SFAC 2014-2015 Winter Quarter Recommendations

Presented below are the recommendations of the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) to the office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (VCSA) for Winter Quarter 2015. This document should not be considered a substitute or summary of the committee's final report for the 2014-2015 year; instead, it is a work-in-progress towards that aim. There is a need and desire from the VCSA office, at this stage of the budget process, to ascertain the opinion of SFAC, and by association the student body, regarding the use of student fees for the upcoming fiscal year. These recommendations will be included in their budget presentation for campus. It is also a reflection of the restricted circumstances under which SFAC has had to operate during the 2014-2015 year, the nature of which will be explicated in the final report.

It is relevant, however, to mention that one of these restrictions was the difficulty in reaching out to and communicating with the student body as a whole, a problem that is not unique to SFAC, but one that has nonetheless hindered our ability to garner the student voice on a large scale. While we will be working towards solving this problem in the Spring Quarter, the budget timeline of both the VCSA and the campus required us to do what we could to provide as much informed feedback as possible during Winter Quarter. Given this, all student representatives returned to their constituencies, provided their student governments with a presentation, and solicited feedback to the best of their abilities. The majority of the feedback received, therefore, was presumably representative of those students who are most concerned and familiar with the operations of the university (since they are members of student government), and may not reflect accurately the concerns of commuter students and marginalized groups who may not be as well-represented. Nonetheless, SFAC feels that the information that was gathered, negotiated with the experience and expertise of the committee members, provides a sufficient understanding for recommendations and discussion at this stage, one that can be expanded in

Spring Quarter through broader and more rigorous methods of garnering input and continued communication between representatives and their constituencies. Acknowledging the potential limitations, and the overall imperfection of any data gathering method, SFAC feels confident that these recommendations are representative generally of the concerns, comments, and needs of the student body.

These recommendations also reflect a blending of the needs of the VCSA office with SFAC's charge. The VCSA office adopted a strategy of proposing a few, broad strategic initiatives for consideration that could then be presented to the campus in an effort to secure large amounts of funding for campus-wide projects. VCSA also conducted a budget realignment analysis to ensure that resources are matched with priorities. In either case, if successful, funds could be distributed to specific programs, services, and areas of concern raised by the students. While SFAC acknowledges that the VCSA office cannot be expected to go to the campus and request funds for small, individual line items, that numerous considerations go into the funding of any project, that not all concerns can be addressed, let alone in one year, and that the VCSA has a long and well-documented history of taking action on items recommended by SFAC, the committee wanted to ensure that certain priorities were raised explicitly in these recommendations so that they could be addressed in the short term.

The criteria used for determining which specific items SFAC would support were the frequency with which we heard the demand, the inclusion of underrepresented or otherwise disadvantaged student communities, and the immediacy of the need. The objective of this is to ensure that specific demands are not lost under the guise of "big picture logic" and that we perform our charge of ensuring that the student voice is made explicit. In other words, SFAC feels that it is critical to raise specific areas of concern at the same time as it provides the broader

level of feedback that the VCSA office requires, particularly as the UCSD SFAC is the only one in the UC system that lacks the ability to allocate funds directly to address immediate needs. The bulleted selections preceding each section highlight, in no particular order, those items to which SFAC offers its strongest support.

Health and Wellness

Health and wellness, as an overarching theme, has emerged as the students', and therefore as SFAC's, top priority for 2014-2015. It was addressed explicitly by all six college councils, and issues of accessibility and funding of services in these areas have been discussed by many other groups and individuals on campus. Health and wellness is a broad, and potentially ambiguous, category that encompasses not only numerous individual programs, but also a wide range of ideas and concerns that often require a considerable amount of time and resources to address. Although SFAC is attempting to highlight specific needs within these broader categories, it wants to emphasize the fact that the students have made it clear that improvements in campus health and wellness are both welcomed and needed, and that any use of funds in this area is considered desirable. It was even mentioned that students would accept transferring funding from other areas that deal more with campus life and student engagement if it were necessary to fund improvements in these areas. In the following paragraphs, we will be addressing health and wellness as two individual yet complementary priorities.

