**Referendum Title**

Retention Programs and Services Referendum

**Ballot Language**

The University of California is committed to graduating students within 4 years. It is critical to increase programs and services that will focus on retention of students and will support them as they work toward achieving their academic, personal, and professional goals. The Calvin E. Bright Success Center (BSC) provides peer mentoring, tutoring, academic success workshops, resource referrals, and academic coaching to all UC Merced students who access our services.

The BSC currently receives funding from student fees, tuition, grants, and donations. Bright Success Center Programs include Fiat Lux, Guardian Scholars, Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS), Services for Undocumented Students, Strengthening Talents and Exploring Pathways (STEP), Student Accessibility Services, Success Mentor Program (SMP), and Transfer, Returning, and Veteran Program (TRV). Referendum funding would be used to support all BSC programs. Undergraduate students will be expected to pay this fee for the fall and spring semesters and will last through the duration of the campus’s operation. This fee will not apply to summer students. The fee will be will be adjusted using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to address inflation.

**Proposed Semester Fee Breakdown: Fee Rate Per Semester**

The following table illustrates the prospective fee amounts calculated per semester by year; calculations reflect estimated CPI\* adjustments.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Yr 1 Per | Yr 2  Per | Yr 3  Per | Yr 4  Per | Yr 5  Per | Yr 6  Per | Yr 7  Per | Yr 8  Per | Yr 9  Per | Yr 10  Per |
|  | % of fee | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt | Sem Amt |
| Campus Unit | 75% | 41.25 | 41.25 | 41.25 | 41.25 | 41.25 | 42.49 | 42.49 | 42.49 | 42.49 | 43.77 |
| Financial Aid | 25% | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 14.16 | 14.16 | 14.16 | 14.16 | 14.58 |
| Total | 100% | 55.00 | 55.00 | 55.00 | 55.00 | 55.00 | 56.65 | 56.65 | 56.65 | 56.65 | 58.35 |

*\*3% used as Consumer Price Index (CPI) for calculation*

Do you approve funding a $55 fee per undergraduate student per semester to ensure UC Merced undergraduate students have access to retention programs, services, and resources?

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the fee ($13.75) would be returned to undergraduate students in the form of financial aid. After the return to aid, the remaining $41.25 would be used to provide programming and services, such as academic coaching, mentoring, and tutoring, in order to increase retention for first generation, foster youth, low income, transfer, returning, veteran, students with disabilities, undocumented students, and students in need of academic resources and support.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I hereby support the Retention Programs and Services Referendum

\_\_\_\_ No, I hereby do not support​ the Retention Programs and Services Referendum

**Complete Text**

We, the undergraduate students of the University of California at Merced, would like to see retention programs and services for first generation, foster youth, low income, transfer, returning, veteran, students with disabilities, and undocumented students more widely and effectively addressed by current campus resources, such as the Calvin E. Bright Success Center, that address retention programming and services on campus. Retention programs and services are defined as programs and services designed to retain students at UC Merced until they graduate.

**Introductory Statement**

The Calvin E. Bright Success Center (BSC) focuses on providing academic and learning support services that assist students in achieving their academic, personal, and professional goals. The BSC includes multiple units that provide programs serving many different communities on campus including scholars who are first generation, foster youth, low income, transfer, returning, veteran, students with disabilities, undocumented students, and students in need of academic resources and support.

**Background**

The BSC staff aims to develop and provide students with services that focus on academic coaching, learning support, relationship building, and resource referral. In addition, peer mentorship, peer tutoring, and learning support workshops are used to help scholars explore values, goals, and skill development.

**Purpose of the Fee**

The funds generated from this referendum will provide additional staffing, extended operating hours, resources, programs and/or services that aim to address retention for first generation, foster youth, low income, transfer, returning, veteran, students with disabilities, undocumented students, and students in need of additional academic resources and support.

**Breakdown of the Fee**

Twenty-five percent of funds accumulated will be directed to Financial Aid for Fall and Spring semesters.

Raising fees by $55 per semester: An estimated $116,875 will return to Financial Aid annually for students and $350,625 will be raised for retention programs and services annually. Starting in academic year 2025-26, this fee shall be adjusted for inflation every 5 years in accordance to the Consumer Price Index\*. SFAC will oversee the use of the fees.

**Oversight of the Fee**

The Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) led by student committee chair/vice chairs will oversee the use of the funds. SFAC will make recommendations on the allocations of these fees. SFAC will ensure funds are used in the best interests of the community and in compliance with existing policies and guidelines. Review of said fees is annual.