

CUCSA Government Relations

Action Group Report FY 17-18



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
Research and Findings	6
Recommendations and Conclusion	8

Executive Summary

SYNOPSIS

The University of California (UC) has strong motivation to maintain productive relationships with the State of California and the Federal government. These two levels of government represent the largest sources of funding to the University system, impacting the teaching, research, and public service missions of the University in arenas as diverse as UC Health to county-based 4-H Offices¹. To help foster and support these relationships, UC has a network of government relations staff and public affairs personnel at both the system-wide level and campus-levels who interact with elected and appointed officials as well as staff of both levels of government (and on local levels) on a daily basis. These UC staff help protect the funding streams for our educational, research, and service missions, and advocate on various legislative or regulatory items of concern (or benefit) to the UC.

Outside of the advocacy offices, UC staff members perform critical work in implementing and supporting mission-critical activities. The general UC staff body has historically been underutilized in advocacy work. Advocacy staff have historically lacked systemic infrastructure to spread their message among staff. Better leveraging of general staff for the goals of improved government advocacy became the focus of one of the CUCSA Work Groups in 2016-2017. That group's work continued in the 2017-2018 CUCSA Action Group for Government Relations Advocacy. The 2017-2018 CUCSA Action Group was established with the goal of implementing the recommendations made by the prior year's 2016-2017 CUCSA Work Group. The key recommendation was to institutionalize an ongoing working relationship between CUCSA and State Government Relations (thus, our Action Group was created), and supporting the University's newly launched Advocacy Network ([UCAN](#)). Additionally, this year's Action Group has continued to assess and refine strategies for improving the staff voice in government advocacy on behalf of the University. This report offers a handful of recommendations refining these efforts, going forward, and highlights progress made to date.

Highlights of our 2017-2018 Action Group results this year include:

- ✓ Establishing a productive ongoing link between CUCSA and the state government relations office in Sacramento. This provides a conduit for two-way communication:
 - Campus staff can hear of opportunities to advocate and/or participate in the University's relationship with the state in a coordinated, robust, and timely manner.

¹ The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources system currently has offices, programs, and academics in every county in California through Cooperative Extension (CE), providing direct connections to the people of California. Cooperative Extension 4-H Offices help sustain a healthy community within the county by engaging 4-H youth members, adult 4-H volunteers, cultivating partnerships, providing programmatic direction and oversight, and conducting applied research to advance the field of youth development.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- State Government Relations now has a small pool of engaged staff ready to participate in budget subcommittee hearings in the Legislature, as needed.
- ✓ Progress in establishing formal, ongoing links between campus staff assemblies and their local government relations offices.
 - Contact lists have been distributed to all staff assemblies (and we recommend that they be updated annually) of local, state, and federal government relations staff with local staff assemblies and CUCSA Delegates.
 - Local partnerships provide government relations personnel a larger constituency for support when events and other local opportunities arise.
- ✓ Increase the awareness and engagement of staff on UC's advocacy priorities.
 - We have leveraged the CUCSA organization to inform staff of opportunities to advocate on behalf of the UC system and substantially increase the participation of UC Staff in calls to action, coordinated by UCAN.
 - The 2017-2018 Action Group developed a newsletter article template that all CUCSA delegates can use in their local Staff Assembly newsletters or other communications about participating in the UC Advocacy Network.
 - Ongoing social media contributions on local and CUCSA social media assets gave additional visibility and staff engagement on important advocacy priorities for the UC.

The general climate and federal spending on most areas of research improved in this current federal fiscal year, which offered a reprieve from mounting concerns about potential cuts and potential negative impacts to UC. Further, the relationship between the Legislature and UC also improved, with increases in UC's budget and substantive one-time allocations provided in the FY 2018-2019 budget awaiting the Governor's signature (as of June 15, 2018). And finally, we want to acknowledge the efforts of students, who effectively and energetically advocated for increased state funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 2018-2019

We recommend that continued efforts to encourage staff advocacy be sustained. Progress has been made that has had material benefit to UC; increased participation by staff will further amplify the benefits of advocacy and the benefits generated from staff being engaged. For next year:

