

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO • SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ



## VIDEOCONFERENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

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**A. Academic Council**

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- Jean-Daniel Saphores, Chair, University Committee on Faculty Welfare

**IX. SPECIAL ORDERS**

- A. Consent Calendar [NONE]**

**X. REPORTS ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES [NONE]**

**XI. PETITIONS OF STUDENTS [NONE]**

**XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS [NONE]**

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

## **I. Roll Call**

### **2019-20 Assembly Roll Call April 15, 2020**

#### **President of the University:**

Janet Napolitano

#### **Academic Council Members:**

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Mary Gauvain, Vice Chair  
Oliver O'Reilly, Chair, UCB  
Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, UCD  
James Steintrager, Chair, UCI  
Michael Meranze, Chair, UCLA  
Thomas Hansford, Chair, UCM  
Dylan Rodriguez, Chair, UCR  
Maripat Corr, Chair, UCSD  
Sharmila Majumdar, Chair, UCSF  
Henning Bohn, Chair, UCSB  
Kimberly Lau, Chair, UCSC  
Eddie Comeaux, Chair, BOARS  
Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Chair, CCGA  
Mona Lynch, Chair, UCAADE  
John Gilbert, Chair UCAP  
John Serences, Chair, UCEP  
Jean-Daniel Saphores, Chair, UCFW  
Andrew Baird, Chair, UCORP  
Sean Malloy, Chair, UCPB

#### **Berkeley (5)**

Cathryn Carson  
Fai Ma  
Jennifer Johnson Hanks  
Suzanne Fleiszig (alt for John Ngai)  
Lok Siu (alt for Daniel Boyarin)

#### **Davis (6)**

Anne Britt  
Richard Grotjahn  
Joel Hass  
George Mattay  
Jeffrey Williams  
*TBD (1)*

#### **Irvine (4)**

Jacob Avery  
Elliott Currie  
Andrej Luptak  
Nancy McLoughlin

#### **Los Angeles (7)**

Hiram Beltran-Sanchez  
Nicholas Brecha  
Jessica Cattelino  
Mansoureh Eghbali  
Kym F. Faull  
William Marotti  
Peter Tontono

#### **Merced (1)**

Josue Medellin-Azuara

#### **Riverside (2)**

Thomas Cogswell  
Isgouhi Kaloshian

#### **San Diego (5)**

Amy Bridges  
Seana Coulson  
Igor Grant  
Tara Javidi  
Stephanie Mel

#### **San Francisco (5)**

Marek Brzezinski  
Linda Centore  
Steven Cheung  
Bo Huang  
Jacqueline Leung

#### **Santa Barbara (3)**

Charles Akemann  
Claudio Fogu  
Isabel Bayrakdarian

#### **Santa Cruz (2)**

Janette Dinishak  
David Brundage

#### **Secretary/Parliamentarian**

Andrew Dickson

## MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

February 12, 2020

## MINUTES OF MEETING

## I. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Pursuant to the call, the Assembly of the Academic Senate met on Wednesday, February 12, 2020. Academic Senate Chair Kum-Kum Bhavnani presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Senate Director Hilary Baxter called the roll of Assembly members and confirmed a quorum. Attendance is listed in Appendix A of these minutes.

## II. MINUTES

**ACTION: The Assembly approved the minutes of June 12, 2019.**

## III. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY SENATE LEADERSHIP

- Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair
- Mary Gauvain, Vice Chair

Working Group on Comprehensive Access: President Napolitano formed the WGCA to develop recommendations for upholding UC values when UC health systems collaborate with non-UC systems. It followed a UCSF decision of May 2019 to halt a planned affiliation with the hospital chain Dignity Healthcare, over concerns that Dignity's restrictions on services for women and LGBT people were inconsistent with UC values. These concerns also informed the July 2019 [report](#) of the UCFW Non-Discrimination in Healthcare Task Force, which recommended that UC avoid affiliations with entities whose values conflict with its public mission and values. The WGCA included three Senate representatives: Chair Bhavnani, Past Senate Chair May, and UCSF Professor Vanessa Jacoby. The WGCA did not reach consensus on the question of whether UC should affiliate with external health care organizations that limit services. However, the Chair's Report, now available for public comment, outlines two options: 1) allow affiliations with non-UC entities that prohibit certain services for women and LGBT people, and 2) prohibit such affiliations.

Bylaw 336: In April 2019, Assembly [approved](#) amendments to Bylaw 336 in response to the Regents' request to the Senate to implement CA State Auditor recommendations for improving UC's response to sexual violence and harassment complaints. The revisions to 336 define a uniform procedure for all alleged violations of the faculty code of conduct. They require 1) the Senate to schedule hearings on complaints against faculty respondents before the P&T Committee no more than 60 days after the Chancellor files charges, unless a good cause extension is granted; and 2) P&T to issue its recommendation to the Chancellor no more than 30 days after a hearing concludes. The Assembly also emphasized that workload increases must be supported with resources.

Fossil Fuels Divestment: In May 2019, the Senate approved a [memorial](#) requesting that the Regents divest the University's endowment portfolio of all investments in the 200 publicly traded fossil fuel companies with the largest carbon reserves. The University responded positively to the

memorial and noted that it is continuing the divestment glide path begun in 2015. Some faculty want UC to accelerate the process and extend divestment to the pension fund holdings.

UCM Chancellor Search: The Presidential Advisory Committee for the UC Merced chancellor search is screening candidates. The Committee includes six Regents, five UC faculty—including three from Merced—as well as students, staff, and alumni representatives.

Foreign Influence: The Academic Council has discussed concerns about the increasingly racialized ways scholars and students from specific countries and of specific ethnicities are being targeted as potential threats in national conversations about academic espionage.

Task Forces: The Academic Senate's Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force is considering the implications of full-time online degrees. An Extending Faculty Diversity Task Force will be exploring opportunities for campuses to collaborate on faculty diversity issues; and an Interim Working Group on Climate Change will consider the role of the Senate in responding to the climate crisis. A joint Senate-Administration Disciplinary Guidelines Task Force is developing consistent guidelines for chancellors to draw upon when assigning discipline to faculty for conduct violations.

Regents Meetings: Vice Chair Gauvain noted that Regents committees are hosting in-depth presentations on specific topics. These include a series of presentations by Provost Brown to the Academic Affairs Committee about the UC undergraduate student experience as it relates to quality, access, and affordability, and about the importance of graduate education to the state. Vice Chair Gauvain encouraged faculty to consider how they might increase their participation in advocacy and public messaging. She noted that the Regents tend to be interested in and responsive to student remarks made during public comment at Regents meetings. And while the faculty also have persuasive stories about, for example, the importance of graduate education, they rarely speak at those meetings.

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE PROVOST**

- **Janet Napolitano, President (attending by video)**
- **Michael T. Brown, Provost and Executive Vice President**

Presidential Priorities: President Napolitano shared a list of priorities she wants to address during the remainder of her presidency:

- Finalize a collective bargaining agreement with the AFT
- Finalize a policy on affiliations between UC health systems and non-UC organizations
- Conclude debate on the use of standardized testing in admissions
- Finalize a policy on Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment in the clinical setting
- Appoint a chancellor at UC Merced
- Finalize a systemwide policy on Native American Cultural Affiliation and Repatriation
- Prepare for a Supreme Court decision on DACA
- Negotiate a healthy state budget
- Close the State audit on undergraduate admissions policies and practices
- Pass the March 2020 General Obligation bond initiative

State Budget: The Governor's 2020-21 State budget proposal includes \$217.7 million of new ongoing funding and \$55 million in additional one-time funding for UC. The budget helps UC address operating cost increases related to teaching, research, and public service, but does not cover all cost increases. To address the gap, the Regents are discussing a possible tuition increase.

Labor Issues: The University has reached agreements with the service worker and patient care units of AFSCME Local 3299 and is working toward an agreement with the “Unit 18” Lecturers. In addition, UCSC and UCOP are working to resolve the graduate student wildcat strike at UCSC. UCOP has offered to open informal discussions with the systemwide bargaining unit about cost of living issues affecting graduate students.

Title IX: The January Regents meeting included a report from UC’s systemwide Title IX coordinator about UC’s extensive Title IX efforts. These include revisions to UC’s SVSH policy and student adjudication framework; a response to proposed federal Title IX regulations; implementation of recommendations from the CA State Auditor, and a new task force to develop consistent faculty disciplinary guidelines across campuses. In addition, a working group is developing a systemwide policy specific to sexual misconduct in the clinical setting.

Admissions: The UCOP Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Audit Services (ECAS) is finalizing its phase two report on an internal systemwide audit of undergraduate admissions. The audit reviewed local processes and controls around Admission by Exception, Athletics, and Special Admissions. The California State Auditor has also initiated an independent audit of UC admissions.

NAGPRA: The University is scheduling public consultation sessions with Native American tribes about a new draft policy on Native American Cultural Affiliation and Repatriation. The policy will be released for a second systemwide review this spring.

Discussion:

Assembly members expressed concern that the UCSC wildcat strike could spread to other campuses and asked President Napolitano if UC would consider reopening the contract to end the strike, or take other steps to address graduate students’ concerns. An Assembly member expressed concern that adopting Option 2 in the WGCA Chair’s report could abolish existing UC campus affiliations, including those with the Veterans Affairs hospitals. Another noted that concerns about affiliations with external organizations do not relate to religion per se, but to the values of the organization. A member noted that many rural Californians interact with UC only through ANR County Advisors or ANR programs like 4-H; however, those programs are being cut or eliminated. Another member encouraged UC to initiate a visual ad campaign as a budget advocacy strategy.

- President Napolitano said she understands the challenges associated with housing and the high cost of living in Santa Cruz and other UC campus communities, but the wildcat strike undercuts existing collective bargaining agreements and the University will not entertain reopening the contract or issuing a side letter. UC continues to advocate for more funding to support graduate students. The University is exploring the idea of housing fellowships, and understands the need to accelerate CEQA approvals for affordable student housing. She noted that questions about existing affiliations would be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Provost Brown added that he is committed to improving graduate student support and understands that nothing is more important to maintaining UC quality than support and funding for graduate students. The strike should be a call to common cause to address a wide range of issues associated with advancing the academic and personal success of graduate students, including the gap between stipends and housing costs. He noted that each of the UC 2030 framework goals – increasing degree attainment, closing achievement gaps, and advancing the professoriate – includes a graduate education component.

- Provost Brown noted that the University is working hard to develop positive relationships with state legislators, many of whom did not attend UC, and to link their policy interests with UC's research, teaching, and public service missions.
- President Napolitano noted that UC's land grant mission is a critical part of its identity, and that ANR is the only aspect of UC present in every California county. She added that ANR was the only element of the UCOP budget increased in the Governor's proposed budget.

## **V. STATUS OF THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET**

### **▪ David Alcocer, Associate Vice President, Budget and Capital Resources**

In November 2019, the Regents approved a 2020-21 budget plan that requested State support sufficient to sustain core operations, fund high priority investments, and avoid a tuition increase. Specifically, it requested a permanent base budget adjustment of \$264 million (or 7.1%), \$25 million for the UCR School of Medicine, \$60 million to support the 2030 Framework, and other amounts for student academic preparation, student mental health, and enrollment growth. UC also requested \$500 million in one-time funding for deferred maintenance. The Governor's proposed budget provides a 5% base budget adjustment, \$25 million for the UCR SOM, \$15 million to expand UCSF Fresno, and \$3.6 million to support UC ANR.

The 5% increase is good by historical standards, but falls short of UC's needs. This is partly because over time, UC has moved to a blended funding model that combines tuition/fees, UC general funds, and State general funds. The continued sustainability of that model requires moderate increases to each source – or exceptional increases to one. A 5% increase to state general funds amounts to a 2% increase to UC's total core funds. Investing in UC's budget plan and sustaining those investments over time will require additional core funds of \$2.1 billion annually by 2024-25. Otherwise, the annual shortfall will grow from \$259M in 2020-21 to \$734M by 2024-25. Regular inflation-based adjustments to student charges would significantly reduce (but not eliminate) the projected shortfall.

The Regents are considering two models for a tuition increase: 1) an across-the-board increase tied to inflation, and 2) a five-year plan that guarantees each entering freshman cohort a tuition level for six years. 56% of CA resident undergraduates at UC receive aid that fully covers tuition and fees. When tuition stays flat, other costs rise but no new aid is generated to cover them; however, when tuition rises, new aid is available from UC grants and Cal Grants.

Proposition 13 is a General Obligation bond on the March 2020 state ballot, which if passed would provide UC campuses with \$2 billion to address their most pressing capital needs. All campuses will receive a portion of the GO bond and all will have their first priority bond project funded.

Other budget-related issues include the legislature's interest in the impact of nonresident enrollment on California resident enrollment; how a proposed expansion of Cal Grants for CCC students could impact financial aid for UC students; and the University's discussions with the state about a restart of regular contributions to UCRP or one-time Proposition 2 funding for UCRP.

## **VI. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **A. Academic Council**

#### **1. Revisions to Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area D)**

BOARS Chair Comeaux noted that the Academic Council is recommending next steps for the Area D (“Laboratory Science”) freshman admission requirement, which build on the Assembly’s February 2018 [revisions](#) to Senate Regulation 424.A.3 ([amended in April 2019](#)), in light of a new [Public Policy Institute of California \(PPIC\) report](#). The February 2018 revisions aim to increase science literacy and align UC’s expectations for science preparation with changes to high school curricula based on California’s adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for grades K-12. The February 2018 policy had three components:

1. Increase the minimum Area D requirement from two courses (three recommended) to three courses, while continuing to require that two courses “provide basic knowledge in at least two of the fundamental disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics”;
2. Change the name of the requirement from “Laboratory Science” to “Science”; and
3. Broaden the range of science disciplines to be accepted for the third course.

However, the proposal to increase the number of required Area D courses was put on hold over concerns that 25 CA high schools do not offer more than two science courses. UC commissioned the PPIC study to further analyze the effect of the changes. Key PPIC study findings revealed:

- 19% of high school graduates who have otherwise satisfied the A-G requirements may be affected by the proposed Area D increase.
- Asian American and white students are more likely to meet the new requirement than Latinx or African-American students.
- Many affected students are likely to start the Area D sequence late, specifically those who did not take a science course in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Although affected students may have a high probability of taking another year of Area D, many do not, partly due to institutional factors such as course placement, grading policy, course validation rules, counseling, and scheduling.
- In a separate analysis, UCOP found that while 94% of all UC freshman applicants completed the three recommended Area D science courses in fall 2019, percentages were lower for underrepresented groups. (91%)

Council recommends that the Assembly endorse the following actions:

1. Maintain the Area D requirement at 2 years of science required and 3 years recommended.
2. Work with UC outreach and educational partnership programs to continue advising students and their families on the importance of rigorous science and math preparation.
3. Engage in vigorous education, outreach, and support via UCOP High School Articulation to encourage high schools to redesign Area G science elective courses for Area D approval, to increase the number of overall eligible students and eligible URG students.
4. Leverage the online curriculum design and implementation expertise of *UC Scout*, whose mission is to reach educationally disadvantaged students across the state, raise achievement levels, and close educational opportunity gaps.
5. Extend the reach of the UC California Science Project, which provides a statewide infrastructure for high-quality professional development for pre-K through university teachers, with the goal of improving science education for all California students, and a special focus on the needs of English learners and high-need schools.
6. Capitalize on the commitment from the Lawrence Hall of Science at Berkeley to conduct direct outreach to all public high schools in need of support with NGSS implementation.



Council also recommends asking the President to 1) convey to the state the Academic Senate's dismay that some California public high schools do not offer at least three science courses that meet Area D requirements, and to urge the state to ensure that all public high schools offer at least three such courses; 2) to convey that the Senate intends to reconsider the issue of requiring three science courses within five years, with the expectation that all CA high schools will by then be offering three courses, taught by qualified teachers; and to 3) convey that UC's current underfunding limits its capacity to increase outreach. In addition, BOARS will develop short- and long-term strategies for tracking the equity gap.

It was noted that Senate Regulation 424.A.3 reflects the change from "laboratory science" to "science." Language about broadening courses eligible for fulfilling the third recommended Area D course appears in the [A-G Policy Resource Guide](#), maintained by UCOP Student Affairs.

**ACTION: The motion to endorse the recommendations was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. There was one abstention.**

## **2. Status of the UC Presidential Search**

Regents Policy 7101 outlines procedures for the UC presidential search. A Regents Special Committee has been appointed to lead the search and consider candidates. Per 7101, the Academic Council has appointed an [Academic Advisory Committee \(AAC\)](#) to assist the Regents Special Committee. The AAC is chaired by Senate Chair Bhavnani and includes one representative from each campus, plus two at-large members, Professor Mary Gauvain and Professor John Powell. The AAC met with the executive search firm in January, and has been evaluating candidates. The Special Committee has held town hall meetings at several campuses to gather input into the [Search Criteria](#). However, in contrast to previous searches for UC presidents, and despite repeated requests, the Special Committee has been meeting without the AAC chair.

- Assembly members noted strong concern about the exclusion of Chair Bhavnani from the proceedings and urged that all official presidential candidates be reviewed by the AAC. The chair of the Santa Barbara Senate division offered a resolution for the consideration of the Assembly. Members supported the resolution and offered various wordsmithing suggestions highlighting the value faculty participation adds to search process.

**ACTION: The following motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously:**

"WHEREAS in previous searches for UC Presidents, the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee was invited to attend all meetings of the respective Regents Special Committees; and

WHEREAS Regents Policy 7101.E specifies that "In general, the consultative practices followed in recent presidential searches shall be carried forward"; and

WHEREAS we understand the current Regents Special Committee has (with the exception of an initial meeting on November 6, 2019) met without the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee;

*Resolved*, that the Assembly of the Academic Senate wishes to express its concern and disappointment about the exclusion of the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee from the meetings of the Regents Special Committees. Faculty can contribute invaluable insights into the role played by the President in ensuring the University fulfills its education and research missions for the State, as well as in the overall functioning of the University. We hope that the Regents

Special Committee will include the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee in all future meetings and deliberations.”

### **3. Report of the Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force**

The STTF report and recommendations were released for systemwide Senate review on February 3. The March 23 deadline for comment will enable final discussion and action at the April 1 Council and April 15 Assembly meetings. Based on feedback, the Assembly will issue a final set of Senate recommendations to President Napolitano for transmittal to the Regents in April. The STTF was co-chaired by Henry Sanchez (UCSF) and BOARS Chair Eddie Comeaux (UCR). A six member STTF subcommittee led the writing effort. Co-Chair Sanchez and subcommittee members Jonathan Glater (UCI) and Julian Betts (UCSD) joined the Assembly meeting for an initial discussion of report, which includes six recommendations:

1. Review and update components of the statewide eligibility index.
2. Expand Eligibility in the Local Context.
3. Undertake further analysis of the admissions process to identify those points in the process, and the factors at work at each point, that contribute to disproportionate declines in representation of students from populations that have historically been excluded from higher education opportunity at UC.
4. Identify and expand student academic support services at every campus and evaluate them. UC could then design and evaluate new support programs, as needs are identified.
5. Obtain the necessary data and test items to perform an updated item-level analysis of current standardized tests to test for bias and disparities.
6. Develop a new test that will be continuously accessible to students and that will assess a broader array of student learning and capabilities than current tests. This could take nine years to implement.

The report also discussed two reforms the STTF considered but did not recommend: 1) moving to a “test optional” policy, and 2) using the Smarter Balanced Assessment for UC admission.

The STTF found that standardized tests provide predictive validity above and beyond HSGPA, including for disadvantaged students. It found that UC uses tests as one component of a comprehensive review system that assesses applicants based on 14 factors, taking into account disparities in opportunity. Campuses compensate for variation in test scores across groups by noting the difference in average scores between groups, and re-norming scores based on social group defined by ethnicity and by family income. The STTF found that test score differences do not explain racial disparities in UC admission rates. Rather, 75% of the gap between the racial mix of high school seniors and the racial mix of UC admits is explained by factors that occur prior to the admissions decision, particularly completion of A-G coursework with sufficient grades (40%). It found that students who did not score highly on the SAT/ACT still get into UC, and that many URM students gain entry on the strength of test scores.

On the other hand, the STTF did not conclude that standardized tests have no role in disparate outcomes for underrepresented groups. The report noted that predictive validity is important, but the normative assumptions underlying the analyses do not capture all relevant structural inequities. The report noted that STTF did not have access to data on the potential effect of the testing requirement and scores on students who choose not to apply to UC, and it emphasized the need to obtain updated item-level data for the SAT to test for racial bias. The report also discussed a division on the STTF on the question of whether to set a sunset date on the current use of

standardized tests before the development of the new test outlined in the report. (An informal vote on whether to set a sunset date for the use of standardized tests in admissions was 9 opposed; 7 in support; with one abstention.) In addition, six STTF members signed an additional statement emphasizing their concerns about the length of time suggested in recommendation #6.

## **VII. UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY WELFARE REPORT**

### **▪ Jean-Daniel Saphores, UCFW Chair**

Faculty Salaries: The University implemented 4% adjustments to the faculty salary scales in 2018-19 and 2019-20, as part of a multi-year plan to close the pay gap with UC's Comparison 8 institutions. However, UC faculty salaries still lag the Comparison 8 by 5%-6%, and UCOP is reviewing a plan for augmentations over the next three years sufficient to eliminate the remaining gap. The final plan will depend on the final state budget. UCFW is concerned about the continued market relevance of the published salary scales, and their connection to the merit and promotion system. A joint Senate-Administration Salary Scales Task Force has been charged with reviewing the role and meaning of the faculty salary scales and off-scales. UCFW believes in grounding UC faculty compensation on a single set of salary scales for all UC campuses that is connected to the merit and promotion system, and that uses off-scales only in exceptional circumstances.

Benefits: UCFW is monitoring the long-term sustainability of UC's retiree health care benefits, as well as the long-term viability of UC Care, given UC Care's inability to attract a significant number of younger or healthier members. UCFW also is concerned about new pressure from the Regents to increase employee contributions to UCRP, following revised actuarial assumptions that increased UCRP's unfunded liability. UCFW's Task Force on Investment and Retirement is encouraging UCOP to model options for borrowing that would reduce the liability and avoid increasing employee contributions.

Child Care: All UC campuses except Santa Cruz have child care facilities on or near campus. Convenient child care is important to faculty and is also an equity issue for female faculty. UCFW is collecting information about options for improving access to child care and will be making a recommendation.

Policing Policy: Two years ago, a Systemwide Public Safety Task Force updated the UC Police Procedures manual (the "Gold Book") and identified best practices for campus police departments, including the creation of campus public safety advisory boards to better connect campus police with the campus community and reduce discrimination against minorities. UCFW is monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

SVSH: UCFW is participating in a joint task force charged with developing clearer, more uniform guidelines for chancellors when assigning discipline to faculty for conduct violations and more consistent application of discipline across campuses.

Administrative Burden on Faculty: UCFW is aware that faculty have been shouldering more administrative tasks and is exploring opportunities for reducing the compliance burden and increasing efficiencies.

