

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA®
STUDENT AFFAIRS POLICY COMMITTEE
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Student Affairs Policy Committee Annual Report 2020-2021

SAPC Members:

- Diane Ohala, *Chair*, Linguistics
- Sonia Batsheva Kaufman, GPSC
- Cheryl Cuillier, University Libraries-Research & Learning
- Yijun Ding, College of Optical Sciences
- Kristen Little, English
- Kimberly Marchesseault, Management and Organizations, Eller
- Matthew Mugmon, Fred Fox School of Music
- Timothy Ottusch, Family Studies & Human Development, CALS
- Tara Singleton, ASUA
- Jeff Stone, Psychology
- Kendal Washington White, Dean of Students, ex-officio (8/09-)

During the academic year 2020-2021, the committee met **June 3, 2020; July 8, 2020; August 5, 2020; September 9, 2020; October 14, 2020; December 9, 2020; February 10, 2021; April 14, 2021, and May 5, 2021**. Details and highlights are provided below.

Highlights for June 3, 2020 included:

Discussion of new student enrollment data and SSRI survey of student challenges: Committee members discussed new student enrollment data shared by Kasey Urquidez, Vice President, Enrollment Management at the June 1, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting. Chair Ohala directed the discussion to focus on ways to help create a better learning environment for students of disadvantaged populations who may be dealing with institutional racism in conjunction with COVID-19. The committee tasked themselves to think of ways to help students returning in the fall (in any capacity) who may be returning from a state of anxiety and trauma, including reaching out to OIA.

Additional discussion of enrollment trends shared by Urquidez included noting that 34% of those surveyed reported some loss in family income; 64% think they will have to delay their college experience. Chair Ohala noted that students report experiencing inconsistency with how instructors handle online teaching, noting reports of online courses requiring more work, instructors not using D2L, and some students may not be in a safe or productive space at home—compromising their ability to participate in the course. She suggested SAPC may have a role in smoothing out the online instruction experiences of students in the fall.

Committee members also discussed the need for safeguards for the student experience, noting that having different levels of teaching modality doesn't solve problems of students not hearing from instructors and poorly re-designed syllabi from in-person to online classes. Members asked what students should do if a professor is unprofessional or changes deadlines during an online course and if guidelines from the Teaching and Learning Group could be used to ensure an equitable class experience. Members also planned to ask OIA if there was anything that could be done to resume teaching assessment of courses/instructors.

Discussion concluded with Chair Ohala asking the committee members to identify student concerns from the SSRI survey via a shared document in the SAPC Box folder so that these concerns could be prioritized and shared with senior leadership and other relevant groups.

Highlights for July 08, 2020 included:

International Student Visas: Committee members discussed the withdrawal of international student visas and suggested hybrid classes may offer a solution that allows students to stay on campus. The committee also discussed a potential workaround through independent study courses as they are, by definition, in-person courses. Committee member Stone asked if this workaround would be applicable to undergraduate students. Chair Ohala responded that communications through UA suggest it will work and students should work with appropriate departmental assistants to identify and help students sign up for independent study courses, as needed. Members discussed a potential downside to independent study registrations, stating students may encounter a delay in progress toward a degree if these credits are not needed. Committee members discussed the lawsuits by other institutions connected to this issue. Member Marchesseault shared in Zoom chat the link to a petition on the subject for anyone who was interested in signing.

Student Regent Anthony Rusk Initiative: Chair Ohala shared that she was contacted by Vice Chair of the Faculty, Dr. Melanie Hingle, who was in conversation with Student Regent Anthony Rusk. Rusk wishes to draw Faculty Senate support behind an initiative about student basic needs, as these have worsened in light of COVID-19. Chair Ohala will join a conversation with Rusk on July 20th and will mention the initiative at the next meeting of the Senate Executive Committee.

