

**Breaking Barriers Through Governance: The Role, Import, and Potential of Young
People on Boards of Higher Education
VOICE Initiative Report
2021-2022 Academic Year**

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Part I: Write-Up

With the generous support of the UC VOICE initiative we were able to provide three webinars for the UC community at large. Our first session was at 12pm on Thursday, April 14th 2022 and included past UC student regents Jamaal Muwwakkil (UC Student Regent 2020-2021), Hayley Weddle (UC Student Regent 2019-2020), and Jonathan Stein (UC Student Regent 2012-2013). The second session was at 12pm on Thursday, May 12th and included participants Jess Bravin (UC Student Regent 1996-1997) and Marcela Ramirez-Stapleton (UC Student Regent 2016-2017). In the first two sessions we centered questions about the student regent experience including, but not limited to: What are the unique challenges, opportunities, or experiences of the position? What advice would you have for a student interested in giving back to the UC in this fashion? What is the best way to have the voice of students heard by the board? What is the legacy you left on the UC system?

The third and final session of the webinar series took place on Thursday, June 2nd at 12pm. Former student regents Jesse Bernal (UC Student Regent 2009-2010), Jess Bravin (UC Student Regent 1996-1997), Marcela Ramirez-Stapleton (UC Student Regent 2016-2017), Jamaal Muwwakkil (UC Student Regent 2020-2021), Hayley Weddle (UC Student Regent 2019-2020), Jesse Bernal (UC Student Regent 2009-2010), Jonathan Stein (UC Student Regent 2012-2013), and current UC Student Regent Alexis Atsilvsgi Zaragoza 2021-2022 all joined that session. We asked the following questions:

- Not every higher education board in the nation has student representation. First question is do you think students should have a seat on all governing boards in higher education? Why or why not? And the second question is what do you think is the utility of having student representation on the board?
- How might the UC do a better job of showcasing the student regent role and listening to student leadership in the system?
- We've learned that a lot of "governance" and decision making happens outside of board spaces. Can you talk to us a bit about what you learned about navigating the political, academic, and social components of this work both formally and informally?
- What are the ways in which your experience on the board as a student regent impacted your commitment to and involvement in issues related to free speech and civic engagement?
- Students were asked the following question: "What do you feel are the most pressing issues in higher education (or the UC) today?" Here's what they said...How would you, as the student regent, prioritize these issues and collaborate to make sure the students felt heard?
- How might the UC improve the role and experience of the student regent?

While the sessions were intuitively created to offer opportunities for current UC students (and other stakeholders) to learn more about the roles and experiences of students on the board of regents, we were pleasantly surprised as to how much these webinars meant to the student regents who joined us. This became an opportunity for them to reflect, discuss, and be re-energized about the important work that they did and are doing to help advance opportunities in higher education for students and people of color. In particular, we sparked conversations among the group about what's next. They all talked about how important it is for leadership and civic engagement to create opportunities for critical dialogue and planning. Though the sessions were only planned for an hour, after each, the panelists and VOICE recipients stayed after to continue the conversation. We discussed a potential student trustee conference that would attract students from across the nation as well as a more intentional and structured way for the former student regents within the UC to have spaces for discussion, disagreement, and planning.

Part II: Takeaways (Lessons Learned)

Attendees. Overall, the event page registered a total of 60 guests from across various institutions, majors, and professions. We had students, staff, and faculty of higher education institutions interested in the conversations surrounding civic engagement and the role of the student trustee. For example, we had a PhD student from the University of Nebraska reach out to us for more information about the role of our UC student trustees. These conversations showcase the need to expand student regent content beyond our UC community and have the Center advocate for the import of student leadership and civic engagement.

The event was shared via Twitter and Instagram by The UC Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement, The University of California Office of the President, The UC Riverside School of Education, The Berkeley Center for Studies in Higher Education, The UC Graduate and Professional Council, and the UC Riverside Graduate Student Association. This generated more participants in the sessions that were not officially registered via the event page and that we could not keep track of. Having a way to keep track of all of the attendees would be beneficial for us to have a data source to follow-up with. We also did experience some drop-offs of attendees as we went further into the end of the school year. For future events we will further work to diversify the outlets for publicity. One major outlet that we didn't have the advantage of in the spring of 2022 were the courses that Dr. Rall normally teaches on leadership and governance.

Timing. For subsequent projects of this kind, we might reconsider hosting the webinars earlier in the school year. May and June tend to be busier months in higher education so we potentially would have had additional participants if we opted to provide these webinars in the winter or fall quarters. Additionally, we may want to have a session in the evening too. 12pm may not have been ideal but we wanted to choose a time that folks might at least have a break so that they could listen to parts of the session.

Questions. We had many questions that unfortunately went unanswered due to time constraints, however this has prompted us to re-apply for a subsequent VOICE fellowship in the

22-23 academic year and continue the conversation. An idea for the future is to have a place for participants to pre-submit questions for the panelists ahead of their scheduled presentation dates. We also had great questions come up via the Q & A section of zoom or questions that were prompted by something the participants said. While all the questions we prepared in advance were not used, the time was well spent.

Included with the Report:

We've attached the final budget of how all of the funds were used for the speaker honoraria and the raffled gift card prizes to UC students. We're also submitting copies of the fliers for the events as well as the zoom recordings for two of the sessions. Together, these pieces offer a nice overview of the scope and reach of this important topic.

Part III: Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to participate in a conversation about the importance of student voice in the student student regent role.