Climate Change: UCFW wants UCOP, UC faculty, and UC students to take concrete measures to address the climate change crisis.

## **4. The Operation and Engagement of the Assembly of the Academic Senate**

The Assembly has conducted all business via videoconference since 2014, in part due to financial constraints. Some Academic Council members have voiced concerns about the Assembly's operation and engagement, noting that the Assembly is the highest legislative authority in the Senate and is supposed to be a deliberative body, but years have passed since it has rejected, or seriously amended a proposal. Today there is a perception that it mostly rubber-stamps action items. In addition, technical limitations of remote participation limits the effectiveness of policy discussion, engagement with administrators, and a sense of community. Council members have suggested ways to improve the effectiveness of the Assembly and its meetings. The Senate office was encouraged to find funding for at least one in-person meeting each year, featuring a "State of the University" address by the President. Other suggestions included: meetings to be held in a videoconference format; introduction of electronic voting; encouraging more organized discussion; Q&A during meetings; using the listserv to facilitate pre-meeting discussions; and encouraging representatives to meet as a group at their respective divisions.

- Assembly members expressed support for holding one in-person per year and also for alternating meetings in Oakland with other campus locations.
- Director Baxter noted that in-person meetings are expensive, and they have not always inspired engagement above and beyond that at a videoconference. Videoconferencing technology has improved, and some faculty, particularly those concerned about their carbon footprint, have asked the Senate to increase opportunities for remote meeting participation. UCOP has also asked the Senate to model a 5% budget cut for 2020-21, and the Senate is seeking opportunities to reduce travel expenses, including more videoconference meetings. The Senate is also emphasizing to UCOP that it has a special role in convening faculty from across the state to participate in shared governance. Director Baxter noted that the Senate office will endeavor to find funding for one in-person meeting annually.

## **VIII. SPECIAL ORDERS**

### **A. Consent Calendar**

**B. Annual Reports (2018-19):** [Bylaw 120.D.3](#) requires that standing committee annual reports be included in the first Assembly agenda of each academic year.

## **IX. REPORTS ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES [None]**

## **X. PETITIONS OF STUDENTS [None]**

## **XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS [None]**

## **XII. NEW BUSINESS [None]**

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Assistant Director

Attest: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Senate Chair

Attachments: Appendix A – Assembly Attendance Record, Meeting of February 12, 2020

## **Appendix A – 2019-2020 Assembly Attendance Record, Meeting of February 12, 2020**

### **President of the University:**

Janet Napolitano

Andrej Luptak (absent)

Nancy McLoughlin

### **Academic Council Members:**

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair

Mary Gauvain, Vice Chair

Oliver O'Reilly, Chair, UCB

Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, UCD

James Steintrager, Chair, UCI

Michael Meranze, Chair, UCLA

Thomas Hansford, Chair, UCM

Dylan Rodriguez, Chair, UCR

Maripat Corr, Chair, UCSD

Sharmila Majumdar, Chair, UCSF

Henning Bohn, Chair, UCSB

Grant McGuire, (alt for Kimberly Lau,  
Chair, UCSC)

Eddie Comeaux, Chair, BOARS

Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Chair, CCGA

Mona Lynch, Chair, UCAADE

Susan Tapert, Vice Chair, UCAP (alt for  
Chair John Gilbert)

John Serences, Chair, UCEP

Jean-Daniel Saphores, Chair, UCFW

Andrew Baird, Chair, UCORP

Sean Malloy, Chair, UCPB

### **Berkeley (5)**

Daniel Boyarin

Cathryn Carson

Fai Ma

John Ngai

Jennifer Johnson-Hanks (alt for Richard  
Scheffler)

### **Davis (6)**

Anne Britt

Richard Grotjahn

Joel Hass

George Mattay

Jeffrey Williams (absent)

*TBD (1)*

### **Irvine (4)**

Emily Baum (alt for Jacob Avery)

Elliott Currie

### **Los Angeles (7)**

Hiram Beltran-Sanchez (absent)

Nicholas Brecha

Jessica Cattelino

Mansoureh Eghbali

Kym F. Faull

William Marotti

Peter Tontonoz

### **Merced (1)**

Josue Medellin-Azuara

### **Riverside (2)**

Thomas Cogswell

Isgouhi Kaloshian (absent)

### **San Diego (5)**

Amy Bridges (absent)

Seana Coulson

Igor Grant

Tara Javidi

Stephanie Mel

### **San Francisco (5)**

Marek Brzezinski (absent)

Linda Centore (absent)

Steven Cheung

Bo Huang (absent)

Jacqueline Leung

### **Santa Barbara (3)**

Charles Akemann

Claudio Fogu

Isabel Bayrakdarian

### **Santa Cruz (2)**

Janette Dinishak

David Brundage

### **Secretary/Parliamentarian**

Andrew Dickson

### III. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

- Kum-Kum-Bhavnani

1. Academic Council Actions in Response to COVID-19
  - a. [Divisional Flexibility for Grading Options](#)
  - b. [Temporary Modification of Admissions Requirements](#)
  - c. [Statement on Course Materials Developed for Remote Teaching](#)

### IV. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

#### A. Academic Council

- Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair

#### 1. Report of the Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) [INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/ACTION]

In early 2019, Council Chair May empaneled a Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) to respond to President Napolitano's request to the Academic Senate to examine the University's current use of standardized testing for admission; review the [testing principles developed in 2002](#) BOARS and [revised by BOARS in 2010](#); and determine whether any changes in admission testing policies or practices are needed. Chair May asked the STTF to consider whether the University and its students are best served by UC's current testing practices, a modification of current practices, another testing approach, or the elimination of testing. The STTF met 12 times between February 2019 and January 2020, and empaneled a writing subcommittee to produce specific recommendations. The STTF [report and recommendations](#) were released for systemwide Senate review on February 3 and can be found at the following URL: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/underreview/sttf-report.pdf>

The STTF report and recommendations were released for systemwide Senate review on February 3 with a March 26 deadline for comment. The Academic Council discussed the results of the systemwide review on April 1, and the comments from Senate divisions and systemwide committees are included in the Assembly agenda packet. The Academic Council found strong and consistent support for the recommendations across reviewers. The Council passed a motion "to endorse the STTF report, with the recommendation that in five years the University revisit whether the added value of the SAT/ACT still holds, employing the methods used in the STTF report."

**ACTION REQUESTED: Discuss major report recommendations, consider Council recommendation and determine Assembly position to forward to the President for transmittal as an Academic Senate recommendation to the Regents.**



320 STEPHENS HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

March 25, 2020

KUM-KUM BHAVNANI  
Chair, Academic Council

*Subject: Comments on the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force*

Dear Kum-Kum,

On March 16 and 18, 2020, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division discussed the report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF). The Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) reviewed and provided comments (see attached). DIVCO endorsed AEPE's letter.

The STTF's charge was to examine UC's "use of standardized testing for admission and consider whether the University and its students are best served by UC's current testing practices, a modification of current practices, another testing approach, or the elimination of testing." AEPE's letter described, "Their recommendation was that standardized tests should be retained at this time because they provide important information about an applicant, particularly when that information is examined holistically (together with all other data points about the applicant) and contextually (in comparison to scores from the applicant's school and neighborhood)."

#### **Use of tests at Berkeley – Holistic review**

Berkeley utilizes "holistic review," and standardized test scores are considered, along with 13 other criteria. These criteria include grades, choice of classes [e.g., Advanced Placement (AP), honors, regular, and other classes], AP scores, extracurricular activities, work history, essays, and other areas. This information is evaluated in the context of the applicant's high school, and specific knowledge of an applicant's high school is important. For example, if an applicant is completing six AP classes, it is a different context if that high school only offers six AP courses vs. offering 12 AP courses. The applicant maximizes their academic opportunities at the school with six AP courses. The goal is to gain an overall evaluation of the applicants in the context of the opportunities available to them. In addition, inclusion of information from the 14 criteria is valuable for making decisions for students who may come from under-resourced schools. DIVCO discussed the fact that when all methods are flawed, triangulation provides a better understanding of the applicant than using any one or two alone.

DIVCO commends the thoughtful and comprehensive work of the STTF and appreciates AEPE review and comments. The discussion in DIVCO and the committee report highlights areas of concern for the Academic Council's consideration.

### **Costly recommendation**

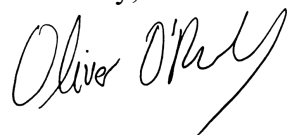
DIVCO considered that the STTF's recommendations includes the elimination of the current standardized test scores over nine years and have an alternative suite of assessments. The report stated that it will cost \$100-150 million to develop a new standardized test. DIVCO is concerned that there is no money to develop the tests and those monies could be targeted toward retention activities.

### **Cultural bias tests**

DIVCO discussed extensively that most standardized tests, not only the SAT, show bias toward groups who have "higher" cultural and social capital. Populations who have been previously exposed to topics presented on standardized tests do better than those who have not been exposed to those topics, and particularly, low-income students and some underrepresented ethnic groups. In addition, individuals from higher income levels may have higher scores since they have the resources to afford test preparation courses.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Oliver O'Reilly  
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Enclosure

cc: Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Vice Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Executive Director, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Ignacio Navarrette, Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE)





320 STEPHENS HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

March 12, 2020

OLIVER O'REILLY  
Chair, Berkeley Division  
Academic Senate

Dear Oliver,

Re: AEPE response to Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) Report

### **Executive Summary**

UC President Napolitano requested a study of the advisability of retaining standardized testing (SAT or ACT) as part of an admissions process. This request was carried out by a specially-formed task force composed of Senate representation and included faculty with research expertise on admissions. Berkeley was represented by Professor of Public Health Darlene Frances, former member of Berkeley's Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) and Chair of the systemwide University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE). Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering George Johnson, former AEPE Chair and former systemwide Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) member also represented Berkeley. BOARS Chair Eddie Comeaux (UCR Education) was a co-chair of the task force.

The Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) met throughout summer and fall of 2019, operating under a very tight deadline. Their recommendation was that standardized tests should be retained at this time because they provide important information about an applicant, particularly when that information is examined holistically (together with all other data points about the applicant) and contextually (in comparison to scores from the applicant's school and neighborhood). The task force recommended that UC develop its own standardized exam, but foresaw it would take nearly a decade for this goal to be fully accomplished. A minority of task force members agreed with the main recommendations but asserted it should be possible to develop the new test in a shorter time frame, such as five years.

AEPE endorses the task force recommendations, as well as those of the minority report. In Berkeley's holistic review process, standardized test scores are evaluated in the context of scores historically presented by applicants from that school to UCB. High test scores in a local context would be a salient feature that can lead application reviewers to pay special attention to an

application. AEPE also supports the recommendation to eliminate the requirement for students to take the SAT with essays.

In addition, we offer our own observations about how standardized test scores have been used at Berkeley, and how Berkeley might continue to improve its admission and enrollment of a more diverse student body.

### **Introduction**

Historically, the original intent of standardized testing was to promote college and university admission of a more diverse student body. Its widespread adoption contributed to changing the population of elite schools, from one dominated by Protestant graduates of New England prep schools, to one that included graduates of public high schools, applicants from other regions of the country, and larger numbers of Jews and Catholics. Standardized tests were designed as tests of potential, “Scholastic Aptitude,” rather than as examinations of mastery of specific forms of knowledge. Because they measured “aptitude” rather than “knowledge,” it was thought that one could not prepare for these tests.

In more recent years, the growth and success of test preparation centers has revealed that such preparation can be an effective way to raise a score, and therefore that there are significant advantages to being able to afford such preparation. Better funded schools and better educational opportunities contribute to a disproportionate compound advantage that is reflected in test scores. Consequently, one can rightly question whether standardized test scores are still serving the equalizing function for which they were designed.

### **Current Use of Testing**

Admission to the UC, and to a particular campus, is a multi-step process, in which standardized tests feature in multiple ways. These steps include determination of the applicant pool, reading of the application, and final selection of admitted applicants.

The Master Plan defines UC eligibility as the top 12.5% of California high school graduates. Today, this standard can be met in one of two overlapping ways. (Applicants must also demonstrate eligibility by meeting other requirements, such as the A-G subject course requirements and depth of study requirements.)

- a) Being in the top 9% of the class at each high school. This is determined by an applicant’s high school record.
- b) Being in the top 9% of a statewide pool of high school seniors. This pool is established by a determination involving high school GPA and standardized test scores.

Naturally, there is a good deal of overlap between these two paths to eligibility. Applicants who meet either of these criteria are deemed “UC eligible” and are also guaranteed admission to the UC, although not necessarily to any particular campus. Students apply to as many campuses as they want, and each campus independently determines whom to admit. UC-eligible applicants not admitted to any UC campus which they specifically applied to, are referred to campuses with additional enrollment capacity, generally UC Merced.

In addition to UC eligible applicants, others may also apply. All students who complete the A-G requirements with at least a C in each and a 3.0 GPA overall are “entitled to review” at any campuses to which they apply. Campuses may also consider applications from additional students. Examples of such applicants include those who did not complete the A-G requirements, attended high schools that don’t use quantifiable grades, were home-schooled, or who have low test scores. These applicants are “entitled to review,” and may be admitted by a UC campus as an “Admission by Exception.” “Admission by Exception” is limited to 6% of each campus, of which 4% can only be used for diversity purposes.

Standardized tests thus play a role in determining UC eligibility, but even an applicant with low scores can apply, is entitled to review, and may be accepted by a UC campus. Scores also play a role in admission to each campus.

- a) Some campuses use “comprehensive review,” in which the test score, along with grades and other criteria, are used in an algorithm to determine admission.
- b) The most competitive campuses, including UCB, UCLA, and UCSD, use “holistic review.” On these campuses, standardized test scores are considered, along with grades, choice of classes (AP classes, honors classes, etc.), scores on AP and other subject-matter exams, extracurricular activities, work history, essays, etc. All this information is evaluated in the context of information about the applicant’s high school. This is why specific knowledge of an applicant’s high school is so important: taking six AP classes, when a high school only offers six, is more significant than taking six when a school offers twelve. The goal is to gain an overall evaluation of the applicants in the context of the opportunities available to them. In Berkeley’s holistic review process, standardized test scores are evaluated in the context of scores historically presented by applicants from that school to UCB. Scores thus play a role in the holistic evaluation, but not as part of a formula; they are one of several information points used in the holistic evaluation process.

### **Task force and AEPE recommendations**

The task force was given a very tight deadline to conduct its study. They have produced a number of recommendations, but notably, they considered, but did not recommend, that the UC stop using standardized test scores at this time. AEPE likewise was given a very short amount of time to consider the task force report and its recommendations. AEPE appreciates the work of the task force, and accepts the recommendations. We note that the task force documents that standardized test scores are not a salient factor that negatively affects diversity on UC campuses; in fact, high test scores in a local context would be a salient feature that can lead application reviewers to pay special attention to an application. We add the following comments:


1. In the area of eligibility, there is a need to open the portals as wide as possible. We endorse the expanded eligibility proposed by the Task Force. We encourage the incorporation of more factors in the determination of UC eligibility. We note that the greatest source of disparity in achieving UC eligibility is failure to complete A-G; while we would not advocate getting rid of A-G, we would urge greater consideration of

students who did not complete this requirement, often through misadvising early in high school. Without lowering the A-G requirement, we would encourage any attempt to improve the quality of pre-college advising in the high schools.

2. In area of admission and selection, we acknowledge that standardized test scores are problematic absent holistic and contextual review. We approve of Berkeley's use of holistic review, a process that has been continuously refined and indeed needs further development. We join the Task Force in encouraging other campuses to do the same. However, those campuses need to be provided with the resources to do so, and indeed Berkeley also needs greater resources, if for example widened criteria for eligibility were to lead to an increase in the number of applications. The ability to provide holistic review of approximately 100,000 applications within a short timeframe is a nearly impossible task.
3. With the Task Force, we do not recommend elimination of standardized testing as a data point in the holistic review process at this time. We are concerned about unforeseen and unintended consequences of the scores being eliminated or made "optional." Under holistic review, standardized test scores are not used in an algorithm, but they do inform us about the applicants. Exam scores are important and are considered, but only as one of many factors. High school students can apply with low scores, and those low scores can be offset by other factors revealed in the application; they do not preclude admission. Test scores are only one among a number of factors considered in holistic review that are useful indicators. They are particularly useful as an additional indicator of which students would be most likely to benefit from targeted orientation and academic support services that will help them attain success at UCB if admitted.

It is important to better communicate to the public and particularly to high school advisers the role that test scores play in admissions decisions. At the same time, test scores have been under question for a long time, and it is not acceptable to keep referring to "unforeseen" consequences. In the wake of this task force report, there needs to be active follow-up research into the consequences of adjustments in the process. Many technical questions, such as the impact of "score choice" (allowing student to choose to have only scores from the best sitting reported by the testing institution) vs. "superscoring," (considering the best scores from each subset of the exam, so that students will choose to have all sittings reported to us), remain unexplored. For these reasons, AEPE endorses the "minority" recommendations.

Sincerely yours,



Ignacio Navarrete

Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education

Enclosure



DAVIS DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502  
(530) 752-2220  
academicsenate.ucdavis.edu

March 24, 2020

**Kum-Kum Bhavnani**  
Chair, Academic Council

**RE:** Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)

Dear Kum-Kum:

The STTF report was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. Seven committees responded: Admissions and Enrollment (A&E), Affirmative Action and Diversity (AA&D), Courses of Instruction (COCI), General Education (GE), Preparatory Education (PE), Undergraduate Council (UGC), and the Faculty Executive Committee of the College of Letters and Science (L&S).

The Davis Division commends the STTF report and thinks its data, rigor, and depth speak for themselves. While there are many components to the report, we emphasize the most urgent point, given upcoming discussions by the Board of Regents: **Use of standardized testing in admissions, insofar as it is used in a contextual, holistic manner alongside other admissions criteria, should continue at this point in time.** We believe it is irresponsible to cease use of standardized tests until and unless replacement assessments are created and operationalized.

In the enclosed responses, our committees have reviewed and analyzed the report extensively. We strongly encourage reading them in their entirety.

We point to two comments from A&E and UGC to summarize the Davis Division's opinion:

"Our committee believes that the University of California should continue to use the SAT/ACT in UC admissions through ongoing use of its holistic review process which considers test scores as one out of fourteen criteria for admission. In keeping with current admissions practice, we endorse the use of test scores and all other admissions criteria through the current approach which evaluates each student's performance *in context*, accounting for each student's environment and opportunity." –A&E

"In summary, if the use of the SAT in admissions were the factor that caused the disparity in student representation on campus, UGC would advocate its immediate elimination. However, since the SAT in the UC system is used in a fashion that emphasizes student context, especially for low-income and first-generation students, the data in the report suggest that other factors are

driving this disparity. In addition, the test could be used as a tool to help channel resources to students who may face the greatest challenges to completing their degree.” –UGC

We also highlight two important comments from UGC and A&E regarding A-G requirements:

“Roughly three-quarters of the missing numbers of underrepresented minorities (URMs) on UC campuses are attributable to the challenges in completing A-G requirements and a lower likelihood of applying to the UC system. We would like to express our hope that any decision regarding use of the SAT will not distract from the urgent need this points to for increased provision of instructional and college counseling resources to underserved populations in California. We hope that the careful, expert work in this report will shine a light on this pressing institutional shortfall materially affecting the prospects of state’s high schoolers.” – UGC

“BOARS should study whether the entire A-G course requirement is comprised of foundational work that is essential to academic preparation at the UC. Since this requirement dramatically reduces the pool of student applicants, BOARS should study whether the A-G course list could be pruned in a way that would improve representation while maintaining academic preparedness.” –A&E

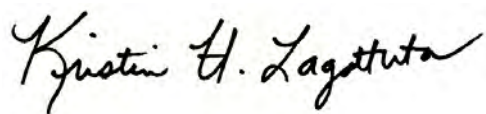
We further emphasize one point discussed by A&E, PE, and UGC: The significant predictive connection between standardized test scores and multiple metrics of student success provides a means for UC to target assistance towards students who most need supportive services, particularly URMs and first-generation students. Such assistance, though, would be “hollow” in PE’s eyes unless it entailed “real, material, financial, and personnel resources at individual campuses,” and unless “steps are taken to achieve equity among the different campuses, which boast widely varying levels of social and economic support.” A&E recommends that standardized test scores be given “strong consideration when access to high-cost transition programs such as STEP is offered to a small subset of entering students.”

A&E is not supportive of STTF recommendation 2, which discusses expanding eligibility in the local context. A&E argues that this approach “effectively increases admissions based on HSGPA. Unless HSGPAs are shown to be less subject to implicit bias than are other measures of student performance, this item will not deliver the desired result.” A&E also believes that expanding ELC could put strain on UC campuses already running at capacity.

Committees expressed mixed support and multiple caveats for Recommendation 6 to create replacement assessment methods for standardized tests. UGC cautions that a “California-specific test may be an undue burden to vulnerable populations, especially if the new test involves a fee or leads to a separate industry of preparation support or tutoring. If a new test is designed, care should be taken to make fees as negligible as possible and preparatory support as widely accessible as possible.” A&E is not supportive of doing the first part of this task on a two-year timeline; it recommends removing the firm timeline such that new assessments can be developed that are truly superior to current options. We summarize our thoughts on Recommendation 6 with UGC’s comment: “Until a carefully designed and robust replacement is found, immediately eliminating use of the test altogether is a matter of concern.”

The Davis Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin H. Lagattuta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristin H. Lagattuta, Ph.D.

Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

Professor, Department of Psychology and Center for Mind and Brain

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

c: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

March 12, 2020

To: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, UC Davis Academic Senate  
Edwin Arevalo, Executive Director, UC Davis Academic Senate

From: Deborah Swenson, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Enrollment

Re: Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

During its meetings on February 11, and March 3, 2020, the Committee on Admissions and Enrollment discussed the SAT task force report and worked to articulate the committee's views on the task force's recommendations. Although the report is extremely long, we appreciated the detailed view it provides on admissions as they are practiced at UC Davis and throughout the UC system. Since the ultimate effects of standardized testing on admissions outcomes depend on admissions practices, this information shapes our group's view of the most appropriate responses.

### **Use of the SAT/ACT in Admissions**

In answer to the core question, our committee believes that the University of California should continue to use the SAT/ACT in UC admissions through ongoing use of its holistic review process which considers test scores as one out of fourteen criteria for admission. In keeping with current admissions practice, we endorse the use of test scores and all other admissions criteria through the current approach which evaluates each student's performance *in context*, accounting for each student's environment and opportunity.

The information in the report provides compelling evidence for the continued use of standardized test scores as part of an admissions process that views students in context. First, although the use of standardized tests may lead to disproportionate representation at other universities which compare students based on their absolute test scores, as is the case for the CSU system, the task force report demonstrates that under-representation at UC is not driven by the use of test scores in admissions. As shown on page 30 (item B1) the task force report concludes that "It is very rare that otherwise qualified students could be blocked from UC based only on test scores". For example, out of the 120,000+ applicants to UC in 2018, only 50 of the rejected students had high grades and low test scores, and these rejections may have been due to other student factors aside from low test scores. More generally, students with strong high school GPAs (HSGPAs) and low test scores were more likely to be admitted to UC than were students with high test scores and low HSGPAs. Since it appears that almost no students are denied admission based on their test scores alone, the use of the SAT/ACT does not appear to be



an important factor that is responsible for disproportionate representation of students, as compared with the demographics of California resident high school seniors.

Further, the task force report demonstrates that test scores provide useful information that may assist UC in selecting students who will flourish as measured by college GPAs, second-year retention and graduation rates. In particular, the report shows that test scores provide enhanced insight into these outcomes, above the information provided by HSGPA alone. Since capacity constraints force the UC to reject large numbers of exceedingly strong students, it is appropriate to make admissions decisions that evaluate each student's strengths from the full range of perspectives, including grades, extracurricular activities, essay responses, and test scores, all in context.

Finally, due to the predictive connection between standardized test scores and student success, the continued use of test scores should be used to target assistance to at-risk students. For example, page 27 of the report illustrates the non-retention rates for first generation students. Alarming, low-SAT first generation UC students face a 10-25% risk of non-retention, despite strong HSGPAs. This suggests that standardized tests scores should be given strong consideration when access to high-cost transition programs such as STEP is offered to a small subset of entering students.

### **Value of the SAT/ACT in other University settings**

If standardized test scores are eliminated as a tool in admissions, this will create complications in each of the following areas.

- Due to differences in grading systems and school curricula, it is difficult to compare California applicants with non-resident students. Standardized tests provide an opportunity for direct comparison.
- Writing placement at UC Davis is conducted through a \$110 entry level writing placement exam. Sufficiently high SAT/ACT scores allow many students to be placed without the exam.
- At many UC campuses, there is a strong opinion that test scores, and math scores in particular, are essential for identify students who are sufficiently strong to succeed in engineering degree programs.
- SAT scores assist in enrollment management since they help predict yield. The importance of matching student enrollments with UC campus capacities - not going under or over target - cannot be overstated.

### **SAT/ACT impact on students**

- Elimination of standardized testing will shift evaluation of student capability to HSGPA and extra-curricular activities. Under-representation will not improve if the elimination of SAT causes readers to place a higher weight on extracurricular activities, and high schools are not uniform in their offerings. Similarly, if teacher grades of their students are subject to unconscious bias, problems with disproportionate representation will not improve. This concern is based on studies which uncover at least unconscious bias revealed by teacher grades related to student race, gender, or attractiveness.

For example: *Racial Discrimination in Grading: Evidence from Brazil* (Fernando Botelho, Ricardo A. Madeira) in *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*: October 2015 vol 7(4): 37-52.

<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.20140352>

- Due to highly competitive nature of UC admissions students need to consider other university options. In order to apply to the CSU system or private and public colleges that are of the same caliber as UC, the SAT is still required. Students will probably continue to take the SAT even if it is dropped by UC. Further, if UC moves to a new test, students will need to prepare for the SAT/ACT and the new test. We also expect that the current test-prep industry will gear up to sell preparatory courses tied to any new test which supports admission to UC.

### **Confronting disproportionate representation**

Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 of the task force report shed light on approaches to tackling disproportionate representation that we endorse, or endorse with slight modification.

#### **Recommendation 3. Further analyze factors contributing to disproportionate representation**

Since the report shows that 40% of under-representation of URM students is due to A-G coursework, and 24.5% of under-representation is due to students not applying to UC, these items appear to be of first-order importance. Real efforts need to be made to improve outreach. For example, by 8<sup>th</sup> grade, UC outreach efforts should ensure that all California students are informed about the high school A-G course pattern they should take to help them gain admission and subsequent academic success at a UC campus.

Further, BOARs should study whether the entire A-G course requirement is comprised of foundational work that is essential to academic preparation at the UC. Since this requirement dramatically reduces the pool of student applicants, BOARs should study whether the A-G course-list could be pruned in a way that would improve representation while maintaining academic preparedness.

Finally, UC should use its clout to push testing companies to universally provide standardized testing to California high school students in their high schools. Currently, the test companies provide two test waivers to low-income students for testing in their Saturday sessions. However, work, travel difficulties, family responsibilities or imposter syndrome may prevent students from signing up for and taking advantage of the Saturday testing option. Many studies, such as those linked below, show that in-school testing leads to the identification of college-eligible students who would not have tested on their own, and increases application to college by these students.

*ACT for All: The Effect of Mandatory College Entrance Exams on Postsecondary Attainment and Choice* (Joshua Hyman) 2017 Education Finance and Policy, Vol 12 (3):281-311. [https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/full/10.1162/EDFP\\_a\\_00206](https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/full/10.1162/EDFP_a_00206)

Many more examples in the New York Times opinion column by educational expert Susan Dynarski, *Simple Way to Help Low-Income Students: Make Everyone Take SAT or ACT*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/14/upshot/how-universal-college-admission-tests-help-low-income-students.html>

#### **Recommendation 4. Study and expand student academic support services**

The task force report reveals a high risk of non-retention for first generation students who had low SAT scores. For this reason the SAT should be retained to identify at-risk students. Since the attrition rate is especially high for low-SAT first generation students, providing academic support services that enable at-risk students to remain at UC could improve representation for under-represented students. The task force also calls for study of the support programs to learn what is working. This could already be implemented, by studying current programs operating at UC Davis and other campuses.

#### **Recommendation 5. Obtain data to perform item-level analysis of current standardized tests**

This requirement seems appropriate. If some types of questions are found to lead to biased evaluation of student capability, this is important information that should be used to make changes in the SAT/ACT, or in the design of a new assessment tool.

## **Refining Admissions**

### **Recommendation 1. Review and update components of statewide eligibility index**

The top 9% of students gain eligibility through the statewide index which is based on HSGPA and performance on the SAT or ACT. Through the use of the tool on the linked page, students can view whether their performance places them in this group.

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/freshman-requirements/california-residents/statewide-guarantee/>

Since this form of eligibility applies to system wide applicants to the UC, we do not have a campus position on this item. Any refinements should be concluded through cooperation of BOARs and UCOP, and informed by the expertise of admissions teams across the system.

## **Reactions and Responses to additional Task Force Recommendations**

Absent additional data and analysis, we are not in support of the final two recommendations.

### **Recommendation 2. Expand Eligibility in the Local Context**

This approach effectively increases admissions based on HSGPA. Unless HSGPAs are shown to be less subject to implicit bias than are other measures of student performance, this item will not deliver the desired result.

Further, an expansion of ELC is complicated given the fact that the UC is already running at capacity. New ELC students can only be accommodated if new funds and capacity are put in place, or if the number of students who gain eligibility through the statewide index is reduced.

- Note: ELC was expanded from top 4% by HS to top 9% by HS in 2012. Although the task force calls for further expansion of ELC and for study of the new expansion in the future, no one has yet studied the impacts of the 2012 expansion. Prior to further ELC expansion, there should be study of the impacts of the 2012 expansion as they relate to student success.
- An expansion of ELC will lead to further mismatch between student expectations and student admissions. ELC does not guarantee that a student will be placed in their preferred campus, preferred major or preferred start term (Fall). Each of these items are facing bottlenecks, which will become more acute if ELC is expanded.

**Recommendation 6. Develop a new assessment that will be continuously accessible to students and that will assess a broader array of student learning and capabilities than any of the currently available tests.**

This recommendation calls for UC to “articulate a set of skills and attributes that 1) can be measured in a uniform and quantitative way, 2) are likely to be predictive of success at UC, and 3) could potentially show smaller disparities than current measures along the lines of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.” Evaluation of math and reading achievement would continue “due to their foundational importance in college and career success.” Following this articulation, a new test would be created to capture the desired items.

Although it is always desirable to refine assessment methods, the call for a new test on a tight time-line is risky. Is it really feasible to articulate the desirable cognitive capabilities in a two year window, and to then quickly embed them in a new tests? In addition, this timeline does not account for the operational aspects related to its implementation, including, messaging out to students and counselors, and determining how to incorporate the never before used test scores into admissions decisions that yield the best-qualified students, and campus enrollment targets.

If this recommendation is supported, the firm timeline should be removed. Until a new test is developed that is superior to current options, it is risky to demand a shift to a new assessment tool by a specific date.

TO: Academic Senate Chair Lagattuta

RE: Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

The Affirmative Action and Diversity Committee (AA&D) has reviewed the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force. It is clear that the whole system is moving toward elimination of these requirements and most of the data available supports this notion. The report presents sensible reasons for moving cautiously to ensure that a better replacement to the current admissions system is in place before the final change takes place. We need to avoid inadvertently creating a worse system than what we have right now. The committee believes that international student admissions should also be considered in this change in policy.

# **Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force**

## **Courses of Instruction Committee Response**

**March 13, 2020**

The Committee on Courses of Instruction has discussed the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force. While beyond the strict purview of this committee, we wanted to indicate support for the task force's recommendations, including the continued use of standardized tests as long as those tests are effectively in a comprehensive review process that serves to admit a diverse pool. We would draw attention to the statement on page 5 that “The Task Force did not find evidence that UC’s use of test scores played a major role in worsening the effects of disparities already present among applicants and did find evidence that UC’s admissions process helped to make up for the potential adverse effect of score differences between groups,” as well as the statement on page 34 that “the SAT allows many disadvantaged students to gain guarantees of admission to UC.”

To: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

From: A. Katie Stirling-Harris, Chair, General Education Committee

Date: March 10, 2020

Re: General Education Committee (GEC) response to the Request for Consultation: Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)

The GEC has discussed the report of the STTF, and has concluded that this issue lies outside the purview of the GEC.

That said, the committee members observed that standardized testing is inherently deeply biased and its use fits poorly with the University of California's role as a public university dedicated teaching and serving all Californians. Some observed that making the tests optional will only work to the advantage of the affluent; others urged greater attention to contextualizing high school GPAs (the expansion of Eligibility in Local Context). More generally, the committee enthusiastically agreed with the additional statement submitted by six members of the STTF who called for greater speed in ending the use of standardized testing and for the consideration of other criteria in admissions.



Date: March 17, 2020

To: Kristin H. Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

Re: RFC “Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force”

The Preparatory Education Committee has considered the report of the Standardized Testing Task Force and broadly admires its methodologies and conclusions. With gratitude to the commissioning of the report and the work that was required in order to see it completed, the Committee did have some conflicting opinions about particular recommendation.

Some members expressed concern about Recommendation #6 based on the questionable assumption that developing the proposed test would be expensive and difficult to assess as to its superiority to the existing standardized tests. Other members felt that the expertise of the report’s authors was reason for faith in the possibility of developing a superior test that helped achieve the goals that we all share: a student population at the University of California that not only mirrors the population of our state, but serves as an engine of intellectual, economic, and social opportunities for those who have long been marginalized and structurally barred from those opportunities.

The committee also unanimously highlighted recommendation #4 as worthy of support, but hollow unless “support” entailed real, material, financial and personnel resources at individual campuses was provided; furthermore, that steps are taken to achieve equity among the different campuses, which boast widely varying levels of social and economic support.

To: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

From: Katheryn N. Russ, Chair, Undergraduate Council

Date: March 19, 2020

Re: Undergraduate Council (UGC) response to the Request for Consultation: Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) has discussed the request for consultation on the Review of the Standardized Testing Task Force. We recognize this as the purview of the Committee on Admissions and Enrollment rather than UGC, but offer the following thoughts in case useful.

UGC noted that roughly three-quarters of the missing numbers of underrepresented minorities (URMs) on UC campuses are attributable to challenges in completing A-G requirements and a lower likelihood of applying to the UC system. We would like to express our hope that any decision regarding use of the SAT will not distract from the urgent need this points to for increased provision of instructional and college counseling resources to underserved populations in California. We hope that the careful, expert work in this report will shine a light on this pressing institutional shortfall materially affecting the prospects of state's high schoolers.

UGC came away from the reading and discussion of the report with the following key thoughts:

1. The report's findings that the SAT is predictive of student performance upon matriculation suggests that it could be used as a tool to better channel resources to support student success, especially for URMs.
  - Why? The data demonstrate that URM students' performance on the SAT is predictive of college persistence.
  - These persistence problems may not be due to academic ability, but rather confounding factors related to poverty and other vulnerabilities—vulnerabilities for which we, as a university, could be providing more campus-level supports to retain students.
  - UGC is aware of a Community of Practice on campus investigating how best to address these issues and also would like to highlight a shortage of resources for programs like UC Davis Special Transitional Enrichment Program (STEP), for which 4,700 students are eligible annually but only about 200 are supported.
2. The holistic admissions review process largely offsets adverse impacts of SAT performance on admission of URMs at UC Davis. Uneven use of holistic review across UC campuses may make the SAT issue more salient elsewhere.
3. Expansion of Eligibility in the Local Context could offset adverse impact on admission of URMs even further.
4. The SAT is more informative of student performance upon matriculation than high school GPA and therefore has some value as one limited tool within the broader holistic admissions review process. This tool would be difficult to replace right away, making immediate elimination of its use a matter of concern.

- There are genuine barriers to simply removing scores from consideration without an alternative means of judging applications.
- There is some question as to whether eliminating use of the SAT without a replacement mechanism could result in fewer, not more, students from underrepresented groups.

UGC supports efforts to create and test a replacement exam to aid in admissions recognizing this may take time and substantial resources. However, the Senate also should consider whether having to take a California-specific test may be an undue burden to vulnerable populations, especially if the new test involves a fee or leads to a separate industry of preparation support or tutoring. If a new test is designed, care should be taken to make fees as negligible as possible and preparatory support as widely accessible as possible. Some expressed skepticism as to whether a new test could be found that would not perform similarly to the SAT/ACT, insofar as these tests are picking up the resource issues at the high-school level mentioned above. Until a carefully designed and robust replacement is found, immediately eliminating use of the test altogether is a matter of concern.

In summary, if the use of the SAT in admissions were the factor that caused the disparity in student representation on campus, UGC would advocate its immediate elimination. However, since the SAT in the UC system is used in a fashion that emphasizes student context, especially for low-income and first-generation students, the data in the report suggest that other factors are driving this disparity. In addition, the test could be used as a tool to help channel resources to students who may face the greatest challenges to completing their degree.

# **Review of the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force**

## **FEC: College of Letters and Science Committee Response**

**March 13, 2020**

The UC Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) has performed a very careful and detailed study of data on admissions and student success by various demographic groups.

The study finds that 75% of the gap in admission rates for URM students is due to factors that precede consideration for admission, most notably failure to take all required A-G courses (page 5 and figure 3C-7 page 48).

For students applying for admission the SAT and HSGPA are substantially lower on average for less advantaged groups (page 38). The comprehensive review process adjusts substantially for lower SAT scores, leading to significantly higher rates of admission for less advantaged demographic groups for any given test score (page 4, page 79). For example, first generation students with SAT scores in the 1000-1300 range have an admit rate twenty percentage points higher than that of non-first generation students (Figure 3C-1 on page 39). The corresponding boost to HSGPA scores is much less (Figure 3C-2 on page 39).

The SAT score is informative in predicting student success (first year GPA, retention and completion), and for less advantaged groups (low income, first generation and URM) the SAT score is more informative than HSGPA (page 5 and figures 3A-3 to 3A-5 pages 36-38).

Nonetheless there are concerns about using the SAT (pages 63-77) and a desire to do more to increase enrollment of less advantaged groups, especially given the changing demographics of California.

The STTF made six consensus recommendations aimed towards increasing enrollment of less advantaged students at UC. The STTF was unable to make a consensus recommendation of whether or not to drop the SAT, but did recommend against making standardized tests optional.

Upon reading the report, the L&S FEC's unanimous view is that use of the SAT, along with the comprehensive review process that makes adjustment for student background, should be maintained. The SAT is informative and more data is better. A reliance on HSGPA alone would be problematic. UC admits few students with HSGPA less than 3.5 and as a result the comprehensive review makes less adjustment to HSGPA than to SAT for less advantaged groups (figures 3C-10 and 3C-11 pages 53-54). Furthermore HSGPA is not perfect as it varies considerably across schools and over time there is grade inflation (pages 53-57).

March 20, 2020

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Council Chair  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**Re: Systemwide Review of Standardized Testing Task Force Report**

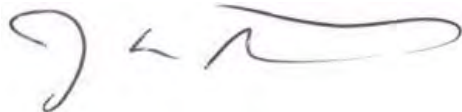
At its March 17, 2020 meeting, the Irvine Division Senate Cabinet reviewed the Standardized Testing Task Force Report. Irvine's Council on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools, Council on Educational Policy, and Council on Equity and Inclusion had also reviewed the report.

The Cabinet was not able to reach a consensus on the report's overall recommendation to retain the SAT/ACT as an admissions requirement until a systemwide alternative could be created. However, members agreed that if the UC continues to require standardized tests in undergraduate admissions, then:

- The SAT and ACT should be offered free to California resident students, for example, through their high schools;
- SAT/ACT scores should not be used for awarding scholarships;
- The timeline for a replacement standardized test should be accelerated.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



James Steintrager, Chair  
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

C: Jeff Barrett, Chair Elect, Academic Senate, Irvine Division  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Academic Senate  
Gina Anzivino, Assistant Director, Academic Senate, Irvine Division  
Brandon Haskey-Valerius, Cabinet Analyst, Academic Senate, Irvine Division



March 23, 2020

Kum-Kum Bhavnani  
Systemwide Academic Senate Chair

Re: Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force

Dear Chair Bhavnani,

The Divisional Executive Board met on March 5, 2020 and had an extensive and thoughtful discussion of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force.

First, the Board would like to express its deep appreciation to the Task Force for its deeply considered and transparently reasoned report. Many of the Board were surprised at some of the conclusions and the data presented. But they recognized the careful scholarship and thinking that underlay the report and the remarkable amassing and analysis of the data. They were also impressed that the Task Force forthrightly noted and explored the *ethical* questions that might allow the same analysis to lead to different *policy* conclusions.

Second, the Board was persuaded by the Task Force's conclusion that within the context of comprehensive review the use of standardized testing did not necessarily act in a discriminatory fashion and that it could, *within* different socio-economic groups serve a useful predictive function. It therefore supports the Task Force's recommendation that its use be continued within comprehensive review. But it notes that this conclusion requires that all campuses practice comprehensive review in order to ensure that it does not function in a discriminatory way.

Third, we support the recommendation to expand Eligibility in the Local Context. Disparities in wealth and other socio-economic categories have led to increasing funding disparities across the K-12 system. These inequalities, in turn, have affected both the support and the educational offerings offered to students. Expanding Eligibility in Local Context seems to us to be an important way to offset at least some of those disparities.

We do, however, agree with the minority on the Task Force that waiting nine years or more to find a more suitable way to provide statewide assessment is too long a period. We would recommend that the Academic Senate urge that an alternative assessment that provides predictive power in a less potentially discriminatory way be deployed as quickly as possible and within the next several years. We also recognize the limits placed on the analysis because it was limited only to the population of admitted and enrolled students.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to opine on this issue. As is the divisional practice, we have appended all of the committee responses we received prior to the deadline to submit our response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Meranze', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Meranze  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl. Committee responses

Cc: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Joseph Bristow, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate  
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate  
Mary Gauvain, Vice Chair, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Shane White, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate

March 9, 2020

Professor Michael Meranze  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Final Review of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)

Dear Chair Meranze,

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reviewed the STTF Report via email and at its March 9 meeting. We are impressed with the depth of investigation and recommendations of the STTF. CODEI notes that no reference has been made to the 2001 UCOP study on the related topic, where it is noted that "After controlling for socioeconomic factors, the predictive power of the SAT II is undiminished, while the relationship between the SAT I and UC freshman grades virtually disappears." CODEI notes that SAT is already optional since students can take the ACT instead of the SAT. CODEI notes that some of the data do not seem to corroborate some of the recommendations. The research population sampling focuses on admitted students and they form the only statistical group considered, as opposed to those who were not admitted into the system. CODEI notes that had a comparison between the two groups been made one would be able to access in more detail the impact SATs have in diversifying our recruitment efforts.

On the other hand, the increased reliance on grades alone might favor students from a privileged background, and therefore CODEI recommends that any decision about discontinuing SATs take into consideration that the holistic use of SAT scores will benefit diversity and recruitment. CODEI notes that it seems premature to remove SATs in the absence of a different evaluation tool. CODEI believes that further reassessment of the issue should be done before the proposed 9 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me at [passos@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:passos@humnet.ucla.edu) or the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion analyst, Annie Speights at [aspeights@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:aspeights@senate.ucla.edu) or ext. 53853.

Sincerely,



José Luiz Passos  
Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

cc: Members of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Annie Speights, Committee Analyst, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



# **UCLA** Academic Senate

## Committee on Teaching

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March 9, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

Re: **Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Teaching discussed the Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) at its meeting on March 5, 2020. The committee discussed the implications of the report and, overall, was supportive of the STTF's recommendations.

Some committee members were encouraged by the finding that UC admissions takes into account students' contexts when evaluating test scores, resulting in applicants from less advantaged demographics being admitted at higher rates for a given test score. While acknowledging that this, by no means, is sufficient to create a truly equitable chance for all Californians to gain admittance to UC, it shows that UC's holistic admissions process is on the right track given the system within which it is working.

The committee understood the STTF's reasons for retaining standardized testing, particularly given the reduction in the correlation between high school GPA and the analyzed metrics of undergraduate success. However, the committee noted the inherent inequality of using standardized testing, which primarily caters to a historically advantaged demographic. Members were enthusiastic about the third and fourth recommendations, which appear to recognize the underlying problem. The committee encourages further analysis to identify factors that underly the admissions opportunity gap and that may be objectively accounted for in the admissions processes as well as implementing services that can help students from all demographics thrive at UC.

One member wondered whether the second recommendation would help or hinder the opportunity gap. As the report notes, 75% of the opportunity gap arises from factors roots in systemic racial and class inequalities, which includes lower high school graduation rates and lower rates of completion of the A-G courses required by UC. While expanding the ELC pathway is likely to help students in schools serving underrepresented communities, it does not address the bigger issue and may proportionally benefit those who do not need it.

