

## Student Involvement Fee Referendum 2020-2021 Referendum

### I. Referendum Title

Student Involvement Referendum

### II. Ballot Language

The Office of Student Involvement (OSI) provides co-curricular experiences for students and is currently funding by a portion of the Student Life fee. Since UC Merced opened in 2005, the following programs have grown substantially:

- Registered Clubs and Organizations (RCO) have grown from 20 to 200+ clubs (*900% increase*).
- Fraternities and sororities have grown from zero to 20 organizations (*2000% increase*).
- Student employees have grown from three to 25 annually (*733% increase*).
- Summer programs increased from three to 15 events (*400% increase*). This increase was supported through intentional collaborations with 10 campus units.

UC Merced is growing and so are the needs of student groups. The newly proposed Student Involvement Fee will provide:

- Official Storage access (RCOs and FSL groups will have access to store items such as mats, costumes, canopy, tabling items, Large wooden letters, equipment) *NEW*
- Digital signage on campus to market events on campus *NEW*
- Equipment (Equipment RCO and FSL groups to check out) *NEW*
- Bobcat RCO Assistance Grant (increase the number and amount of the grant awards)
- Waive RCO re-registration fee upon completion of required trainings *NEW*
- Certifications and Professional Development Trainings
- Summer programming
- Graduate/Professional staff to support cultural organizations on campus
- Additional student employment opportunities

The Office of Student Involvement are proposing a new fee of \$10.00 to address the above expressed needs on campus. If approved, undergraduate students will be assessed the fee during fall, spring, and summer semesters beginning fall 2021. The fee will be assessed only one-time during the summer. The new Student Involvement fee will increase for inflation every five years (using the Consumer Price Index) beginning with fall 2025.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the entire fee (\$2.50 in academic year 2021-22) would be returned to UC Merced undergraduate students in the form of financial aid. After the return-to-aid, the remaining \$7.50 will be used for the aforementioned programs, services, and student employment. **Do you support the new Student Involvement Fee of 10.00 per semester, including summer, to ensure UC Merced undergraduates have access to additional resources and supports to enhance Student Involvement?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I hereby support the Student Involvement Referendum.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I hereby do not support the Student Involvement Referendum.

\_\_\_\_\_ I abstain from voting on the Student Involvement Referendum.

### **III. Complete Text**

The Office of Student Involvement focuses on the critical development of undergraduate student population through co-curricular involvement. Co-Curricular experiences are essential to supporting student's accomplishment of academic, career, and personal goals. Astin's (1984, 1999) and Tinto's (1993, 1997) research emphasizes the beneficial effects of academic engagement and asserts that students learn through involvement. Astin's theory suggests that students play an integral role in determining their own degrees of involvement in academic courses, co-curricular activities, and social development. Astin states that the quality and quantity of the student's involvement will influence the capacity for student learning, agency, and development.

The Office of Student Involvement provides opportunities for students to be engaged in more expansive ways than are acknowledged by studies that focus on academic endeavors. Further research has found that institutions of higher education that create robust experiences blending social and educational benefits impact their students' quality of Involvement by increasing involvement in activities outside of the classroom and integrating students' learning in curricular and co-curricular areas (Kuh, 1996). Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt (1991) found that the quality of students' undergraduate experience was related to students' level of involvement in campus Involvement. This proposal aligns with higher education research and student development best practices at UC Merced.

### **IV. Introduction Text**

The Student Involvement Fee will ensure that OSI provides UC Merced undergraduate students access to official storage, equipment, digital signage, funding, certificates and professional development trainings, summer programming, additional staffing (student employees and/or graduate/professional).

### **V. Background**

The Office of Student Involvement at UC Merced was established to support student needs outside the classroom, hereto referred as co-curricular experiences. Currently the Office of Student Involvement has four programmatic and service areas promoting co-curricular engagement and development of students. Those areas include: Clubs and Organizations (200 + student orgs), Fraternity and Sorority Involvement (20 FSL orgs), the Associated Students of the University of California Merced (ASUCM), ASUCM Campus Activities Board and the OSI Business Center to meet student needs and interests. The Office of Student Involvement coordinates and

supports hundreds of student-centered events each year in collaboration with student organizations, campus and community partners to promote student's accomplishment of academic, career, and personal goals. Additionally, the Office of Student Involvement employs over a dozen UCM students each year to implement innovative student requested events, programs and services for the campus community.

The proposed fee supports student salaries and student-based resources, programs and events. With campus expansion there is an urgent need to strengthen and increase co-curricular opportunities and services for students. However, without the proposed fee OSI will be unable to provide resources such as storage, equipment, funding and staffing to enhance the personal and professional growth of RCO/FSL leaders and members. Students continue to request more training and skill building opportunities for club/organization leaders and members. The proposed fee will support hiring a graduate or professional staff. The graduate or professional staff will focus on retention and offer transformative and culturally relevant training. Moreover, the staff member will help students document, translate and articulate experience to bolster attainment of internship or career opportunities.

## **VI. Purpose of the Fee**

The purpose of the fee is to meet the growing needs of students and student groups on campus. UC Merced is growing and so are the needs of student groups. The proposed Student Involvement Fee will provide:

- Official Storage access (RCOs and FSL groups will have access to store items such as mats, costumes, canopy, tabling items, Large wooden letters, equipment) *NEW*
- Digital signage on campus to market events on campus *NEW*
- Equipment (Equipment RCO and FSL groups to check out) *NEW*
- Bobcat RCO Assistance Grant (increase the number and amount of the grant awards)
- Waivers for RCO re-registration fee upon completion of required trainings *NEW*
- Certifications and Professional Development Trainings
- Summer programming
- Graduate/Professional staff to support cultural organizations on campus
- Additional student employment opportunities

## **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 the increased fee during fall, spring, and summer semesters beginning fall 2021. The fee will be assessed only one-time during the summer. The fee will increase for inflation every five 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%	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	9.75
Financial Aid	25%	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	3.25
Total Fee	100%	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	11.50	11.50	11.50	11.50	11.50	13.00

**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 new 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 Involvement and request/review annual reports on the use of student fees. SFAC consists of twelve voting members, three non-voting advisors, and four non-voting ex-officio representatives from the Associated Students (AS) and the Graduate Students Association (GSA) and meets weekly during fall and spring semesters.