**SFAC Continuity Report 2014-2015 Academic Year**

The following report provides a summary of the actions undertaken by the UCLA Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) for the 2014-2015 academic year. If you have any questions about the contents of this report, please contact Theresa Jean Stewart-Ambo (2014-2015 SFAC Chair) at thestew@ucla.edu. Any inquiries about the current work of the committee can be submitted to Erik Pena, 2015-2016 Chair, at sfacchair@saonet.ucla.edu.

**SFAC Priorities and Ongoing Campus Issues**

Building on the work of prior SFAC committees, the 2014-2015 SFAC worked on a number of tasks that addressed the internal operations of the committee to allow the committee to effectively fulfill its primary objective - provide recommendations to Chancellor Block pertaining to student fees. These operations were made a top priority to ensure that committee members had the appropriate knowledge, time, and resources available to make informed decisions regarding recommendations - the committee’s single most important responsibility. Because a majority of each year focuses on reading and responding to unit reviews and funding requests, a major task of this year’s SFAC was to ensure this process was done as succinctly as possible. Broadly speaking, the two priorities for 2014-2015 were to: 1) streamline the unit review and funding recommendation process, and 2) follow-up on the compensation review policy. These following topics, as well as other items of business from the academic year, are discussed in greater length in this report:

1. **Unit Review and Funding Recommendation Process**

One major goal for the 2014-2015 academic year was to streamline the unit review process, because of the length of time required to read unit reviews and funding requests, and provide recommendations to the Chancellor's office. At the recommendation of several committee members, SFAC made several adjustments to trim down the process for units and committee members. Some of these changes included: 1) combining the unit review and funding request into one document, 2) eliminating redundate questions that appeared in both requests, and 3) eliminating unit review presentations. Additionally, all units were asked to submit reviews, changing prior biennial reviews.

Another procedure implemented was teaming SFAC members into the same groups for the duration of the year. This required group members to read the unit review and funding request of the same units (e.g. group one read the unit review and funding request for the career center, students affairs administration, and central ticketing office). These same groups were also encouraged to read past unit reviews and funding requests. Having groups focus on the same units for the entire years and reflect on past documents created a level of expertise within the committee that eased the process of reviewing submissions. While improvements can be made from year to year, this process worked well for this academic year.

1. **Course Material Fees**

SFAC is tasked with the responsibility of reviewing course material fees, and submitting recommendation to the Chancellor. Over the last few years, SFAC has been reluctant to raise student fees and, as such, approve course material fees. This year a number of requests were submitted to Academic Planning and Budget (APB), and the following describes recommendations forwarded to the Chancellor.

Life Science 23L: Introduction to Laboratory and Scientific Methodology- This course had an existing course material fee of $20, and the request was to adjust the current course material fee to $30 per student. The increase of $10 was to would cover consumable materials (i.e. one time supplies such as pipet tips, agar plates, gloves, microcentrifuge tubes, cuvets, 96 well plates, algae, primers, proteins, TLC plates, capillary tubes, protein stain and polyacrylamide gels, as well as chemicals) associated with hands on lab experience. SFAC recommended to approve the $30 fee for Fall 2015

Neuroscience 102: Introduction to Functional Anatomy of Central Nervous System- This course did not have a course material fee. A $55 course material fee was requested and SFAC recommended a $45 fee be approved for Summer 2015. After reviewing the application, SFAC decided not to support the total request of $55 because of the number and amount of course material fees currently imposed on students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related fields. Furthermore, the majority of students eligible to enroll in Neuroscience 102 already possess lab goggles and lab coats and should not be responsible for purchasing or maintaining these items through a course materials fee.

1. **Student User Fees**

College of Letter and Science: Statistics Department - A $15 student user fee was submitted for review to SFAC for students who register for DataFest, a two-day, all-night competition modeled after hackathon events. This event is hosted by the StatsClub, a student organization at UCLA. The Student User Fee application was sponsored by the Statistics department. SFAC recommended to approve this student user fee application. It should be noted that this fee was associated with a student organization. Future student user fees applications of this similar nature need earnest investigation examining the relation or affiliation of the student organization to the requesting department. At the time, SFAC was concerned that this request may establish a precedent for student user fee applications.

1. **Compensation Policy Review**

Prior Compensation Policy Subcommittees of SFAC reviewed the UCLA Student Fee Advisory Committee Student Service Compensation Policy, last revised May 2010. After numerous exchanges with the Chancellor, SFAC was tasked with the responsibility of investigating the current compensation and student workload in order to justify if the compensation policy needed to be amended. In the 2013-2014 academic year, SFAC sent letters to all student majority committees receiving support from SFAC seeking input on how their committee currently fulfills the following three areas: time required for participation inside and outside of regular committee meeting time; gravity of responsibility and scope of interaction and impact on the general campus community; and size of budget reviewed. At the end of the year, few committees responded to this inquiry. For the 2014-2015 academic year, this subcommittee was chaired by Angela Chen. The committee convened to review all the prior documents pertaining to the compensation policy in order to understanding the history of the policy, how stipends and compensation was established and why some committees were compensated and not others. Another letter was sent to these committees, with a majority responding.

1. **Council on Student Fees (CSF) and UC-wide issues**

This year, the UCLA SFAC Vice Chair was acting representative to CSF and provided updates to SFAC on all CSF proceedings. CSF focused on two major campaigns 1) student mental health, and 2) referenda history and usage as select universities. In the Spring quarter, UCLA hosted the CSF meeting. These efforts were organized and coordinated by SFAC members, SFAC Advisor and supporting staff.

