



Student Affairs Policy Committee

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA®
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Student Affairs Policy Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

SAPC Members:

- Cheryl Casey, *Co-Chair*, Research & Learning (LIB)
- Diane Ohala, *Co-Chair*, Linguistics (SBS)
- Charlotte Brown, Postdoctoral Fellow (OSC)
- Meg Cota, Educational Policy Studies and Practice (COE)
- Sylvester Gaskin, Associate Dean of Students (*ex-officio*)
- Kristen Little, English (SBS)
- Matthew Mugmon, Music (COFA)
- Timothy Ottusch, Family Studies-Human Development (CALs)
- Jeff Stone, Psychology (COS)
- Jordan Toyos, (ASUA)

During the academic year 2021-2022, the committee assembled 8 times: September 8, 2021; October 13, 2021; November 3, 2021; December 8, 2021; February 9, 2022; March 16, 2022, April 13, 2021, and (upcoming) May 4, 2022. Highlights of each meeting are provided below.

Highlights for **September 8, 2021**, included:

Discussion of Student Basic Needs Survey: Surveys to assess student basic needs were distributed at all three state institutions. ASU partnered with and distributed the Hope Survey whereas NAU and UArizona crafted an in-house [Student Basic Needs Survey](#) (informed by the Hope Survey). UArizona's distribution in Spring 2021 garnered a 10% response rate. Committee members reviewed the data, noting that 35% of respondents

reported having experienced food insecurity. Members also noted that food insecurity disproportionately affects BIPOC students, and that 76% of students experiencing food insecurity did not reach out for assistance because they thought they were ineligible, didn't know the services existed, or didn't know where to go, among other reasons. The survey also showed that there are students who could benefit from campus and/or community resources yet they do not use them because they feel others need it more.

Member Little raised the reluctance of international students to use community resources for fear it could affect their visa and residency status. Member Stone suggested that if it could be determined exactly which types of students need the help, different interventions could be targeted toward those students. Co-Chair Casey brought up that there are some new offices/departments that did not exist before (e.g., Student Success & Retention Innovation) and would like to collaborate with them.

Discussion of COVID-19 protocols and procedures: Committee members discussed UAArizona's website in relation to Covid-19 protocols and procedures. Students and faculty both report being unable to easily find information. Member Cota expressed that students receive a lot of communication daily and when it is too much, these important things slip through the cracks. Students also get frustrated and give up when there are multiple clicks needed to get to resources. Co-Chair Ohala talked about putting a "help" button on the UA homepage, which was up and running as a result of SAPC's previous suggestion to the Provost, but it was then taken down during a UAArizona homepage refresh. Member Cota suggested the use of QR codes to guide students to the proper resources and co-chair Casey suggested the use of a chatbot feature on the website, which has been a successful strategy at other institutions.

Highlights for October 13, 2021, included:

Follow-up from 9-8-21 Meeting: Co-Chair Casey explained that five ["What Students Should Know About COVID-19" videos](#) have been added to UA's COVID-19 page to assist student and others' navigation of current protocols, at the request of SAPC. Member Gaskin reported that the Campus Pantry is seeing close to 1,000 people a week, which is close to peak pandemic numbers. There is a push to expand the Campus Pantry—currently there are small grab bags available at Health Sciences.

Discussion of Graduate Student Financial Stress Survey: Co-Chair Casey asked the committee to identify challenges noted in the [the 77-page survey](#) and come up with possible solutions. Member Cota expressed that it is important to compare what has and has not changed since the start of the pandemic. Member Stone agreed and suggested that the committee think of solutions with the current pandemic in mind. He explained that a big issue to draw attention to is the unpredictability of funding and the threat that it places on students. The way that funding is dispersed does not allow for graduate students to plan ahead because it does not come until the semester has already started. Member Cota brought up awards and explained that award letters come right at the start of the semester, not before. Member Stone talked about grants and how students utilize the graduate assistant and teaching assistant positions for help with funding. Member Ottusch expressed that there should be a transparent timeline so that

students can put back-ups in place in case they do not get the grant funding. Member Ottusch brought up that housing costs are rising, which exacerbates the situation. Committee members discussed the dropout rate and the committee's need for statistics on retention. Member Brown brought up two possible reasons for dropping out: lack of information and lack of resources.

Member Gaskin explained that his team is working on a training to help students apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. He agreed that communication is a widespread issue, and it is hard to get the right information out to the right people. Email is not reliable because not everyone checks/reads their emails. Member Brown brought up the workload of graduate students and expressed it needs to be looked at as well.