Health

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**
- **UCSD CARE (formerly Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC))**
- **Student safety**

We have chosen to distinguish between health and wellness in our analysis of student well-being in order to highlight the complexity of students' needs in these areas. In terms of student health– differentiated from student wellness by a more specific focus on curing illnesses and resolving medical issues– students across the campus have expressed support for services that promote physical and mental health. Specifically, both CAPS and The Zone were mentioned explicitly by at least half of the undergraduate college councils. For the former, the primary concerns were expanding CAPS to provide more services and counselors and to reduce waiting times, with many students concerned about the average two week (or more) gap between scheduling an appointment and meeting with a counselor. One student pointed out that this problem was particularly pronounced for students waiting to see an LGBT counselor, especially if the patient is seeking a particular counselor. Others pointed out similar issues with the availability of psychiatrists, which is currently below the recommendation of one per 10,000 students.

Additionally, students want to see UCSD CARE's resources expanded so that it can reach out to more students and also increase its visibility, since there were concerns that too few students on campus were aware of the help and advising that they offer. Similarly to CAPS and mental health, UCSD CARE's and sexual assault can carry harmful stigmas that may prevent victims from seeking help, thus underscoring the need for this organization to be provided with sufficient resources with which to undertake outreach programs. Students also expressed a desire to see decreased waiting times, an extension of the services that are offered, and an increase in the number of bilingual counselors. Other specific issues that received explicit mention were having the campus Student Health Services open 24 hours, or at least extended, and increasing

the quality of service, both in terms of range of services and accessibility to students, of the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).

SFAC is also strongly supportive of emergency awareness initiatives that would draw greater attention to the resources supporting campus safety that are already in place. This issue is becoming increasingly relevant in anticipation of the trolley system that will connect the campus to the surrounding areas by 2019. During the course of our consultations with students, the issue of the number of emergency call boxes on campus was raised and one student noted her experience at other campuses, where at nearly any point she was within visible range of at least two similar kinds of call boxes. Additionally, multiple students who participated in a campus tour of these call boxes reported that they were disappointed with the low number they saw. Further research into the matter, however, with the support of the UC San Diego Police Department, indicated that the actual number of these boxes seemed sufficient, while committee members pointed out that, in an era of ubiquitous cell phone use, the cost of installing new devices (~$6800 each) might be put to better use in other areas related to student safety.

SFAC got the general impression, however, that, regardless of the number of these devices, students were unaware of where they were located, how they were utilized, and even that they existed at all. The committee recommends that an educational program should be funded that would engage students directly on this issue, rather than having them have to locate the information on their own. Ideas for this program could include increased signage, which could publicize (among other considerations) emergency phone numbers and the locations of call boxes, and a campaign to increase the general awareness of these resources campus-wide.

Wellness

- **The Zone**

- **Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA)**

- **Stress relief resources**

In terms of student wellness, defined as a more broad state of wellbeing, students have expressed support for services that promote healthy lifestyles and reduce a variety of types of stress. Regarding The Zone in particular, the general feeling among students is that increased funding and expanded programming would enable them to provide their useful services to more students and encourage them to implement new ideas. Stress-relief opportunities in general were mentioned by two of the undergraduate colleges. The desire for stress-relieving activities was somewhat less focused, but many students connected this concern to support for The Zone and its programs (the free body massages were mentioned explicitly) and wanted to see an expansion of these activities, as well as the implementation of new ideas. Overall, The Zone provides services in areas that students value, such as stress relief and community building.

