



## Senate Resolution No. 2018/2019-070

### *Student Basic Needs Referendum*

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#### Primary Sponsor

Sophie Bandarkar (Student Advocate)

#### Cosponsors

Connor Hughes (Policy and Planning Associate Chief, Office of the ASUC President), Nava Bearson (Chief-of-Staff, Office of Student Advocate), Mateo Montoya (Chief-of-Staff, Office of Student Advocate), Alexander Wilfert (ASUC President), Regina Kim (ASUC Senator), Yuan Tao (Chief-of-Staff, Office of ASUC Senator Kim), Charlotte Campbell (Chief-of-Staff, Office of ASUC Senator Kim), Sabrina An (Data & Communications Director, Office of ASUC Senator Kim), Alvin Yu (Data & Communications Associate, Office of ASUC Senator Kim), Lillian Zhang (Art & Creative Advocacy Associate, Office of ASUC Senator Kim)

**WHEREAS**, a Global Food Initiative study<sup>[1]</sup> confirmed that 39% of undergraduates and 23% of graduate students at UC Berkeley experience food insecurity during the academic year, and a UC Berkeley Chancellor's Housing Task Force Housing study<sup>[2]</sup> found that 10% of our total campus population experiences homelessness at some point of the academic year.

**WHEREAS**, Funding is critical to: (i) educate all incoming students about basic needs support services to help prevent them from experiencing basic needs insecurity; and (ii) to provide food and housing relief and crisis support, particularly for those students who do not qualify for financial aid, public assistance, or need immediate intervention, (iii) encourage increased campus, state, and UCOP financial support for basic needs, by demonstrating student commitment to the issue.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the proposition title of this proposition shall be "Student Basic Needs Fee" and the proposition question shall be:

"The *Student Basic Needs Fee* will be a new mandatory fee of \$15.00 per semester, \$10.00 per summer. The fee (1) will be assessed starting in fall 2019 to undergraduate and graduate students, including summer; (2) will be subject to annual inflation adjustments starting in fall 2020; (3) will terminate at the end of summer 2029; (4) will have thirty-three percent of revenue allocated for return-to-aid per campus policy; and (5) will provide equitable basic needs services to students experiencing economic, food, and housing insecurity (displacement or homelessness). The fee will expand food assistance support to at-need students not eligible for CalFresh, increase CalFresh

enrollment, and provide support for students experiencing homelessness, chronic housing insecurity, or displacement. Do you approve this fee?"

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the proposition shall be a binding student fee; and,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the primary proponent of this referendum is Regina Hye Min Kim; and,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Senate of the Associated Students of the University of California officially endorses this proposition and resolves to place it on the ballot pursuant to ASUCBL 4302. The exact title and wording of this proposition shall be subject to certification, and if need be, adjustment by the Elections Council pursuant to ASUCBL 4302.

## APPENDIX

### Introductory Statement

UC Berkeley's (UCB) Basic Needs Committee (BNC) was established in 2013 and is the first institutional committee in the country, and longest in operation, dedicated to the economic - food - housing justice of college students. The latest and largest studies about UC and UC Berkeley student basic needs confirm the following: UC Food and Housing Security Study published in December 2017<sup>[1]</sup>, confirmed that 39% of Undergraduates and 23% of Graduate Students at UC Berkeley experience food insecurity during the academic year. USDA defines very low food security as reduced food intake or disrupted eating patterns at times due to limited resources. Low food security is defined as reduced quality, variety or desirability of diet, with little or no indication of reduced food intake. These two categories comprise food insecurity. The UC Berkeley Chancellor's Housing Task Force Housing Study<sup>[2]</sup> confirmed that 10% of our total campus population experience homelessness at some point of the academic year.

