

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) within the Division of Student Affairs, provides peer mentoring, tutoring, academic success workshops, resource referrals, and academic coaching to all UC Merced students who access our services.

As enrollment at UC Merced has expanded, the Bright Success Center has not received additional funding to account for expanded services or new initiatives to meet the changing needs of students at UC Merced. Currently the BSC receives funding from student fees, tuition, grants, and donations. The Bright Success Center Programs include Community Partnerships, the Fiat Lux Scholars Program, the Guardian Scholars, Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS), Services for Undocumented Students, Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs, Strengthening Talents and Exploring Pathways (STEP), the Success Mentor Program (SMP), and the Transfer, Returning, and Veteran Program (TRV). Referendum funding would be used to support all BSC programs. Undergraduate students will pay this fee for the fall and spring semesters. This fee will not apply to summer students. Starting in fall 2026, the fee will be adjusted every five years 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%	20.63	20.63	20.63	20.63	20.63	21.24	21.24	21.24	21.24	21.88
Financial Aid	25%	6.87	6.87	6.87	6.87	6.87	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.29
Total	100%	27.50	27.50	27.50	27.50	27.50	28.32	28.32	28.32	28.32	29.17

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

Do you approve a new fee of \$27.50 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 (\$6.87) would be returned to undergraduate students in the form of financial aid. After the return to aid, the remaining \$20.63 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 \$27.50 per semester: An estimated \$56,897.50 will return to Financial Aid annually for students and \$170,692.50 will be raised for retention programs and services

annually. Starting in academic year 2026-27, 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.