- ✓ We recommend a two-person action group (Appoint a chair and co-chair)
 - A smaller team, supported by CUCSA's social media and marketing leads, should suffice as CUCSA balances a heavy workload with competing priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- ✓ We recommend that some engagement should be made with UC's Federal Government Relations Office.
- ✓ Continue to maintain relationships with SGR.
- ✓ Social media engagement at both the CUCSA-level and providing content for campus staff assemblies and organizations to broaden awareness and encourage participation.
- ✓ Update the Newsletter template and provide content-development support to CUCSA outreach efforts and for local staff assemblies and other interested staff organizations.
- ✓ Facilitate and encourage each location's staff assembly to meet with their Local Government Relations Staff

RATIONALE

Staff has a major stake in preserving research and budget support to the University. Further, we continue to find the need for, and collectively benefit by encouraging ongoing, robust relationships between staff organizations and government relations staff within the UC system. Advocacy efforts are more successful when committed, engaged staff participate. UC employees are present in every legislative district in the state, illustrating how this advocacy resource can be further expanded to provide critical support for UC's outreach efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The University of California (UC) receives funding from the State of California that is essential to its academic mission and to fulfilling all of its mission-related activities. UC is one of the largest employers in California and its activities in research, teaching, and public education are extraordinary. UC's economic and social impacts are felt in every district of the state, and the ripples move out across the entire country and world. However, the political and budgetary dynamics can be impacted by political processes at both the state and federal levels, and the University and its mission-critical activities can be adversely affected. Over the past two years, CUCSA has explored the broader question of how UC could better-leverage its staff, as voters and constituents with a deep stake in the University's success. There are times where staff can and should play a role in advocating for the University and in careful coordination with Communications and Government Relations, providing a distinct and effective voice in government relations.

The University's relationship with the state is very complex and obviously has political dynamics. This means ongoing care and sensitivity must be maintained with engaging staff in advocacy; however it appears that efforts have been successful and positive thus far. In an organization as complex and large as the University of California, creating a formal, ongoing link between CUCSA and the state government relations office in Sacramento provides an essential conduit for two-way communication, whereby:

- ✓ Campus staff hear of opportunities to advocate and/or participate in the University's relationship with the state
- ✓ Sacramento personnel can hear perspectives from staff when issues come up.
- ✓ Legislators and staff can get a much more informed and deeper appreciation for the multi-faceted functions and roles of UC for the state, and in their own Districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Research and Findings

SYNOPSIS OF PAST FINDINGS

This year's Action Group acted upon surveys and interviews conducted by the 2016-2017 Work Group. A brief synopsis of those key findings is helpful to understand both the priorities selected for this year, how much progress has been made, as well as our recommendations going forward.

□ Lack of Connection between Site Staff Assemblies and Government Relations Contacts

What became evident through our research was that there were only very loose connections between each location's staff assemblies and their government relations personnel, and that is only at some sites, where at others, there was essentially no connection at all. This general lack of a connection is not ideal for either party.

It was also evident that there was a [largely untapped] willingness on the part of the government relations staff to partner with local staff assemblies and their leadership.

□ Lack of Connection between CUCSA and UC-wide Government Relations Contacts

In the past, there was a glaring lack of connection between the CUCSA organization and the offices in Sacramento and Washington, DC who act in the interest of the entire UC system. The CUCSA organization represents bright and engaged staff advocates throughout the system, with deep connections to their campuses, and can represent a unified voice for many staff issues. CUCSA Delegates are also effective conduits for communications to the staff assemblies at the various sites.

□ Federal Funding Cuts Places State Budget at Risk

Potential cuts in federal discretionary spending, and in health care could add additional pressures across all areas of research. While some spending puts research directly at risk, other impacts may be indirect but no less impactful. The University of California relies on Medicare funding to provide much of its graduate medical education, and billions of dollars are also at risk if Medicaid is cut. The impacts of Medicaid would not just be directly felt by UC Health, but on the entire state. In turn, the state would experience a major budgetary crisis in trying to absorb even part of such federal health care funding cuts, thus likely precipitating further cuts in UC's core funding.

Our findings from last year tried to emphasize the point that having a robust advocacy network is useful and important in "good" years, but absolutely critical in the event that billions of dollars were at risk in the scenario identified above.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

□ Federal Funding of Research at UC Locations is at Risk

The UC system is a major contributor to research, leveraging expertise at its many institutions to provide world class research in a broad set of subjects of vital importance to the state, country, and globe. While the current federal budget was a more positive one for research funding, the ongoing budgetary and policy shifts at the federal government level could result in significant cuts to our thriving research enterprise. These federal sources of funds not only fund the researchers, but also the staff that support them, and quite frequently, when resources begin to shrink, staff jobs are sacrificed before those of research and academic staff, which could then have an even more negative impact on the UC staff population. Many could lose jobs, while those that remain are asked to do even more under constrained conditions, leading to other problems.

CURRENT RESEARCH

Limited Interviews with State and Local Government Relations contacts

This workgroup conducted some follow-up interviews with a cross-section of federal and state government relations contacts throughout the system, and invited Meredith Turner (Associate Director-Legislative Advocacy & Institutional Relations) in State Government Relations to speak to CUCSA Delegates twice. The list of personnel interviewed is included below. The contacts were asked some general questions related to anticipation of need, overall sentiment, etc., but each conversation had different areas of focus. Our primary points of contact that involved frequent conversations and discussion were Kieran Flaherty and Meredith Turner, in State Government Relations.

Kieran Flaherty	Associate Vice President and Director	Office of the President
Meredith Turner	Associate Director-Legislative Advocacy & Institutional Relations	Office of the President
Christine Brunner	Public Relations Officer	Agriculture & Natural Resources
Adrian Diaz	Director-State Government Relations	Berkeley
Angela Gilliard	Director- State Government Relations for UC Health	Sacramento

FINDINGS

The consistent response among most or all interviewed was continued affirmation of the 2016-2017 Work Group's findings: that staff should add their unique voice(s) to the issues that are already being brought to the attention of the state and federal legislatures on a regular basis, mostly revolving around the benefits that come from continued funding of our universities, medical centers, and labs. The staff perspective can effectively and productively strengthen the overall story of the strengths of the University of California, and be compelling additions to the efforts of government relations staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

All interviewees showed continued interest in establishing connections with CUCSA, the individual staff assemblies and all other mechanisms for engaging with staff and getting them more involved.

In last year's findings, there was some concern identified in the research findings that staff advocacy *could* generate too many separate, and potentially conflicting, messages being sent by different parts of the UC, whether that be different locations with different messages, or different populations or classifications of UC employees. There were also thoughts expressed from some respondents that as more individual people got involved, that more dissenting voices could create conflict in messaging that would not help the cause in Sacramento or Washington. Finally, there were concerns that with more people involved, it might become more complicated to prioritize the top few issues, being that not all problems can be solved at one time. All of these concerns appear to have been avoided or ameliorated thus far, thanks in no small part to careful development of UCAN.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Recommendations and Conclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS

UC has a network of government relations staff and public affairs personnel at both the system-wide level and campus-levels who interact with elected and appointed officials at local and county levels, as well as staff of at both state and federal levels of government on a daily basis. Campuses vary in the structure, size, and scope of these offices. For example, UCSF has extensive long-term community engagement as a result of its complex operations in multiple neighborhoods, and extensive construction and building efforts. These UC staff help enhance public sentiment and support, and protect the funding streams for our educational, research, and service missions, and advocate on various legislative or regulatory items of concern (or benefit) to the UC.

Outside of the advocacy offices, UC staff members perform critical work in implementing and supporting mission-critical activities. The general UC staff body has historically been underutilized in advocacy work. Advocacy staff have historically lacked systemic infrastructure to spread their message among staff. Better leveraging of general staff for the goals of improved government advocacy became the focus of one of the CUCSA Work Groups in 2016-2017. That group's work continued in the 2017-2018 CUCSA Action Group for Government Relations Advocacy. The 2017-2018 CUCSA Action Group was established with the goal of implementing the recommendations made by the prior year's 2016-2017 CUCSA Work Group. This report offers a handful of recommendations refining these efforts, going forward.

As of April 2018, UCAN is now comprised of 17,141 opted-in, "emailable" advocates who are tracked and communicated with via the new e-Advocacy tools. Of these advocates, nearly 9,000 have taken action on state and/or federal calls-to-action. We believe that this is an excellent accomplishment and believe that further progress can be made. In particular, it will be important to sustain our efforts of continued engagement with incoming faculty, students and staff, and other friends/alumnae (including former staff) of the University.

The primary focus of UCAN has been to increase advocacy engagement through regular and timely communications and expand its advocate base by promoting calls-to-action through partnerships with campus leadership, a strong social media presence, and targeted social media ad buys.

Maintaining a formal, ongoing link between CUCSA and the state government relations office in Sacramento makes sense to build onto this momentum, going forward. It appears to be working, with nearly 6,000 more advocates participated in UCAN this year. Campus staff are hearing of opportunities to advocate and/or participate in the University's relationship with the state, and the UCAN Network is facilitating this through robust, user-friendly mediums. Staff Assemblies and CUCSA are reinforcing these messages, and encouraging staff to participate and engage, enhancing participation. In turn, Sacramento personnel are hearing perspectives from staff (students, faculty, alumni, and concerned citizens) when issues come up.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We believe that a critical next step for dramatically increasing participation in UCAN and setting the stage for other effective and targeted outreach efforts is creating a formal, ongoing link between campus staff assemblies and their local government relations offices. This next phase of deepening the engagement and potential of staff participation supports deepened impact of UCAN, but also other local efforts and outreach (to legislative district staff, local officials, etc.). As social media continues to be more productively used by both CUCSA and local staff assemblies, economies of scale and reach continue to expand the potential of deeper engagement at the campus/location levels. All of this enhances our advocacy efforts and enhances the sense of community on our campuses.

SGR Staff had anticipated the possibility of challenging budget subcommittee hearings in the Legislature. We had been asked to be available, and the Chair of our Action Group was available but in the end, we were not needed in budget hearings. The CUCSA Committee can help identify staff for future hearings or be points of contact in future.

Finally, a co-author of this report, Jeff Porto, Jr., of the Merced campus, participated in UC Merced's first Sacramento Advocacy Day. The opportunity to showcase the extraordinary results and growth of the Merced campus, helped provide a resonating story of UC's accomplishments. We believe such efforts are productive and successful, and hope that enhanced social media coordination can help broaden and deepen the impact of such efforts across staff organizations and other locations, as well.

To help deepen local engagement, our Action Group created a newsletter article template that all of our delegates can use in their local Staff Assembly newsletters or other communications about participating in the UC Advocacy Network. This will enhance awareness and support the ongoing outreach efforts, as it is seen to be endorsed by staff organizations.

Recommendations:

We recommend that continued efforts to encourage staff advocacy be sustained. Progress has been made that has had material benefit to UC; increased participation by staff will further amplify the benefits of advocacy and the benefits generated from staff being engaged. For next year:

- ✓ We recommend a two-person action group (Appoint a chair and co-chair)
 - A smaller team, supported by CUCSA's social media and marketing leads, should suffice as CUCSA balances a heavy workload with competing priorities.
 - This smaller team should stay regularly engaged with SGR and the UCAN Network.
- ✓ We recommend that some engagement be initiated with UC's Federal Government Relations Office. Further details are below.
- ✓ Social media engagement at both the CUCSA-level and providing content for campus staff assemblies and organizations to broaden awareness and encourage participation.
 - Continue to provide outreach and activate current and former CUCSA Delegates via social media.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- Generate content and notifications/updates on the CUCSA and local location levels.
- ✓ Update the newsletter template and provide content-development support to CUCSA outreach efforts and for local staff assemblies and other interested staff organizations.
- ✓ Facilitate and encourage each location's staff assembly to meet with their Local Government Relations Staff
- ✓ Participate in at least one of the quarterly system-wide SGR Meetings to raise awareness and ties with campus-based government relations staff and CUCSA.
- ✓ Next year's Action Group should be on call to help support Budget Hearings, and staff testimony, as needed.
- ✓ Continue an annual Visit with SGR (at minimum), and participate in future UC Days, in Sacramento (in coordination with SGR) in the spring of 2019 and as scheduled in the future.
- ✓ Periodic Calls/Meetings with the Action Group and SGR. We recommend that Meredith Turner continue to be the primary point of contact.

Federal Government Relations (FGR):

Our action group has pursued the action items identified from the 2017 Report, including interviews with individual government advocacy offices at various campuses, development of a newsletter to distribute to CUCSA for further distribution to local Staff Assemblies, and encouraging and supporting each Staff Assembly through the process of developing systemic relationships with their local government advocacy personnel. All of these efforts have been focused predominantly on State-level advocacy, but there is a Federal Government Advocacy office that should be included in future work. Grassroots advocacy is a relatively new strategy for UC's federal government relations office. Should need arise, having open and established lines of communication will allow a more rapid response by staff, and response to related UCAN Advocacy efforts in support of federal priorities.

