

## **Fall 2015 Council on Student Fees Meeting Report**

The 2015 fall Council on Student Fees (CSF) meeting was held November 14-15 at UC Berkeley, with Paul Tchir (SFAC Chair) and Jackie Markt-Maloney (SFAC Vice-Chair) in attendance as representatives from UCSD. All campuses were present, including representatives from UC Davis who, expressing interest in returning as a regular member following an extended absence, joined the gathering as observers. Following introductions, the meeting proceeded with a series of reports, beginning with one each from Jackie, who serves as the CSF chair, and UCLA's Erik Pena, the vice-chair. Since the summer retreat, the chair had been active securing a memorandum of understanding with the UC Council of Associated Students Presidents that will encourage and enable them to work together more frequently. The vice-chair, meanwhile, had established a process to review the CSF minutes from the past five years in order to uncover trends and produce a report for future councils. Next, the UCSA Director, Toni Gomez, filled us in on her numerous campus visits, including her efforts to encourage UC Davis to rejoin CSF, while the treasurer updated us on the UCSA budget. The meeting then engaged a discussion known as "Around the State", where each campus reviewed its state of affairs regarding SFAC-related issues, addressing successes and challenges experienced since the last meeting.

Most of the remainder of the first day was spent working on the three campaigns that were agreed upon during the summer meeting. After breaking up into their groups, the attendees focused on creating campaign descriptions, as well as establishing the fundamental resources and processes that would allow them to be productive during the period between CSF gatherings. The Fee Accountability Campaign stemmed from the previous year's Funding Stream Assessment Campaign, which was intended to ensure that Student Service Fees were not going towards the payment of the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) tax and to

determine what percentage each campus was being taxed. This year, a new initiative to address issues surrounding the implementation and use of the new Mental Health Fee was added to the group's tasks and its members began to explore ways in which it could engage this expanded charge. The Best Practices Campaign, whose objective is to create a pool of resources upon which campuses could draw to improve the efficiency and efficacy of their operations, established a series of categories for which it will solicit data across the UC system. Finally, the Outreach Campaign, which was formed to establish and share best practices and resources for campus outreach, as well as create a template and report that could be used for future councils, set up a timeline for their efforts leading up to the winter meeting.

The day ended with the passing of a resolution to allow UC Davis to rejoin CSF with waived dues, as well as a presentation from UCSA regarding a system-wide fee that had been proposed during the Spring Meeting. This \$6 per student per year fee would be implemented on all campuses, including those whose undergraduate or graduate councils have withdrawn from UCSA, with an opt-out ability being available at the level of the student rather than the campus. This is necessitated, according to UCSA, by poor representation that is in large part a result of the fallout from controversial decisions, wherein a represented body may withdraw on the basis of disagreement with an action taken by UCSA. This limits the budget and makes it too unpredictable for efficient operation, and it was argued that since UCSA benefits everyone, everyone should contribute to supporting its activities. The new funds would be used to expand the conference schedule, recognize student accomplishments, increase access to UCSA, improve staffing, and bring in new technology. UCSA intends to advance a formal proposal for the fee at the next UC Regents meeting and, although CSF lacks a strong connection to the fee (since it funds UCSA and not individual campuses) and therefore has no official say in its

implementation, UCSA was seeking the council's support for the initiative. There were concerns from several CSF members, including UC San Diego delegation, that the proposal was too inchoate to be supported during the meeting. UCSA decided, therefore, to pursue support at the winter meeting, when it hopes to have a more developed and formal proposal that will allow them to better answer the questions and address the concerns raised by CSF.

After passing the 2016 CSF budget, the highlight of the second day was a visit from Harry Le Grande, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs at UC Berkeley. His primary focus was on the issue of housing for students, the limited and exorbitantly-priced nature of which at Berkeley is a problem that will only be exacerbated by the state's demands to increase enrollment substantially campus-wide. Any solution to this will compound issues related to the overall cost of attendance, which has become increasingly prohibitive for students of most means. Following a training session on how to hold effective meetings with administrators and secure their commitment to action, the council wrapped up several lingering items of discussion and debriefed the meeting. The 2016 winter quarter CSF meeting will take place at UC San Diego on February 20-21.