Overall, the committee was pleased that UC is addressing this issue and that the STTF report is an appropriate first step. The committee hopes that alternative methods are examined in depth and that a more balanced admissions process may be identified.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jbisley@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:jbisley@mednet.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bisley", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James Bisley, Chair  
Committee on Teaching

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate, Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Academic Senate, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Teaching

# **UCLA** Academic Senate

Committee on International Education

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March 5, 2020,

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Jesse Clark, Chair  
Committee on International Education

**Re: Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardize Testing Taskforce**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on International Education (CIE), discussed the Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardize Testing Taskforce, during its meeting on February 26, 2020. The committee agrees that the report did not provide enough details on the methods admission officers use to evaluate and make admission decisions. The committee agrees that additional research and studies need to be conducted to design a better, less bias test. The committee also felt it important to have another measure to evaluate for admission besides quantitative analyses. Overall there is a concern that those who have more resources will do well on the exam, providing an advantage to those who are privileged. The committee felt strongly that everyone should have the same opportunities and resources available to prepare for such exams. The committee is most interested in seeing how well international students do on standardize testing, specifically in what subjects, in comparison to domestic students. The committee does not agree that the test should be optional.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jlclark@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:jlclark@mednet.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on International Education

# **UCLA** Academic Senate

Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

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February 25, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Lynn Vavreck, Chair  
Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics

**Re: Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardize Testing Taskforce**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics (IAC), discussed the Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardize Testing Taskforce, during its meeting on February 25, 2020. The committee agrees that making the test optional deserves more in depth research and studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [lvavreck@polisci.ucla.edu](mailto:lvavreck@polisci.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzanakay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzanakay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics

# **UCLA Academic Senate**

Committee on Library & Scholarly Communication

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March 5, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Derjung “Mimi” Tarn, Chair  
Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication

**Re: Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Taskforce**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) discussed the Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Taskforce during its meeting on March 2, 2020.

The committee commends the Task Force for their thoroughness, as the report addressed all of the issues raised by committee members. The committee agrees with the recommendations outlined by the Standardized Testing Taskforce and strongly supports the goals of diversifying the student population and enhancing access.

Discussion focused on the need for additional research and studies to design better, less biased standardized tests. Committee members expressed concern about differential access to test preparation resources due to the costs of tutoring, and suggested that the University might consider taking a proactive role to address this issue by offering free test preparation for students. Making the test optional also deserves more in-depth research and studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [dtarn@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:dtarn@mednet.ucla.edu) or the Committee’s analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication

March 4, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

**RE: Systemwide Review Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Chair Meranze,

At our February meeting, the members of CUARS had the opportunity to discuss the STTF report. As policies related to undergraduate admissions are the purview of CUARS, our committee has closely followed issues around standardized testing and the work of the STTF. The committee agreed with the key recommendations of the report:

- To keep the SAT/ACT as one part of holistic review while more predictive and potentially less biased standardized measures are developed.
- And to increase the percentage of students who are admitted to the UC system through their eligibility in their local high school context.

The ability of the SAT/ACT to predict student success was a major focus of the report. Clearly, if SAT/ACT scores were not related to student success, there would be no justification for their use. However, data presented in the report did show clear predictive validity for the SAT/ACT, even when controlling for demographic factors. Indeed, SAT/ACT scores are most predictive for students from under-resourced backgrounds. Indeed, this finding suggests that test scores are one means to identify exceptionally promising students from these backgrounds who did not have the opportunity to take advanced coursework or engage extensively in extracurricular. A particularly persuasive finding of the report is that eliminating the SAT/ACT would not lead to a greater diversification of students in the UC. This is likely because these scores are currently interpreted in their “local context”, which helps mitigate the effects of reduced educational opportunities.

That being said, the committee noted that the amount of variance explained by test scores is fairly modest. Thus, we strongly support the holistic review model in which test scores are one small part of the evaluation of an application. The committee also discussed how historically the use of standardized tests resulted in barriers in accessing higher education for underrepresented groups due to biases in test construction. Because of this legacy, the committee strongly supports the current practice of using the interpretation of scores in the student’s school and neighborhood context rather than raw scores. The availability of fine-grained demographic data, such as that provided by the College Board Landscape

tool, is critical for the fair evaluation of applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and available resources.

Finally, while we support the recommendations given in the STTF report, the committee also suggested that further work should be done to develop a set of best practices across the UC campuses for using local context information in interpreting academic performance. The committee also suggested the UC should lobby for more fee waiver programs and no cost test preparation to help reduce barriers caused by economic disadvantage

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report, which I hope will be helpful when the report is discussed at the upcoming UC Academic Council Meeting. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [knowlton@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:knowlton@psych.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Sincerely,



Barbara Knowlton, Chair  
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions & Relations with Schools

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions & Relations with Schools



March 6, 2020

Senate Chair Michael Meranze  
Cc:Valeria Dimas, Andrea Davis

Re: Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

**Dear Senate Chair Meranze,**

The School of Theater Film & Television Faculty Executive Committee met on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 to discuss the Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay.

FEC Committee members noted that in their experience with the TFT undergraduate admissions process, the only essays seen were those included with the general UC application. The ACT/SAT essays seem superfluous to the admissions process, at least at TFT. It was also noted that the financial burden of this test and the inconclusive results of a timed writing exercise are also sound reasons to eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay.

Finally, the TFT FEC agrees that further research into eliminating standardized testing altogether is warranted, as is further consideration into expanding guaranteed UC admission to local students from the current top 9% to the top 12%.

The TFT FEC supports this BOARS recommendation unanimously.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Ed Araiza".

**Professor J. Ed Araiza,**  
Chair, FEC  
UCLA School of TFT  
310-825-6723



February 29, 2020

Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: Systemwide Senate Review of the Standardized Testing Task Force**

Dear Professor Meranze,

At its February 24, 2020 meeting, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the Standardized Testing Task Force Report.

Members unanimously agreed that the report was very exhaustive and well-researched and commend the Task Force for such a thorough job. After a relatively long discussion, members agreed that the report makes a strong case for keeping standardized testing and were generally supportive of that decision.

The members agreed that the system of comprehensive review provides flexibility for campuses to strike a balance between weights on standardized test scores, GPAs, and other components of admission, that best suits that particular needs of that campus.

It was also noted that students who transfer from community colleges are not required to submit a standardized test score, providing an opportunity for students who do poorly and also fail to gain admission through the ELC pathway.

The Task Force's second recommendation: "Expand the ELC pathway, which admits students in the top 9% of each school based on HSGPA alone, to admit more than the top 9%, so as to increase access and representation, while leaving the statewide index formula unchanged." raised some concern among members. The UC system has experienced enormous growth in enrollment in recent years and campuses are struggling to manage the larger numbers of students. While the members were sympathetic with regard to increasing access and with the Task Force's comment that, "...allowing growth in the undergraduate population... from expanding ELC would send a signal to Californians about the high value that UC places on becoming more representative of the state over time." They thought it

would be wise to move cautiously with regard to increasing further the size of the student body so as to make sure that students who are admitted are not shortchanged.

With regard to the question of whether the requirement for students to take the essay exam ought to be retained, the Council agreed with the assessment that the additional test was not needed, given the essay component of the application itself. However, the student representatives on our committee felt strongly that the essay portion should be retained, arguing that it provided an additional method for students to distinguish themselves. After some discussion, it was decided that providing an option to submit the essay exam would be the fairest outcome—letting those students who believe they would be helped by the inclusion, take advantage of the opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the report. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at [mcgarry@ucla.edu](mailto:mcgarry@ucla.edu) or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at [efeller@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:efeller@senate.ucla.edu) or x62470.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen McGarry".

Kathleen McGarry, Chair  
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Joseph Bristow, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate  
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate  
Elizabeth Feller, Analyst, Council on Planning and Budget  
Shane White, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate  
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget

3125 Murphy Hall  
410 Charles E. Young Drive East  
Los Angeles, California 90095

February 27, 2020

To: Michael Meranze  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Adriana Galván  
Chair, Undergraduate Council

**Re: Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force**

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Dear Chair Meranze,

The Undergraduate Council reviewed and discussed the Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force at its meeting on February 14, 2020. Council members expressed general support for the Task Force's recommendations, and offered the following comments and questions for further consideration.

Like the members of the Task Force, Council members were surprised to see data that found the SAT to be more predictive of student outcomes than expected, as well as data that found that the SAT's predictive power has increased over time. Members wondered how UC's data compare to those of non-UC schools.

Acknowledging that SAT scores are strongly correlated with a student's access to resources—such as test prep courses by Kaplan and Princeton Review, and private tutors—members discussed ways for UCLA to invest in and scale existing efforts to even the playing field for potential applicants and build the college pipeline. For example, the Los Angeles Mentorship Program (LAMP) sends UCLA students to University High School Charter (part of LAUSD) to provide students with SAT and ACT test preparation. Might the campus support the creation of online versions of these test prep courses, to increase access to these resources?

That said, such an approach operates within the existing system, instead of seeking to alter it. To that end, members support Recommendation #4 ("Study and expand student academic support services"), which suggests that UC "find ways to improve undergraduate outcomes, especially for those who enter UC with lower SAT scores and HSGPAs," which "could lessen the predictive power of admissions test and grades by virtue of improving outcomes for at-risk students" (p. 105). We know that going to UCLA can have a profound effect on the life trajectories of students, their families, and their communities. So, put another way, members wondered: Do we want to admit students who we know can succeed at UCLA under our current system—or do we want to change our current system so that we can bring in "at-risk students" and help them succeed here?

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment.

3125 Murphy Hall  
410 Charles E. Young Drive East  
Los Angeles, California 90095

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AG', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Adriana Galván  
Chair, Undergraduate Council

cc: Lené Levy-Storms, Vice Chair, Undergraduate Council  
Aileen Liu, Committee Analyst, Undergraduate Council



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
TOM HANSFORD, CHAIR  
[senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
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**MARCH 23, 2020**

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL'S STANDARDIZED TESTING TASK FORCE  
(STTF) AND ADDITIONAL STATEMENT**

Dear Chair Bhavnani:

The [Report and Recommendations of the Standardized Testing Task Force](#) and the Task Force's [additional statement](#) regarding the role of standardized testing in admissions to the UC system were distributed for comment to the standing Senate Committees and the School Executive Committees of the UC Merced Division.

Members of the Merced Divisional Council applaud members of the Task Force for their efforts and for the thoroughness of their report and recommendations. At its March 18, 2020 meeting, the Divisional Council discussed committee comments and unanimously endorsed the STTF report and recommendations.

Appended to this memo, you will find thoughtful and comprehensive comments from the Undergraduate Council (UGC) and its Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee, the Committee for Diversity and Equity (D&E), and the School of Natural Sciences Executive Committee (SNSEC).

The Merced Division thanks you for the opportunity to opine on this complex and very important report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tom Hansford".

Tom Hansford  
Chair, UCM Divisional Council

CC: Divisional Council  
SNS Executive Committee Chair Mitchell  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Fatima Paul, Interim Executive Director, Merced Senate Office

Encl (3)



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
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MERCED, CA 95343  
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**March 9, 2020**

**To: Tom Hansford, Chair, Divisional Council**

**From: Undergraduate Council (UGC)  
Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee of UGC (AFAS)**

**Re: [Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force](#)**

Members of UGC and AFAS have reviewed the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF). The report is thorough and addresses a complex topic, not standardized testing per se, but the role of standardized testing in admissions to the UC system. The distinction between these two is important and is discussed throughout the document.

Although UC uses SAT/ACT scores in admissions, it is well-recognized that these scores are inherently flawed; as a result, they are generally incorporated into the UC admissions process with comparatively small influence relative to other factors, and always placed into a broader context. (For more context on the role of standardized testing in UC admissions, see Section II, pages 14-16.) As stated in the Executive Summary on page 5 of the report:

*“UC weights test scores less strongly than GPA, and comprehensive review appears to help compensate for group differences in test scores...The Task Force did not find evidence that UC’s use of test scores played a major role in worsening the effects of disparities already present among applicants and did find evidence that UC’s admissions process helped to make up for the potential adverse effect of score differences between groups.”*

Taking a step back, college admissions are a complex and emotionally-charged topic, yet many arguments and assumptions about admissions—and especially standardized testing—are often over-simplified. The STTF report is not simple, providing comprehensive analyses of admissions and UC outcomes data in Section III. It is also notable that the STTF itself is made up faculty and grad students who are deeply informed on this topic (roster on page 117 of the report). But it is equally clear that there are tensions within the document itself (e.g., between sections III and IV), and these tensions almost certainly derive from the inherent complexity of the issue. As noted throughout the report, even seemingly small modifications in UC admissions policy can have large ripple effects on the UC system, California K-12 system, and beyond.

In this context, the STTF report provides multiple counter-intuitive results based on the statistical analyses in Section III. Many of the main findings are provided in the Executive Summary. Importantly, the data show that SAT/ACT scores currently appear to be more predictive of college success than high school grades—which may stem in part from grade inflation at wealthier high schools (analysis provided on pages 56-59). Due to UC’s approach to analyzing the SAT/ACT in admissions, SAT/ACT scores also appear to be better predictors of outcomes for underrepresented groups than for majority groups (pages 24-29). Perhaps most significantly, use of SAT/ACT scores does not appear to increase disparities in admissions. As noted in the document on pages 41-42:

*“STTF was concerned that UC might be using the SAT in ways that disparately affects particular racial/ethnic groups. STTF regarded this as a plausible and sensible claim that an intelligent layperson concerned about*

*diversity would be likely to make. In the absence of persuasive evidence that this did not happen, the STTF was prepared to recommend significant restrictions to UC's use of tests. Indeed, elsewhere in this document the Task Force has marshalled the main arguments for dropping admissions tests, and that section writes stirringly about differences by group in SAT scores such as those shown in **Table 3C-3**, which many consider to be evidence that the SAT has a disparate impact on admissions by racial and socioeconomic groups.*

*We did not find evidence that UC's use of test scores worsened disparities that are already present among applicants."*

However, it should be noted that these data are relatively limited in time, and that the four college success factors that are regularly used in the report (retention to second year, first year GPA, graduation, and GPA at graduation) in college are not comprehensive (as clearly acknowledged in the report on page 19). These factors are not necessarily fixed outcomes, either, and recommendation 4 of the STTF is to improve student support services to improve college success throughout the system. Finally, most of these data are presented at the level of the system as a whole, and we should be cognizant of UC Merced's unique role within the system.

The data analysis section (III) makes a strong case for **not** removing the SAT/ACT requirement at this time, as it could have multiple unintended consequences. However, Section IV builds a strong case for the eventual removal of these scores—as the University of Chicago and other universities have done—and their replacement with another form of assessment. The core of this argument (as noted in the Executive Summary) is that the very fact that test scores are effectively 'compensated for' in UC admissions confirms that they are flawed. This is the underlying reasoning—with significant additional support provided throughout the document, and particularly in Section IV—for recommendation 6, that the UC develop a new form of assessment to replace the SAT/ACT.

Before considering this recommendation, it is important to note that recommendations 1-4 could have a strong positive influence on applications, admissions, and student success based on the analyses reported here, as well as on the successful previous implementation of ELC (Eligibility in the Local Context). Recommendations 1 and 3 would require additional analyses and discussion. With respect to Recommendation 3, the report notes that UC minimum admissions requirements (specifically graduating from high school and completing required a-g courses) have a large effect on reducing applicant diversity (pages 47-54). This clearly merits additional study. Recommendation 2 would expand ELC. ELC has been studied extensively by BOARS and has clearly improved access to the UC system. Recommendation 4 would expand student support and is discussed above. UGC supports recommendations 1-3 and particularly recommendation 4, where UC Merced could be a leader. It seems that one potential implication of increased student support would be to weaken the relationship between SAT/ACT and the four metrics of college success.

UGC also supports recommendation 6 (and related recommendation 5). On a fundamental level, the fact that the UC currently effectively employs test scores in admissions does not excuse their flaws. This is also a moving target: the tests themselves change and the relative influence of GPA appears to have changed over time—and this could very well change again. (The statistical work conducted here is largely observational based on current data, and does not consider potential future scenarios in a predictive modeling framework.) On a practical level (and as noted in the report on pages 12-13), forced removal of SAT/ACT scores from admissions, without anything to replace them, could be a very difficult situation to navigate.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this report.

Cc: UGC  
AFAS  
Senate Office



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
COMMITTEE FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

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5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
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**March 5, 2020**

**To: Tom Hansford, Senate Chair**

**From: Committee for Diversity and Equity (D&E)**

**Re: The Report and Recommendations of the UC Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force**

The Committee for Diversity and Equity (D&E) has reviewed the Report and Recommendations of the UC Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF), and has the following comments.

1. The elimination of SAT/ACT would adversely affect historically underrepresented student populations. This is because the removal of SAT/ACT requirement would lead to higher weights being placed on high school GPA in the admission process. Given that more AP courses are offered at more affluent schools, students at less affluent schools will be at a disadvantage. In addition, high schools will be under increased pressure to raise students' GPAs, potentially resulting in a worsening of the grade inflation problem.
2. D&E agrees with the STTF's position that a complete elimination of the SAT/ACT, without the availability of an alternative assessment system, is not the best option. The holistic approach in the admission process, which is currently in place, has proven adequate in mitigating the negative impacts of the standardized tests.
3. Some members of the STTF argued that the 96-months timeline for developing a new test proposed by STTF is too long, and diminishes the sense of urgency that this issue deserves. However, it is not clear whether the University would be able to develop an assessment system that is an improvement over SAT/ACT in a shorter period of time.

The Committee for Diversity and Equity appreciates the opportunity to opine.

cc: D&E Members  
Fatima Paul, Interim Executive Director, Senate Office  
Senate Office





SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 N. LAKE ROAD BLDG A  
MERCED, CA 95343

March 6, 2020

To: Tom Hansford, Chair, Merced Division of the Academic Senate

From: Kevin Mitchell, Chair, Natural Sciences Executive Committee

Re: Systemwide Senate Review – Report and Recommendations Standardized Testing Task Force

The SNS Executive Committee has reviewed the report and recommendations of the Standardized Testing Task Force. This appears to be a thorough review of UC's current practice of using standardized tests (SAT/ACT) in undergraduate admissions. We agree with the continued use of these tests at present, and we support the recommendations of the task force for further review and refinement of the admissions processes to improve the equal representation of all California students in the UC system.



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE  
RIVERSIDE DIVISION  
UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING, RM 225

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March 20, 2020

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair, Academic Council  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**RE: (Systemwide Senate Review) Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force**

Dear Kum-Kum:

I'm happy to provide the UCR Division's consultative response to the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force. The full standing committee responses are attached. UCR's Senate Executive Council discussed the Report at its regular meeting of March 9, 2020. One member suggested that while standardized testing is clearly a flawed method for admissions, any replacement will likely introduce new and possibly unanticipated problems. Executive Council generally agreed that if the use of testing were to be eliminated or significantly changed, UCOP is obligated to support campuses in building a sufficient instructional, tutoring, and mentoring infrastructure to ensure the success of all students. It is worth stressing that the UCR Division deeply appreciates and commends the Task Force for producing such a rigorously detailed, thoughtful, analytically focused, and methodologically sound report. It is an exemplary document with systemwide and national implications.

Standing Committees supported the Report's overall conclusions and stressed various points made throughout the text. Multiple committees strongly endorsed the Task Force's recommendation to further study and strengthen student academic support services throughout the system—this recommendation has particular importance for the UCR campus, where the broadest range of students tend to succeed and thrive when properly supported by the academic services infrastructure. Importantly, the Committee on Educational Policy and School of Medicine Executive Committee affirm that it is crucial to be mindful of any (unintentional) adverse effects that elimination of standardized testing may have on the diversity of the pool of admitted UC students.

We appreciate the work of the Task Force and expect that these supportive review comments will be taken into account as the UC system further considers the place of standardized testing in the admissions process.

Peace  
dylan

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dylan Rodríguez".

Dylan Rodríguez  
Professor of Media & Cultural Studies and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director of the Academic Senate  
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office



March 2, 2020

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Sheldon Tan, Chair  
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheldon T".

Re: Systemwide Standardized Testing Taskforce Report

The Committee on Undergraduate admissions reviewed the Standardized Testing Taskforce's Report at their February 21, 2020 meeting and had an intensive discussion on the different aspects of the report. The Committee agreed in principle with the report's conclusions and recommendations based on the comprehensive admission data and correlation analysis from the report. Some members mentioned that the report's conclusion should be considered in the context of holistic review and for UC campuses that use holistic review as part of their admissions process. The Committee found the admission data and analysis included in the report from UCR insightful and valuable for continued discussions to improve UCR's admissions process.

March 2, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Louis Santiago, Chair, Executive Committee  
College of Natural and Agricultural Science



Re: Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

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The CNAS Executive Committee discussed the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force. The committee agreed that if these tests were eliminated, it would put more emphasis on the high school grade point average (HSGPA), which is not standardized and more dependent on uncontrollable factors. The committee noted that we do not do the Comprehensive Review at UCR, so the use of standardized tests in admissions is relatively more important here. The committee also noted that the regressions for using SAT scores to predict performance had r-squared values of around 0.2, which is not predictive, and indicates that only around 20% of the variance is accounted for, so we wondered what other factors contribute.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

March 3, 2020

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Lucille Chia, Chair *Lucille Chia*  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)


The CHASS Executive Committee discussed the Report Review: Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force at the regular meeting on February 26, 2020. The CHASS Executive Committee has no specific comments on the STTF report itself, but members note that in addition to this report, student success should take into account:

- available resources on an individual campus to support students' academic and their other needs;
- that as the number of transfer students increase in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the student body, we need a similarly detailed examination of their admissions criteria and how these correlate with their success at the UC schools.



March 6, 2020

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Stefano Vidussi, Chair   
Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Systemwide Standardized Testing Taskforce Report

The Committee on Educational Policy reviewed the Standardized Testing Taskforce's Report at their March 6, 2020 meeting and are supportive of the report's conclusions that changing the admissions structure would harm students as the report noted that inclusion of the results of ACT/SAT in a holistic admission process appears to overall mitigate adverse effects to the inclusiveness of the admission system due to other factors. The Committee is aware of the bias of standardized testing but believe that moving to other measures may decrease diversity. The Committee is supportive of the UC's continued evaluation of possible alternatives to the ACT/SAT admissions requirement.



March 5, 2020

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Jingsong Zhang, Chair  
Committee on Preparatory Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jingsong Zhang", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Re: Standardized Testing Taskforce Report

The Committee on Preparatory Education reviewed the Standardized Testing Taskforce Report at their February 26, 2020 meeting on behalf of their charge of preparatory education and conclude that in the current form or if continued to be available, the use of the SAT and ACT exam is one of several useful tools for students to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement.

March 4, 2020

**To:** Dylan Rodriquez, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

**From:** Declan McCole, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

**Subject:** SOM FEC Comments on STTF Report and Recommendations

Dear Dylan,

Please find below the comments from the members of the SOM FEC regarding the Standardized Testing Task Force Report & Recommendations:

- The School of Medicine Faculty Executive Committee commends the extremely thorough report produced at great effort by the STTF Committee. We applaud the emphasis on identifying: “those points in the process and the factors at work at each point that contribute to disproportionate declines in representation of students who belong to populations that have historically been excluded from higher education opportunity”. This is of high importance to a campus such as UCR which is located in an economically deprived part of California with high numbers of underrepresented minorities (URM) in its catchment area. This goal also aligns closely with the mission of UCR School of Medicine to improve access to healthcare for the underserved. A major focus of achieving that goal is to increase the proportion of practicing physicians who represent those communities and who come from the Inland Empire. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of the factors that restrict access of URM and socioeconomically deprived populations to third level education – and identification of solutions to these barriers – is enthusiastically welcomed by UCR School of Medicine.
- Comment regarding Executive Summary point 4:  
The SOM FEC also strongly endorses the recommendation to “Study and expand student academic support services”. This is absolutely essential in order to equip disadvantaged students with the emotional and academic skills to be able to navigate the rigors of higher education. One of the biggest challenges to URM success is “imposter syndrome”. Developing resources to help combat this reaction in students and enhance their sense of self-worth is likely to have a transformative impact on graduation rates and future career outcomes.
- Comment regarding Executive Summary point 5:  
“Obtain the necessary item-level data to perform an updated analysis of potential bias in current standardized tests.” The SAT is a differentiator and we need to understand how this will affect our medical students. Committee discusses that exams are a benchmark to determine if a



student is retaining the information taught or read, tests also measure the level of competence reached by each individual learner.