1. **Recommendations (See recommendation letters to Chancellor for more details)**
	1. **Benefit Shortfall and Cost of Living Adjustments**

Funding benefit shortfall and cost of living adjustments (COLA) for full-time staff support with SSF funds for the 2015-2016 was a definite priority for SFAC. Understanding that a large portion of SFAC funds are allocated to full-time contract staff, SFAC understood the importance of supporting this expense and wanted to recommend the best option to the Chancellor given budget forecasts. Generally, SFAC believed that reducing funding for these costs is needed in order to reserve permanent funding for programs and positions in future years. Moreover, SFAC recommended that temporary SSF funds be used to cover benefit shortfall and COLA.

* 1. **Mental Health**

Similar to last year, SFAC continued to be increasingly concerned about the sustainability of the current funding model for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). At the end of the academic year, there did not seem to be significant progress made in addressing the CAP’s funding structure- particularly with regard to SSF. This was particularly troubling to SFAC, given the increased demand for mental health services at UCLA and nationally. For these reasons, SFAC continued to uphold its recommendation (for a second year) that sustainable funding models being developed and permanent funding channels be pursued to support mental health services for UCLA students.

* 1. **Early Childhood Education**

Reviewing the request for UCLA’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, it became abundantly clear that the SSF funds provided to the unit may not be having the “impact” desired in providing childcare to UCLA student parents. Meaning, SFAC evaluated the number of students being served and whether SSF funds were being used in an equitable manner. During the year, it appeared that SFAC was providing a $10,000 subsidy each, for approximately 43 students. However, it was clear that he need for childcare was much greater by UCLA parents. For these reasons, SFAC did not recommended to fund the increased funding request from ECE. Instead, SFAC recommended a continuing allocation of temporary fundings for 2015-2016. Additionally, SFAC recommended that ECE and Student Affairs develop a proposal that more equitably serves students in need of child care and more effectively uses SSF funds.

* 1. **Community Housing**

SFAC recommended reducing Community Housing Office (CHO) permanent allocation for 2015-2016 by 50%. Following, SFAC recommended to decrease CHO permanent allocation by 100% to $0 in 2016-2017. The committee decided to move toward eliminating CHO’s $230,000 permanent budget because we believe that the SSF funds provided were not adequately used to support student housing needs of nearly 60% of UCLA’s student body that live in non-university housing.

* 1. **Business of Science Center**

This academic year, lengthy discussions took place as to whether student services fees were appropriate funding source for the Business of Science Center (BSC), which is located in the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology within the David Geffen School of Medicine. A concern had been festering for a number of years as to whether this violated SSF guidelines, and aligned with an “academic program” as opposed to a student service. While services provided by the BSC were oriented toward career and professional development, SFAC voted to cut temporary continuing funding to BSC in 2016-2017. This recommendation was forwarded to the chancellor, along with the recommendation that the BSC pursue support from the UCLA schools of Engineering and Medicine, and philanthropic outlets.

The above details some the major undertaking of SFAC for the 2014-2015 academic year. An important issue to note is the budget forecast presented during the 2015 Spring quarter, which projected the SFAC permanent budget to incur a deficit starting 2018-2019. Although the committee was aware of potential fee increases, including a 5% increase for students’ mental health, decisions were not based on an anticipated fee increase. The upcoming year will present some changes for SFAC, as student fees were increased at the end of the academic year.

There were some other items implemented into the committee that are worth including into the continuity report for the sake of documentation for future Chairs and committee members. During the 2014-2015 academic year, SFAC adopted the use of ucla.box.com to house all SFAC files. Working with OTC within Student Affairs, SFAC was able to establish a secure folder. Within this folder there are SFAC documents for 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 academic years that committee members can access if they are invited to the group.

Discussions took place at several committee meetings, particularly when reviewing funding requests regarding the quality of unit reviews and funding requests submitted to SFAC. While many units submit were outstanding and well prepared requests, there were a number of units that prepared subpar documents. In some instances, it is possible to compare requests from year to year and notice that number of students served had no change. If SFAC members had not reviewed past requests they may not be aware of this issue. Moreover, SFAC was constantly challenged my units that failed to provide well thought out responses regarding alternative funding sources or adherence to SSF guidelines. In future years, it is suggested that SFAC committees convey to units with earnest the importance of submitting well written proposals. Additionally, SFAC should consider meeting with division heads to convey expectations regarding submissions.

As a final comment, I leave a final piece of advice to future committees members and chairs who take the time to review such reports. I believe that it continues to remain unclear as to who is responsible for responses made to and by the Chancellor's office regarding funding recommendations. For example, in 2013-2014 SFAC did not recommend to fund mental health services for the 2014-2015 academic year because they request exceed the temporary funding capabilities of the committee. Funding mental health would have crippled the committee and left SFAC in deficit. Therefore, SFAC did not recommend to fund and suggested to the Chancellor that alternative options be found. The Chancellor in turn responded with support, and also recommended that a committee be convened to discussion long term funding options for mental health at UCLA. The subsequent year, this committee did not meet until the Spring quarter for many reasons. I bring this challenge to light, because in the coming years SFAC will likely have serious and on-going discussions about permanentizing full-time contact staff, benefit shortfall, and cost of living adjustments. Additionally, I suspect that SFAC members will continue to be accountable to students and student dollars by being critical of the “use” of SSFs through measure of evaluation. These discussions, and any other discussions, weigh heavy on SFACs annual recommendations and need to have clear follow through. For these reasons, I recommend that SFAC members, particular the Chair, establish clear lines of communication clear and consistent communication with the Chancellor's office at the tenure of each term.