UCB's BNC is made up by undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, faculty, administrators, and off-campus experts and service providers. UCB's BNC, in collaboration with the UC Systemwide Basic Needs Committee, developed a comprehensive Basic Needs prevention model to include proactive interventions for food insecurity (FI) and homelessness, skill-building and educational services, as well as emergency relief and crisis services. These efforts have been featured in the three largest studies in the country on college student BN, national and state media features, and in four successful state bill hearings. Additionally, UCB was selected by the Federal Government Accountability Office to be included in their first national study on college student FI. Despite progress in serving a growing number of students over the years, many students' needs continue to go unmet as the operational budget for basic needs is not consistent and it does not allow the capacity to serve all students experiencing FI and/or homelessness. Funding is critical to: (i) educate all incoming students about basic needs support services to help prevent them from experiencing basic needs insecurity; and (ii) to provide food and housing relief and crisis support, particularly for those students who do not qualify for financial aid, public assistance, or need immediate intervention.

## **Background**

- **Systemic Crisis:**

- Federal financial aid is at a four-decade purchasing power low<sup>[3]</sup>, California's state budget funding for UC Berkeley has not recuperated to pre-recession levels<sup>[4]</sup>, the city of Berkeley has the most expensive cost of living city amongst all colleges/universities in the country<sup>[5]</sup>, and the majority of off-campus services are not tailored for college students. For example: it's taken five years of local-state-federal efforts to shift exemption interpretation and application for college students to be eligible for CalFresh. When it comes to homelessness, the overwhelming majority of local-state-federal resources are dedicated to long term homelessness, 10 years or longer of being homeless. We are nowhere near policy or funding shifts at the state or federal level. The most optimistic projections for federal or state shifts foresee change happening in three to four graduating generations. Two of the main reasons for this delay is the current political landscape and the funding needed to make this shift (see the California Budget & Policy latest publication<sup>[6]</sup> and the Century Foundation's latest study "Expanding Opportunity, Reducing Debt<sup>[7]</sup>"). Bottomline, the current generation of students are experiencing the least economic security of college students since the 1960s. Financial aid is not being invested in by Federal or State governments to keep up with the cost of living of the Bay Area.

- **UCOP Funding:**

- Between FY 2015 - FY 2019, UC Office of the President provided UC Berkeley with \$401,500 as seed funding to provide direct services and prepare to scale basic needs efforts. Unfortunately, funding will not continue from UC Office of the President due to the President's Initiative fund being cut as recommended by the California Government Audit Office.

- **California State Budget Funding:**

- In FY 2018, we successfully advocated for \$250,000 from the California State Budget. Unfortunately, in FY 2019, funding decreased to \$150,000. The funding was decreased despite significant increased participation in state hearings, submission of letters of support, and in-person student advocacy to the budget committee members. We cannot expect or guarantee the state budget process will continue to support college student basic needs, when operational budgets for UC are prioritized. Moving forward, the state will have to respond to the results of the November 2018 election. The House Democratic Party leadership confirmed their commitment to pass the AIM Higher Act<sup>[8]</sup>. This will improve funding for public higher education, but unfortunately it will not eradicate the need to support student basic needs.

- **Campus Funding:**

- This AY 2018-2019 is the first academic year we have a dedicated team from

University Development and Alumni Relations (UDAR) to support fundraising for basic needs. They have confirmed their commitment to lift basic needs as a priority and have been thought partners in the creation of our basic needs operational budget. They understand and are champions of ensuring that UDAR match the investment that students will make to basic needs. In addition to UDAR's contributions, this is by far the most proactive cabinet generation to date. Chancellor Christ and her leadership team, Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost Alivisatos, Vice Chancellor of Equity & Inclusion Dubon, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Sutton, and Vice Chancellor of Undergraduate Education have shared several leadership and strategy conversations with our UCB BNC. The Basic Needs Student Leadership Committee will meet regularly throughout the year with these stakeholders to push the agenda of basic needs, and ask the campus to match or exceed student funding commitment. These conversations have already been initiated and the passing of this referendum is understood as a step towards funding a holistic program that will eventually be fully replaced by the University. We look forward to their leadership and support to also contribute to the funding of our basic needs efforts.

- **Student Basic Needs Referendum:**
  - This referendum will shift the UC Berkeley experience to prioritizing student basic needs and provide a safety net for students experiencing the most severe challenges. This fee will also demonstrate student commitment and prioritization of the issue and encourage other stakeholders to fund basic needs. Specifically, we project this fee will allow us to outreach to all incoming students and serve hundreds of students with higher economic, food, and/or housing needs.