FGR has an office in Washington D. C. and works directly with Congress and federal agencies in the capital that impact research funding, regulatory climate, and other interests of the University. Just as the CUCSA government advocacy group worked to build awareness of and cooperation with the Staff Assemblies of every institution in the UC network, it would be valuable to work, where appropriate, towards having a similar capacity/institutional relationship with FGR. The FGR is currently led by Interim Vice President, Chris Harrington.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Work with FGR should focus on alerting them to CUCSA, the Assemblies whose delegates form CUCSA, and the way they can communicate with both CUCSA and individual assemblies to get their message to the staff across UC. FGR has only recently begun doing grassroots advocacy work, in concert with the University of California Advocacy Network (UCAN). Depending on future circumstances and political and budget conditions, future advocacy efforts may become more necessary. Setting some groundwork in advance would be a prudent step. CUCSA and the local staff assemblies can serve as valuable partners in spreading their messages and any requests for CUCSA and assembly involvement as appropriate. Similarly, further engagement of UC alum throughout the country could be useful in influencing members of Congress in districts outside of California.

CONCLUSION

The efforts described in this report have allowed staff to add their unique voice to strengthen the image and broaden understanding of UC's critical role in its three missions. Our plan started with building more formal links, starting in the fall of 2017, between CUCSA and the government relations offices in Sacramento, while also strengthening the links at each location between staff assembly leadership and the site government relations contacts. Now that the relationships are solidified (especially with SGR), CUCSA has been able to help coordinate campaigns to educate staff at all locations on how to be better involved in the government relations process as individuals, as well as together. This will continue to include efforts to sign staff up for the UC Advocacy Network (UCAN) and inform staff when legislators hold local events in their districts so that staff can be more involved locally in reminding legislators of the UC employees in their constituency.

In the President's [May 2018](#) letter to the UC Community, she noted that:

"Over the last two months, state legislators were contacted more than 5,600 times by over 2,500 UC students, faculty, Regents, Chancellors, staff, alumni and others. We especially appreciate the sustained, enthusiastic advocacy by students, as well as the letters sent by the Academic Senate and the Alumni Associations. **And the Council of UC Staff Assemblies has been effective in promoting our UC Advocacy Network campaign.**"

Given ongoing uncertainty in the political and budgetary atmosphere, the efforts described in this report represent important steps being taken to create a mutually beneficial relationship between staff and government relations that strengthen UC's message and image about the value of UC and the return on investment that UC produces from state and federal investment. While some of the potential crises in federal funding that appeared possible just a short time ago seem to have receded, we believe that UC should remain vigilant. Strong incentive exists for all University stakeholders to continue building and deepening our advocacy and engagement efforts. The recommendations described in this report are also activities that engage staff, which enhances productivity, loyalty and retention. Those are important, albeit ancillary benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Most tangibly, progress was made in encouraging state reinvestment for UC. As we finalize this report, we now have final numbers for the Legislature's appropriation in the FY 2018-2019 Budget (it now awaits the Governor's signature). In total the University of California received \$98.1 million in on-going funding and \$248.8 million in one-time funding over the 2017-18 budget (grand total \$346.9 million). The breakdown of these funds is listed below.

On-Going Funding: Total \$98.1 million

- 3% base budget increase at \$92.1 million
- \$5 million to support 500 new California undergraduates in 2018-19
- \$1 million to support the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation

One-Time Funding: Total \$248.8 million one-time

Instructional Funds: \$107 million one-time

Campus Life and Student Wellbeing: \$6.7 million one-time

Deferred Maintenance: \$35 million one-time

Health: \$55 million one-time

Research Funds: \$15.5 million one-time

Other: \$29.6 million one-time

- \$25 million for UC Berkeley towards the campus operating deficit
- \$2.8 million for UC Davis Aggie Square planning costs
- \$1.8 million for UCLA Ralph J Bunche Center for African American Studies
- New budget line item created for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Division
- Budget bill language allowing a partial assessment for UC Path for up to \$15.3 million in expenses above the budget line item
- Trailer bill language requiring annual reporting on UCOP funded initiatives

In Closing:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We are appreciative that thousands of people who have become engaged in advocating for the University, and for the committed staff and leaders of the University who patiently represent us all in managing critical relationships with government at all levels. Each of us look forward to remaining engaged and supportive of ongoing advocacy efforts that help ensure the University of California remains a strong and vibrant institution critical to the dissemination of knowledge.