

April 3, 2023

Jessica Cattelino, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Funding Contracts and Graduate Education

Dear Chair Cattelino,

At its meetings on February 27, 2023, and March 20, 2023, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed and discussed the Executive Board's request that the Council gather further information on the University's plan for funding the increased costs for ASEs, TAs, postdocs, and Graduate Education as a whole resulting from the UAW strike settlement.

It is worth noting that all campuses are struggling with the issue of how to fund the large and unanticipated costs associated with the UAW settlement. This has been a frequent topic for discussion at the University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) meetings. It is fair to state that plans on all campuses are in development. Most chancellors appear to be using whatever discretionary funds are available to them in order to help cover these costs and enlisting the help of deans on their campuses to do the same. These plans remain provisional on most campuses because of the magnitude of the costs, and generally are in place only for the next 12-15 months. Based on discussions with UCPB colleagues, it is unclear how these costs will be borne on any campus after the coming academic year.

Members discussed with Interim Vice Chancellor Allison Baird-James and Interim Academic Planning and Budget Office Director Rebecca Lee-Garcia the UCLA campus plans for funding strike settlement costs. They indicated that the magnitude of the central support had been decided upon and announced in a Bruinpost to the campus, and that the final sources for this support had not yet been decided upon. The Chancellor has agreed to utilize central reserves for the first year, but discussions were ongoing with ancillary units and deans across the campus to utilize other funding reserves. IVC Baird-James indicated that funding plans beyond the first full year of the settlement had not yet been developed.

CPB members expressed to the IVC their view that the campus should be pursuing targeted cuts to non-academic units in order to help fund the increased costs of graduate education. The IVC stated that while the administration is open to any suggestions from the Senate for where and how cuts could be targeted, they have not undertaken such a review themselves as of yet and are not adequately staffed to do so at this time.

From the Council's perspective, the matter of funding the strike settlement costs highlight the fact that there is a need for meaningful faculty involvement at all levels in budget processes. The absence of a clear plan for graduate education funding, much less support for departments, their daily operations, and mid- to long-term planning, poses a serious threat to the quality and stability of academic programs across campus. Members agree that faculty involvement in resource allocation decisions is essential if UCLA is to excel as a research university, and exclusion of faculty places all our programs in a precarious position.

Members also have underscored the lack of transparency in administrative (non-academic) unit funding and performance assessment. Given the growth of these units, we believe that there are opportunities to identify areas where funding cuts can occur to help streamline their processes and improve operations. The goal is to have more efficient and effective campus units to help achieve goals and help the academic mission. However, given the lack of information, it is challenging to identify where to make cuts.

The view of CPB is that it is only through a deeper and consistent involvement of faculty in campus budget processes that we will be able to influence resource allocation decisions for graduate student funding. We currently lack the information necessary to target cuts and help prioritize programs. By participating in the assessment and review of administrative units as well as schools and divisions, there would be a path to eliminate costly inefficiencies. We therefore have strongly recommended to IVC Baird-James three key steps to further these goals:

- 1) FECs within each school and division should be part of the budget development process, and that no budget should be presented to EVC/P until the dean has documented faculty involvement in the budget process;
- 2) CPB should be directly involved in central review of the budgets of all units, and that the final campus budget should not be approved by the chancellor until CPB has had an opportunity to review and advise;
- 3) CPB should be involved in budget hearings starting with the current academic year. The IVC has agreed that as CPB Chair, I will be able to participate in budget hearings both for academic and administrative units. Given the large number of units, we will select a limited number for this year (the list of specific units for this year is in development). The full Council also will have an opportunity to review and comment on the final budget before presentation to the Chancellor.

CPB also strongly recommends that a system of regular reviews for administrative units with public dissemination of the findings of those reports. In particular, members suggested starting with pilot reviews of Campus Human Resources, the Division of Graduate Education, and the Registrar. Results of these reviews would need to be shared with the Academic Senate. In addition, clear data on campus spending on consulting firms such as Huron and Deloitte would need to be disclosed. Members also stressed the need for Academic Senate consultation and participation before the creation of new units or major administrative roles which are typically associated with increasing costs.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at afl@ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Leuchter', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andrew Leuchter, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Andrea Kasko, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Shane White, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Associate Director, Academic Senate
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget