

Chancellor's Graduate and Professional Student Advisory Board

Student-Parents and Student-Caregivers Resources Subcommittee

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Objective Statement: An assessment of resources available to student-parents and student-caregivers.

Background

The 2021-2022 academic year is the first time there is a dedicated student parent and student caregiver subcommittee on the CGPSA board. The subcommittee was formed in response to two different concepts. First, from the 2020-2021 Graduate Student Finances subcommittee. Through the Finance subcommittee initiatives, student parent programs and resources were highlighted. The outcome of the subcommittee was from a meeting with Sandy Batchelor and Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor. The meeting highlighted there is a lack of a clear home for student parent services, student childcare grants are not sufficient, and navigating university leave is difficult. The subcommittee suggested that there needs to be clear directions to resources designated for student parents and tips to help navigate the system. They also suggested hiring a dedicated staff person that supports Student Parents and creating a resource guidebook.

Second, it was formed out of a discussion about the needs of students after the height of the pandemic. 1 in 6 working Americans are caregivers. Members that formed this committee were concerned about the impact that the pandemic had on students who were parents and caregivers of senior parents as well as special needs children. Although a subcommittee was formed to survey the impact that the pandemic had on students, we thought that it would be prudent to give caregivers and parents its own committee because they are two underserved groups whose responsibilities were impacted throughout the pandemic and thereafter. Within the discussion, we found that data on these two subgroups is typically removed as obsolete information, which means UC Davis does not have public statistical data that speaks to the needs of either group collectively. Through student counter stories, we understood that there were prevalent faculty attitudes that did not support students who served in these roles, and the university does not have a policy in place that specifically supports students who serve in these roles. In response to our concern for graduate students who are in either role, we agreed to form the student-parent and student caregivers subcommittee which incorporates students that take care of other dependent individuals such as elderly parents or disabled siblings. Therefore, we believe that having a subcommittee focused on retaining and supporting student parents and student caregivers is essential.

Accomplishments

We dedicated this year to carry out 4 primary objectives:

1. Assess current resources available to student parents and student caregivers. Our goal is to have resources at minimum that are comparable to what other UC campuses' have implemented as resources to their students.
2. Collaborate with the student-parent working group to be advocates for graduate and professional student parents.
3. Develop a survey to understand the experiences of student caregivers and faculty perceptions.
4. Understand the impact of the pandemic on student parents' and student caregivers' lives in hopes of starting the conversation about creating new policy that supports both groups.

Following the formation of the subcommittee, understanding current resources and where they are housed was of the utmost importance. We met with Sandy Batchelor and Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor again. This resulted in the finding of some of departments that house various resources which are listed below:

- Aggie Compass
 - A space to learn about basic needs resources, including grocery pick up, CalFresh, and housing assistance.
- Early Childhood Lab School
 - A teaching, research, and demonstration laboratory within the Department of Human Ecology. Enrolls children ages 12 months through five years in part-time (12 hours per week).
 - CCAMPIS (Child Care Access Means Parents in School), is a federal grant designed to provide funding for child care and related services to promote the success of student parents. Priority is given to undergraduate students, single parents, and students with the most financial need.
- Financial Aid
 - Undergraduate only UCD scholarships which include the Cranstart Transfer Scholarship and the Osher Reentry Scholarship.
- Enrollment Management Analytics
- WorkLife
 - The Graduate Student Child Care Grant (GSCCG) is a flat award per UCD student, per term of up to \$1100/quarter or \$1650/semester. If the actual cost of care is less than \$1100 for the quarter (\$1650 for the semester).
 - The graduate/professional student who demonstrates financial need may be eligible to supplement their Graduate Student Child Care Grant (GSCCG) with additional funds from the Community Based Care Grant (CBCG). The GSCCG is per UCD student, while the CBCG is per child and requires financial need. For a child 0 to 2 years, the CBCG can supplement an additional \$500 per quarter to equal \$1600; for a child 2 through 5 years, an additional \$100 per quarter to equal \$1200; for children 6 to 12 years there is no supplement as the GSCCG award exceeds the CBCG amount.
- Transfer and Reentry Center (TRC)
 - The TRC assists all transfer students (junior college or community college to UC Davis, UC to UC Davis, out of state to UC Davis) and reentry students (+25 and/or student parents). As part of its work with reentry students, the TRC supports and advocates for the needs of primarily undergraduate student parents. The house the Babysitter Directory, The Directory connects current UC Davis students with children who need babysitting services with current UC Davis students who are interested in babysitting.
- Women's Resource and Research Center (WRRC)
 - The WRRC offers a number of free resources focused on supporting student parents at UCD and their families. They host a variety of resources which include family friendly programming and the student parent closet. The Student Parent Closet provides free diapers, wipes, nursing pads, and other supplies for parenting and caregiving students at UC Davis.
- Housing
 - The campus offers on-campus apartment complexes for UC Davis students with families which include Primero Grove and Orchard Park (coming fall 2023)..
- Graduate Studies
 - Graduate students are eligible for a maximum 3 quarters leave of absence with department and Graduate Studies approval; an extension can be requested. The purpose of PELP is to enhance the prospect of a graduate student successfully completing their academic program by allowing time for the student to resolve personal, financial or medical problems, including care for a child or family member.
- Student Health and Counseling Services

- o Short-term counseling services are held in the Graduate division as well as in Student Health to address the socio-emotional needs of students. They will provide referrals for long-term counseling at no cost to the student.
- Lactation/Nutrition
 - o The lactation support program provides university affiliates and their partners with lactation consultations, support group meetings, and the use of hospital-grade breast pumps located in close to 40 lactation sites on the UC Davis campus.

The Student Parent Working Group maintains the student parent resources website. This work group consists of representatives from the WRCC (Cecily Nelson-Alford, Director and Courtney Caviness, GSR) and the TRC (Marissa Weiss, Transfer Retention Specialist). The working group has done a fantastic job of centralizing resources that are available on campus and hosting events on campus for student parents. However, not to the fault of the working group, most of these resources are aimed at supporting undergraduate student parents with less focus on graduate or professional students. The undergraduate is more of a focus because the UC application has a question that gauges the incoming parents with dependents. There are also little to no resources for student caregivers of other people who are dependent on their care. The Student Parent Advisory Board is a broader group of stakeholders and advocates for student parent issues at UC Davis. The Board elevates up and out student parent concerns and helps to foster a collaborative approach to building a family friendly campus. This group is convened by members of the Student Parent Working Group.

After meeting with the Student Parent Working Group, we decided it would be best to meet monthly to discuss progress on supporting students and to attend the quarterly meetings for the Student Parent Advisory Board. The main outcomes from the meetings were about upcoming events and results of a study distributed to the student body. To briefly highlight some of the survey outcomes, of the 100+ students who responded to the survey over 50% of the students identified financial challenges as one of their biggest hurdles and over 70% of student parents experience “quite a bit of stress.” Resources and events exist on campus to help alleviate some stress that student parents or caregivers experience, but there needs to be more. While suggesting more support efforts, we understand the workload that is required to do such things.

Within the year, we found that UC Davis did not have a department or committee outside of ours that offered any relief or support to student caregivers. In addition to collaborating with departments who support student parents, we decided that it was best to gauge perceptions and attitudes towards student caregivers via a survey which would have questions about the pandemic as well. This was in response to the lack of resources available on campus. While developing the survey, we simultaneously researched how other University of California schools support student parents and student caregivers. The results from the research of other UC Schools are briefly described in Appendix I. After researching, we have suggested some recommendations on how to improve the support for student parents and caregivers.

Recommendations

- Expand fellowship and grant funding to include living expenses, housing, research, etc.
- Create fellowships for student caregivers that are available in each department.
- Increase the fellowship and grant funding amount for childcare (collaborate with Student Parent Working Group)
- Expand age limits/offerings with childcare at the Early Childhood Lab School (infants 0-12 months)
- Increase full-day childcare options at or near UCD.

- Include student parents and student caregivers in graduate studies policies.
- Create a student parent and student caregiver center that has dedicated staff member(s) and houses all of the student parent and student caregiver resources.
- Increase child-friendly and caregiver-friendly study spaces.
- Develop a UCD webpage as well as a digital presence that provides resources, support and information to address the growing needs of graduate students in any caretaker role, particularly post-pandemic
- Establish relationships with Student Health, CARE, the Public Health Department and UCD's medical school for resources, webinars, and research to help evaluate, educate and advocate for student caregivers.
- Initiate the Graduate Student Council in initial conversations with the intention to draft policy amendments in favor of student caregivers of dependent children and the elderly parent.
- Provide training to faculty and staff so that they are aware of what caregivers discrimination is.

Summary and Future Directions

Next year's subcommittee should continue to work with the Student Parent Working Group and the Transfer and Reentry Center to strategize how to improve current resources and to make suggestions on implementation strategies. The working group is hosting a pre-orientation workshop for sharing resources and could be a good place to assess student needs and pandemic impacts. Implement both surveys in fall quarter, then assess the results. One survey is intended for faculty and staff and the other is intended for the student body. The outcome of the two surveys will determine the next next steps in Winter and Spring quarter that speak to how to better support student parents and student caregivers at UC Davis. In addition, we propose implementing focus groups where counter stories can be recorded and utilized for research content, to understand the complexities of caregiver student roles when gender and race overlap, and to gain insight into the scope of faculty and staff relations with graduate students in these roles. We also suggest continuing the conversation to the Director of Admissions and Recruitment, Laura Young, to seek help in updating SLATE to reflect a question that gauges graduate student parent and caregiver population.

This was a year of building connections with campus members involved in supporting student parents and student caregivers. It was essential to understand the resources that Davis currently has and what departments house those resources. We suggest continuing the committee to help the voices of graduate and professional students be heard and to advocate for additional resources to help improve the lives of these students. Last year in the Finance committee executive summary it was also stated that "challenges for graduate student parents are a significant threat to diversity and inclusion in higher education, and a leak in the pipeline to academia for women and students of color." This is an important factor to note, that being a student parent or caregiver requires more resources and support for the retention of students overall, as well as women and students of color. We hope that the future outcomes of this committee will garner support in many ways including the implementation of new policies, funding, mentorship, and campus resources.

Appendix I - Student Parent & Caregiver Resources at UC Schools

UC – Santa Cruz: A quarterly Student Parent & Dependent Meal Plan; Graduate students can receive up to \$1,100 per quarter for childcare reimbursement; and they are trying to establish and sponsor a student parent group on campus through the SOAR.

UC – Riverside: Have a dedicated staff member for Student Parent and Scholarship Programs; Grad Student Parents Association aims to support and mentor current and incoming graduate parents and to advocate and lobby for graduate parent needs on campus and system-wide; each eligible Academic Student Employee (ASE) may receive up to \$1,100 per quarter or \$1,650 per semester; and the Student-Parent Action and Retention Collaborative (S.P.A.R.C) Family Resource Guide provides a curated list of on- and off-campus resources for families.

UC – Berkeley: The Student Parent Center is part of the Centers for Educational Equity and Excellence (CE3) which supports nontraditional students; The Student Parent currently houses 10 employees including a Program Coordinator, Student Parent Success Counselor, Social Workers, and Student Staff; Parent Grants support undergraduate student-parents with dependent children; Registered graduate student parents who live with dependent children and demonstrate financial need are eligible for a grant that may be applied toward housing/living expenses, dependent health insurance, child care, and/or tuition; the graduate student caregiver grant may be applied toward housing and living expenses, dependent health insurance, and/or tuition. If funding permits, awards of up to \$12,000 per year (\$6,000 per academic term) will be made to eligible applicants; Women doctoral students in good academic standing who hold a fellowship, a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) position, or Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) appointment, and who expect to give birth during the semester, can be excused from regular duties for a period of six weeks without loss of financial support; and the student parent policies govern accommodations that all faculty, departments, and academic programs must extend to graduate students. These Student Parent Policies are included in the Guide to Graduate Policy, the document governing all policies related to graduate education at UC Berkeley.