UCSD Recreation also provides much needed outlets for extracurricular stress relief, physical health, and social bonding, specifically through intramural and club sports and recreation classes. The Associated Students in particular made sure to highlight the importance of maintaining, if not expanding, these resources, which reflected a broader support for Recreation as a unit. The mixed reactions from students, meanwhile, indicates that Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) is valued as a component of health and wellness, but not considered a high priority for student fee funds. Similarly, some individuals who appreciated ICA wanted to see less of a focus on Sports Facilities after recent cost expenditures at Muir Field and satellite training facilities.

Another important aspect of student wellness comes in the form of minimized stress caused by external factors, including financial and legal issues. Financial stress affects the

majority of UCSD students and can lead to further stressors, such as food insecurity and the pressure to work multiple jobs. Graduate students, for example wanted the campus to increase its focus on providing resources for student parents and employment opportunities to help close the financial gap over summer where they often do not receive any funds. Student Legal Services (SLS), meanwhile, was mentioned on numerous occasions as a unit that was immensely valuable to the campus, but insufficiently visible. Students wanted to expand its resources to not only expand the unit's services, but to increase the awareness of what it has to offer. Those who were knowledgeable about SLS implied that it was among their most important priorities, behind only health and wellness.

It is the opinion of SFAC that, in the effort to improve retention and student engagement, the campus should focus on addressing the root causes of these issues, such as prohibitively high tuition costs and other barriers to student success. For example, while SFAC believes that the Food Pantry is a valuable resource and should receive support from student fee funds, our consideration of this matter in the context of other emerging concerns illuminated to this committee (including food insecurity, student health, and financial insecurity) could help us to engage in a larger conversation about student wellness. Specifically, the Food Pantry possibly serves to remedy a symptom of the primary issue at hand, which seems to be linked primarily to financial insecurities felt by a wide array of students. As financial struggles (and subsequent food accessibility) have a strong connection to an increased need of psychological and other health services, this is a potentially important, critical, and more analytical conversation to be had within the SFAC and the VCSA office.

Campus Life and Student Engagement

- **The Loft**

- **Triton Fest**

- **International Center**

- **Graduate Student Association (GSA) Fund Manager Proposal**

After health and wellness, campus life and student engagement was the next major category addressed by students. While this issue was sometimes raised broadly and explicitly as a central concern, with students expressing differing beliefs regarding whether or not the campus has addressed this issue successfully, most of the constituencies raised this issue in one form or another. Some brought up this issue in terms of directing resources towards diversity projects and increased support for the LGBT Center and initiatives for other underrepresented groups on campus. Others voiced their support for student fees going to fund the expansion of events, both new and old, but, more so than with health and wellness, students had more specific priorities in this category.

The programs and services related to campus life that were discussed by the student councils reflected their priority to continue campus events programming and expand alternatives to drug and alcohol use. Both The Loft and Triton Fest were mentioned, with the former being discussed as a service worthy of more funding for more and better shows and expanding the range of genres and performers. The latter was engaged as part of a broader interest in the expansion of alternatives to drinking and drugs programming, including the Village After Dark initiative.

The International Center also received significant support from the constituencies, being supported in broad terms by students, who believed that its current offerings were excellent, but that they needed to be expanded in terms of reach, variety, and visibility. Some also wanted to see more funding go towards the International Café program so that it could be expanded and

made more visible, while others wanted to see more advisors in the Programs Abroad office so that services could be made more widely available. SFAC acknowledges that Programs Abroad could be considered an issue related to preparation for post-graduation, a topic discussed later in this document, since international experiences often provide students with cultural experiences that leave them better able to succeed in a global environment. The committee decided to place this issue under campus climate, however, because it felt that these experiences have a more immediate and direct benefit to their tenure as students and contribute to fostering better relationships and interactions across all members of the community, as well as helping them engage issues of diversity, broadly construed, on the campus.