- There was also some strong discussion on the merits of the SAT. Several members of the committee echoed Chancellor Wilcox's recent Op-Ed in the LA Times regarding SAT scores and emphasized the concern that eliminating the SAT/ ACT will harm students in the middle of the scoring range as some students are in positions to have their grades inflated (a practice in many prestigious schools) while there are also students of challenged economic backgrounds who are given a break in their scores due to their circumstances. However, there is a middle range of students that depends on the score tests to demonstrate their potential. These are students who are not economically challenged enough to be afforded a scoring benefit, and are not wealthy enough to get into high-end schools. The final comments on this topic were that there is research showing a strong correlation to a strong test score to the longevity and completion of their study.
- Several members of the committee expressed a need for some clarity on how the test scores are weighed, diversity is weighted, and that a fair opportunity for all socio-economic levels is provided.
- Concern was expressed that the UC model has been instituted to be one college with multiple campuses, however not all campuses have focused on serving the taxpayers. Concerns were raised in regards to campuses, most specifically UCLA, accepting out of country (in addition to out of state) students when taxpayers expect their children to be able to attend UC schools.

Yours sincerely,



Declan F. McCole, Ph.D.  
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee  
School of Medicine

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

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Henning Bohn, Chair  
Debra Blake, Executive Director

March 20, 2020

To: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Academic Council

From: Henning Bohn, Chair  
Academic Senate

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Henning Bohn", is written over the printed name.

Re: Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)

The Santa Barbara Division distributed the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force to a broad spectrum of Councils and Committees, and explicitly requested comments from its Undergraduate Council, Committee on Admission, Enrollment and Relations with Schools, Committee on Diversity and Equity, Council on Research and Instructional Resources, and the Faculty Executive Committees of undergraduate-serving colleges. Respondents greatly appreciated the extensive efforts of the Task Force in producing such a thoroughly researched, data-driven report. The most comprehensive responses were provided by the Undergraduate Council and the Committee on Admissions, Enrollment and Relations with Schools.

The Undergraduate Council (UgC) firmly supports the STTF recommendations and feels strongly that the University must identify a valid, robust, and fair replacement before standardized tests can be dropped as a requirement for admission to UC. Though there is much need for improvement, the current options "aid in predicting important aspects of student success" (p. 5), and campus admissions offices appropriately compensate for the "observed differences in average test scores among demographic groups" (p. 4). Premature elimination of the SAT would increase reliance on GPA in the admissions process, a crucial consideration at a time when, as the report stresses, grade inflation has made high school GPA less valuable as a predictor of student success in college, a trend that would likely be further exacerbated if standardized test scores were dropped as an admissions criterion.

UgC disagrees with the minority report's statement that the timeline for the replacement should be condensed, and was particularly disappointed that the statement appeared to deny one of the

central findings of the official report (that use of standardized testing in the admissions process actually improved rates of acceptance for underrepresented groups rather than depressing them, as has been feared) without evidence and with no attempt to rebut the arguments made in the report. At present, a new method of assessment has not been identified or designed, and once a replacement has been devised, it will take time to collect and evaluate data on its performance. Further, both families and high schools will need notification of the new examination several years in advance in order to adequately prepare.

In the meantime, the UgC urges the University to consider other adjustments to freshman and transfer admissions criteria in order to make the admissions process as equitable as possible. Further, the Council recommends that the UC work to educate the public about the ways in which standardized testing is used in admissions, which would help to address the impression that admissions decisions are based primarily or disproportionately on the results of the SAT/ACT.

Though UC has made significant progress in enrolling and retaining freshman cohorts that are representative of the diversity of the State of California, there is still work to be done. UgC endorses Recommendation 2 of the report, regarding the expansion of the ELC pathway, as it will assist the University in increasing diversity in the student population while the new assessment system is being developed. That said, members acknowledged that questions remain as to how this expansion would affect the distribution of undergraduate enrollments at individual campuses, as well as overall enrollments systemwide.

UgC also endorses Recommendation 4, regarding the strengthening of student support services. UC must invest in the students that it has admitted. Though UCSB has significantly increased student support services over the past decade, the campus could improve in its coordination of services for students as well as program assessment.

While UgC is intrigued by the idea of a UC examination, members raised a number of issues that should be taken into consideration. What would the funding source be for the development of the examination? For California residents, might the existing examinations be made more equitable by providing state subsidies and/or administering them at all high schools during school hours, perhaps even at no cost to the student? If a new exam were developed, would that mean that students applying to both UCs and non-UCs (including California residents) would need to take multiple standardized tests? Would non-resident domestic and international students have testing sites available to them within a reasonable geographic range?

The Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Relations with Schools (CAERS) also endorses the STTF Report. Several members found it difficult to support the development of a UC standardized test at this time due to the lack of a conceptual framework. Like UgC, CAERS raised concerns as to whether UC has the capacity, financial or otherwise, to develop and implement a test and whether the University would be able to ensure test security. It was acknowledged that these issues will need to be examined in great detail.

CAERS members support comprehensive review of applicants at all UC campuses where SAT/ACT scores are retained and represent a component (among many) that is used to assess applicants.

In Recommendation 2, the STTF identifies an expansion of the ELC Pathway as a possible mechanism for increasing the diversity of incoming freshman cohorts. While supportive of STTF's

aim, CAERS recommends that the University develop simulations of the pathway expansion, in order to anticipate potential problems. Given that the ELC Pathway guarantees a student “admission to at least one UC campus, although not necessarily their top choice,” many students are likely to be referred to Riverside or Merced, which are also nearly (if not already) at capacity (p. 14). The Committee voiced concern that the expansion would further exacerbate campus enrollment problems.

CAERS was opposed to the minority statement that was submitted after the distribution of the report, and expressed dismay that the counter recommendations were not supported by data. Moreover, the Committee felt that the entire statement was itself contradictory.

The College of Engineering Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) supports the STTF’s report and encourages the continuation of its data driven approach to promote an even stronger case. The FEC recommends that clarification be provided regarding the method of sampling and whether the data gathered are from all campuses. The FEC believes there should be campus-specific sampling to account for differences at the campus level in admitting prospective students, once they have passed the systemwide admission threshold. The committee stressed the importance of improving access to all students across UC and at all of the individual campuses.

The College of Letters and Science Faculty Executive Committee (L&S FEC) was in consensus that the use of test scores should be maintained for the near future, but that further investigation of admissions criteria that promote fair access to the UC system should be a priority. In this regard the FEC encourages the University to follow through expeditiously on the report’s recommendations.

At least one member of the L&S FEC expressed concern that the use of standardized tests limits access of underrepresented minorities to the UC system; however, the discussion also acknowledged data from the report suggesting that such tests provide a pathway to admission for many underrepresented and low-income students who would not otherwise be guaranteed admission based on high school grade point averages.

The Faculty Executive Committee of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education agreed with the additional recommendation by Glater, Gardana, Lynch, Maul, Cai, and Francis that the UC system consider “eliminating consideration of scores on these standardized tests in admissions in a shorter time period than the nine-year span contemplated by the Report and potentially before an alternative suite of assessments is developed”.

The Committee on International Education (CIE) pointed out, after consulting our local Admissions Office, that standardized testing plays an important role in the admission of international students and in the assessment of compliance with the “Compare Favorably” policy for admission of nonresident domestic and international students. CIE would like to stress that changes in the use of standardized testing will require a restructuring of admission policies for international students and changes in the way we report on how nonresident admits compare with in-state students.

The Committee on Diversity & Equity (CDE) found that the most persuasive arguments in the report centered on the ways in which the ACT/SAT legitimize inequality, and how the University of California has supported and promoted systemic discrimination by continuing to use them. The University needs to show that it is committed to its ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion by re-evaluating

standardized test scores as a requirement for admission. Most members were in support of removing the test scores as an admission requirement.

CDE would like to encourage UC to find a more timely solution other than the current nine-year timeframe to create its own test; perpetuating discrimination by requiring prospective students to take the ACT/SAT is no longer acceptable. Members also suggested an expansion of the Eligibility in Local Context (ELC) program, which only considers high school grades for admission. This expansion would offer admission to a more diverse population of California students.

The Task Force Report was reviewed separately by the three subcommittees of the Council on Research and Instructional Resources. General support was expressed by all three groups. While the Committee on Research Policy and Procedures (CRPP) supports the recommendations of the Task Force, its members took issue with the follow up letter from select members of the Task Force advocating for a swifter timeline to eliminate standardized tests in admissions consideration. It was felt that the report did a good job of using data to show that test scores do not play an oversized role and that the UC as a whole had employed effective strategies for mitigating how the tests might exacerbate disproportionate representation of certain minority groups. CRPP members did not feel that this statement provided sufficient evidence to support its opposition to the recommendations of the Task Force.



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

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March 25, 2020

Professor Kum-Kum Bhavnani  
Chair, Academic Senate  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Standardized Testing Task Force Report (STTF)

Dear Professor Bhavnani:

The STTF Report was circulated to standing Senate committees for review. Responses were received from the Divisional Committee on Admissions (COA). The report and the Committee's response were discussed at the Divisional Senate Council meeting on March 16, 2020. Senate Council endorsed the report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maripat Corr".

Maripat Corr, Chair  
San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

Cc: Steven Constable, Vice Chair, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate  
Ray Rodriguez, Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Robert Pomeroy, Chair, Committee on Admissions  
Ashley Welch, Senate Analyst  
Lori Hullings, Associate Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate



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Office of the Academic Senate  
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March 23, 2020

KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, Chair  
Academic Council

**Re: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Chair Bhavnani:

The Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate has completed its review of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force. The Committees on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA), Educational Policy (CEP), Planning and Budget (CPB), and Teaching (COT) have provided comments.

One area of general agreement centers on support for a recommendation proposed by CAFA. In its response, as well as throughout the STTF's research and deliberations, CAFA suggested that UC consider a student's ACT/SAT score to be the average of all their sittings of the exam instead of the highest sitting. This is an easy and inexpensive way to ensure greater equity as it takes into consideration the fact that those most likely to take the exam multiple times are students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and with greater academic support. CPB, CAAD, and COT strongly endorse CAFA's proposal.

The committees also embrace the STTF's call for improving support for students. On this issue, CPB agrees with the recommendation that campus support services should be expanded and the emphasis placed on doing so in an intentional way. CAFA emphasizes that providing assistance to students and families from under-resourced schools is not only a "moral obligation" but also "a good investment towards better retention and graduation results," and COT underscores this latter point. CAAD observes that it is unwise to continue to admit students without having "identified and acquired the necessary resources to successfully support them throughout their college careers." While CEP similarly recognizes the importance of student support, the committee raised some concern over the number of steps that the STTF outlined prior to the implementation of assistive measures, writing "we should certainly see what works most effectively elsewhere, we do not think that we need such a long chain of steps before anything is done."

The committees generally support retaining the use of standardized test scores, acknowledging the careful ways that UCSC and UC contextualize and balance the use of such data in admissions considerations. CEP and COT support the use of standardized test scores in general, and CEP points out that these tests can help assess writing and math placements in a manner that is more cost efficient for the University. As mentioned above, CAFA proposes that if standardized test scores are to be used, they should be the average of all of the student's scores if the student has taken the exam multiple times. CAAD and CPB support the proposition of transitioning from the ACT/SAT to an alternate model such as the Smarter Balanced assessment.

On behalf of the Santa Cruz Division, I thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this issue.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Lau, Chair



Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Enc: CAAD Re: Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force and the BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement  
CAFA Re: Systemwide Review of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)  
CEP: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)  
CPB Re: Systemwide Review of Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) Report  
COT Re: Systemwide Review of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) Report

cc: Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget



March 20, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force and the BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD) reviewed the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF), the STTF minority statement, and David M. Smith's research on the statistical advantage of a "top sitting" reporting policy for students who take the SAT multiple times. CAAD also reviewed the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement.

Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

CAAD raises the following questions and comments:

1. How can the ELC pathway be expanded allowing for the admission of more students (Report of the STTF, Pg. 6, Section 2), before first analyzing the admissions process to identify where disproportionate declines in underrepresented students occur (Report of the STTF, Pg. 6, Section 3), and expanding student academic support services (Report of the STTF, Pg. 6, Section 4)? It seems unwise to admit more students unless and until we have identified and acquired the necessary resources to successfully support them throughout their college careers.
2. Does assessment for admission include any non-quantitative indicators of success, such as involvement in extracurricular activities, commitment, perseverance and work ethic? Are admissions interviews ever conducted, and if not, would that be something the university might consider for some applicants?
3. CAAD supports the report's recommendation to develop a new admissions assessment to replace standardized tests. Standardized testing stands as a barrier to entry for students in several respects, including the resources (time, money, transportation) needed to participate in the standardized test taking process. Many students may be discouraged from applying to college due to the standardized testing requirement.
4. The report notes that while standardized test scores are a flawed means of assessment, it appears that the UC system has used them in a reasonable way as one factor reviewed amongst others in admissions. CAAD is hesitant to support the minority opinion of phasing out use of standardized test scores in admissions, prior to the development of a new suite of assessments to replace them, without further information about what would be used to assess applicants in the interim. Without that information, CAAD is concerned that new inequities would be introduced into the process. For instance, placing greater importance on high school GPA in the absence of standardized test scores would not account for the varying grading standards across California schools (Report of the STTF, Pg. 4).
5. It would be beneficial to have more information on how the admitted applicant pool would be affected before removing standardized test scores as an assessment factor. One suggestion: run a simulated admissions cycle using past years' data without taking standardized scores into

account. Further, measures beyond performance in the first year need to be considered. It is well known that URM students struggle in the adjustment period of the first year.

6. Until a new assessment suite is developed to replace standardized test scores, CAAD supports averaging test scores when assessing students who have taken the ACT or SAT multiple times, rather than taking the highest score of multiple sittings. As noted in David M. Smith's research on this subject, students who can afford to take a standardized test multiple times wind up with an average increase in their test score when only the top score is assessed. Taking the average of multiple scores would help reduce the disadvantage of students who are only able to take the test once.
7. CAAD questions whether the scope of the inquiry into our use of standardized test scores should be expanded to address systemic inequalities that start much earlier on. One of the largest barriers to student success in college is attending underfunded K-12 schools. To truly even the playing field for UC applicants, the larger issue of funding disparities in California public schools must be examined.

#### BOARDS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

CAAD endorses the BOARS recommendation. If ACT/SAT essay scores are not being used at UC campuses for admissions decisions, then this should not be a requirement for applicants. As noted in the recommendation, with other time and cost burdens already placed on California college applicants, there is no need to add additional barriers to entry, particularly ones that most affect students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond on this matter.

Sincerely,

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Elizabeth Abrams, Chair  
Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Jeremy Hourigan, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

February 20, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test Requirement  
Systemwide Review of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed both reports regarding BOAR's proposal to eliminate the SAT essay/ACT Writing Test Requirement, and the report and recommendations of the Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF).

We endorse the Standardized Testing Task Force's (STTF) recommendation to retain the requirement that prospective University of California students must submit standardized test scores. Even after admission, standardized tests are a valuable tool to place students at the appropriate level in writing and mathematics courses:

- Students can satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) by obtaining a suitable score in standardized tests. Students who do not satisfy ELWR by this method can take the UC Analytical Writing Placement Examination (AWPE). Our experience is that students who are required to take the AWPE sometimes do not do so and have to take an ELWR course at UC, perhaps unnecessarily. The practical result of channeling all students through the AWPE will be an increase in the number of students who have to unnecessarily take an ELWR course, which is bad for the students and expensive for the university.
- In introductory mathematics (calculus) courses, data analysis shows that standardized test scores are the best predictor of how well a UC Santa Cruz student will do in a course, i.e. which course they should be placed in. Of course, as with the AWPE, we provide students with an alternative placement examination in case their standardized test scores are not truly reflective of their level. But considering the well-known high impact of delay in the introductory mathematics sequence, it would be foolish to deny students the opportunity to use their standardized test scores to test into a higher-level class.

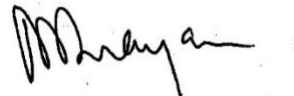
We note the STTF's conclusion that the use of standardized test scores in a holistic context allows possible negative aspects of these tests to be controlled, and that the lower than expected percentage of underrepresented minorities at UC is due to other factors. Thus, removing standardized test scores will make little difference to the admission process and harm the student's post-matriculation.

CEP also notes the STTF's recommendation to study and expand student academic support services, report on existing programs and then evaluate them, followed by designing and evaluating new support programs. This seems a long and laborious process. At least at UC Santa

Cruz, it is evident to us that students need more academic support, both for the strongest students — through a well-designed honors program — and the weakest. While we should certainly see what works most effectively elsewhere, we do not think that we need such a long chain of steps before anything is done.

CEP has no comments on the recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Onuttom Narayan", followed by a period.

Onuttom Narayan  
Chair, Committee on Educational Policy

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity  
Don Smith, Chair, Graduate Council  
Jeremy Hourigan, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

March 16, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate

**RE: Systemwide Review of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) Report**

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Teaching (COT) discussed the report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) at our meeting on March 10, 2020. We appreciate the complexity of the set of questions considered by the Academic Council's task force and the thoughtfulness of their report. Based on our understanding of how SAT and ACT scores are used in admission decisions, we appreciate the care that is taken in considering the context of any scores.

We agree with the STTF's recommendations. We understand the recommendation to maintain the SAT/ACT requirement is proposed in light of a broader context, where initial eligibility screening relies on a variety of factors beyond high school GPA and standardized test scores, including careful consideration of the local high school context.

COT also supports the recommendation made by David Smith, chair of the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) at UC Santa Cruz, to take the average score rather than the "highest sitting" for students who take the test multiple times. We are convinced by Professor Smith's report, that taking the highest score gives an unfair advantage to students with the means to afford multiple tests. We hope that BOARS and the Academic Council will accept this recommendation offered by CAFA at UC Santa Cruz.

Finally, we support CAFA's recommendation (in their response to the task force report) to provide additional academic support to students from less privileged families and communities, in order to increase not only access to UC but also preparation, retention, and graduation.

Sincerely,



Maureen Callanan, Chair  
Committee on Teaching

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

March 17, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate

**RE: Systemwide Review of Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)  
Report**

Dear Kim,

CPB was pleased to have the opportunity to comment upon the final report of Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF), which we discussed at our February 27th meeting. The committee was impressed with the thoughtful analysis and strongly agreed with the principle that the UC admissions process should strive towards ensuring that the incoming class is representative of California high-school graduates.

Standardized tests, such as the SAT and ACT, have well-documented disparities in scores between groups of students, on the basis of characteristics such as family income, first-generation status, and others. However, systemwide eligibility and local holistic review both use standardized test scores in highly contextualized and nuanced ways in an attempt to minimize those disparities. The STTF report also examined how each stage in the application and admission process contributed to the underrepresentation of various groups in the enrolled class, finding that standardized test scores likely played only a minor role.

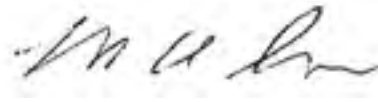
Nevertheless, standardized tests do play some role in contributing to underrepresentation, including in some ways that are difficult to evaluate quantitatively. For example, some students may self-select out of applying because of the hurdle posed by the financial and/or time cost of the SAT/ACT, or because of a lack of support or guidance at school or home, even though those students might find success at a UC. For those students, it is difficult to know how much of their decision to not apply arose from standardized testing and how much from other considerations. Regardless, transitioning to a different form of standardized assessment that is already part of the high-school curriculum (such as the Smarter Balanced assessment) could remove the additional barrier of the extracurricular SAT or ACT test. We note that removing all reliable standard testing would likely disadvantage institutions with fewer resources for reviewing applicants.

The STTF report raises a number of points that urge caution before switching to the Smarter Balanced assessment. CPB finds those points to be compelling, and also notes the value of standardized test scores (when appropriately contextualized) in the local holistic review process. However, we support transitioning from the SAT/ACT to an in-school standardized assessment with some expediency, if and when the reliability and validity of the Smarter Balanced assessment can be demonstrated for admissions purposes.

CPB also strongly agreed with the recommendation that campuses should expand academic support services to ensure that admitted students can thrive, given that access and social mobility are one of the goals of the admissions process. We also agree that it is important to assess the effectiveness of programs and services in an intentional way, including through analysis and experiments. Such assessment does not need to slow the implementation of programs, but when resources are limited it is crucial to assess the effectiveness and iteratively reallocate resources to programs and services that have greater impact.

Finally, CPB strongly supports the analysis of CAFA arguing that students should be evaluated on their average SAT/ACT test score, rather than on the best sitting. Students who have the means to take the SAT/ACT multiple times (typically students from higher socioeconomic levels) gain a substantial benefit from doing so. Changing from best sitting to the average score would be an extremely simple way of negating this substantial disparity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B. Schumm", is positioned above the typed name.

Bruce Schumm, Chair  
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: CAAD Chair Abrams  
CEP Chair Narayan  
COT Chair Callanan  
CAFA Chair Smith

March 13, 2020

KIMBERLY LAU, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

**Re: Systemwide Review of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Kim,

During its meeting of March 4, 2020, the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) discussed the final draft of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) as well as an opinion drafted by a minority of the STTF.

Specific Recommendations

Throughout the Task Force's deliberative process, CAFA attempted to promote a change in the way standardized test scores are calculated at UC that we believe would eliminate a significant portion of the advantage enjoyed by wealthy students and those whose families give them strong academic support. The change is simple and could be probably be implemented with little difficulty or cost on anyone's part: it is simply to consider a student's score to be the average of all their sittings of the exam instead of the highest sitting. The attached analysis (attachment 1) demonstrates the advantage accruing by taking the test multiple times, even without any improvement on the student's part; it is simply due to the "random noise" associated with each score. Remarkably, this advantage seems to be about comparable to any actual improvement due to study, becoming accustomed to the test, etc. experienced by re-takers. Not surprisingly, lower-income students and those from underrepresented minority groups are less likely to take the test multiple times (see attachment 2, Goodman et al.). The simple measure we propose could reduce their disadvantage substantially with little cost or difficulty. This recommendation has been endorsed unanimously by CAFA, including members mainly supportive of and mainly skeptical of standardized testing, and for this reason we implore BOARS to take it up seriously and pass it on to the Regents if their expectation is to second the Task Force's conclusion to continue with standardized testing at all, and whether it will be required or optional.