UC - San Diego: The Triton Food Pantry provides a variety of dried goods, canned goods, and fresh produce are available to students; Services provided by our lactation experts include prenatal consultations, personal instruction after baby's birth (available seven days a week for hospital inpatients), help for babies with health issues or

developmental delay, assistance with multiple births and premature babies, lactation appointments for moms and babies needing help after they leave the hospital; Full-time care is available at the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) for children 3 months to 5 years old. The program is open to the children of full-time UC San Diego students.

UC - Los Angeles: Has dedicated staff members that support the student with dependents
UCLA-Affiliated Child Care Resources: Bright Horizons at UCLA Westwood Child Care Center is a program which include a program director, program manager, two program coordinators, program assistant, and a graduate intern; Six weeks of maternity leave funding are automatically granted for expectant mothers holding UCLA Fellowships, Graduate Division Endowed Fellowships or fellowships offered by academic departments and centers at UCLA; An ASE/GSR who meets the standard eligibility requirements will be offered a reimbursement of up to \$900 per quarter or \$1,350 per semester for childcare costs during the academic year. Additionally, an ASE/GSR who meets the standard eligibility criteria for a summer session appointment can be reimbursed up to \$900 for eligible expenses incurred

during the summer; UCLA Early Care and Education (ECE) provides full-time care only available Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 5:30 pm year round and care for infants (8 weeks) to kindergarten;

The Infant Development Program is a teaching and research facility for the Department that accommodates both cross-sectional and longitudinal investigation of infants, toddlers, their parents and caregivers; The University Parents Nursery School is a cooperative school that cares for the children (aged 2-5) of UCLA students, staff and faculty;

UC - San Francisco: Registered PhD students receiving financial support from the University may take *up to ten weeks of paid* parental leave in relation to childbirth, the adoption of a child, or the placement of a foster child under their care; Registered PhD students may also take *up to four weeks* of paid medical/family leave in relation to their own serious health condition or to care for a qualifying family member who has a serious health condition; PhD graduate students who have young, dependent children in childcare may be eligible for the childcare grant program provided by the Graduate Division. This program will provide funds to assist students with the cost of childcare for the academic year.

UC Santa Barbara: Students with families can apply to live in one or two bedroom apartments located about a mile from the campus center; Approved graduate students with single-child households will receive an award of \$250; graduate students with more than one child will receive an award of \$150 per child; One-on-one consultation and support for breastfeeding mothers is available free of charge.

Caregivers for Adults and Elderly Support Group -Held once a week on campus for one hour and facilitated by a clinical psychologist employed by UCSB. The service is offered solely to faculty as a means to share their experiences and to learn coping strategies.

Work Life offers webinars for students that address topics such as “What Working Parents Need”; “Building Your Childcare Network”; & “Working Parents’ Connection”.

UC Irvine: The Early Childhood Education Center offers a full-day preschool program for children two years to five years of age; The university’s contract with the UAW provides salaried ASEs appointed for a minimum of 25% for the duration of the quarter up to six weeks paid leave for childbirth; A central childcare reimbursement fund has been established to pay for reimbursable childcare expenses.

UC Merced: The Academic Personnel Office offers work-life support for faculty and staff in the areas of family care and lactation services. Under the umbrella of Family Care, they offer resources for babysitting and support with caregivers who provide elder care. Their website claims, “SelectPlus is a web-based resource to help employees find and select pre-screened, in-home care for children, adults and even pets. SelectPlus also offers access to tutors, housekeepers and other care providers. Employees can select the local caregiver that is right for them.” These benefits are accessible by staff who are eligible for UC benefits.

Academic Student Employees (ASE) and Graduate Student Researchers (GSR) are eligible for some childcare reimbursement, with stipulations:

1,100 per quarter or \$1,650 per semester for expenses incurred during the ASE’s appointment period during the regular academic year. An employee must have a valid GSR appointment for a minimum of 25 percent time for the duration of the term for which they have applied.

97% of UCM’s graduate population is financially supported by way of a Teaching Assistantships, GSR or fellowship.