Food Insecurity: Chair Ohala shared an overview of a survey about food insecurity issues sent from Hingle. She also informed the committee about the ASUA website about basic needs and resources for students. She said she thought Rusk was working to get Regents behind a basic needs coalition because UA has surpassed other Arizona Universities on the issue so far. Committee members discussed the correlation of mental health, financial, and food issues.

Communications to Students: The committee discussed that communications about fall classes have been inadequate, both to students and instructors. As an example, she said in UAccess when modalities are changed by the instructor, the enrolled student is not notified – the only way for a student to know this change is to check their schedule. Ohala shared she is hearing from students they do not understand the difference between remote and online and think remote means synchronous video instruction and online means asynchronous video instruction. She added all global campus sections also said remote when main campus sections said online for the same course. Ohala also explained issues with searching for courses by modality in UAccess. Committee members discussed problems with communicating which classes are taking place with each modality and determined to start follow-up questions with the

Registrar's Office, Provost, and UITs. Committee member Stone suggested adding a message about this issue to all D2L classes. Ohala expressed she would communicate with Lisa Elfring and Mark Felix about this.

Highlights for August 5, 2020 included:

Presentation and Q&A with Student Regent Rusk: Rusk presented to the committee regarding basic needs insecurity. He identified basic needs as: food, physical health, housing, quality education, mental well-being, sense of belonging, financial support, and safety. Rusk stated the problems of basic needs access were complicated at the university level because of perceptions of college students surviving on basic items. He indicated food insecurity is three times the national average at the national level. Citing facts and figures, Rusk added the University had one of the nation's largest problems with food insecurity at the college level resulting from students no longer living at home and having to budget while losing the safety net of family. Rusk added, in context of the pandemic, many students who were food insecure became more so due to loss of family jobs or positions that supported them while on campus. Rusk stated that supporting the most at-risk students would lead to benefits for the state of Arizona as a whole and would encourage "thought leaders".

He also provided solutions to the problem of basic needs insecurity including:

- Creating the University of Arizona Basic Needs Coalition
- Making data-based decisions
- Shifting the culture and stigma around basic needs
- Becoming the thought leaders in Arizona on Basic Needs

Rusk provided an overview of what other institutions have done to address this issue including:

- Advocacy
- Research (UC and Alabama relied on research data)
- Connecting students to SNAP
- Expanding food pantries
- Creating basic needs centers
- Swipe Out Hunger
- Northern Arizona University's App
- Food scholarship programs; Farm scholarship programs
- Formation of campus basic needs security coalitions

He also shared the impacts of such programs and provided the example of food scholarship programs in Houston, Texas. In the programs he mentioned, students who received bags of groceries twice a month were retained at a rate of 60%. The retained students earned a GPA of 3.05 (compared to 2.75 for those students not in the program).

Committee members discussed with Rusk the best way to move forward with the items suggested by the presentation. Members asked how often and at what scale basic needs insecurity is assessed. Rusk responded basic needs were assessed through an annual survey but also expressed the survey system used by UA may not be thorough and answers may not be comprehensive. Chair Ohala indicated the committee may be able to work with her connection to a committee that oversees surveys at UA. Chair Ohala also commented on the food scholarship program and suggested the outcomes from giving students groceries each week may be enormously beneficial. She added that the Campus Pantry collects card-swipe data and that may be a way to gather information about users and correlate effects on GPA and retention. Rusk stated the UA main campus is considered a food desert and the nearest grocery store is a mile or

more distant, presenting transportation problems to students. Committee member Little suggested the writing program could participate in getting information out to freshmen as they are positioned to interact with the majority of incoming students.

Chair Ohala stated she will start a Google Doc based on the presentation to SAPC and the committee would work to create starting points to share with Rusk regarding best practices. Chair Ohala asked the committee members what information they would like to see collected regarding students on campus. Member Stone responded there was need for information on factors effecting student outcomes on campus and if it would be possible to predict from a dataset retention, graduation rates, or GPA based on basic needs factors. He also asked the committee for advice to give Rusk on starting a center to work with survey data. Stone suggested to establish a center they would need data and guidelines on gathering data. The committee also proposed that Rusk present at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Highlights for September 9, 2020 included:

Basic Needs Coalition: Chair Ohala updated the committee on her meetings with Student Regent Anthony Rusk and Vice Chair of the Faculty Melanie Hingle regarding the Basic Needs Coalition Rusk is attempting to form. Ohala informed the committee she reported to the Senate Executive Committee (SENEXEC) regarding Rusk's work. Hingle reinforced the notion that this was a student-led initiative and Ohala suggested the need to support a student-led agenda.

