Monroe Gorden***, including offering courses without credit, writing some strict guidelines about what kinds of courses could be funded in the future. She also outlined the questions the committee had, including how to ensure that courses are being taught above and beyond the 100% administrative job duties of the instructor, how to define a core instructional program, and how the money is being used to fund instruction, if at all.
* ***Christine Wilson*** said the two major issues they were looking at was if SSF funds could be used to fund credit bearing courses, and if a 0% appointment on 19900 funds would satisfy the budget office and the Chancellor, assuming the credit issue could be reconciled. ***Mallory Valenzuela*** added that a definition of a core instructional program needed to be made, as the policy states SSF funds should not be used to fund these.
* ***Janina Montero*** gave the committee some background on the credit bearing courses and how they came into being. She began with the life skills courses, explaining that as Health Education proceeded in the development of its services, the unit came to SFAC for funding. That committee was fully apprised of the deep engagement that students undergo in the course, and what the credit does is recognize the student’s investment of their time. She emphasized that the Life Skills courses taught at the BRC are a student service that is engaged over a period of time, and is complimentary to core instructional programming rather than a part of it.
* ***Mallory Valenzuela*** asked if when the courses were first proposed to SFAC if credits were a part of the proposal. ***Janina Montero*** replied that they were, because it is part of the philosophy of these courses, especially the IRG, that they require sustained engagement over a period of time to be effective. She went on to say that when the program was brought forward for funding, it was proposed in exactly the same manner it is run now. She also conveyed a desire to expand the program to grow participation and subject matter, and pointed to a number of other institutions that employ this program in an expanded way.
* ***Janina Montero*** admitted that she was somewhat surprised when the SFAC committee expressed concerns about the courses, as they existed in exactly the same iteration as they had when initially presented and approved. She also voiced that if the campus had additional 19900 funding, they would not invest it in this. It would instead go towards history, science, and other core curricular courses.
* ***Monroe Gorden*** stated that it seemed the major issue was reconciling the policy with the courses. After reviewing it several times, he came to the conclusion the courses offered through the Career Center and the BRC are not things that would be provided through the departments at UCLA, and as such can be defined as co-curricular programming, rather than core curricular programming. The policy specifically states that the SSF funds should be used to provide funding for programs that complement the core instructional programs, which is precisely what these courses do. These are units that provide student services, and these courses are just another service.
* ***Monroe Gorden*** explained that he feels the natural tendency when one hears buzzwords like courses is to assume that they are the kind of things that will be offered on the academic side. Upon closer examination, however, these classes come under services, and that is why they are taught by student affairs professionals, rather than faculty.
* ***Janina Montero*** referenced other universities that offer “University 101” type of courses, which typically have 1 or 2 units associated with them, which offer students the opportunity to learn the skills they need to successfully transition into a more challenging academic and independent life.
* ***Monroe Gorden*** answered the committee’s question about where the courses are being funded by SSF funds: The exempt staff members who teach the courses spend a percentage of their time on teaching. Their salary is paid with SSF funds, of which a small percentage can be thought of as going towards paying them to teach the course. He reiterated that these are very small percentages of staff time.
* ***Christine Wilson*** said that after speaking with Glyn Davies, her understanding was that at least the BRC is operating within policy because all of their instructors have a 0% appointment on 19900 funds and have all their administrative duties paid for by SSF funds. ***Christine Wilson*** suggested that if the Career Center operated this way as well that it would satisfy APB.
* ***Christine Wilson*** explained that the committee has concerns about opening the flood gates of requests to fund courses if they find that these are within their purview to fund. ***Janina Montero***reinforced to the committee that she feels very strongly about preserving the Student Service Fee for student services.
* ***Randy Mai*** asked if there were other courses that were not on the list the committee was provided with, like internships that people at CPO get credit for. ***John Joanino*** answered that for those you register through Chicano Studies, as it is a departmental internship. ***Monroe Gorden*** said he would take a look at how it is funded, but that it may not have come under his radar if students have to register through an academic department.
* There was some discussion about the function of credit being given for student services courses. ***Christine Wilson*** stated that she felt the greatest significance is that it ensures students will attend every session, which is the only way that learning outcomes can be reached. Programs like this cannot happen if you do not offer credit. Rebecca Lee-Garcia stated that no matter the decision, it needs to be consistent year after year. ***Kathleen Copenhaver*** brought up the matter of defining service courses, and narrowly defining what can be funded.
* ***Kym Faull*** said that Monroe had pointed out two important things; that these courses are not a part of the core instructional program, saying that he agreed with him, and that what SFAC should support should be complementary to the core instructional program, and he feels that these courses are indeed complementary in that way. He feels that the fact that it appears on the transcript is not relevant.
* Chairperson ***Meg Babakhanian*** pointed to the entrepreneurship program that wants to request funding from SFAC, for which the students do not receive credit, and asked the committee if they felt that this should be funded also.
* ***Christine Wilson*** stated that coming up with the right set of very clear guidelines could prevent the “flood-gate” issue. The other issue is the budget office, because if APB feels that SFAC is interpreting the policy incorrectly then their recommendation to the Chancellor will be rejected.

**CSF Meeting**

* **Alison Winje and Meg Babakhanian will be attending the CSF meeting.**

**Adjournment:**

* Meeting was adjourned at 6:05