Sent By: Dr. Raquel Rall

Cc: [Valeria Dominguez](#)

Hello _____

I hope you are doing amazingly well. I am emailing because I am excited to invite you to participate in an online session about the student regent position. My PhD student, Valeria Dominguez, and I recently were awarded some VOICE Initiative funding from the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement for our project, "Breaking Barriers Through Governance: The Role, Import, and Potential of Young People on Boards of Higher Education". [insert link to the announcement if it out]

The impetus for this study is that we believe today's students have myriad experiences that are necessary to inform the future of the institutions, especially in relation to where they stand within society-at-large. Higher education trustees are the "bridge between higher education and society" meaning that they are not only meant to consider decisions within the bubbles of their institutions but, instead, their decisions have effects that reverberate across external communities (Novak & Johnston, 2005). This project's aims are to educate students about the democratic process that exists in UC governance and prepare the next generation of student leaders for civic engagement. Our goal is to teach students the formal and informal roles of the Student Regent, how the Student Regent serves as a collective voice, and how the Student Regents work in community with constituents to address the needs of a diverse UC. Our online seminars will be open to both undergraduate and graduate students across all 10 UC campuses.

Our goal is to facilitate two smaller sessions where we first bring students together with the UC Regent Emeriti to learn about their tenure as the Student Regents. Then, in a final session, we will have a larger panel of former student regents where the audience will be asked what advocacy issue they believe requires the most attention of the UC Student Regent. The Regent Emeriti will discuss how they would prioritize and address the issues at hand. We hope the audience will learn that the role of Student Regent is often met with conflicting needs of their constituents, issues that require extensive collaboration with state and local leadership, and issues that require both short and long term problem-solving.

For participating we'd like to offer you an honorarium of \$150 for one session or \$300 for participating in one of the earlier sessions and the final larger session. We hope that you will also spread the word to any UC students you know that might benefit from hearing more about the student regent position once we have solidified the dates and created flyers with more details. We'll also be raffling off gift cards for students who attend.

Please use this [doodle poll](#) to let us know your availability. We are hoping to host our earlier sessions between April-May, and our final session in late May- early June. If you know of any other former UC student regents that you think we should invite, please send their info my way or forward this along!

I look forward to hearing from you,
Raquel

Part IV: Event Page Invitation

Registration Link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/breaking-barriers-through-governance-tickets-300388489057>

Breaking Barriers Through Governance: The Role, Import, and Potential of Young People on Boards of Higher Education

Dr. Raquel Rall, UC Riverside School of Education

Valeria Dominguez, Doctoral Candidate, UC Riverside School of Education

Join us as we bring together UC Board of Regents Student Regent Emeriti to discuss the importance of civic engagement and young leadership at the University of California. These conversations aim to educate students about the intentional ways in which students participate in, lead, and change higher education. We invite student trustees to present in seminars open to the UC student population and discuss their experiences, challenges, and growth as student leaders. There is a great deal to learn from these students who have spent their tenure on the board constructing what it means to be a leader, what it means to be civically engaged, and what it means to make a difference.

Our program aims to advance conversations around the relevance of and need for democratic participation on college campuses and further campus dialogue related to access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. With an eye on young board members, these talks stand to illuminate motivation for and best practices of how civic engagement manifests into everyday decisions of these pivotal leaders and document the legacy of these students responding beyond words to act as influential decision-makers.

April 14th 12pm-1pm PST Event:

Jamaal Muwwakkil, UC Student Regent 2020-2021

Hayley Weddle, UC Student Regent 2019-2020

Jesse Bernal, UC Student Regent 2009-2010

Jonathan Stein, UC Student Regent 2012-2013

May 12th 12pm-1pm PST Event:

Jess Bravin, UC Student Regent 1996-1997

Paul Barragan-Monge, UC Student Regent 2017-2018

Marcela Ramirez-Stapleton, UC Student Regent 2016-2017

Max Espinosa, UC Student Regent 1998-1999

June 2nd 12pm-1pm PST Event:

All eight UC Regent Emeritus panelists

Current UC Student Regent Alexis Atsilvsgi Zaragoza 2021-2022

Our conversation on June 2nd will invite panelists to work together with audience members to address the most critical UC issues in today's environment. We hope the audience will learn that the role of Student Regent is often met with conflicting needs of their constituents, issues that require extensive collaboration with state and local leadership, and issues that require both short and long-term problem-solving.

This event is open to all. Please select which dates you would like to participate. Emails are required for zoom registration.

Student attendees at each event will be entered into a raffle for a gift card!

This project is funded by the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement VOICE Fellowship.

**JOIN US FOR A THREE-PART
WEBINAR SERIES!**

BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE, IMPORT, AND POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

We bring together UC Board of Regent
Student Trustee Emeriti to discuss the
importance of civic engagement and young
leadership at the University of California.

Sign up for a session today! Open to all!

**APRIL 14TH 12PM-1PM PST
MAY 12TH 12PM-1PM PST
JUNE 2ND 12PM-1PM PST**



**This project is sponsored by the UC National Center for Free Speech
and Civic Engagement VOICE Fellowship**

PART ONE: BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE, IMPORT, AND POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

APRIL 14TH 12PM-1PM PST



Jamaal Muwwakkil
UC Student Regent 2020-2021



Hayley Weddle
UC Student Regent 2019-2020



Jonathan Stein
UC Student Regent 2012-2013



PART TWO: BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE, IMPORT, AND POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MAY 12TH 12PM-1PM PST



Jess Bravin
UC Student Regent 1996-1997



Paul Barragan-Monge
UC Student Regent 2017-2018



Marcela Ramirez-Stapleton
UC Student Regent 2016-2017



Max Espinoza
UC Student Regent 1998-1999



PART THREE: BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE, IMPORT, AND POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

JUNE 2ND 12PM-1PM PST

All seven UC Regent Emeritus panelists



plus:

Jesse Bernal

UC Student Regent 2009-2010



Alexis Atsilvsgi Zaragoza

UC Student Regent 2021-2022