### **Implications of Fee Not Being Approved**

- As studies continue to be published, media coverage of basic needs efforts increases, students share with their peers about our basic needs resources and services, and campus community members refer students to our resources and services, the demand for these services grows. Two examples of this exponential increase are our CalFresh and Food Pantry efforts:
  - **CalFresh:** In AY 2016-2017, we submitted over 50 CalFresh applications, in AY 2017-2018 we submitted 1,397 CalFresh applications.
  - **Food Pantry:** served 507 students in Spring 2016 (its first semester of operation), by Spring 2018 we served 3,809 students at 10,170 total visits.
- Every year, our basic needs efforts are not driven by the need of our students, rather by the funding available to support our interventions, the facilities where they are provided, and the staffing needed to deliver them. This FY 19, funding decreased from both UCOP and the State Budget, additionally, the cost of food and operations for Cal Dining increased. *The combination of less funding and higher costs will result in us serving fewer students with the highest needs via our Food Assistance Program. Whereas in FY 18 we served an estimated 138 unique students, we are projected to serve less than half this year.* This is one example of how funding directly impacts capacity to serve students.

### **Student Involvement in Basic Needs Efforts and Referendum**

- The co-founder of our 2013 UCB Food Security Committee, now the UCB BNC, was ASUC Senator Sadia Saifuddin. Since 2013, undergraduate and graduate student leaders have been vocal voting members of our institutional committee. The Student Advocate's Office, which provides free and confidential casework services for students, has been instrumental in informing and shaping our campus and systemwide basic needs efforts. By 2016, the Graduate Assembly expanded their infrastructure to create an official Basic Needs Workgroup to prioritize graduate student leadership involvement in campus and systemwide efforts. Both the ASUC and Graduate Assembly have representatives serving in both the Basic Needs Student Leadership Team and the Basic Needs Committee.
- Beyond committee participation, UC Berkeley was amongst the first universities to compensate student leadership with academic units via Ethnic Studies Field Study Units and hire both work-study and non work-study students to lead basic needs efforts. Today, our team is made up by: (1) paid Graduate Student Fellow, (1) paid Graduate Student Researcher, (7) paid Undergraduate Basic Needs Coordinators: branding, CalFresh, community programs, finance, food systems, food pantry, and video/photography, (8) paid Nutrition Outreach Workers, (6) paid CalFresh ambassadors, (+80) unit earning interns and volunteers. Each of these students directly informs, shapes, and supports the operations of our basic needs efforts.
- In terms of the referendum, graduate and undergraduate student input (in the form of town halls, assembly meetings, and researched pulled from earlier surveys) has informed the following:
  - Prioritizing the Food Assistance Program, Homeless Student Support, CalFresh outreach, and student-facing positions in the Basic Needs Center.
  - Prioritizing the creation and expansion of student positions over staff that will be compensated and have leadership positionality to inform and shape efforts. Supporting the partial salary of a few student-facing staff members.
  - Designing the oversight structure of the Basic Needs Fee. revenue

### **Similar Fee Models**

- No UC campus has passed a Student Basic Needs Fee. Some campuses have passed referendums to only support their food pantries. These campuses are listed below:
  - **UC Irvine:**
    - [Food Pantry](#) referendum. \$3 per undergraduate student, per quarter. 10 year referendum, this is their 3rd year in operation. Inflation adjustment has increased referendum to \$3.16 this AY 2018-2019.
    - UC Irvine student leadership have begun formal conversations to shape a comparable basic needs referendum proposal as this one.
  - **UC Santa Barbara:**
    - [AS Food Bank](#): \$5 per quarter, adjusted at 2% per year.
  - **UCLA:**
    - [UCLA Food Closet](#): passed a Social Justice referendum that included .50 cents per student/per quarter, adjusted by inflation per year.

- **UCSD:**
  - Increased their student government fee, amongst the recipients of the new funding available, is The Hub Basic Needs Center.

