

Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs
2020-2021 Referendum

I. Referendum Title

Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs

II. Ballot Language

The Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs fee will ensure that UC Merced students continue to have access to culturally-responsive student support practices by using the funds towards:

- Student employment and internship opportunities
- Resources (e.g., expanded event support, additional student staff hires, culturally-responsive skill building and leadership opportunities, cultural wealth and social justice/equity workshops) for Registered student Clubs and Organizations (RCOs)
- Expansion of signature programs such as Annual Social Justice Retreat, Fabulosity Drag Show, Lavender Graduation, Womxn’s Empowerment Conference, Womxn in the Wilderness, Inclusive Excellence Symposium, and support of cultural graduations
- Resources for equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives for undergraduate scholars (radical healing and love institute, multicultural summer institute, UCM equity challenge, social justice student leadership program, Black and Latinx student advocacy retreats etc.)
- Current and future cultural resource and retention centers/affinity spaces, Living Learning Communities, and their oversight of identity-based resources both virtual and/or in-person
- Radical healing initiatives and collaborative partnerships to support the mental health of our historically-marginalized student populations in culturally-sensitive ways

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the entire fee (\$3.75 in academic year Fall 2021) would be returned to UC Merced undergraduate students in the form of financial aid. After the return-to-aid, the remaining \$11.25 will be used for the aforementioned programs, services, and student employment opportunities. **Do you support the new Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs Fee of \$15.00 per semester, including the summer, to ensure UC Merced undergraduates have access to enhanced Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs, services, and resources?**

_____ Yes, I hereby support the Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs fee.

_____ No, I hereby do not support the Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs fee.

_____ I abstain from voting on the Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs fee.

Commented [UCOP1]: UCOP Comment: This looks like a new fee; however, in some places, the fee is framed as an increase. Please clarify that this is indeed a new fee and not an increase to another fee.

This is a new fee. The current Student Life Fee supports some programmatic social justice efforts. However, this new fee would support new programs and initiatives NOT covered by the Student Life Fee. This new fee supports a new office that has been formed.

III. Complete Text

The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs (OSJIIP) was officially established in January 2020, previously being just one of the many areas housed within the Office of Student Life's (OSL) budget, providing co-curricular experiences for students. (Historically, Social Justice Initiatives, LGBTQ+ and Womxn's Programs received partial funds from a \$15.00 per student/semester student life fee.) The student life fee will continue to support the limited existing programs. With the new reorganization, OSJIIP will provide new social justice and identity programs, events, and workshops for the campus community to address campus climate concerns that will be specifically covered by this new fee (radical healing and love institute, multicultural summer institute, UCM equity challenge, social justice student leadership program, Black and Latinx student advocacy retreats etc.)

The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs (OSJIIP) aims to enhance the retention of our historically-underserved scholars and to foster an inclusive campus environment for all by providing opportunities for holistic development, intersectional community building, and student agency. In our commitment to serving UC Merced's diverse scholar community, we seek to influence university policies and practices to position our campus as a hub for transformative leadership and social change. We enact our mission and commitment by focusing on the critical development of our undergraduate student population through cocurricular involvements, including creating opportunities and resources that align with our strategic pillars: collective healing and sense of belonging, social justice and equity education, intersectional identity development, coalition-building and the expansion of identity-based learning and support spaces. OSJIIP will continue to provide accessible resources, workshops, focus groups, healing circles, and more to address campus climate concerns, while building authentic connections among and across our diverse scholar community.

Maintenance, Development, and Expansion of Cultural Resource and Retention Centers

With UC Merced's richness in cultural diversity, Gonzalez (2000) "stressed the importance of cultural nourishment," which is applicable with many student communities. This cultural nourishment and learning expands throughout the campus spaces, going beyond the residence halls, classrooms and student organizations. One of the many purposes cultural (e.g.: Intercultural, Multicultural, Social Justice) centers can provide is to enhance "learning environments to encompass the multicultural and multi-contextual perspectives of (but not limited to) racial/ethnic students" (Gloria, 1999). Cultural centers also enhance the learning environment in addressing intersections of identity, power/privilege, social justice and collective healing. As stated, the student population at UC Merced is very diverse, not only racially/ethnically, but among many social identities such as gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, first generation college status, socioeconomic status, immigration status and more. Maintenance of our existing cultural centers and the creation of new ones can provide avenues for students to explore their multiple identities and provide resources for this exploration and connection with others who share similar narratives and experiences. In order to maintain our physical spaces and create identity-focused programming for these spaces, both in

person and virtually, we need our centers to be adequately funded, staffed, advocated for, and supported.