Ohala said Rusk has been working with the Regents and they decided to establish a Basic Needs Taskforce at the ABOR level. Ohala informed the committee the taskforce will only focus on housing and food (out of the many factors contributing to basic needs insecurity outlined by Rusk in a previous presentation). She added this did not mean the other basic needs factors could not be addressed at the local level. Ohala added that Rusk was working with Tucson community members including local foodbanks.

Student Data Insight Strategy Team: Chair Ohala explained some of her involvement with the Student Data Insight Strategy Team which has been formed under the Provost. She said the group meets weekly and operates under the basic idea that data from surveys of the University population has not reached key stakeholders. She said the team was working to make it so information was adapted and refined for particular purposes and would work well with initiatives on campus. Ohala added there was an PhD student working on the needs of international students. She also stated Marla Franco was working on information related to pre and post-COVID emotional support for students and instructors. Ohala shared details about information needs at the University and encouraged SAPC members to identify items that were not included and could be added.

Wildcat Check-in: Ohala informed the committee the Wildcat Check-in survey was pushed out to students via D2L. The survey was listed on the top of student's D2L homepages and Ohala said she was going to share an email to spread awareness. She added the survey collected check-in data weekly and once a student opts-in to share this information, it was shared with OIA, CAPS, and housing services. Ohala said that questions were added about child-care based on committee feedback.

Ohala shared sample data gathered from the survey and explained that the survey asked students which types of support they needed and then matched them with resources to address the need. From the data she shared, Mental and Emotional Health was the largest need, followed by Financial Wellness. Ohala said the survey does not focus on D2L instruction and that OIA would be conducting future surveys specifically on D2L instruction. She added this survey could feed into initiatives such as the Basic Needs Coalition and allow SAPC to decide which issues to tackle first.

Ohala asked the committee to review responses to the survey via Box and highlight items for follow-up. She said graduate student responses were low and asked member Kaufman to follow up with GPSC to see if graduate students were receiving the survey in D2L. Committee member Marchesseault said she would share information about the survey to Eller listservs.

International Students: Chair Ohala provided information about a study regarding international students. She said the survey was focused on international students because the level of support provided to this population was lacking in comparison to other students. She added international students were a vulnerable population and disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Ohala broke down the social support offered to international students before and during the pandemic and stated international students felt less supported than peers. According to the survey she shared, 1 in 4 international students did not feel socially accepted. She said international students indicated they needed additional financial wellness and academic support services. Ohala suggested a future guest may be invited to the committee to discuss this subject.

Committee member Kaufman stated she will share information with GPSC regarding orientations and will check to see if there is an international student specific orientation. Committee member Ding said international students have their own orientations through the graduate college and the International Student Center is available but is more focused on legal/tax issues. She added it was up to groups of international students to create their own communities on campus. Member Hudson said that if the University is dependent on this demographic for financial reasons, then attending to these student's needs should be a priority. Chair Ohala said she would add items related to this topic to the SAPC Box folder and will look into the International Student Center and clubs.

Highlights for October 14, 2020 included:

Basic Needs: Chair Ohala informed the committee that the presentation to Faculty Senate by Student Regent Anthony Rusk was well received. She said she met with Rusk regarding other constituents who were not necessarily on the radar for this group. Ohala reminded the committee there were two different levels at work with this item: the ABOR level where a working group focused on housing and food insecurity was established as part of a state-wide initiative and the Basic Needs Coalition, which is a local, UA-level coalition.