The Task Force found that overall UC has done a good job already of contextualizing standardized test scores to the school context of the applicant. As of this admissions cycle, UCSC formalized this practice by having holistic reviewers only see the percentile rank of the applicant (relative to the applicant pool from their school to UC, from their school to UCSC, and within the overall pool to UCSC, the latter seldom being used), and not the absolute numerical values of the scores at all. Masking those data was made possible by our use of UC Davis's tool for application review. We would like to suggest that BOARS recommend a similar practice to other campuses.

Next, we would like to encourage BOARS to bring to the foreground something that (perhaps naturally) was a secondary conclusion of the Task Force's report: that providing effective support for students from schools (and families) that gave them less academic preparation is not only a moral obligation that goes hand-in-hand with the moral obligation of giving them access to the University through context-sensitive admissions decisions but also a good investment towards better retention and graduation results. We believe this is all the more important considering that the Task Force's overall conclusion is that the admissions processes are doing a fairly good job already of minimizing effects of privilege-bias in the standardized tests (primarily by minimizing their overall share in the admissions decision, but also by considering school context). We hope BOARS will also consider adding an emphasis that is missing in the report: that "support" does not just mean psychological and cultural support, but must mean real



academic support, including expanded access to programs like ACE, but, even more importantly, course re-designs for first-year and introductory courses that support the academic needs of these students.

Finally, we believe that the argument for the SAT as a discovery mechanism -- of students who assumed incorrectly that they couldn't or shouldn't attend university -- seems to have been given insufficient attention in the Report, and was dismissed too quickly. Rather than looking simply at the degree to which this discovery mechanism may already be taking place in California (which may be underestimated in the absence of broad qualitative research with real interviews), more attention should have been paid to the successes of fully-supported (no fee for families) and universal testing for this purpose in schools where it has been tried. CAFA recommends that, if standardized testing is continued over the next few years, BOARS begin a new study to look at ways of increasing participation and access (to not just a first but a second sitting of the test) to less-advantaged schools and students throughout the state. The third attachment (Bulman et al.) provides evidence that increased access to SAT testing through the opening of new testing centers, free in-school testing, and default registration policies, can lead to significant increases in SAT test-taking, college enrollment and college graduation among low-income students.

Sincerely,

/s/

David Smith, Chair

Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

Enc: Statistical advantage of multiple sittings of the SAT under a "top sitting" reporting policy,  
David M. Smith, BOARS representative for UC Santa Cruz, March 5, 2019  
Take Two! Sat Retaking and College Enrollment Gaps, Joshua Goodman, et al., Working Paper  
24945, National Bureau of Economic Research, August 2018  
The Effect of Access to College Assessments on Enrollment and Attainment, George Bulman,  
American Economic Journal, 2015

CC: Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching

## Statistical advantage of multiple sittings of the SAT under a "top sitting" reporting policy

David M. Smith, BOARS representative for UC Santa Cruz, 3/5/19

*Summary: Because UC chooses the top total sitting of the SAT, there is a large advantage to students who can afford to take the exam multiple times simply by virtue of the random variation of scores. This advantage is at least as large as the more often discussed advantage due to wealthy families being able to afford intensive test prep services. The efficacy of such services is not addressed here and should not be taken as a given; increases on average from first to later sittings can also come from simple acclimation (getting used to the test environment), from free online test-prep services, and from a selection effect in which students less satisfied with their score are more likely to retake. I suggest that if inequity due to some students' ability to take the SAT more often is a concern, half or more of that concern can be eliminated by changing UC admissions policy to use the average score of all SAT sittings of a student rather than the highest single sitting.*

These are the results of a simple simulation intended to approximate the advantage gained by students who are able to take the SAT multiple times, under the test reporting system currently in use, where the top total sitting on a 1600 point scale is used. We assume that the students are *not* improving their ability to take the test between sittings, just "rolling the dice" multiple times and taking their best total score. I simulated 10,000 students, all of whom have a "true" score of 1200 (this would be their average if they took the test an infinite number of times).

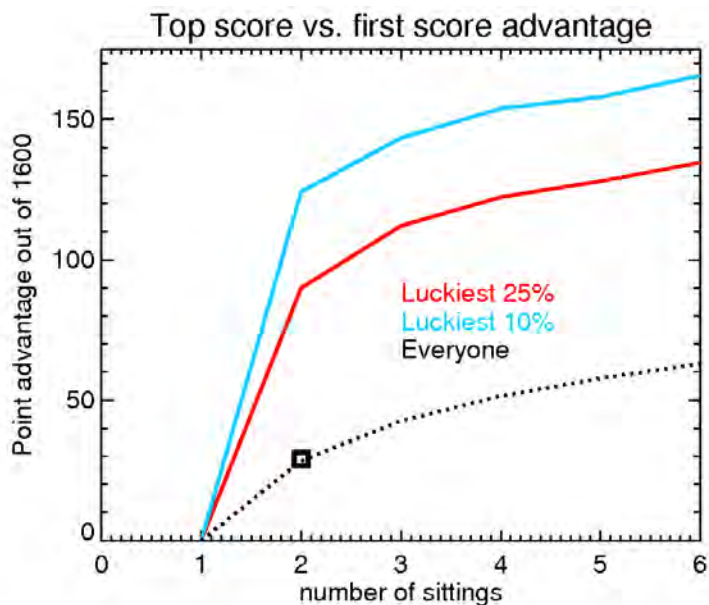


Figure 1: Average advantage for all students, the luckiest 25%, and the luckiest 10% **just** by taking the SAT multiple times when the score calculated for admissions purposes in the highest total sitting of a 1600 point test, with no change in proficiency, no acclimation, and no selection effect (i.e. a student's score won't affect their decision whether to retake). The star shows a result quoted by Vigdor & Clotfelter (2003), which is the average increase of 29 points from first to second score -- a nonrandom effect combining acclimation, real improvement, and the selection effect. It is of virtually the same size as the random gain due to the top sitting practice used by UC admissions.

The usual way of reporting the standard deviation of the SAT is to give the standard deviation of real scores in a large population. This, of course, includes the true variation due to students' actual proficiencies with the test, as well as the the random variation due to the finite amount of information that can be gathered in a single sitting. This standard deviation is 195 (College Board 2017 SAT Suite Annual Report, 2017, pg. 5). But it is not what we want, as we are simulating 10,000 students with identical proficiency, so we want only the random component. This is harder to come by, but Bond et al. 2018 (Journal of Labor Economics, v. 36, pg. 807) give the

standard deviation of the difference between the first and second sittings of students as 70.3, which would imply a standard deviation for each sitting of  $70.3/\sqrt{2} = 50$  points. This doesn't account for any improvement by practice or acclimation, and it is averaged over students at all levels of score, not just those near 1200 (for example, the top-scoring students will have a lower standard deviation, and that will have been incorporated into this overall average).

The top sitting policy turns an average *variation* in score into an average *increase* for students who can afford multiple sittings and come from a home environment in which they are encouraged or pressured to take them. The distortion produced by this practice is as large or larger than the much-better-publicized concern about wealthy parents being able to afford expensive test-prep services. I will not address whether such services really do convey a significant advantage -- the task force should make that conclusion from appropriate studies -- but I note that Vigdor & Clotfelter (2003, *Journal of Human Resources* XXXVIII, 1) found an average increase of 29 points out of 1600 (verbal+math) in 1997 data for the second sitting. This happens to be just about the same effect size as the purely random advantage conveyed by UC's top-score-of-two policy. In Figure 1, this coincidence is shown by the black square -- the average improvement from *first to second* sitting quoted by Vigdor & Clotfelter -- landing on top of our curve of the average improvement from *first to top* score when there are two sittings with no expected difference. Not all of the systematic difference from Vigdor & Clotfelter can be attributed to expensive test prep, however; some will have come from acclimation (getting used to the test environment), some from cheap or free practice, some from the extra education obtained at high school between the sittings (aging effect), and some from a selection effect, in which students who feel they scored below their proficiency are more likely to retake, and those who feel they did well compared to their proficiency are less likely to retake. Thus, if all these effects could be removed from the 29 point increase found by Vigdor & Clotfelter, I believe we would see that whatever advantage remained from expensive test prep would be found to be significantly lower than the random effect I have modeled.

Figure 2 shows the advantage of "top sitting" relative to the average of all sittings, which is the replacement policy I am suggesting, whether UC keeps mandatory testing or changes to optional testing. Taking the average sitting, there is no longer any random advantage from multiple sittings, but real improvement in proficiency or acclimation does give some benefit. The dilution of that benefit by averaging serves to reduce the disadvantage of students who are only able to take the test once.

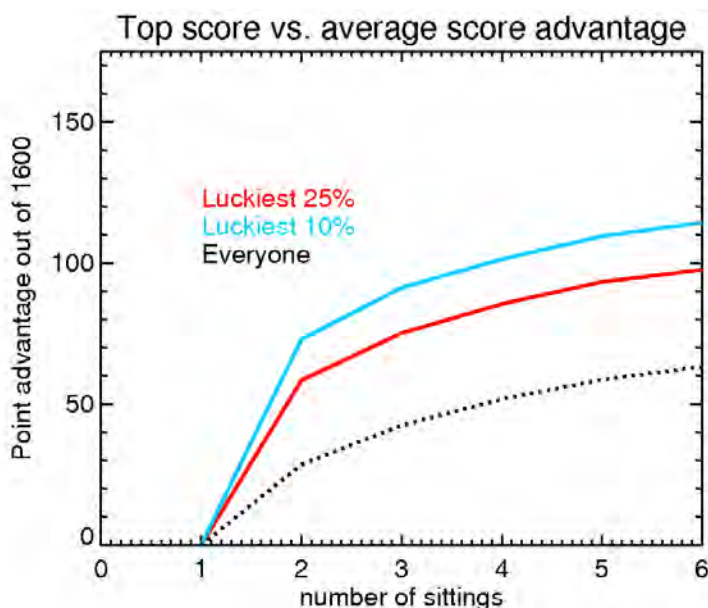


Figure 2: Average advantage of the whole population, the luckiest 25%, and the luckiest 10% from multiple sittings when comparing the current policy (top sitting) to the suggested policy (average sitting).

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Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, Chair  
Steven Cheung, MD, Vice Chair  
Vineeta Singh, MD, Secretary  
Jae Woo Lee, MD, Parliamentarian

March 26, 2019

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, PhD  
Chair, Academic Council  
Systemwide Academic Senate  
University of California Office of the President  
1111 Franklin St., 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**Re: Comments on the Report from the Standardized Testing Task Force**

Dear Kum-Kum:

The San Francisco Division of the Academic Senate has reviewed the report from the systemwide Senate's Standardized Testing Taskforce (STTF), with a particular focus on the pipeline of future underrepresented minority (URM) health sciences students. This task force was established for the purposes of answering a number of questions related to whether standardized tests best serve UC students and graduating high schools students within California. Ultimately, however, the task force addresses the central issue of whether UC should drop the SAT, and whether the perceived bias of standardized tests against URMs is born out in the data. UCSF's Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC), and the School of Medicine Faculty Council (SOMFC). In making our comments, we would like to thank UCSF faculty members Henry Sanchez, Chair of the Task Force, and Andrea Hasenstaub, who analyzed the data for the report. The San Francisco Division would also like to thank Stacy Torres, an Assistant Professor in UCSF's Center for Health and Community, who contributed to CEP's comments.

The San Francisco Division is concerned about the pipeline of future students in the health sciences. As a whole, the UCSF percentage of URM students is only approximately 19.3%. As the report points out, the pipeline issue is rooted in the gap between the URM percentage of incoming freshmen on UC campuses and that of graduating. With some concern, we observed that approximately 59% of California high school graduates were URMs, while only 26% of admitted California freshmen (and only 18% of the admitted students overall) were URMs. With this in mind, our Division is particularly interested in the question of whether standardized testing assessments fairly promote diversity and opportunity for students applying to UC.

After a review of the report (and a presentations of the report at a number of committee meetings), Executive Council, CEP, COLASC, and the SOMFC agreed with many of the conclusions and recommendations of the committee, which were substantiated by a rigorous data analysis. Members were pleased to learn about the robustness of UC's holistic comprehensive admissions review process, which allows UC admissions officers to examine SAT scores in a local context, and thereby take into account students' contexts when evaluating test scores. As made clear in the report, this is not possible for HSGPAs, which UC admissions policy places a greater emphasis on. In particular, we noted that disadvantaged and URM students applied to UC with HSGPAs significantly lower than the HSGPAs of more advantaged groups, and the UC admissions process did not appear to compensate for HSGPA as it does for test scores. Ceteris paribus, we would support the retention of standardized tests in UC's admissions process (CEP, COLASC, & SOMFC).

That said, we note a distinct sentiment among some faculty that mean differences in standardized test scores between different demographic groups are often very large, and many of the ways these tests could be used in admissions would certainly produce strong disparate impacts between groups. The Task Force was stymied in its ability to study the inherent bias

for individual questions because the College Board has not released item-level data for twenty years or more. Indeed, some faculty remain deeply skeptical of the value of the tests, and would encourage a further de-emphasis on scores, if they are not dropped altogether. We also observe that this is essentially the sentiment expressed by some Regents in the press and other fora.

Some questions also remain about the weight of standardized test scores in the determination of scholarship recipients (pg. 14, 16). Greater transparency about how these determinations are made at different UC campuses would be welcome and perhaps greater standardization across campuses is warranted.

Given the likelihood of the Regents to vote to eliminate standardized tests at UC, the San Francisco Division endorses a number of recommendations contained within the report that hold the potential to either increase the admission of URM students or improve their outcomes (e.g., graduation rates), or both, regardless of whether UC eliminates standardized tests in its admissions process (CEP, COLASC):

- Review and update components of the statewide index used to identify UC-eligible students.
- Expand the ELC pathway, which admits students in the top 9% of each school based on HSGPA alone, to admit more than the top 9%, so as to increase access and representation, while leaving the statewide index formula unchanged.
- Undertake further analysis of the admissions process to identify those points in the process and the factors at work at each point that contribute to disproportionate declines in representation of students who belong to populations that have historically been excluded from higher education opportunity.
- Study and expand student academic support services, especially for the STEM fields. A multi-pronged effort to study, fine-tune and expand the system of academic and socio-emotional supports that UC provides to its undergraduate students would begin by identifying and reporting on existing programs, then proceed to evaluate them.

This leaves the big question of whether UC should pursue the development of an independent assessment tool that holds the potential for replacing the SAT. While such a tool could potentially be a boon to admission officers, members felt that this seems to be an unnecessary outlay of funds, time, and energy that could be diverted to other pressing needs, such as hiring staff to perform holistic assessments of applicants if the SAT were dropped or bolstering support services for admitted diverse students. Additionally, in my view, the new test would likely not address the inequalities embedded in the SAT/ ACT assessments. Given the current economic outlook spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe the resources that would be poured into developing a new assessment could be put to better use addressing a range of other needs (CEP, COLASC).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important report.

Sincerely,



Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, 2019-21 Chair  
UCSF Academic Senate

Enclosures (3)

Cc:

Jennifer Perkins, DDS, MD, UCSF CEP Chair

Marta Margeta, MD, PhD, UCSF COLASC Chair

Jialing Liu, PhD, UCSF School of Medicine Faculty Council Chair

March 25, 2020

Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, Chair  
UCSF Academic Senate  
500 Parnassus Ave, MUE 231  
San Francisco, CA 94143

Re: CEP Comments on the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force Report

Dear Senate Chair Majumdar:

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) recently discussed the report from the systemwide Senate's Standardized Testing Taskforce Report, with a particular focus on the pipeline of future underrepresented minority (URM) health sciences students. Then systemwide Senate Chair Robert May empaneled the task for the purposes of answering a number of questions related to whether standardized tests best serve UC students and graduating high schools students within California. Ultimately, however, the task force addresses the central issue of whether UC should drop the SAT, and whether the perceived bias of standardized tests against URMs is born out in the data. In making our comments, we would like to thank UCSF faculty members Henry Sanchez, Chair of the Task Force, and Andrea Hasenstaub, who analyzed the data for the report. The Committee would also like to thank Stacy Torres, an Assistant Professor in UCSF's Center for Health and Community.

As a whole, the UCSF percentage of URM students is only approximately 19.3%.<sup>1</sup> In addition, we note that according to the latest statistics available from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), four UC campuses make up the top 11 medical student pipeline intuitions that supply 50 or more applicants to U.S. medical schools.<sup>2</sup> The pipeline issue is rooted in the gap between the URM percentage of incoming freshmen on UC campuses and that of graduating. With some concern, we observed that approximately 59% of California high school graduates were URMs, while only 26% of admitted California freshmen (and only 18% of the admitted students overall) were URMs.

Therefore, if UCSF is serious about increasing the number URM students in the health sciences, then we must also pay due attention to the manner in which graduating high school students are evaluated by the University of California, as we often set the standard(s) for the Nation. With this in mind, CEP members were particularly interested in the following questions addressed by the Task Force:

- Do standardized testing assessments fairly promote diversity and opportunity for students applying to UC?
- Does UC's use of standardized tests increase or contract the eligibility pool compared to two other possibilities: 1) de-weighting standardized tests; or 2) eliminating the testing requirement?
- Should UC testing practices be improved, changed, or eliminated?

On the whole, CEP agreed with many of the conclusions and recommendations of the committee, which were substantiated by a rigorous data analysis. Members were pleased to learn about the robustness of UC's holistic comprehensive admissions review process, which allows UC admissions officers to examine SAT scores in a local context, and thereby take into account students' contexts when evaluating test scores. This is not possible for HSGPAs, which UC admissions policy places a greater emphasis on. In

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<sup>1</sup> Per UCSF's Office of Diversity & Research, fall 2018 enrollment data (<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/reports-data/diversity-data>). The category of 'unknown' has been left out in the percentage cited above.

<sup>2</sup> See AAMC Table A-2: Undergraduate Institutions Supplying 50 or More Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools, 2019-2020 ([https://www.aamc.org/system/files/2019-11/2019\\_FACTS\\_Table\\_A-2.pdf](https://www.aamc.org/system/files/2019-11/2019_FACTS_Table_A-2.pdf)). The four UC campuses include UC Los Angeles (#1 at 1,014 applicants), UC Berkeley (#5 at 697 applicants), UC San Diego (#6 at 564 applicants), and UC Davis (#11 at 474 applicants).



particular, we noted that disadvantaged and URM students applied to UC with HSGPAs significantly lower than the HSGPAs of more advantaged groups, and the UC admissions process did not appear to compensate for HSGPA as it does for test scores. Therefore, dropping the SAT entirely (without developing alternate admissions criteria – see below) could have a further disparate negative impact on URM graduating high school students.

That said, members also agreed with the report that mean differences in standardized test scores between different demographic groups are often very large, and many of the ways these tests could be used in admissions would certainly produce strong disparate impacts between groups. The Task Force was stymied in its ability to study the inherent bias for individual questions because the College Board has not released item-level data for twenty years or more. Indeed, some faculty remain deeply skeptical of the value of the tests, and would encourage a further de-emphasis on scores, if they are not dropped altogether. We also observe that this is essentially the sentiment expressed by some Regents in the press and other fora. Therefore, CEP endorses a number of recommendations contained within the report that hold the potential to either increase the admission of URM students or improve their outcomes (e.g., graduation rates), or both, regardless of whether UC eliminates standardized tests in its admissions process:

- Review and update components of the statewide index used to identify UC-eligible students.
- Expand the ELC pathway, which admits students in the top 9% of each school based on HSGPA alone, to admit more than the top 9%, so as to increase access and representation, while leaving the statewide index formula unchanged.
- Undertake further analysis of the admissions process to identify those points in the process and the factors at work at each point that contribute to disproportionate declines in representation of students who belong to populations that have historically been excluded from higher education opportunity.
- Study and expand student academic support services. A multi-pronged effort to study, fine-tune and expand the system of academic and socio-emotional supports that UC provides to its undergraduate students would begin by identifying and reporting on existing programs, then proceed to evaluate them.

Some questions also remain about the weight of standardized test scores in the determination of scholarship recipients (pg. 14, 16). Greater transparency about how these determinations are made at different UC campuses would be welcome and perhaps greater standardization across campuses is warranted.

This leaves the big question of whether UC should pursue the development of an independent assessment tool that holds the potential for replacing the SAT. While such a tool could potentially be a boon to admission officers, members felt that this seems to be an unnecessary outlay of funds, time, and energy that could be diverted to other pressing needs, such as hiring staff to perform holistic assessments of applicants if the SAT were dropped or bolstering support services for admitted diverse students. Additionally, in my view, the new test would likely not address the inequalities embedded in the SAT/ ACT assessments. Given the current economic outlook spurred by the pandemic, CEP members believe the resources that would be poured into developing a new assessment could be put to better use addressing a range of other needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important report.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Perkins, DDS, MD  
Chair, Committee on Education Policy  
UCSF Academic Senate  
2019-20

CC:

Alison Cleaver, Associate Director, Academic Senate  
Amber Cobbett, Faculty Engagement Analyst, Academic Senate

March 25, 2020

Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, Chair  
UCSF Academic Senate  
500 Parnassus Ave, MUE 231  
San Francisco, CA 94143

Re: COLASC Comments on the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force Report

Dear Senate Chair Majumdar:

The Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) recently discussed the report from the systemwide Senate's Standardized Testing Task Force. Our deliberations were significantly informed by UCSF faculty members Henry Sanchez, Chair of the Task Force, and Andrea Hasenstaub, a BOARS member who analyzed the data for the report. While this issue is not directly within our remit, we were compelled to comment, given the importance of diversity for the sustainability of robust scholarly communication.

Although COLASC is not familiar with the specific statistics on UCSF's URM enrollment percentages, we do recognize that the pipeline issue is important to not only our own institution, but also the health sciences in general. Indeed, we read in the report with deep concern that while approximately 59% of California high school graduates were URM, only 26% of admitted California freshmen (and only 18% of the admitted students overall) were URM. Therefore, we were particularly interested in two issues: (i) whether standardized testing assessments fairly promote diversity and opportunity for students applying to UC, and (ii) whether there would be value in dropping them from the UC admissions process.

Perhaps to the surprise of some members, we learned that UC's holistic comprehensive admissions review process allows UC admissions officers to examine SAT scores in a local context, and thereby take into account students' opportunities/circumstances when evaluating test scores. This is simply not possible for HSGPAs, which UC admissions policy places a greater emphasis on. We recognize that mean differences in standardized test scores between different demographic groups are often large, and that many of the ways these tests could be used in admissions could produce strong disparate impacts between groups. However, based on the Task Force findings, we do not think that dropping the SAT is advisable at this time, especially given the fact that UC is not able to evaluate HSGPAs in a local context in the same way that admission officers can do so with standardized testing results.

In making this recommendation, we realize that some Regents hold the opposite opinion, and may vote to eliminate the SAT in May. With this possible outcome in mind, we stand solidly behind two of the Task Force's recommendations:

1. Expand the ELC pathway, which admits students in the top 9% of each school based on HSGPA alone, to admit more than the top 9%, so as to increase access and representation, while leaving the statewide index formula unchanged.
2. Study and expand student academic support services. A multi-pronged effort to study, fine-tune and expand the system of academic and socio-emotional supports that UC provides to its undergraduate students would begin by identifying and reporting on existing programs, then proceeding to evaluate them.