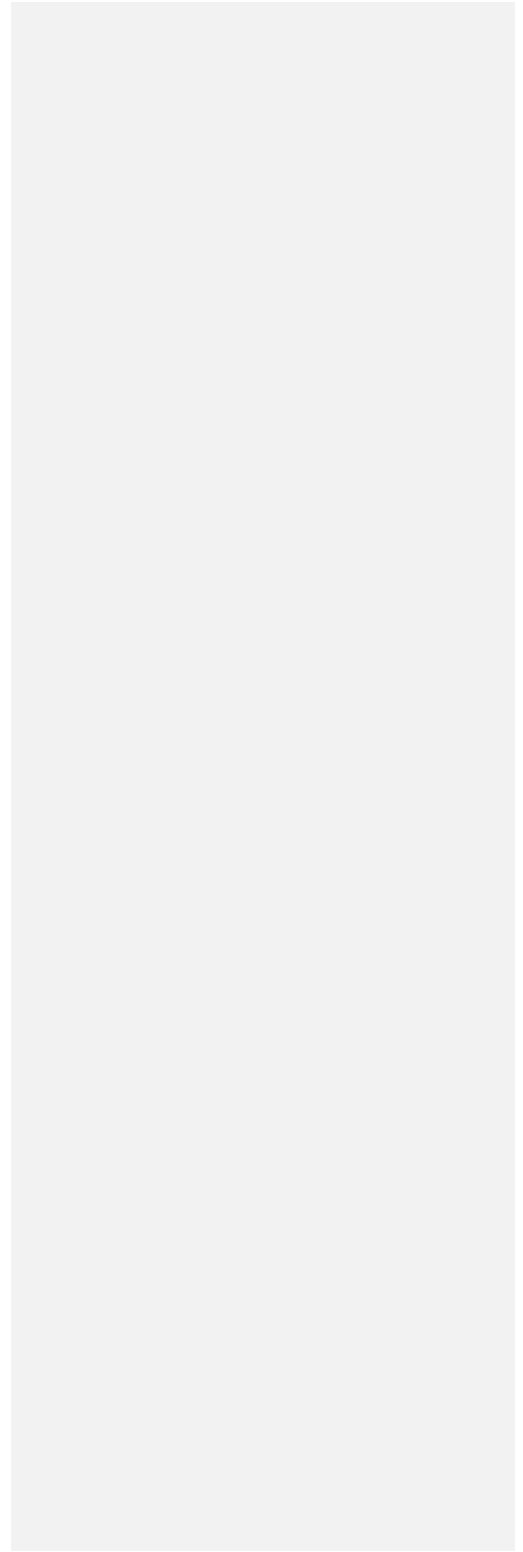
Resources to Assist with Sense of Belonging in Culturally-Based Student Organizations

"It is important to understand how students' internal sense of validation indicates whether the educational environment is inclusive and whether staff and faculty proactively empower students for success" (Hurtado, 2011, 54). In the 2014 Campus Climate survey, 471 (22%) out of 2109 students strongly agreed that they feel comfortable with diversity and inclusion and in the UCUES 382 (19%) out of 2009 students strongly agreed they belonged to UCM which compared to the other nine UC's, UC Merced falls within the top three. In addition to these reports, we work with scholars and alumni daily who share with us how transformative and impactful their experiences in identity-based or culturally-focused student organizations were on their collegiate career and how their training from our office has supported them in seeking and keeping career opportunities and working in multicultural, often global contexts. With divisiveness and tension rising in our nation, we seek to train scholars and staff on how to create more inclusive and authentic environments that foster a true sense of belonging, or as many of our scholars refer to it, "the feeling of family" at UC Merced.

