

December 23, 2018

UC Student Regent Devon Graves Statement Re: Student Advisor Pilot Program



### Statement

Throughout my time in student leadership I have consistently advocated for students to be engaged at all levels of governance at the university. This value guides my decision-making, as well as how I evaluate others' decisions. Recently, leaders on the Board of Regents decided to sunset the student advisor program. Based on discussions with student associations and an analysis of the pilot program conducted by the Regents' Office, it became clear that the student advisor position is not the most effective channel for amplifying the student voice. Thus, I am supportive of sunsetting the program and increasing other opportunities to ensure a diversity of student perspectives are represented at the board level.

The student advisor role was created and piloted by hard-working student advocates who I deeply respect, and thus I do not take the decision to sunset the program lightly. I made my decision to support the sunset of the advisor program based on the following information that was presented to me:

1. Students serving in leadership positions should have access to the support and resources needed to be effective in their roles. In the case of the student advisor, this infrastructure is not present. The student advisor position is administered through the student affairs division at the Office of the President, and does not receive the same support that the Student Regent does. The Student Regent and regent designate receive a tuition waiver, an office on their home campus, and the support of the Regents' office staff, all of which are integral to the success of carrying out goals for the position. Because the student advisor is not a regent and does not have this support, it is not fair to expect a student to effectively operate in the board space as a member.
2. Part of the rationale for creating the student advisor role was to provide a one-year opportunity for students to serve on the Board of Regents (as the Student Regent commitment is two years). However, the advisor position did not attract many new candidates, despite a 10 campus recruitment tour. For the two application years of the pilot program, only four students applied solely for the student advisor position. 15 students applied for both the student advisor and Student Regent positions in the first year, and 22 applied for both positions in the second year. This is compared to the 40-50 students who apply for the Student Regent position. Additionally, positions like the UCAN ambassador received over 100 applicants this year. The student advisor program did not garner significant interest from students.
3. During discussions about the pilot program, I was adamant that we increase student participation at the board if the student advisor pilot program was not going to be extended. I have worked with student leadership to increase the number of student advocates to the regents (StARs), and worked to secure time on the agenda for the UCGPC president to present before the Board of Regents, similar to the UCSA president. Additionally, I requested to increase the committee observer positions to add one more observer for the new Regents' Special Committee on Basic Needs. Both the StAR and committee observer roles provide the opportunity for students to engage with the Board of Regents about a broad range of issues. By expanding these programs, I hope to ensure that diverse perspectives from many students are shared with the board. Moving forward, I have also requested that the Regents' office ensure that the committee observer positions and StAR positions remain filled. This has not happened before, because UCOP student

affairs has coordinated those programs. Lastly, the Student Regent is currently serving as vice chair of the Public Engagement and Development committee and chair of the Regents' Special Committee on Basic Needs. There has never been another time in the university's history where so many students play a formal role during the Board of Regents' meetings.

The student advisor pilot program prompted critical reflection about the most effective channels for students to engage in the governance of the university. Though the end of the pilot is disappointing to some, I am confident that expansions of the StAR and student observer programs will result in increased student engagement with the Board of Regents. During the remainder of my term, I will continue working to ensure that student engagement is at the forefront of all conversations.