Financial Literacy: The committee discussed tying financial literacy to health and wellness concerns. Chair Ohala asked if Eller offered any financial literacy courses and committee member Marchesseault replied Eller did not offer courses and students were dispersed to appropriate campus resources. Committee member Mugmon added the Norton School teaches a popular financial literacy course. Chair Ohala stated she would follow up regarding the Norton School course added there was also a state-wide initiative called Take Charge Cats associated with this issue.

Survey Data: Ohala informed the committee she will meet with Lucas Schalewski, Director of Assessment & Research, regarding survey data. She said Student Regent Rusk had asked about the adding questions specific to food insecurity that have been asked at other institutions to surveys at the University.

Mental Health Resources: Chair Ohala expressed that demand for mental health resources do not seem to meet demand. Ohala and Stone discussed that there is no formal relationship between CAPS and the psychology department. Stone clarified by saying that clinical psychology has a clinic that is focused on training and research purposes and the clinic does not have an emphasis on seeing patients in the facility. Stone offered to follow up with the clinical director to see if there are any offerings for students to use the clinic. Stone shared a response from the clinical director later in the meeting, stating there was a campus-wide attempt to consolidate services under Executive Director, Student Wellness and Retention, Amy

Athey. The response indicated students were seen in the clinical health clinic but anything involving prescriptions were referred to CAPS. Stone shared a document detailing mental health services available on campus.

Outsourcing of the UA Bookstore Issue: Committee member Cuillier updated the committee on ideas presented during the previous Faculty Senate meeting regarding outsourcing of the UA Bookstore. She said UA currently has an independent bookstore and profits are returned to campus for scholarships and ASUA programs. Cuillier added the bookstore has tried to hire an outside consultant for an independent analysis of the outsourcing idea. She said there is a perception that the bookstore is subsidized by campus but, in reality, the bookstore pays back \$6m to campus and pays into the debt service of the student union.

Cuillier and Debby Shively, Interim Associate Vice President, Business Affairs - Auxiliary Services, will develop a report and presentation for Faculty Senate in November to inform faculty about the campus bookstore and implications of outsourcing for students. She added the bookstore does not charge sales tax, students may charge items to bursar accounts, and the bookstore worked to keep prices low. Cuillier spoke about the partnership between the library and bookstore regarding e-books and the inclusive access program.

Committee member Singleton said the partnership with the bookstore was a main financial resource for ASUA and it was vital the bookstore not be outsourced. Cuillier asked Singleton to speak at the November Faculty Senate meeting to oppose outsourcing. Committee member Marchesseault said the bookstore represented an important partnership with Eller as it was an on-campus business that helped students through experiential learning.

Cuillier said more information will be shared at an upcoming SAPC and that presentations on the topic would be made at SPBAC.

Fostering Success: Chair Ohala informed the committee about the Office on Fostering Success which helps students who were currently or had been homeless, part of the foster care system, or were experiencing housing challenges. Ohala suggested to Dani Carillo, Program Coordinator for Fostering Success that she present to Faculty Senate in future.

Lab Courses: Chair Ohala informed the committee about students who were told to purchase supplies ahead of fall classes but who may have had difficulty acquiring items due to housing or financial insecurity. She added that students were allegedly asked to purchase supplies in addition to lab fees they were paying and suggested that this was an issue the committee could investigate and bring to the attention of Senior Leadership. Ohala had already met with OIA and agreed to take point on this concern.

Ohala pointed to particular facets of this issue:

1. Financial issues and assumptions that all students have common household items. Some items were not common and not available during the pandemic.
2. Students were turning to the campus pantry to acquire food items for classes, not for consumption.
3. Students may not have access to physical space because kitchens and other spaces in residence halls are closed.

Highlights for December 9, 2020 included:

Resources Access on UA Homepage: Chair Ohala informed the committee there is now a button on the UA homepage that connects students to virtual support services. She raised this issue at the previous

meeting of the Senate Executive Committee and Provost Folks connected her with relevant individuals that helped to address this need.

