



ASUSF SENATE LIST OF DEMANDS

We, the Associated Students at the University of San Francisco, expect the following actions from the USF Board of Trustees, the USF President, the USF President's Cabinet, and other relevant administrative offices:

1. **Additional funding for low-income students for the 2020-2021 school year:** *ASUSF Senate* would like to emphasize the immediate and devastating nature of this round of tuition increases. It unfairly targets marginalized students at this university, and threatens to push many out altogether. In response, we would like to allocate additional funding to support students who are most impacted by the increase, using the following guidelines:
 - Additional funding should ideally cover the entirety of the tuition increase, thus keeping students out-of-pocket expenses the same as they paid for the current school year. We understand that this may not be financially viable, so we are willing to discuss partial-coverage funding. For example, an increase totaling \$1,500 is unthinkable for many students. However, offsetting this for low-income students partially, in amounts like \$1,000 can make continuing their education significantly more attainable.
 - Clear definition of 'low-income' students not based exclusively on measures such as whether or not they qualify for a Pell grant. We want to ensure students who need aid but may not meet those measures for various reasons do not fall through the cracks. We are happy to have continuing conversations on what the "requirements" to receive this additional funding would be, but want to ensure that it is inclusive.
 - Additionally, what constitutes "low-income" should not be based solely on FAFSA information, as it excludes people who are not eligible for FAFSA due to immigration reasons. We would like to be a part of all conversations regarding what 'counts' as being a low-income student, as a measure to ensure student perspectives are heard, particularly those of our undocumented community, and others who may not have access to FAFSA.
 - The additional funding should not come in the form of loans or work-study. Funding should function the same as a need-based grant would and will **not** detract from existing aid.
 - We are willing to discuss the implementation of an 'verification' process to ensure both students' desire to request additional funding, as well as their eligibility for the program. We believe that a verification process is an effective way to ascertain that the aid is going to students who need the money the most. Students should not, however, be competing with other students and should not be ranked by GPA, extracurricular activities, etc. This verification process is in no



way an application, it is merely a method of allowing students to self-identify if they need additional tuition assistance.

- Announcement of the availability of additional funds should be communicated via university-wide email as soon as possible, with expectations for the amount they are eligible to receive, and ideally before the school year has ended.
2. **Full adoption of the Financial Aid Bill of Rights** (Outlined at the end of the document): Students deserve an office that is timely, professional, and is working to mitigate the challenges associated with this tuition increase.
 3. **A reprioritization of the value of student voices** in USF's administration in the following ways:
 - (1) Adding two (2) additional undergraduate student seats to the Board of Trustees, with voting and speaking power. Students deserve the dignity of having their voices taken into account in places of power, especially those in which decisions are being made about their life at USF.
 - (2) Adding two (2) additional undergraduate student seats to the University Budget Advisory Council (UBAC), with voting and speaking power. Similar to the Board of Trustees, it is crucial that student voices are taken into account during the allocation process of the university's budget.
 4. **Honesty in the financial aid process for incoming students:** the practice of offering students their best possible financial aid offer when they're accepted to get them in the door and only informing them that there "may be tuition increases" is inherently unethical and traps low-income students.
 - Incoming students must receive a document that they must sign outlining their expected costs of attendance throughout their four years at USF, and this document must stipulate that financial aid does not increase proportionately with tuition increases.
 5. **A written acknowledgement** by University administration of their commitment to serve underprivileged and low-income student groups at the University, and an affirmation of the critical role that they play in making USF great.
 6. **Accessible and transparent documentation** that the above changes are being made at the administrative level.



For the purposes of achieving these ends, we expect the following communication in the coming weeks and months:

1. Clear and consistent communication from the Board of Trustees, the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, and any other relevant USF Administrative offices regarding these matters with *ASUSF Senate* and the student body as a whole.
2. Meetings within the next few calendar weeks which are to be scheduled between *ASUSF Senate* leadership and key university individuals and decision makers, who can help provide more clarity around the specifics of the tuition increase, the mechanisms that caused it to happen, as well as the support the university intends to provide to its students. The USF student body deserves to be kept in the loop about decisions regarding what their money is being used for, and wants to have an informed conversation about the realities of the tuition increase with administrative officials.
3. Continuous effort from the university to take part in the fall semester ASUSF Town Hall in which students and members of the USF community can come and voice their concerns about the tuition increase within the next month to key leaders in USF Administration, including the President, the Provost, the Vice Provost for Institutional Budget and Planning & Analytics, the Vice Provost of Strategic Enrollment Management, and all other relevant decision-makers. This town hall will be promoted through official USF communication channels, including a separate, university-wide email (not just as part of the USF events calendar) to students, staff, and faculty which details the specifics of the event, which are to be as listed below:
 - a. The event will be held during a time when students tend to have availability, and will be sufficiently long so as to allow students who want to voice their opinion the opportunity to do so.
 - b. The forum will not only be a presentation from USF administration and leadership about the increase, but also, an open-mic forum for students to directly tell University leadership how the tuition impact will affect them and their families, and get any questions that they may have regarding it answered.
 - c. The forum will allow for submissions collected online to be read aloud by a member of *ASUSF Senate*, for students who want to have their voice heard but are unable to physically be there, for reasons such as they are currently studying abroad, have work/school conflicts, etc.
 - d. We expect to work with USF administration to ensure that the town hall is productive and encourages an open dialogue between students and University officials. We are willing to speak with organizers of the event about time limits for speakers, and other 'housekeeping' points to keep the forum flowing and the conversation effective.