Highlights for November 3, 2021, included:

Follow-up from 10-13-21 Meeting: Co-Chair Ohala revisited the financial stress survey and explained that there is real concern campus-wide for departments not being able to meet the floor for the increase in graduate student wages. A big concern is that this could mean fewer graduate students; Provost Folks stated that UArizona may have to lower the number of graduate students to meet the floor for the number of students that are accepted. There will also be an increase in mandatory fees for graduate students.

Presentation by Dr. Meredith Aronson on CatCloud: Guest Aronson explained that UArizona has implemented a new multi-constituent system on a single platform called [CatCloud](#), which offers students a way to manage aspects of student life including getting feedback from instructors and the ability to flexibly manage what they see. From workshops conducted for this purpose, students expressed four different needs that could be met by such a platform: 1) academic success, administrative support and navigation of processes 2) timely, personalized content to the student 3) top-level information made available in a way that is relevant to students, and 4) content should be student driven and refined by students. There is a working group of students that have been meeting weekly to refine this process, and the soft launch will be in January of 2022 in the Honors College. This is currently geared towards undergraduates; there is no unique graduate interface yet. Development of CatCloud will be iterative. A Fall 2022 launch is planned.

Member Brown expressed that the magnitude of information on the calendar for students could become overwhelming. Guest Aronson explained that they are working on a "turn in" function so that once students are done with an assignment, it drops off the list. Co-Chair Ohala suggested having a "Basic Needs" tab within the CatCloud platform so that students can find basic needs resources when they need them. A current problem is that students in need often do not know such resources exist or where to go to receive them. Co-Chair Ohala will send the link to the Student Basic Needs survey to Guest Aronson so she can verify the data and bring the idea back to the working group.

Highlights for December 8, 2021, included:

Follow-up from 11-3-21 Meeting: Co-Chair Casey explained that basic needs information and library resources that are being explored for possible integration into CatCloud. Member Cota suggested the committee ask for updates so that faculty can see what the students see and be able to give advice. Co-Chair Ohala reminded the committee of their request at the previous meeting that Meredith Aronson give a presentation to Faculty Senate after the soft launch.

Discussion of Student Basic Needs Coalition: Co-Chair Ohala explained that the Basic Needs Coalition was proposed and started by Anthony Rusk, a former student regent. Melanie Hingle and Dan McDonald (faculty senators) helped spearhead this and received grant money to help run it. Co-Chair Ohala and Member Ottush are meeting with Co-Chairs of the coalition, Bridgette Riebe ([Campus Pantry](#)) and Dani Carrillo ([Fostering Success](#)), at their request to discuss the faculty's role in supporting student needs. Members noted that faculty are in a position to direct students to resources, so they need to know what they are and where to find them. Member Cota noted that a lot of emails are sent with links to student resources, but it is difficult to navigate the information efficiently. She expressed the need for a better way of communication than a stream of links for websites. Member Gaskin shared the basic needs website: <http://basicneeds.arizona.edu>.

Co-Chair Ohala explained that focus groups have shown that having a professor talk about basic needs in the classroom has a positive impact. She suggested encouraging all instructors to do so and to include [a basic needs statement on their syllabi](#), so that the stigma about utilizing these resources is further broken down. Co-Chair Ohala suggested that the committee come up with a short protocol that advises professors on what to do and how to talk about it in class, which they could share with the Basic Needs Coalition for feedback and approval. She also suggested putting something on D2L when it first populates at key times of student need; there is a widget function that could be utilized for this purpose.

Highlights for February 9, 2022 included:

Course materials discussion: Co-Chair Casey presented a proposal from the UA BookStores. More details will be shared with campus in the coming months.

Discussion of UA Global Campus (UAGC): Co-Chair Casey gave a brief overview of the acquisition of UAGC. Gail Burd is leading the effort along with a steering committee and core working group that were formed to work on the coordination. The timeline for these committees' work is 1-1.5 years. It is unclear if UAGC will be integrated into UA Online; Provost Folks envisioned two different programs because UAGC has a different accreditor and admission standards. The committee would like to know if the resources for UA Arizona will extend to UAGC. There are no talking points on the website currently about these issues. Member Stone asked if the welfare of UAGC students will fall under

the purview of SAPC (currently unknown). Member Gaskin was told that Student Affairs would not be responsible for UAGC students although Arizona Online students do fall under the Student Affairs umbrella. Member Cota noted that there are duplicate degrees being offered through UAGC that UArizona already offers, which could become an issue. Committee members would also like to know if UAGC will be governed by UArizona's faculty governance or if they will have their own.