There were many other issues and ideas raised and supported by the individual constituencies, including a general desire to see more musical and art events and more support for autonomous student projects in the arts, with spaces for creative input of the ilk of the Che Cafe and the Craft Center. One graduate student raised the idea of making honorariums available for non-academic speakers and making the campus more "public" for outreach programs. The GSA submitted a proposal requesting $16,000 towards the support of a 0.25 FTE fund manager. This position already exists and is staffed through the Student Life Business Operations, but is paid for currently through the use of the Graduate Student Fee. This position takes up 8% of the GSA's total budget and forces it to their cap of 25% of the total budget going towards salaries (the GSA also offers a minimal stipend to its elected and appointed officers, as well as some smaller positions). Alleviating the burden on the student budget would allow more money to go towards organizing student events and the creation of a paid Outreach Coordinator position, both of which would go towards enhancing the campus experience for graduate students. This position was previously funded by the Student Business Office until the budget cuts of 2009, and

is comparable to the Associated Students Director position that is funded at 1 FTE using student fee funds. Given this information, as well as the fact that graduate students are less likely to take advantage of campus climate initiatives since they are primarily targeted towards undergraduates, SFAC supports the use of Student Fee funds towards this initiative and strongly urges the office of the VCSA to commit resources towards this proposal by Fall 2015.

Other suggestions that were raised less frequently were the support and expansion of transfer and commuter student services and getting the campus more integrated with its surrounding environment. One specific example that was provided in this regard was more engagement with the beach, from programming, informational, and access standpoints. An example given for the latter was working with the city and the transportation authority to help facilitate the use of public transportation to bring longboards and other related gear to the beach.

Another concern raised by student organizations, which are to a certain extent the foundation of student engagement, was excessive obstacles to event programming and funding. Many students involved in organizations have expressed discontent with CSI and the Triton Activities Planner (TAP) process. A possible solution could be increasing the resources available to the Center for Student Involvement (CSI) for improved staffing. Other students noted a desire to expand the availability of physical spaces and meeting rooms on campus for activities of all kinds.

Preparation for Post-Graduation

- **More opportunities for non-STEM majors**
- **Improvements in access to career opportunities**
- **GSA Graduate Student Travel Grant Program**

While students did voice their support for the maintenance and expansion of academic retention and success programs such as OASIS (in particular the Summer Bridge) and the Triton Community Leadership Institute, most prioritized services that facilitate preparation for the future, such as Career Services, professional development workshops, and career fairs. Students were generally satisfied with Port Triton and other resources for on-campus job opportunities, but expressed concerns regarding preparation for life after graduation. This desire for improved preparation stems from dissatisfaction with current workshops and the focus of career opportunities on STEM majors. Career Services was raised as as a unit by many constituencies and was often discussed in terms of specific priorities, with students wanting to see funding directed towards specific initiatives and objectives. Some explicitly mentioned a desire for more non-STEM career advisors, while others engaged this directive in the form of requesting career counselors for different majors to help guide individuals after their graduation. They also felt that Career Services was understaffed as a whole and wanted to see funding directed towards filling this need and wanted more advice for practical careers, rather than research internships. The issue of alternative academic careers for graduate students (careers for advanced degree holders outside of academia) was also raised, as was the idea of mentorship programs that would build bridges between graduate and undergraduate students, particularly in the non-STEM fields

We received student input requesting more inclusivity in career resources to better serve all majors, especially in terms of job fairs. SFAC feels that there might be more effective ways to address the core issue, which is the expansion of job and internship opportunities beyond STEM fields. A solution might entail concerted efforts towards expanding alumni networking and job shadowing opportunities to non-STEM companies, industries, and fields or increasing the number of Career Services advisors with knowledge of and experience in these areas. It may also

require more visibility for those opportunities that are currently available and teaching non-STEM students to present their skills as valuable to STEM companies, as well as making students aware of those STEM corporations that are already seeking non-STEM hires.