4. Continued support for student activists in this matter and for the wider campus community of low-income, working class, first generation and other marginalized students, as is consistent with our university's Jesuit values.



Financial Aid Bill of Rights

1. **Extension of payment deadline for the 2020-2021 school year:** While a payment extension does not completely remedy the issues involved with paying for the increase, it does allow students the time to financially plan that they were denied.
 - Extension of payment deadline for all students (not just low-income ones) to at least October 1st in the Fall and March 1st in the Spring with no financial or other penalties.
 - This will not impact a student's ability to enroll in a payment plan or receive other financial aid.
 - Students will be notified of the tuition extension through a University-wide email to both students and other payers, whether that be parents, guardians, etc.
 - We understand that an extension of the deadline could pose challenges for budgetary planning purposes, and as such are willing to compromise and add that students would need to request this extension instead of it automatically applying.
2. **Lowering the threshold to qualify for payment plans to \$500:** Payment plans are an effective way of assisting students with costs that are otherwise not covered by financial aid, but they assume that students have the capacity to provide more payments upfront than is realistic for many.
 - Instead of requiring the amount owed to enroll in a payment plan to be more than \$2,250, it should be lowered to \$500, spread over 4 payments.
 - Removal of restrictions on students' accounts that we added due to late payments in the past. Students are never trying to skirt around paying for their education, and if they have failed to make payments in the past, it is because it was financially impossible for them at the time. These restrictions unfairly target low-income students and must be removed.
 - When this was proposed last semester, concerns were raised about the ability of this change to be implemented while still obeying California State Law. In recognition of this, we would like to propose that the University, rather than the third party, CashNet, would be the one administering these smaller payment plans.
3. **Establishment of explicitly-noted financial aid "office hours" to get questions answered and where students can discuss changes to financial aid packages:** We understand that there have been various changes to the team in the financial aid office and that there have been some issues with staffing. However, students not receiving emails back when they contact the office about concerns that they have about their



financial aid is unreasonable. We think that this is an effective way to provide an increase in student services, without stretching staff too thin and eliminating influxes of emails that may get lost in the shuffle.

- Establishment of weekly office hours, following the same model that other offices, like the Career Center uses, in which students can get quick questions about their financial aid answered in a timely manner. They should be held in a well-trafficked space, like the UC 1st floor.
- Office hours should be promoted through official university channels and posters around campus.
- They should be staffed by individuals within financial aid who can be helpful, and solve students' concerns promptly and officially, rather than just redirect them to other people who can help.
- Students requiring follow-up or other assistance will be contacted within three business days after they attended office hours by both phone and email about next steps.

4. **Allowing students to request a reevaluation of their financial aid package to take into consideration both the current tuition increase, as well as future ones:** While the financial aid office does offer some mechanisms for students to have their financial aid package reevaluated for reasons such as change in parental income, this excludes tuition increases. It is important to recognize that although the student's financial situation might not have changed, the cost to the student certainly did, and thus their financial aid package must be reevaluated.

- The ability to reevaluate financial aid packages should be included in the below financial aid 'newsletter' to clearly indicate to students that they have that option.
- Financial aid reevaluations should be taken seriously, and in the case that the student cannot be offered additional financial aid, they should receive a letter clearly detailing why their request was denied, as well as possible solutions, including off-campus scholarships and grants.
- In the case that financial aid made a mistake on the student's original financial aid package which is realized during the reevaluation of their financial aid package, their financial aid package must remain the same.

5. **Clear communication from the university to the entire student body regarding the changes in leadership within the Department of Financial Services:** the Financial Aid department is a critical department for students, and staffing changes, particularly high-level ones, routinely disrupt the office's ability to deliver important information to students in a timely, professional, and considerate manner.



6. **A publicly-announced and methodical plan from the Office of Financial Aid to efficiently support students specifically during the summer months:** There are many students who do not live in the city of San Francisco during the summer months who find it incredibly difficult to get a hold of the financial aid office via email or phone call. Students are often on hold for over 45 minutes or their phone calls are never answered. This is unacceptable. The Office of Financial Aid must find a way to better serve the students who are unable to visit the office physically during the summer months.
 - A minimum of two (2) Financial Aid Representatives should be responsible for promptly answering phone calls and responding to emails from students.
 - When on hold, students should have the option to leave their name, number, and message and expect a swift response from a Financial Aid Representative according to the time their call was received.

7. **The continuation of the quarterly publication of a financial aid “newsletter” via university-wide email within the context of a general improvement in communication:** The Financial Aid Office can at times struggle to communicate effectively with the student body, which leads to expensive and stressful miscommunication. A publication of a newsletter, containing information about important deadlines, office hours, scholarships, and workshops will help with this.
 - Quarterly emails should go to all students via their student email.
 - They should contain all relevant information, including: deadlines, scholarship and grant opportunities, office hour times, and other key information.