Opportunities and Intentional Spaces for Radical Healing & Culturally-Sensitive Mental Health Support

For years, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Scholars have been requesting, demanding, and advocating for increased resources and therapists to directly serve students of color. While departments across campus, including our Counseling & Psychological Services, are working to expand resources, we paid critical attention to the role identity plays in the inequitable provision of these resources, and the differing need in what these resources and services can look like from an intersectional, social justice perspective. With collective healing as a pillar and essential value of our office, we have been facilitating healing circles for the campus since our start as an individual office, including in response to #BlackLivesMatter protests and the violence committed against Black and Brown communities, in helping scholars to understand and navigate triggering events online upon the move to remote classes and engagement, to discuss Zoom-bombing and how to stay psychologically safe, to heal amidst general anxiety around the election season and the global pandemic, and so much more, all in a matter of months, with a very small staff team. We then established the Radical Healing series in the Fall 2020. Scholars had been sharing with us the desire for healing spaces with facilitators outside of UC Merced, for facilitators who have a deeper understanding and qualifications around trauma and holistic wellness, and for spaces that speak to their intersectional identities, namely Black, Brown, first gen, and LGBTQIA+. This series brought in guest speakers from around the nation to facilitate virtual trauma-informed healing and wellness programming to directly serve our historically-underserved and marginalized student populations, including, but not limited to students of color, first generation college students, LGBTQIA+ students, and low-income students who may be experiencing high levels of culturally-correlated stress from the global pandemic, election season, and rise of police brutality and violence against Black and Brown communities. To continue creating spaces and opportunities such as these, to best support our students with

culturally-responsive, trauma informed wellness and healing resources, we must continue to secure funding and staff to make this happen.



Continuation of Signature Programs to Enhance Social Justice Education and Multicultural Celebrations on Campus

"In our work and in our living, we must recognize that difference is a reason for celebration and growth, rather than a reason for destruction," Audre Lorde told Claudia Tate in Black Women Writers at Work. We seek to use the Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs fee to continue coordinating our office's signature programs and multicultural celebrations, including, but not limited to the Annual Social Justice Retreat, Fabulosity Drag Show, Lavender Graduation, Womxn's Empowerment Conference, Womxn in the Wilderness, Inclusive Excellence Symposium, and support of cultural graduations.

Supporting Equitable Access to Education and Resources through the Provision of Financial Aid to Scholars in Need

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the fee would be returned to UC Merced undergraduate students in the form of financial aid. After the return to aid, the remaining funds will be used for the aforementioned programs, services and student employment.

IV. Introduction Text

The new Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs fee for support of the Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs (OSJIIP) will provide UC Merced undergraduate students access to resources for collective healing, sense of belonging initiatives, coalition-building among student clubs and organizations, culturally-responsive skill-building and leadership trainings, funding for current and future cultural centers/affinity spaces, resources for equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and additional student employment opportunities.

V. Background

The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs has multiple programmatic and services areas promoting our value-based pillars (Social Justice Education Initiatives, Womxn's & Gender Equity Programs and LGBTQ+ Initiatives, to begin with). OSJIIP initiatives center student agency, intersectional identity development and campus climate to ensure that our undergraduate scholars are thriving. We are listening to the needs brought forth by our scholar community and are responding to meet those needs, as we have always sought to do, and as demonstrated by the development of the Multicultural Center (previously Intercultural Hub) and the LGBTQ+ Pride Center, by the provision of additional support to the AFRO Living Learning Community and other culturally-based student organizations, by the creation and frequency of healing circles this year alone, and so much more. We seek to create an environment for EVERY UC Merced scholar to thrive in this multicultural global society, through the co-curricular initiatives and programming our area continually provides and seeks to expand. As the higher education community prepares for the year 2021 and beyond, many still question why Black/African American/Caribbean, Asian Pacific Islander Middle Eastern Desi American (APIMEDA), LatinX, and First People/Indigenous, LGBTQIA+ students challenge institutions to provide cultural centers and differentiated resources on campus. We know that these spaces

and resources are essential, as part of our retention efforts, so students can explore their identities, the intersections of those identities, better understand how they operate in varying contexts, and use their agency in college, in their career, and beyond, in a safe and supportive environment.

“Cultural centers have historically afforded a safe space for critical thinking and dialogue, represented political spaces of resistance in hostile academic environments, and served as a home away from home for students of color.” (Hord, 2005; Patton, 2006a, 2006b)

Schein (1992) stated “cultural artifacts are the most noticeable elements of culture.” Manning (1993) outlined three types of cultural artifacts: physical, verbal, and behavioral. “Physical artifacts included written documents, memorials, buildings, and physical spaces on campus.” (Museus 2008).