Beyond career preparation, students also commented on preparation in terms of developing skills that will help them succeed in life after graduation. For example, some students wanted to see support for financial advisors that would educate students on how to manage their finances and otherwise prepare for the future. The GSA submitted a proposal requesting $75,000 for a Student Travel Grant Program that would help graduate students attend academic conferences in their fields, which is a vital component of their career and professional development. Students benefit from these conferences through the development of their interpersonal, presentation, and communication skills. Given the success of the pilot program, which was funded through a one-time grant from the VCSA, Graduate Division, and Executive Vice-Chancellor/Chancellor's office, SFAC supports the use of Student Fee funds towards this initiative and strongly urges the office of the VCSA to commit resources towards this proposal by Fall 2015.

Visibility and Transparency

- **Visibility of important, but underutilized, programs**
- **Improved communication between students and administration**
- **Addressing issues related to decentralization**

SFAC would be greatly remiss not to mention that a popular issue raised by students was that of service visibility and awareness about student fee usages, which was raised explicitly by some and addressed indirectly by others. While many of these issues were more ambiguous than other concerns, and specific solutions were not always provided, the multiple mentions of this

factor warrant mention in this report, even if many of the problems are not items that require much, if any, funding to resolve. For example, while the committee sees the rationale behind the replacement of Cafe Roma with Starbucks, the decision not to automatically renew the current management's lease on Porter's Pub, the relocation of the Che Cafe, and the closure of the Craft Center, it also understands that the students themselves are often not educated about the underlying issues and have perceived these actions as hostile or "attacks" on campus culture. While there is always an onus placed upon individuals to learn how and why such decisions are made, SFAC also feels that the manner in which these actions were taken and the accessibility and availability of information regarding these developments have contributed to the perception of a rift between the administration and the student body. Furthermore, the compounding impact of campus-specific concerns on top of UC system-wide pressures, such as the potential for tuition increases, can have a deleterious effect on this relationship. The overall feeling of the committee is that addressing issues of openness and communication would be a significant step in repairing this perception.

In general, the majority of services could benefit students more if they were made to be more visible, and in some cases, more accessible through outreach and/or publicity programs. UCSD CARE and SLS are examples of services that already exist to address student needs, but for a variety of reasons may not be utilized by students. In some cases, such as with the LGBT specialists at CAPS, this is because the service is intended to serve a relatively small population. It is also possible, however, that services are underutilized because students are not aware of either their existence or their utility. Visibility for existing events may be improved by creating a more centralized source of information, such as a dedicated events board in the Price Center.

SFAC also supports initiatives that would increase the visibility of communication channels that already exist.

A related issue was that students wanted to know, on a basic level, where their money was going. While students acknowledge that this information was available, many did not know where to find it and noted that it was scattered in multiple places and difficult to interpret. Rather than having to go find it themselves, students wanted the administration to put forth a greater effort to bringing this information in a concentrated, easily digestible form to them, perhaps through an active educational campaign.

There were several other initiatives raised by the students that fall under the heading of visibility and transparency. Graduate students mentioned an explicit desire for improved electronic communication and/or a centralized email system that would allow them, at the very least, to distribute emails to the entire graduate student community for any reason and could provide easier access to reaching the student body as a whole. While SFAC is aware that such a system would generate questions regarding control over the ability to send emails to such a large group, as well as the diluting effect that sending out too much communication might have, it does not view these challenges as insurmountable and emphasizes the idea that even a minimal level of increased engagement would be better than none at all. Currently, the GSA is restricted by the nature of the messages that it can send to its constituency, while the UCSD SFAC itself is the only one system-wide without the ability to communicate directly with students, which means it lacks the simplest and most basic way for it to collect data on student needs and concerns.

This request also dovetails well with the desire expressed by many students to increase the visibility of student fee-funded activities and programs. Some engaged these issues in terms

of general support for the updating of technological infrastructure, specifically the UCSD Mobile App, to improve the communication of information to students. There were also broad concerns with mending rifts caused by decentralization and the suggestion that resources should be directed towards the development and promulgation of initiatives that promote intercollegiate collaboration and tidy up wasteful overlap between colleges. Based upon student feedback, SFAC supports the focused use of student fee-funded FTEs and prefers that any FTEs provided with student fee money should have a direct benefit to the students (such as CAPS psychologists).