Health & Rec Fees: Ohala stated students were upset because they were continued to be charged fees without using health and recreation facilities. She said the Provost directed her to Dean Washington White who said the fees paid for both recreation facilities and also health services on campus. The non-refundable fees were linked together to provide items such as counseling services, maintenance costs, and recreation programs. Students can request a refund of the campus recreation portion of the fee if they meet certain criteria such as being enrolled in an online-only program.

Update on Basic Needs: Ohala informed the committee there were two groups working out of UA on Basic Needs issues: one at the ABOR level (ABOR Working Group on Food Insecurity and Housing) and one at the UA level (Basic Needs Coalition). Ohala said she was also working with another group started by the Community Programs Manager of the Arizona Foodbank Network, which is a statewide initiative to pull together community resources in aid of supporting students at all three universities and the many community colleges. She said more people were joining these groups as the need arose and the official board and membership would be determined later when the local campus coalition is established.

Data Gathering Group: Ohala has received a request for a formal partnership between the Student Data Network (run by Lucas Schalewski, Director of Assessment & Research) and the Chair of SAPC. She said she was willing to start in spring.

Testing For Spring 2021: Committee members discussed the announcement that students who are not tested may face punitive actions such as restricted access to UA WIFI. Member Singleton shared she planned to meet with GPSC President Sen and President Robbins but was not certain who would make the final decision. Ohala said restrictions on WIFI access would disadvantage populations that are always disadvantaged. Member Ottusch said a working group with the Provost on this topic would likely happen later in the week. He added CALS senators sent an anonymous survey to CALS faculty to gather ideas for compliance mechanisms. He said the ideas would be shared with Vice Chair of the Faculty, Melanie Hingle who could then share with the Provost.

Technology Access Question on Climate Survey: Ohala informed the committee the Basic Needs Coalition group at UA wanted to add questions to the Spring 2021 climate survey regarding technology access needs. She added the HOPE survey did not ask about technology. Members proposed that questions such as “to what extent is access to technology a barrier to success” and questions regarding access to course materials could be added to the survey. The committee discussed adding a checkbox question to indicate which resources students relied on to complete coursework and which contributed to their difficulties. Committee suggestions regarding these questions were transmitted to Lucas Schalewski, as requested.

Highlights for February 10, 2021 included:

Basic Needs Groups: Chair Ohala informed the committee regarding the different levels on which work on basic needs has gone forward. She stated there was an ABOR working group that included all three Arizona universities, but not Arizona community colleges. A survey would be shared with the group to generate data that would be compared across the institutions. She added all of the Arizona universities had shared questions and each campus would be able to pick questions for their iteration of the survey. The shared questions were concerned with food and housing although the local survey also included questions about student access to technology.

Ohala also shared there was a community group headed by Alexander Meyer of the Association of Arizona Food Banks. This group would support students across the state and inform them of community and campus resources. Members of this group included Arizona community colleges. Ohala also said recent changes to SNAP may make more people eligible and allow for people on campus to work with that resource.

Student Resources Button: Chair Ohala discussed with the committee members the location of the button for student resources which appeared on the UA homepage and then was moved to the bottom of the page. Ohala stated this as a concern because students will likely look for assistance where they saw it before and may be discouraged from utilizing resources because they cannot locate the link and because of this inconsistency in placement. Member Ottusch suggested placing the button further down on the homepage and link to the Dean of Students page. Members discussed the possibility of placing a student resources link under the resources tab on the homepage and members agreed consistency in location was most important. Members suggested a student resources could be linked under Student Life.

Basic Needs Survey: Chair Ohala shared the survey with the committee and walked through questions, including those from the HOPE center. Ohala added this will go to the ABOR subcommittee on the matter. Committee members provided feedback including: the food insecurity questions lacked follow-up and technology questions were specifically about barriers to technology access. Members also noted the housing questions included items about safe and stable housing. Ohala stated feedback would be sent to Lucas Schalewski and passed onto ABOR.

