February 26, 2016

Associated Graduate Students Legislative Council

Re: Request for AGS Legislative Council Vote on Wellness Health and Counseling Building

Dear Associated Graduate Students Legislative Council:

We are requesting that Associated Graduate Students Legislative Council bring to a vote the authorization of the Wellness, Health, Career, and Counseling Building Referendum at your upcoming meeting on March 8, 2016. Your authorization of the referendum will allow it to be placed on the Spring 2016 Ballot.

We have been informed that the vote for this referendum on February 23, 2016 resulted in 14 Yay, 15 No, and 0 Abstention. Upon hearing about the discussion on the referendum, we are taking this opportunity to clarify any misunderstanding related to the incorporation of a facilities advisory board and the sunset clause.

Facilities Advisory Board
According to university policy, any student fee funded facility is required to have a Facilities Advisory Board. The policies can be found here:

http://www.dos.uci.edu/conduct/appendix-l.php

Specifically, this excerpt from the policies explains details the board's composition:

FACILITY ADVISORY BOARD GUIDELINES
2. The Facility Advisory Board Guidelines shall contain the following membership provisions:
   a. Membership shall be a majority of students.
   b. The approval of the Board's student members shall be made by ASUCI and AGS.
   c. The Chair shall be a student on the Board who is elected by the Board.
   d. The Director of the Facility shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board.
   e. There shall be no co-seats on the Facility Board.

The policies should clarify any concerns you may have regarding student involvement and input on the building’s programming and use.

Sunset Clause
The language in the referendum reads:

When the debt obligation is retired, the quarterly fee will be reduced to $25 to cover operating expenses, major repairs, and maintenance. This reduced fee will increase annually based on the California Consumer Price Index (CPI).

It is difficult to include a specific end date on the ballot because of the different variables that could affect when a capital project debt is retired. First, financing does not start until after the construction project is completed and the university gains occupancy of the facility. Construction delays can impact the date when the financing starts. Second,
the university finances construction projects through the sale of bonds. The university pools construction projects across the UC system and sells bonds. The timing of when bonds are sold can be affected by other projects in the same pool. Third, there are situations when bonds are refinanced that could impact the retirement date. Since bonds are made up of multiple projects across the system, the campus has little control as to when the bonds are refinanced. The UC Treasurer’s office who manages the debt, takes a holistic view of the debt across the system rather than looking at the debt of a single campus and/or project in order to maximize the debt capacity of the entire UC system.

For your reference, bonds related to capital projects are typically retired after 30 years, however, as you can see, by the nature of the bond-finance process we are unable to secure a specific end date.

As you know, this referendum is intended to build and operate a state-of-the-art building to meet the needs of your peers that currently utilize services such as the Counseling Center, Career Center, Disability Services, Victim Services, Career Center, and other programs that support student health and wellness. In its current state, these services will no longer have the capacity to provide support as a result of campus growth and increased complexity of services needed for students.

As a campus administrator, I do understand the burden that this referendum places on students; however, I do believe that your authorization to allow your constituency to determine the future course of the campus is needed. It appears that the State of California has lost interest in shoring up support for essential student services and therefore it is imperative that you fulfill your legacy to ensure the success of future Anteaters.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Parham, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor

Marcelle Holmes, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Chancellor

Cc: Dan Dooros, Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
    Stephanie Van Ginkel, Student Government, Executive Director
    ASUCI Legislative Council