Issues not Related Directly to SFAC

Many of the issues raised by the constituencies did not fall under areas to which student fees are traditionally (or even permitted to be) directed. Nonetheless, SFAC, as one of the strongest representatives of the student voice, feels it important to bring these concerns to the fore in our recommendations, as well as our final report. Such commentary was welcomed by the VCSA office, which has encouraged us to raise student concerns even if they relate to operations not covered directly by the Student Services Fee. Since students have proclaimed explicit support in having their money going towards these areas, SFAC feels that it is valuable to raise these issues and, if VCSA-related initiatives can work towards addressing them, then SFAC wishes to express its support in these areas, even if the Student Services Fee cannot go directly towards funding them.

Maintenance, broadly construed, was an item raised multiple times in discussions. The blue emergency pylon system, mentioned above, could fall into this category, as could numerous other issues related to student safety. Several students had participated in the program to

investigate issues of insufficient lighting on campus and were dismayed at the current state of this issue on campus. Even those who did not participate in this activity were supportive of directing resources towards alleviating these issues. A related concern was the issue of computer maintenance in public spaces, as well as the quality of internet service campus-wide. Other issues brought up included the facilitation of an all-campus Residential Advisor (RA) training program, support for alleviating issues related to parking, the construction of bike paths inside the campus to improve pedestrian safety, alleviating the financial burden of University Centers , and challenges related to access to transportation and facility use during the summer, particularly for graduate students, who are more likely to remain in the area during these months.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, SFAC believes that the best use of Student Fee Funds would be towards proposals that benefit health, wellness, and safety. Overall, students gave their strongest and most frequent support to CAPS, and thus, combined with its own experience and expertise, the committee considers this the most important issue for 2014-2015. Other key areas in health to which the committee feels that more resources could be directed are UCSD CARE and student safety. In regards to wellness, the student body and SFAC support more resources going towards The Zone and stress-relief initiatives, and also want to take a closer look at ICA and Recreation to see how those units might be better tied to the idea of wellness as a whole. Overall, the university should consider programs and proposals that benefit the physical and mental health of students to be a top concern.

Campus life and student engagement is the committee's next priority, with The Loft, Triton Fest, and the International Center being the most important areas under which students voiced their support in this category. SFAC also lends explicit support to the GSA's Fund

Manager position, which would free up additional resources for that body to serve the needs of its constituency in this area. The committee's third priority is preparation for post-graduation and, based upon student concerns, it felt that more opportunities for non-STEM majors and improvements in access to career opportunities were areas under this heading that would benefit from additional resources. SFAC also supports the GSA Travel Grant program, which services concerns particular to graduate students in this category. In general, the university should prioritize providing students with services and experiences that makes them more well-rounded and prepared for the future.

Time to graduation was also raised and, while not addressed explicitly in the body of these recommendations, the committee feels that this is an item of concern and that many of the ideas mentioned would work ultimately towards facilitating improved time to graduation. We suggest, therefore, that the university and the VCSA office analyze the potential impact on time to graduation when considering any initiatives that it undertakes, particularly those of relevance to the issues raised in this document. Finally, SFAC considers visibility and transparency to be important areas on which the committee, the VCSA office, and the university as a whole can work on together. Although these issues are often not related to budgets or financial matters, SFAC, as a representative of the student voice, feels that there are concerns worth raising that could be worked on in a productive manner. In particular, the visibility of important, but underutilized programs, improved communication between students and the administration, and addressing issues related to decentralization are all important points upon which a discussion might be based. Students across the campus have explicitly raised the issue of promoting greater awareness of and visibility for the activities and programs provided by the student fee-funded units.