### **Purpose of the Student Basic Needs Fee**

- **Relief:** is the largest area of investment for our Student Basic Needs Fee. This area consists of **three primary interventions:**
  - (i) **Food Assistance Program**, will equitably award meal dollars or grocery money in the form of gift cards to students experiencing food insecurity who are not eligible for CalFresh. This funding is designed to serve as a food intervention to match CalFresh for non-eligible populations, such as undocumented or international students in need, and expands on a current resource overseen by the Financial Aids and Scholarship Office. It will serve an additional 278 students at \$192 dollars a month for 12 months. The committee will generate a rubric informed by existing on and off campus models of emergency aid, food, legal, and medical funds. Funding will be available for undergraduate and graduate students proportionately. Funding will be distributed to reflect the proportion of undergraduate and graduate students on this campus and will be equitably awarded according to student need and funding availability. The fund will also support 50% of a Financial Aid and Scholarships staff position (FTE) and benefits to support the processing and disbursement of the additional food assistance applications. This means that the staff will spend 50% of their time meeting with students and allocating these funds. Remaining funds in the Food Assistance budget at the end of each year can be donated to the Food Pantry.
  - (ii) **Homeless Student Support** is to be equitably awarded to students facing displacement/homelessness to support their transition to consistent and safe housing. It will serve about 146 students at up to a \$1000 each. This will be the first time our university will have a Crisis Resolution Specialist to assess each individual case, work with the student to create a plan, and coordinate funding and support for the student to maximize their long-term safety and wellbeing. The referendum will pay for 50% of the Crisis Resolution Specialists' staff position (FTE) and benefits. These will be informed by emergency housing-related services developed in the past few years that have demonstrated the student need, consistent with the survey results, for a homeless student protocol (e.g. SAO emergency housing, Student Affairs housing services, and ASUC security deposit grant-scholarship). This year, campus stakeholders are developing a comprehensive housing support protocol, which will allow students in need to more easily be connected with the resources they need, and leverage the full potential of the homeless student support budget.
  - (iii) **CalFresh**, to proactively reach out to and serve eligible students with higher needs. The referendum will support the hiring of 2 Undergraduate Ambassadors, and 1 Graduate Ambassador to champion this initiative. It will also provide \$1,500 per semester and \$1000 per summer for outreach materials to increase CalFresh enrollment.
- **Outreach:**
  - The Referendum will provide a \$1 budget per first-year student (at a undergraduate, masters, professional, and doctorate level) to provide outreach materials for

incoming students to create a culture of awareness of basic needs challenges and the available resources on campus.

### **Breakdown of the Fee**

1st Year, Operational Budget ([link](#))

### **Duration of Fee**

In compliance with campus and University policies, UC Berkeley's Student Basic Needs Fee is proposed to support UC Berkeley undergraduate and graduate students for 10 years. During these 10 years, we hope to continue to lobby and advocate for permanent financial resources from the UC, campus, and the state to obviate the need for this fee.

### **Sunset Clause:**

- The Student Basic Needs Referendum will sunset in 10 years at the end of summer 2029. In compliance with University and campus policy, the fee level may be reduced or eliminated within reason, for example, if university funding can reach the same proportion of the costs of the need and staffing costs.
- The Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee shall determine if further action is required to recommend sunsetting the fee before the end of summer 2029.

### **How this fee compares with other Campus-Based Student Fees**

Access to worksheet: [direct link](#)

### **Oversight of the Fee**

**Purpose:** All fees will be overseen by the Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee, which will be charged with ensuring that the fees support the original intention of the Referendum while being responsive to the evolving nature of student need. The committee will have the responsibility of monitoring the revenue and expenses of such programs.

**Powers, Duties, Responsibilities:** All members of the Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee will exercise voting power in decision-making on the uses of the fee, advising on how the fees may serve undergraduate and graduate students equitably.