We also do not support developing an independent UC assessment tool to possibly replace the SAT one day. It is simply too expensive, especially when one considers all of other UC's financial liabilities and low funding levels.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important report.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Marta Margeta', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marta Margeta, MD, PhD

Chair, Committee on Library & Scholarly Communication, 2019-2020

March 23, 2020

Professor Sharmila Majumdar, PhD  
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate

RE: Standardized Testing Task Force Report

Dear Chair Majumdar,

I write on behalf of the School of Medicine Faculty Council to support the report and recommendations of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force. The Task Force's recommendations are the product of a thoughtful and data-driven analysis, and the Council appreciated the rigorous and thorough report of the Task Force.

The SOMFC generally supports the recommendations of the Task Force, particularly the recommendation to continue using ACT/SAT test results to inform undergraduate admission decisions unless and until the University designs its own standardized admissions test. The SOMFC was persuaded that mandatory ACT/SAT scores enable the University to admit more disadvantaged students than it could without the scores because the University is able to contextualize individual test scores. This makes it easier, not harder, to find students with great potential in challenging circumstances. It is critically important to the School of Medicine that the University of California admit, train, and graduate a diverse student body. These undergraduate students are the future health care workforce, and that workforce needs to be diverse to serve California's wide-ranging population.

The School of Medicine Faculty Council appreciated the Task Force's evaluation of the significant investment of time and money needed for the University to develop its own standardized test. The Council did not feel qualified to comment on whether that investment would be a sufficiently better evaluation tool than contextualized ACT/SAT scores. Whether the University seeks to develop its own test or not, the SOMFC hopes the University will follow the numbers and the guidance of the Task Force as it works to improve the admissions process and educate a student body that reflects California.

Sincerely,



Jailing Liu, PhD  
Chair, School of Medicine Faculty Council  
UCSF Academic Senate  
2019-2020

**BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)****Eddie Comeaux, Chair**[eddie.comeaux@ucr.edu](mailto:eddie.comeaux@ucr.edu)

Assembly of the Academic Senate

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March 23, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL****RE: REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL'S STANDARDIZED TESTING TASK  
FORCE**

Dear Kum-Kum,

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) has discussed the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF). The committee commends the Task Force and especially the lead authors of the report for their hard work, thoughtful approach, and their conversations with us over the last year. Overall, BOARS supports the recommendations in the report, and we draw particular attention to several points.

As you know, [Regents Policy 2108](#) calls on the Senate and the campuses "to affirm that single-score holistic evaluation is the expected implementation of Comprehensive Review", and it is within that frame that BOARS evaluated the recommendations. As long as standardized test scores are a factor in admission, BOARS recommends that admission offices adopt as a best practice viewing these test scores *in the local high school context*, not just as an absolute value. This practice is described in the report and is shown to help level the playing field for applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. Indeed, all review criteria should be viewed in context and as part of an holistic evaluation of the applicant.

Recommendation 1 in the Task Force report calls on the system to "Review and update components of statewide eligibility index". Under current practice the top 9% of California resident students gain eligibility through the statewide index which is based on HSGPA and performance on the SAT or ACT. The groups' call for refinement of the index reflects the fact that admissions practices at many UC campuses already look at additional student factors when evaluating student records. For example, beyond looking at HSGPA, admissions teams note positive developments such as a student's HSGPA improvement over time. BOARS recommends broader discussions with UC admissions directors and other experts to evaluate whether the statewide index can be improved.

We support the call to provide greater on-campus support to matriculated students, and we suggest widening the support network in the report to include academics explicitly. Similarly,

we support the call for the state to provide greater resources to K-12 to ensure that the full suite of A-G courses is offered at every California high school. The committee also suggested the UC should lobby for more fee waiver programs, school day/location testing, and no cost test preparation to help reduce barriers caused by economic disadvantage.

BOARS is ready to coordinate with administration to implement the Regents decision.

Sincerely,

Eddie Comeaux  
BOARS Chair

cc: Members of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)  
Executive Director Baxter



*Darlene Francis, Chair  
University Committee on Preparatory Education  
darlenefrancis@berkeley.edu*

*University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

March 23, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC SENATE**

**RE: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL STANDARDIZED  
TESTING TASK FORCE**

Dear Kum-Kum:

The University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) met on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, via ZOOM, to discuss the report and recommendations of the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF). Given the shortened timeline for this review, UCOPE members were also encouraged to provide feedback via email. I will share with you the general sentiment of the committee concerning the STTF report and then focus on two particular topics discussed by UCOPE: i) the use of standardized test scores to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) and ii) the ability to provide sufficient academic and mental health support for current and future students.

### **General Comments**

The committee, in general, agrees with the overall STTF recommendations and supports the decision to maintain standardized testing as part of the Admissions process. We believe that the University of California is doing a good job with Admissions despite having to navigate an imperfect and inequitable education system. The decision to continue the use of standardized test scores to inform Admissions decisions at the UC, in principal, appears sound for now. There are concerns, however, about the recommendation that the UC develop its own admissions test and about the timeline attached to this endeavor. How feasible is it for the UC to develop a novel Admissions test that is better than the current SAT and ACT (across multiple domains) that is also capable of addressing existing disparities/inequities without fundamentally addressing the ‘root causes’ of these inequities?

### **Use of Standardized Test Scores to Satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement**

The University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement is a reading and writing proficiency requirement (SR636). There are three ways students may satisfy the ELWR prior to enrollment at a UC: i) by earning a letter grade of C (or better) in a transferable college English composition course ii) by passing the University of California Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) which is administered on UC campuses the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of May or iii) by achieving an acceptable score on an approved test of Writing.

Approved tests of Writing currently include Advanced Placement in English (Language or Literature), International Baccalaureate Higher Level English A Language and Literature exams, **a score of 30 or higher on the ACT, English Language Arts section and a score of 680 or higher on the SAT, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section.** Currently (Fall 2019), ~ 19% of Admitted Freshmen satisfy the ELWR solely via SAT (15%) or ACT (4%) scores. If the use of standardized tests were eliminated in the UC there would be a significant increase in students attempting to satisfy ELWR by taking the AWPE. The number of students who take the AWPE in May fluctuates between ~11,500 – 15,000 annually. Administration of the AWPE would need to ‘scale up’ to meet the increased demand of students who would no longer satisfy ELWR with standardized test scores.

### **Sufficient Academic and Mental Health Support for Current and Future Students**

Several members of UCOPE expressed great concern over the recommendation to expand the Eligibility in the Local Context pathway while leaving the statewide index formula unchanged (Recommendation #2). While laudable in theory, we believe that any discussion of increasing the undergraduate population without committed funding and traction to support these students would be detrimental to them and irresponsible of the UC. In the same vein, Recommendation #4 to study and expand academic support services for our undergraduate student population appears Utopian without funds directly committed to this charge. Indeed, mental health services on our campuses are insufficient to handle current needs. UC needs to engage in a broader discussion of how we can best support the diverse student bodies we strive so hard to recruit and admit.

The committee appreciates the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Best wishes,



Darlene Francis,  
Chair, University Committee on Preparatory Education



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, DIVERSITY,  
AND EQUITY (UCAADE)  
Mona Lynch, Chair  
lynchm@uci.edu

ACADEMIC SENATE  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200

March 23, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI**  
**CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**Re: UCAADE's Comments on the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized  
Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Kum-Kum,

I am writing on behalf of the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) to share the committee's feedback on the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) report. The committee members read the report and discussed it at our March 5 meeting. UCAADE was impressed by the comprehensiveness of the report, the level of detail and analysis provided, and the amount of work that went into it. It was clearly the product of considerable thought and effort.

Ultimately, however, the UCAADE committee members expressed concern about the recommendations pertaining to the continued use of the SAT and ACT tests for admissions decisions, in light of several key considerations delineated below that are relevant to equity and inclusion at the UC. Please note, our comments are focused primarily on the selection decision at the campus level, rather than on the eligibility decision. To that end, we do support the expanded ELC pool recommendation.

- 1) Chapter II of the report describes in detail how admissions officers use the standardized tests in the admissions decision. It conveys that our admissions officers do an absolutely admirable job in overcoming the systemic biases that are associated with the SAT and ACT, by analyzing the scores in the students' local context. We were relieved to see that our admissions officers work so hard to correct those biases, but this begs the question of why we utilize a test that needs this kind of correction to be both diagnostic AND equitable to all applicants.

And while we recognize that standardized tests provide some efficiencies in processing the hundreds of thousands of applications that the UC receives annually, we do not believe that this is adequate justification for their use in light of the systemic demographic and class-based differences that are associated with these tests. And while we are also sensitive to the point made in the report about how GPA and grade-inflation may contribute to class-based

disadvantages, we also note the degree to which our current admissions processes consider and weigh multiple measures of achievement, again in the context of opportunity, through comprehensive review. We expect that admissions officers can still do the outstanding job that they do by reconfiguring their weighting schemes in the comprehensive review process. Indeed, given the relatively light weight admissions officers are currently giving standardized test scores, we expect that eliminating their use should be a feasible goal.

- 2) The Report's recommendation #6 advocated for the UC to develop a more appropriate assessment that measures the kinds of skills required to undertake and succeed in the UC curriculum. This test would potentially be developed with industry and/or philanthropic partners given the enormity of such an undertaking. This recommendation thus acknowledges the poor fit between the current standardized tests and the assessment that would capture what we would like to measure for admissions purposes.

While we concur that such an assessment would be a major advancement, the timeline, potential cost, and speculative nature as to whether it can even come to fruition, much less in the ambitious 9-year development and testing period, leads us to the conclusion that this cannot be the solution to the use of the current tests. Put simply, it is not clear that this plan can and/or will be undertaken especially in the current context of decreasing support for higher education. For that reason, we do not support this recommendation without a specific—and more expeditious—timeline for phasing out the current standardized test requirements for admissions.

In order to give admissions officers time to adjust, we would support a timeline that would not exceed 5 years for completion of that transition, in line with the recommendation made in the additional statement. This recommendation would provide sufficient time for campus admissions units to modify their comprehensive review procedures, and to provide adequate notice to high school counselors, high-schoolers, and their families about the modified criteria.

- 3) We noted in our discussion that we already have a model of admissions to the UC that does not rely upon standardized tests. That is, nearly one-third of UC's undergraduates are transfer students from California community colleges (CCCs) who are admitted based on completion of specified lower division courses and the GPA. There are several options for transfer admissions, both generally and to specific campuses, but none of them involve standardized tests as part of the eligibility or selection process (see <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/>). We view this as a potentially successful model to draw lessons from, given that the CCCs also represent considerable diversity in the level of resources, course offerings, and in the students and communities they serve.
- 4) We recognized that as more and more colleges and universities in the nation are going test-optional or abandoning the standardized test requirement completely, the UC risks losing more and more high-quality applicants who will have less incentive to take these tests given their alternatives that do not require the tests. Just as BOARS has recommended dropping the SAT/ACT essay portion of the standardized test, in part because of its declining use nationally, we expect that the broader turn from the general SAT and ACT tests will accelerate, making our requirement more anachronistic over time.



This potential effect will be especially impactful for poorer students and/or students who need to work in high school since preparing for and taking standardized tests has become exceptionally resource-intensive (both in time and money). In short, by maintaining this requirement in a context of decreasing use among our peers, we run the risk of further decreasing the diversity of our applicant and admit pools.

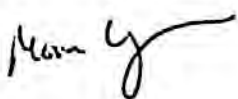
- 5) We had a few concerns with the analyses presented and suggest caution in over-interpreting their meaning. For instance, we note that in the analyses predicting different measures of success (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> year GPA, overall GPA, retention and completion rates), the risks seem to be very high among those with the very lowest test scores (who we think constitute a small group overall, based on other information in the report), then there is generally a tapering of the slope such that score differences are less predictive. This suggests to us that it would be worth probing more deeply into the potential unmeasured correlates to those scores, at least among that subset of admittees.

We cannot tell from these correlational analyses whether factors such as poverty, housing conditions (including the conditions for studying and sleeping), access to food and health care, work obligations, and so on, may produce both poorer standardized test scores and more difficulties in attending and succeeding in college. To the extent that the UC has a large population of students who are food insecure, housing insecure, and/or who are working beyond part-time to meet basic needs, it is incumbent upon us as a university to understand the human experiences that underlie and produce such correlations. This leads to our final concern.

- 6) As the report sets out in the introduction and really grapples with in Chapter IV, there are multiple ways we can think about what our goals are in undergraduate admissions, including identifying and admitting the most highly qualified applicants by the agreed-upon metrics we use, and/or the enhancement of the lives and opportunities for those in the state through access to the highest quality education. We think that the UC does an admirable job of balancing these goals, but also feel that it has further to go as the premiere public higher-education institution to ensure that the UC is the engine for mobility and success in the state. Given our mission as a public university, there remains much work before the UC freshman admit pool more fully represents the state's graduating high school population. While the standardized test requirement appears to be just one of many barriers to full representation, its continued use will nonetheless impede that goal.

Please let us know if you need any further information about our comments and suggestions regarding the use of standardized testing for undergraduate admissions.

Sincerely,



Mona Lynch  
Chair, UCAADE



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE (UCFW)  
Jean-Daniel Saphores, Chair  
[saphores@uci.edu](mailto:saphores@uci.edu)

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March 24, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Kum-Kum,

The University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) has read and discussed the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF). We commend the Task Force and the lead authors for their painstakingly thoughtful approach to a controversial and emotional topic, and for a conscientiously well-written and informative report. We understand that the Task Force was instructed to evaluate the use of standardized tests in admission decisions, but some also understood that its charge included recommending steps to make it easier for underrepresented minority applicants to be accepted to and enroll at UC. These two perspectives are not easily reconciled, and indeed, UCFW was unable to reach consensus.

Part of the committee agreed that the contextualized use of standardized tests adds predictive validity to academic success and helps to alleviate biases that seem inherent to standardized tests. Other UCFW members asserted that any metric that requires so much manipulation is not particularly useful, and that other metrics currently used for comprehensive reviews can provide equivalently useful data.

UCFW did agree with the Task Force that improving A-G access in California high schools, equalizing resources for California high schools, and broadening on-campus support for matriculated students are essential. We further suggest asking the state to pay for up-to-two opportunities for California high school students to take any required standardized tests, so long as such tests are required.

Sincerely,

Jean-Daniel Saphores, UCFW Chair

Copy: UCFW  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Academic Senate



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)  
John Serences, Chair  
jserences@ucsd.edu

Assembly of the Academic Senate  
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Phone: (510) 987-9466  
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March 17, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL STANDARDIZED  
TESTING TASK FORCE**

Dear Kum-Kum,

UCEP discussed the report and recommendations of the Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force during our March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The committee defers to the opinions of those with expertise on the use of standardized tests for admissions into UC. We would like to underscore the importance of a diverse and college-ready student body as well as a commitment to data-driven decisions and evidence-based practices. Members would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Task Force for their hard work on this important effort.

UCEP appreciates the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Serences", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Serences, Chair  
UCEP

## **2. Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing as a Requirement for Undergraduate Admission [INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/ACTION]**

On February 3, the Academic Council released for systemwide Senate review BOARS' recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement for undergraduate admissions.

(<https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/underreview/kkb-review-boars-sat-act-writing.pdf>)

BOARS made the recommendation after finding that no UC campus uses the tests in admission decisions;; that UC campuses represent 9 of the remaining 28 American institutions that still require one of the tests; and that the requirement has become a time and cost burden for students. At its April 1 meeting. Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and systemwide committees. There was strong and consistent support across divisions for the recommendation. Council voted unanimously to support the BOARS recommendation.

**ACTION REQUESTED: Endorse the BOARS/Council recommendation and forward to the President for transmittal as an Academic Senate recommendation to the Regents.**



320 STEPHENS HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

March 23, 2020

KUM-KUM BHAVNANI  
Chair, Academic Council

*Subject: Comments on the BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement*

Dear Kum-Kum,

On March 18, 2020, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division discussed the *Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement*. The Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) reviewed and provided comments (see attached). DIVCO was supportive of BOARS' recommendation and endorsed AEPE's letter.

AEPE stated that "taking this examination presents an extra cost to our applicants." In addition, AEPE explained that "the exam is also not an adequate measure of writing ability: as a timed writing experience, it does not duplicate the kinds of writing typically required at a University-level course, and thus the exam results are not predictive of success in college. Finally, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions reports that they find student scores on this exam of no use in admissions decisions."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Oliver O'Reilly'.

Oliver O'Reilly  
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Enclosures

cc: Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Vice Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Executive Director, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Ignacio Navarrette, Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE)



320 STEPHENS HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

March 12, 2020

OLIVER O'REILLY  
Chair, Berkeley Division  
Academic Senate

Re: AEPE comments on BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay  
Requirement

Dear Oliver,

At its meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>, AEPE discussed the BOARS proposal to eliminate the requirement that UC applicants take the writing portion of the SAT examination. AEPE supports this proposal. Taking this examination presents an extra cost to our applicants. While the College Board is working with school districts to offer the regular SAT exam during the school day, the writing portion will not be included in this new option, and thus high school students would have to register for an extra sitting of the SAT unless the recommended BOARS change is adopted. The exam is also not an adequate measure of writing ability: as a timed writing experience, it does not duplicate the kinds of writing typically required at a University-level course, and thus the exam results are not predictive of success in college. Finally, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions reports that they find student scores on this exam of no use in admissions decisions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ignacio Navarrete'.

Ignacio Navarrete  
Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education

Enclosure



*Kum-Kum Bhavnani*  
Telephone: (510) 987-9303  
Email: [kum-kum.bhavnani@ucop.edu](mailto:kum-kum.bhavnani@ucop.edu)

*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate  
Faculty Representative to the Regents  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

February 3, 2020

**CHAIRS OF SENATE DIVISIONS AND COMMITTEES:**

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Colleagues,

I am forwarding for systemwide Academic Senate review the attached proposal from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission.

Please note that the BOARS recommendation is distinct from the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) recommendations, but we are conducting a systemwide Senate review of both sets of recommendations simultaneously, to enable a more comprehensive conversation about the use of standardized testing at UC.

Please submit comments to the Academic Senate office at [SenateReview@ucop.edu](mailto:SenateReview@ucop.edu) by March 23, 2020 to allow us to compile and summarize comments for the Academic Council's April 1 meeting. As always, any committee that considers these matters outside its jurisdiction or charge may decline to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kum-Kum Bhavnani".

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Academic Council

Encl.

cc: Academic Council  
Senate Directors



**BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)**

**Eddie Comeaux, Chair**

[eddie.comeaux@ucr.edu](mailto:eddie.comeaux@ucr.edu)

Assembly of the Academic Senate

1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor

Oakland, CA 94607-5200

Phone: (510) 987-9466

Fax: (510) 763-0309

June 19, 2019

**ROBERT MAY, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Robert,

While the UC has appointed a Task Force to examine the utility of standardized testing this year, the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) has engaged in a more narrow review of the requirement for all applicants to the UC system to submit scores from the SAT Essay or ACT Writing Test. We recommend that the UC eliminate this requirement as soon as is feasible. Three key considerations led to this recommendation.

1. Nationally, the ACT/SAT essay exams have been virtually eliminated from the college admissions outside the UC. The UC campuses represent 9 of the 12 remaining institutions that still require the ACT Writing Test or SAT Essay. The need to sit for this exam adds time and cost-related burdens on California's students, and, and such, adds to other access barriers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. ACT/SAT essay exams, at present, do not adhere to [BOARS' general principles](#) for use of admissions tests by UC. We received uniform feedback from Admissions Directors across all nine campuses that scores from the ACT Writing Test and SAT Essay are not, and have not, been used for admissions decisions. Although the College Board has produced data showing that SAT essay scores may be associated with academic performance indicators, a case has not been made that there is incremental utility of the essay over and above other data available in the application.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there remain concerns about scoring criteria and validity of the tests (described below) that have dissuaded UC admissions officials from giving any weight to these scores. Ultimately, the essay examination requirement is serving no purpose in helping campuses make decisions about which students are best prepared to excel in the UC system.
3. The UC strongly values the ability of students to write well. Well-developed skills in written expression serve as a foundation for achievement in all areas of study, and the evaluation of writing competence should remain a priority in UC admissions. However, samples of writing produced within a time-limited, single sitting examination may not

<sup>1</sup> BOARS requested data and analyses on SAT essay exams to determine incremental validity.



reflect critical writing skills involving composition, reflection, and revision. BOARS recommends that the admissions review process attend to applicants' demonstrated strengths in written expression within other aspects of the application, such as performance in writing intensive courses.

In summary, the elimination of the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement will reduce burden on California students, mitigate concerns related to access among low-resourced applicants, and better align application requirements with actual admissions practice across the UC system. We note that applicants may still choose to take the SAT essay or ACT writing as these test scores may be used to satisfy UC's Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). We encourage all campus admissions committees to reflect upon and articulate how they evaluate applicant's writing ability in comprehensive review and to clearly convey this to applicants.<sup>2</sup>

Sincerely,

Eddie Comeaux  
BOARS Chair

cc: Members of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)  
Executive Director Baxter

---

<sup>2</sup> With the elimination of the SAT essay/ACT writing test requirement, BOARS would be required to reconstruct the Statewide Eligibility Index (similar to the 2013-14 BOARS adjusted Statewide Index). Note that the SAT Essay is not used in the Statewide Eligibility Index. The ACT English Arts (ELA) score (a composite of the English and Writing scores) is used in the Index.

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/california-residents/admissions-index/instructions.html>



DAVIS DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502  
(530) 752-2220  
academicsenate.ucdavis.edu

March 24, 2020

**Kum-Kum Bhavnani**  
Chair, Academic Council

**RE:** Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

Dear Kum-Kum:

The BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. Seven committees responded: Admissions and Enrollment (A&E), Affirmative Action and Diversity (AA&D), Courses of Instruction (COCI), General Education (GE), Preparatory Education (PE), Undergraduate Council (UGC), and the Faculty Executive Committee of the College of Letters and Science (L&S).

After thorough review, committees support the BOARS recommendation: To eliminate the requirement for all applicants to the UC system to submit scores from the ACT/SAT essay exams. The Davis Division therefore supports the BOARS recommendation.

The Davis Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin H. Lagattuta".

Kristin H. Lagattuta, Ph.D.  
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate  
Professor, Department of Psychology and Center for Mind and Brain

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

c: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

To: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

From: Deborah Swenson, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Enrollment

Date: February 11, 2020

Response to Request for Consultation: Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

Dear Kristin,

The Committee on Admissions and Enrollment has reviewed the RFC “Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement”.