Classroom Transition: Members discussed the transition back to the classroom, potential difficulties, and if students were being surveyed regarding this issue. Member Ottusch shared CAPS conducts a bi-weekly survey to gather the “pulse” of students. He added that, in the past, the survey showed student modality preferences. He added results from a recent survey showed 35% of students were somewhat comfortable being in-person and 53% were somewhat to very uncomfortable being in-person.

Highlights for April 14, 2021 included:

Basic Needs Coalition: Chair Ohala informed the committee about the status of the ad-hoc group established at the University. The group submitted a proposal for the Provost Investment Fund (PIF) through members Dan McDonald, Lucas Schalewski, and Melanie Hingle, which was funded. Ohala stated the group discussed items that need to be explored and tasks required to establish an official Basic Needs Coalition. She said many of these items fell into the wheelhouse of Bridgette Nobbe from the Campus Pantry and Dani Carrillo from Fostering Success in the Thrive Center. The PIF will allow the group to be involved in higher-order tasks and help with establishing necessary infrastructure including seeking additional, more permanent financial backing.

Basic Needs Survey Status: Chair Ohala informed the committee members the survey was sent out in early March and closed in mid-March. She discussed the dashboard information shared with the committee. Questions from the HOPE survey were included and Ohala provided information on actions taken by each of the Arizona universities. She added that ultimately it will be possible to look across efforts at all three of the Arizona universities to find points of alignment and improvement. Ohala added that Student Regent Rusk said the Basic Needs Coalition would meet during the first week of May and he was hopeful Regent DuVal would attend. The focus of this meeting will be recommended policies and practices.

Ohala noted that the Basic Needs Coalition wanted to know, among many other things, what was not being addressed by the survey and that it would hopefully be sent out multiple times to survey students at the beginning and ends of their student careers. She added that other members of this committee wanted

to know if food security was tied to GPA and/or retention rates as these were metrics ABOR was focused on. Committee member Ottusch shared data from the 2018 campus health survey that indicated food insecurity predicted lower GPA. Committee member Stone expressed the need to add the question: at what point did you experience food insecurity and at what level did it happen? Members expressed that number of semesters at the University may be a better measure of class standing than status as freshman, sophomore, etc.

Homepage-Student Resources Issue: Chair Ohala spoke again to Provost Folks regarding placing student resource information in a prominent location on the University's homepage. She was directed to another source who may be able to help with this task. Currently, resources are located under the COVID area of the UA homepage but Ohala shared the committee's suggestions about permanent and consistent placement of a resources link, particular as students need access to resources at all times not just under pandemic-related conditions. Relatedly, the committee members discussed the issue of students who report a lack of basic needs not using resources because they are unaware the resources are available or don't know how to access them. Committee Members again discussed the issue of where students receive information regarding food insecurity assistance and benefits. Member Stone asked if the information is shared during orientation and the committee then discussed the pros and cons of doing so as well as other ways to communicate this information, opting in favor of saturation (i.e., a variety of strategies and modalities).

Basic Needs Survey: Preliminary Data Review: Committee members reviewed and discussed preliminary data shared by Chair Ohala from the Basic Needs Survey. Resulting discussion including members reviewing how messaging impacts students and how cultural differences may impact responses. Committee member Stone highlighted information from results regarding technology. Member Ding asked if an additional question could be added to determine what types of problems students were encountering, what resources were available to them, and where they went to look for assistance. Members also discussed adding a question aimed to discover which campus resources were more heavily used. Members discussed if there was point when this data would be shared broadly to allow colleges, cultural centers, and others to see what is happening with their student population.

Highlights for May 5, 2021 included:

This meeting is pending at the time of this report. Planned agenda items include additional discussion of data from the recent Basic Needs Survey, which is to include proposals for action strategies, and suggestions for coordination and implementation of same. The committee will also discuss concerns and initiatives to be addressed when meetings resume in Fall 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Ohala, Ph.D., Linguistics
Chair, SAPC