- To review highlighted applicants nominated by the Basic Needs Center and Financial Aid and Scholarship Office for hiring and form an ad-hoc Hiring Committee when undergoing staffing processes
- To reserve the right to recommend to the Basic Needs Center that student-based fee staffing funds be removed in the event that the student-fee funded staffer loses the confidence of the Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee upon the recommendation of the Committee chair and a majority vote of the Committee
- To ensure that the services provided by the Basic Needs Referendum are effective,

equitable, responsive, and dynamic

- To determine the various ways and means in which the services will be promoted to the campus community
- To hold the all student-fee funded staffers through this Basic Needs Referendum accountable to the students
- To support communication, cooperation, and collaboration among all committee members and stakeholders on campus throughout this process.
- To invite members of campus offices, programs, and organizations to the committee meetings when needed in order to receive input on issues pertinent to this committee

Voting Members of Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee (8):

- Student Representation:
  - ASUC: Student Advocate's Office representative, ASUC Representative (should have experience in Basic Needs Security).
  - Committee on Student Fees: Representative (1)
  - GA: Representative (1) (should consult with GA Basic Needs Project Director or Vice President of Equity and Inclusion)
  - Graduate Student At-large: Representative (1)
  - Graduate Union Representative
  - Undergraduate Student At-large: Representative (1)
  - Student Basic Needs Coordinator: Representative (1)
- Staff Representation:
  - UCB Basic Needs Committee Chair (1)

Non-Voting Members of the Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee (4):

- Staff Representation:
  - Basic Needs Committee: Representative (1)
  - Division of Student Affairs: Representative (1)
  - Graduate Division: Representative (1)
  - Financial Aid and Scholarships: Representative (1)

Co-Chairs of Basic Needs Fee Oversight Committee:

- (1) UCB Basic Needs Committee Chair
- (1) Appointed student. Each year, student co-chair should rotate between undergraduate and graduate student. The last year's committee should process applications and decide on the next student chair.

Meeting frequency:

- Summer, 2 Day Retreat:
  - Day 1: Annual impact and evaluation presentations from intervention leaders. Annual impact and evaluation presentations, as well as financial breakdown for the



upcoming academic year will be sent to all committee members no later than one (1) week prior to this date.

- Day 2: Negotiation, strategy, and strategic plan for academic year informed by evaluation data, policy landscape, and committee priorities.
- Fall Semester, Committee meetings:
  - There will be no less than three Committee meetings in a duration of a semester
  - The purpose of these Committee meetings will be to communicate progress updates, reports, and impact data
  - Committee members shall review the progress and monitor that the operations are consistent with the Committee's decisions and the original intent of the Referendum
- End of Fall Semester, half-day meeting:
  - Review strategic plan, discuss adjustments needed, and confirm updated strategic plan.
- Spring Semester, Committee meetings:
  - There will be no less than three Committee meetings in a duration of a semester
  - The purpose of these Committee meetings will be to communicate progress updates, reports, and impact data
  - Committee members shall review the progress and monitor that the operations are consistent with the Committee's decisions and the original intent of the Referendum
- End of Spring Semester, half-day meeting:
  - Review strategic plan, discuss adjustments needed to meet the goals of strategic plan, and confirm updated plan through end of fiscal close

Voting:

- A majority of the entire committee shall serve as quorum.

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[1] <https://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/files/food-housing-security.pdf>

[2] [https://housing.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/HousingSurvey\\_03022018.pdf](https://housing.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/HousingSurvey_03022018.pdf)

[3] <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/pell-grants-a-key-tool-for-expanding-college-access-and-economic-opportunity>

[4] <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/a-lost-decade-in-higher-education-funding>

[5] <https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/the-ten-most-and-least-expensive-college-towns-2017-edition/>

[6]

[https://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Amy-Rose\\_Financial-Aid-for-Californias-Future\\_TICAS\\_10.2.2018.pdf](https://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Amy-Rose_Financial-Aid-for-Californias-Future_TICAS_10.2.2018.pdf)

[7] <https://tcf.org/content/report/expanding-opportunity-reducing-debt/?agreed=1>

[8] [https://www.nasfaa.org/aim\\_higher](https://www.nasfaa.org/aim_higher)