US society will continue to become more multicultural within its own borders. People now considered “minorities” will, in fact, become “majorities” in various areas of the country in the not distant future. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of African-, Asian-, Native-, and Hispanic Americans represented just 7.6% of the workforce 50 years ago. In 2000, that number more than doubled to 16%, and, according to the Hudson Institute, is projected to surpass 30% by 2020.

The workforce has become more multicultural as a result of globalization as well. Companies integrate groups of businesses around the world through strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions. Organizations are a mix of people from different cultural backgrounds who have to understand each other, interact on a daily basis and often work in more than one country. Understanding cultural diversity and competence, as well as the need to communicate effectively across cultural divides has become imperative if we are to compete effectively in the global marketplace. In her 2011 article, *What Globalization Means for Diversity and Inclusion Efforts*, Susan Johnson states:

A new era of diversity management is upon us. globalization has transformed society, economics and politics, greatly influencing demographics within the workplace. Not only are today's employees more diverse, with minorities constituting 40% of the U.S. workforce in 2009, the heads of state—Barack Obama, Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf—reflect a sea change in perceptions of leadership. A multi-cultural, global workforce symbolizes a new way of thinking about diversity and inclusion efforts.

“For all practical purpose, all business today is global. Those individual business, firms, industries and whole societies that clearly understand the new rules of doing business in a world economy will prosper; those that don't will perish” (Mitroff, Ian, Quappe, Stephanie, and Cantatore, Giovanna; *Cultural Differences: Not just HR's business, It's everybody's business*, 2007).

VI. Purpose of the Fee

The purpose of the fee is to assist the new Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs, a brand new area within the Division of Student Affairs related to the pillars, addressing campus climate, social justice and equity workshops and expansion of affinity spaces for cultural groups. The fee will provide stability for signature programs such as annual the Social Justice Retreat, Womxn In The Wilderness, Fabulosity Drag Show, healing/community circles, multicultural/leadership and identity exploration initiatives for our undergraduate population.

[This](#) fee will ensure that UC Merced students continue to have access to:

- Resources (e.g. expanded event support, additional student staff hires, skill building and leadership, cultural wealth and social justice, and trainings, etc.) for Registered student Clubs and Organizations (RCOs),
- Funding for cultural centers/affinity spaces
- Resources for equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives
- Certifications and Professional Development Trainings
- Student employment opportunities

We can differentiate our work and lead our campus in culturally-responsive student support practices by using the funds towards:

- Training our staff in trauma-informed approaches and restorative justice practices
- Expanding and maintaining identity-based resources, retention centers, and living learning communities, both virtual and in-person when able
- Increasing opportunities for student staff employment, internships, and assistantships
- Providing radical healing initiatives and collaborative partnerships to support the mental health of our historically-marginalized student populations in culturally-sensitive ways

VII. Breakdown of the Fee

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the fee would be returned to UC Merced undergraduate students in the form of financial aid. After the return to aid, the remaining funds will be used for the aforementioned programs, services and student employment.

If approved, undergraduate students will be assessed a [\\$15.00](#) fee during fall, spring, and summer semesters beginning Fall 2021. The fee will increase for inflation every four years (using the Consumer Price Index) starting Fall 2025

Example Fee Breakdown (Year 1-10 example)

		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%	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	12.10	12.10	12.10	12.10	12.10	13.20
Financial Aid	25%	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.40
Total Fee	100%	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	16.10	16.10	16.10	16.10	16.10	17.60

VIII. Oversight of the Fee

The Student Fee Advisory Committee is charged with evaluating Student Fee Funded Units and making recommendations on allocations of the Student Fees that every undergraduate and graduate student pays while attending UC Merced. SFAC will ensure that the proposed Student Fee is used in the best interests of students, the UC Merced community, and in compliance with existing University policies and guidelines. SFAC will have oversight, make recommendations, meet regularly with Student Life and request/review annual reports on the use of student fees. SFAC consists of twelve voting members, three non-voting advisors, and five non-voting ex-officio representatives from the Associated Students (AS) and the Graduate Students Association (GSA) and meets weekly during fall and spring semesters.