Highlights for [March 16, 2022](#), included:

Follow-up from 2-9-22 Meeting: Co-Chair Casey explained that the court case against Zovio has been decided; UArizona is not liable for any damages, according to President Robbins. Committee members revisited the discussion of the student experience for UAGC students. Casey reported that UAGC will not be served by the UA Libraries. Committee members discussed the lack of faculty representation on the UAGC steering committee.

Discussion of Recent Student-Facing Programs or Initiatives: The Basic Needs Coalition is giving a [presentation](#) to the Faculty Senate during the April 4, 2022 meeting that explains what it is and how faculty can be involved. Member Ottusch and Co-Chair Ohala will assist. Co-Chair Ohala reported that she is also part of a community-based basic needs group, the Higher Education Food Security Network. Co-Chair Ohala and Bridgette Riebe (Director, Campus Pantry) are representatives from UArizona. The group includes representatives from many community colleges and food banks throughout the state as well as all representatives from NAU and ASU. Co-Chairs Ohala and Casey encouraged members to register for the [Student Success Conference](#). Co-Chair Ohala shared information about the [Career Champions](#) program that helps integrate career development into the classroom and facilitates interactions between students and faculty or staff. It is a series of three trainings and once completed, the faculty/staff member receives a certificate.

Discussion of CARE reports through the Dean of Students: Member Little brought up that there may be an issue with perceived lack of support from the Dean of Students once [CARE reports](#) have been submitted. There are instances being reported in which neither students nor faculty have received a timely answer from the Dean of Students Office. Ohala shared that there is a website, "[Need Help Now](#)," which could be used if a situation escalates into an immediate crisis. The website lists various phone numbers to be used in a crisis situation as well as a link that faculty can use to access the [Dean on Call](#).

Highlights for [April 13, 2022](#), included:

Follow-up from 3-16-22 Meeting: Co-Chair Ohala asked Member Gaskin to speak to the previously raised issue of [CARE reports](#). Member Gaskin explained that there is a team of individuals who respond to these reports and triage them according to perceived urgency and need. Member Mugmon asked if the faculty who submit these reports receive notification of any action by the Dean of Students Office after a report has been

filed or if this was not done due to privacy. Member Gaskin confirmed that there are issues of privacy. Member Little asked what steps an instructor or student might take if they do not receive a timely response to a report. Member Little also asked what additional burden the new [Attendance Policy](#) might place on the Dean of Students Office, which could potentially exacerbate the situation with the CARE reports. Member Gaskin suggested the committee reach out to his colleague Chrissy Lieberman, under whose purview these reports fall, for more detailed information. Member Gaskin suggested that faculty can contact the Dean on Call, the Dean of Students Office, and/or UAPD if a situation previously reported but not yet addressed escalates and needs immediate attention.

Discussion of Forthcoming Tuition and Fee Increases: Co-Chair Casey shared the link to the recent [ABOR Tuition and Fees Presentation](#) as well as the link to the associated [press release](#). She explained that these increases will go into effect for incoming students in the 2022-23 school year. Co-Chair Ohala reported that the Student Services fee includes a mandatory meal plan for all residential freshman starting in Fall 2023. Minimum cost will be \$5,090. Director of the Campus Pantry, Bridgette Riebe, and Director of Fostering Success, Dani Carrillo (among other stakeholders, including students) have been involved in ensuring that there will be waivers or reduced rates for students in need, and that student meal plans do not run out before the semester is over, which has been an issue to date (with CatCash). Member Ottusch explained that the dining hall option in place at many other universities is not in UArizona's interest because money from those models does not flow back into campus (it's retained by the outside vendors who provide the services). Keeping the current Student Union-based model allows any profits to flow back to students in the form of support given to various student-facing programs. Members also discussed that the food provided in the Union is still expensive and meal plans do not solve that issue.

Discussion of GI Bill Issues with UAGC: Co-Chair Casey raised concern about GI Bill issues at UAGC as reported by [KOLD](#) and on the [UAGC website](#). Members discussed the concern and concluded that more information was needed to ascertain whether there is a role for SAPC to play. Co-Chair Ohala will reach out to UArizona's Office of Veterans Affairs.

Discussion of SAPC Reports to Senate: With its March 2022 report to Senate, SAPC began sharing student-related items in its monthly Senate reports to increase faculty awareness (e.g., Student Success Conference, emergency student aid). SAPC members support continuing this approach.

Highlights for May 4, 2022, included:

This is a pending meeting at the time of this report. Planned agenda items include a presentation by the [Office of Student Success & Retention Innovation](#). The committee will also discuss concerns and initiatives to be addressed when meetings resume in Fall 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Casey, University Libraries
Co-Chair, SAPC

Diane K. Ohala, Linguistics
Co-Chair, SAPC