Though writing skills are highly valued by faculty at UC, we note that the current testing requirement is not serving a useful purpose in the UC system. To begin, SAT Essay scores are not used to inform admissions decisions at any UC campus. Further, based on data analysis the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) decided to allow students to meet the UC Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) through benchmarks based on the new ACT ELA and SAT EBRW scores but not through the use of the new SAT Essay scores.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the imposition of the SAT Essay requirement creates an unusual admissions burden for its applicants, since the test is only required by 12 universities, which includes the 9 UC system campuses.

Since the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement imposes a burden on students and does not create any value in UC admissions or UC educational efforts, in their February 11, 2020 meeting CAE voted unanimously to support the BOARS recommendation.

Sincerely,  
Deborah Swenson

---

<sup>1</sup> SAT Task Force Report Appendix 1.

TO: Academic Senate Chair Lagattuta

RE: Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

The Affirmative Action and Diversity Committee (AA&D) has reviewed the BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement. The committee agrees with the recommendation.

# **Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

## **Courses of Instruction Committee Response**

**March 13, 2020**

The Committee on Courses of Instruction has discussed BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement. We appreciate the time and effort spent to provide these recommendations. As these topics are not directly relevant to our charge and are outside the expertise of our committee, we have no additional comment, but appreciate having been given the opportunity to opine.

To: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

From: A. Katie Stirling-Harris, Chair, General Education Committee

Date: March 10, 2020

Re: General Education Committee (GEC) response to the Request for Consultation: Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

The General Education Committee discussed the RFC regarding the recommendation by BOARS to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement for admissions to the UC system. The committee members agree with the recommendation. Some members pointed to the tests' very limited value in assessing students' writing skills; others pointed to the deleterious effects such tests can have on applicants coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

DRAFT

Date: March 17, 2020

To: Kristin H. Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

Re: RFC “Recommendation from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement.

The Preparatory Education Committee fully supports the recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing and SAT essay requirement. There is no evidence that such timed writing assessments have either diagnostic utility or predictive power – as most of American higher education and the UC system has long recognized in practice by not actually using the exams – and should be eliminated from consideration.

To: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

From: Katheryn N. Russ, Chair, Undergraduate Council

Date: March 4, 2020

Re: Undergraduate Council (UGC) response to the Request for Consultation: Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

The Undergraduate Council discussed the RFC: Review of the BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement and has no objection. Some members felt that this is not only a sensible, but a welcome direction for policy.

Although this item is being released and reviewed in tandem with the Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force, it covers a distinct item as it pertains solely to the UC essay requirement attached to the SAT or ACT test.

BOARs voted last academic year for the removal of the essay requirement since it is an additional hour test which costs students \$17 to take above the normal SAT fee, and it is not used to inform admissions decisions at any of the UC campuses. It is particularly desirable to eliminate cost barriers that might pose a hindrance to economically vulnerable populations.

Further, the UC system is a real outlier in requiring students to take this test. For the list of schools requiring or recommending the test, see: <https://blog.prepscholar.com/schools-that-require-the-sat-essay>.

The RFC pertains to use of the ACT/SAT Essay score to aid in admissions, not placement or satisfying the entry-level writing requirement. This response is meant to address only its use in admissions, not placement or satisfying the entry-level writing requirement.



# **Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

## **FEC: College of Letters and Science Committee Response**

**March 13, 2020**

The College of L&S FEC strongly supports dropping the ACT/SAT essay requirement as it is not being used in admission and is a potential barrier to application to UC by some potential students.

March 20, 2020

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Council Chair  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

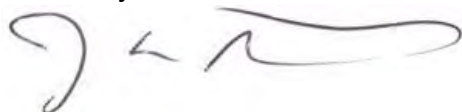
**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate ACT and SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Chair Bhavnani,

At its March 17, 2020 meeting, the Irvine Division Senate Cabinet reviewed the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the essay requirement from ACT/SAT testing for admissions. Irvine's Council on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools and Council on Educational Policy had also reviewed the recommendation. Based on discussions within both Councils and the Senate Cabinet, the Irvine Division supports this recommendation. Members agreed that since the essay was not utilized in admissions requirements, there was no compelling reason to continue the requirement.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



James Steintrager, Chair  
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

C: Jeff Barrett, Chair Elect, Academic Senate, Irvine Division  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Academic Senate  
Gina Anzivino, Assistant Director, Academic Senate, Irvine Division  
Brandon Haskey-Valerius, Cabinet Analyst, Academic Senate, Irvine Division



March 23, 2020

Kum-Kum Bhavnani  
Systemwide Academic Senate Chair

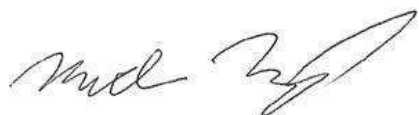
Re: BOARS Recommendation re the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test

Dear Chair Bhavnani,

The Divisional Executive Board met on March 5, 2020 and discussed the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) recommendation to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission. The Executive Board concurs with both the analysis and the final recommendation.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to opine on this issue. As is the divisional practice, we have appended all of the committee responses we received prior to the deadline to submit our response.

Sincerely,



Michael Meranze  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl. Committee responses

Cc: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Joseph Bristow, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate  
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate  
Mary Gauvain, Vice Chair, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Shane White, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate

March 9, 2020

Professor Michael Meranze  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: System wide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

Dear Chair Meranze,

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reviewed the Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement via email and at its March 9 meeting. Members support BOARS recommendations and have no further comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me at [passos@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:passos@humnet.ucla.edu) or the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion analyst, Annie Speights at [aspeights@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:aspeights@senate.ucla.edu) or ext. 53853.

Sincerely,



José Luiz Passos  
Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

cc: Members of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Annie Speights, Committee Analyst, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

# **UCLA** Academic Senate

Committee on International Education

---

March 5, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Jesse Clark, Chair  
Committee on International Education

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate ACT/ SAT Essay Requirements**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on International Education (CIE), discussed the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/SAT Essay requirement during its meeting on February 26, 2020. The committee does not support the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/ SAT Essay Test requirement. Members of the committee believe abolishing the writing testing requirement will greatly impact the English and Writing curriculum programs currently in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The committee believes that eliminating such curriculum, that “teaches to the test”, will limit yet another population of students from being able to answer and articulate well to the SAT/ ACT writing component as well as the UC personal insight questions. The committee suggest the UC System collaborate with our public high schools to identify a better method for teaching English within the public school system.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Jlclark@med.net.ucla.edu](mailto:Jlclark@med.net.ucla.edu) or the Committee’s analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzanakay@senat.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzanakay@senat.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on International Education

# **UCLA** Academic Senate

Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

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February 25, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Lynn Vavreck, Chair  
Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate ACT/ SAT Essay Requirements**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics (IAC), discussed the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/SAT Essay requirement during its meeting on February 25, 2020. The committee is in full agreement with the recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/ SAT Essay Test requirement for the same reasons stated in the letter from Eddie Comeaux, Chair of BOARS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [lvavreck@polisci.ucla.edu](mailto:lvavreck@polisci.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics

# UCLA Academic Senate

Committee on Teaching

---

March 6, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

Re: **Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate ACT/ SAT Essay Requirements**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Teaching discussed the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/SAT Essay requirement during its meeting on March 5, 2020. The committee was unanimous in support of the recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/ SAT Essay Test requirement for undergraduate admission. Given that scores from the ACT Writing test and the SAT Essay have not been used for admissions decisions and may not accurately reflect the writing abilities of applicants, removing this requirement appears to have no downside, but a substantive upside: California students will no longer be required to spend the time and money preparing for and taking the essay components of these tests.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jbisley@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:jbisley@mednet.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Sincerely,



James Bisley, Chair  
Committee on Teaching

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate, Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Academic Senate, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Teaching

# **UCLA** Academic Senate

Committee on Library & Scholarly Communication

---

March 5, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Derjung “Mimi” Tarn, Chair  
Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication

**Re: Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Taskforce**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) discussed the Systemwide Senate Review Report of the Standardized Testing Taskforce during its meeting on March 2, 2020.

The committee commends the Task Force for their thoroughness, as the report addressed all of the issues raised by committee members. The committee agrees with the recommendations outlined by the Standardized Testing Taskforce and strongly supports the goals of diversifying the student population and enhancing access.

Discussion focused on the need for additional research and studies to design better, less biased standardized tests. Committee members expressed concern about differential access to test preparation resources due to the costs of tutoring, and suggested that the University might consider taking a proactive role to address this issue by offering free test preparation for students. Making the test optional also deserves more in-depth research and studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [dtarn@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:dtarn@mednet.ucla.edu) or the Committee’s analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication



February 28, 2020

To: Michael Meranze, Chair  
Academic Senate

Re: **Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate ACT/ SAT Essay Requirements**

Dear Chair Meranze,

As you requested, the Academic Senate Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools (CUARS) discussed the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/SAT Essay requirement during its meeting on February 21, 2020. The committee is in full agreement with the recommendation to eliminate the ACT Writing/ SAT Essay Test requirement for the same reasons stated in the letter from Eddie Comeaux, Chair of BOARS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [knowlton@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:knowlton@psych.ucla.edu) or the Committee's analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu) or x62070.

Sincerely,



Barbara Knowlton, Chair  
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools

Cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
Joseph Bristow, Academic Senate Immediate Past Chair  
April de Stefano, Executive Director  
Members of the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions & Relations with Schools

3125 Murphy Hall  
410 Charles E. Young Drive East  
Los Angeles, California 90095

February 27, 2020

To: Michael Meranze  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Adriana Galván  
Chair, Undergraduate Council

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

---

Dear Chair Meranze,

The Undergraduate Council reviewed and discussed the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement for undergraduate admission at its meeting on February 14, 2020. Council members expressed general support for BOARS's recommendation.

Members were surprised to learn that the UC campuses represent 9 of the 12 remaining institutions that still require the ACT Writing Test or SAT Essay. Coupled with the fact that these tests have been found to be not predictive, the elimination of the ACT/SAT essay requirement seems long overdue.

In addition to supporting BOARS's exhortation to campus admission committees to reflect upon and articulate how they evaluate an applicant's writing ability in comprehensive review, members emphasized that the campus should focus on ensuring that our students are graduating from UCLA with strong writing skills.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment.

Sincerely,



Adriana Galván  
Chair, Undergraduate Council

cc: Lené Levy-Storms, Vice Chair, Undergraduate Council  
Aileen Liu, Committee Analyst, Undergraduate Council



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
TOM HANSFORD, CHAIR  
[senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343  
(209) 228-7930

**MARCH 23, 2020**

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: BOARS RECOMMENDATION TO ELIMINATE THE ACT/SAT ESSAY REQUIREMENT**

Dear Chair Bhavnani:

The BOARS recommendation to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test were distributed for comment to the standing Senate Committees and the School Executive Committees of the UC Merced Division.

At their March 18, 2020 meeting, members of the Merced Divisional Council unanimously endorsed the BOARS recommendation to remove the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test as soon as feasible.

Appended to this memo, you will find comprehensive comments from the Undergraduate Council (UGC), the Committee for Diversity and Equity (D&E), the School of Natural Sciences Executive Committee (SNS EC), and the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Executive Committee (SSHA EC).

The Merced Division thanks you for the opportunity to opine on this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Hansford".

Tom Hansford  
Chair, UCM Divisional Council

CC: Divisional Council  
SNS Executive Committee Chair Mitchell  
SSHA Executive Committee Chair Trounstein  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Fatima Paul, Interim Executive Director, Merced Senate Office

Encl (4)



*Kum-Kum Bhavnani*  
Telephone: (510) 987-9303  
Email: [kum-kum.bhavnani@ucop.edu](mailto:kum-kum.bhavnani@ucop.edu)

*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate  
Faculty Representative to the Regents  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

February 3, 2020

**CHAIRS OF SENATE DIVISIONS AND COMMITTEES:**

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Colleagues,

I am forwarding for systemwide Academic Senate review the attached proposal from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission.

Please note that the BOARS recommendation is distinct from the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) recommendations, but we are conducting a systemwide Senate review of both sets of recommendations simultaneously, to enable a more comprehensive conversation about the use of standardized testing at UC.

Please submit comments to the Academic Senate office at [SenateReview@ucop.edu](mailto:SenateReview@ucop.edu) by March 23, 2020 to allow us to compile and summarize comments for the Academic Council's April 1 meeting. As always, any committee that considers these matters outside its jurisdiction or charge may decline to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kum-Kum Bhavnani".

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Academic Council

Encl.

cc: Academic Council  
Senate Directors



**BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)**

**Eddie Comeaux, Chair**

[eddie.comeaux@ucr.edu](mailto:eddie.comeaux@ucr.edu)

Assembly of the Academic Senate

1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor

Oakland, CA 94607-5200

Phone: (510) 987-9466

Fax: (510) 763-0309

June 19, 2019

**ROBERT MAY, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Robert,

While the UC has appointed a Task Force to examine the utility of standardized testing this year, the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) has engaged in a more narrow review of the requirement for all applicants to the UC system to submit scores from the SAT Essay or ACT Writing Test. We recommend that the UC eliminate this requirement as soon as is feasible. Three key considerations led to this recommendation.

1. Nationally, the ACT/SAT essay exams have been virtually eliminated from the college admissions outside the UC. The UC campuses represent 9 of the 12 remaining institutions that still require the ACT Writing Test or SAT Essay. The need to sit for this exam adds time and cost-related burdens on California's students, and, and such, adds to other access barriers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. ACT/SAT essay exams, at present, do not adhere to [BOARS' general principles](#) for use of admissions tests by UC. We received uniform feedback from Admissions Directors across all nine campuses that scores from the ACT Writing Test and SAT Essay are not, and have not, been used for admissions decisions. Although the College Board has produced data showing that SAT essay scores may be associated with academic performance indicators, a case has not been made that there is incremental utility of the essay over and above other data available in the application.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there remain concerns about scoring criteria and validity of the tests (described below) that have dissuaded UC admissions officials from giving any weight to these scores. Ultimately, the essay examination requirement is serving no purpose in helping campuses make decisions about which students are best prepared to excel in the UC system.
3. The UC strongly values the ability of students to write well. Well-developed skills in written expression serve as a foundation for achievement in all areas of study, and the evaluation of writing competence should remain a priority in UC admissions. However, samples of writing produced within a time-limited, single sitting examination may not

<sup>1</sup> BOARS requested data and analyses on SAT essay exams to determine incremental validity.

reflect critical writing skills involving composition, reflection, and revision. BOARS recommends that the admissions review process attend to applicants' demonstrated strengths in written expression within other aspects of the application, such as performance in writing intensive courses.

In summary, the elimination of the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement will reduce burden on California students, mitigate concerns related to access among low-resourced applicants, and better align application requirements with actual admissions practice across the UC system. We note that applicants may still choose to take the SAT essay or ACT writing as these test scores may be used to satisfy UC's Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). We encourage all campus admissions committees to reflect upon and articulate how they evaluate applicant's writing ability in comprehensive review and to clearly convey this to applicants.<sup>2</sup>

Sincerely,

Eddie Comeaux  
BOARS Chair

cc: Members of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)  
Executive Director Baxter

---

<sup>2</sup> With the elimination of the SAT essay/ACT writing test requirement, BOARS would be required to reconstruct the Statewide Eligibility Index (similar to the 2013-14 BOARS adjusted Statewide Index). Note that the SAT Essay is not used in the Statewide Eligibility Index. The ACT English Arts (ELA) score (a composite of the English and Writing scores) is used in the Index.

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/california-residents/admissions-index/instructions.html>

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343  
(209) 228-7930

**March 9, 2020**

**To: Tom Hansford, Chair, Divisional Council**

**From: Undergraduate Council (UGC)  
Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee of UGC (AFAS)**

**Re: [BOARS Proposal to Eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test](#)**

Members of UGC and AFAS have reviewed the BOARS proposal to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admissions. We offer the following observations:

1. The test is obsolete, costly, and prevents some students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds from applying.
2. A consultation with the UCM Office of Admissions has revealed and confirmed that the test is not of much use in the admissions process and serves no purpose.
3. Effective written communication requires collecting and analyzing information, reviewing, re-writing, and proof-reading. This process cannot be accomplished in the very limited time available on the test. A timed test is not a good measure of writing skills.

We support the BOARS proposal to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test.

We appreciate the opportunity to opine.

Cc: UGC  
AFAS  
Senate Office



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
COMMITTEE FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343  
(209) 228-7930

**March 5, 2020**

**To: Tom Hansford, Senate Chair**

**From: Committee for Diversity and Equity (D&E)**

**Re: A proposal from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission**

The Committee for Diversity and Equity reviewed, at its meeting on March 2, 2020, the proposal by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admissions systemwide.

BOARS notes that: (1) this testing component has been mostly eliminated from college admissions outside the UC system, (2) it adds an access barrier to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, (3) these scores have not been used in UC admissions decisions in practice, and (4) the exam may not accurately reflect a student's writing skills due to the time-limited, single sitting format.

As the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement adds an unnecessary burden to applicants that does not ultimately factor in admissions decisions and generates an access barrier to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the Committee for Diversity and Equity supports the proposal by BOARS to eliminate this undergraduate admissions requirement.

The Committee for Diversity and Equity appreciates the opportunity to opine.

cc: D&E Members  
Fatima Paul, Interim Executive Director, Senate Office  
Senate Office





SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 N. LAKE ROAD BLDG A  
MERCED, CA 95343

March 6, 2020

To: Tom Hansford, Chair, Merced Division of the Academic Senate

From: Kevin Mitchell, Chair, Natural Sciences Executive Committee

Re: Systemwide Senate Review – BOARS Proposal to Eliminate ACT/SAT Essay Writing Test Requirement

The SNS Executive Committee has reviewed the BOARS proposal to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay writing test requirement for admissions. The reasons for eliminating this requirement are well articulated and compelling. We agree with their assessment and have nothing further to add.



FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR  
POLITICAL SCIENCE  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ARTS

JESSICA TROUNSTINE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343  
(209) 228-7742  
(209) 228-4007 FAX

To: Thomas Hansford, Chair, UC Merced Academic Senate

From: Jessica Trounstone, Acting Chair, SSHA Executive Committee

Date: March 6, 2020

**Subject: Proposal from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission.**

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The SSHA EC has reviewed the proposal to eliminate the SAT Essay and ACT Writing Test for undergraduate admission. We have several comments.

- 1) Proponents of the proposal assert that there are alternative manners of demonstrating strengths in written expression such as performance in writing intensive courses. However, we are concerned that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have equal access to such courses.
- 2) The proposal states that applicants may still choose to take the essay test to satisfy the UC's entry level writing requirement. However, given that one of the primary rationales for eliminating this portion of the test is that it adds burden to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Allowing the test to be optional could result in increased stratification regarding access to satisfying the ELWR.

In short, if the test under question satisfy entry requirements other than admission, then there is a danger that the proposed action may end up benefiting students from more affluent backgrounds.

We recommend clarification on the projected impact of the proposed action on the ability of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to satisfy the ELWR.

Additionally, we recommend increased information on the general level of access to writing intensive courses, if available.



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE  
RIVERSIDE DIVISION  
UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING, RM 225

DYLAN RODRIGUEZ  
PROFESSOR OF MEDIA & CULTURAL STUDIES  
RIVERSIDE, CA 92521-0217  
TEL: (951) 827-6193  
EMAIL: DYLAN.RODRIGUEZ@UCR.EDU

March 20, 2020

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair, Academic Council  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**RE: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Kum-Kum,

The UCR Division has reviewed the proposed BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement.

Executive Council discussed the responses of the standing committees at its regular meeting on March 9, 2020 and preferred to refrain from adding further comment. The responding committees either support the proposal or did not wish to express an opinion. A substantive comment was submitted by the Executive Committee of the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, which stressed that preparation for the exam places a disproportionate burden on historically underrepresented and socioeconomically vulnerable populations. Otherwise, the UCR Division's consultation yielded an almost unanimously supportive response.

Peace  
dylan

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dylan Rodríguez", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Dylan Rodríguez  
Professor of Media & Cultural Studies and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director of the Academic Senate  
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office



February 26, 2020

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Jingsong Zhang, Chair  
Committee on Preparatory Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jingsong Zhang", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.


Re: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT and ACT Essay Requirement

The Committee on Preparatory Education reviewed the recommendation for BOARS to eliminate the SAT and ACT Essay Requirement at their February 6, 2020 and February 26, 2020 meetings and do not anticipate the change having an obvious impact on the Entry Level Writing Requirement.



February 27, 2020

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Sheldon Tan, Chair   
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

Re: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT and ACT Essay Requirement

The Committee on Undergraduate admissions reviewed the recommendation for BOARS to eliminate the SAT and ACT Essay Requirement at their February 21, 2020 meeting and voted to support the recommendation.

March 2, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Louis Santiago, Chair, Executive Committee  
College of Natural and Agricultural Science



Re: Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay  
Requirement

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The CNAS Executive Committee discussed the Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement. The committee agreed that because this test has been eliminated from most other school admission criteria, because it is not used very much and possibly not valid, and because it does not reflect skills, that it was a good idea to eliminate its use. The committee noted that cost of preparation for this exam was a burden for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, and that there are other and likely better options if we still wanted a writing examination.



**COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

March 3, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriguez  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Xuan Liu, Chair  
Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Re: Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

The Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (CODEI) considered the proposal from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and supports the recommendation to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission.

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

FR: Richard M. Carpiano, Chair  
Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: Requested comments on “Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the  
ACT/SAT Essay Requirement”

Date: March 3, 2020

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The Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy appreciate the efforts of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) in preparing their proposed recommendation to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission. Our committee reviewed this proposal and have no comments to provide.



# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

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---

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

February 27, 2020

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Lucille Chia, Chair *Lucille Chia*  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

The CHASS Executive Committee discussed the Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement at the regular meeting on February 26, 2020. There were no objections and our committee approved the proposed recommendation.

March 3, 2020

To: Senate

From: School of Business Executive Committee

Re: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: Proposal: BOARS Recommendation to  
Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement: Distributed for Review: 2/5/20

Please let this memo serve as an official notification that the School of Business Executive Committee has no opinion regarding this topic.



March 6, 2020

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Stefano Vidussi, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stefano Vidussi".

Re: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT and ACT Essay Requirement

The Committee on Educational Policy reviewed the recommendation for BOARS to eliminate the SAT and ACT Essay Requirement at their March 6, 2020 meeting and voted to support the recommendation.



School of Medicine  
Division of Biomedical Sciences  
Riverside, CA, 92521

March 4, 2020

**To:** Dylan Rodriguez, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

**From:** Declan McCole, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

**Subject:** SOM FEC Comments on STTF Report and Recommendations

Dear Dylan,

The School of Medicine Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement at their February 27 meeting. SOM is in favor of eliminating the SAT Essay/ACT Writing test requirement for undergraduate admission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Declan McCole".

Declan F. McCole, Ph.D.  
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee  
School of Medicine



ACADEMIC SENATE  
Santa Barbara Division  
1233 Girvetz Hall  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3050

(805) 893-2885  
<http://www.senate.ucsb.edu>

Henning Bohn, Chair  
Debra Blake, Executive Director

March 20, 2020

To: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Academic Council

From: Henning Bohn, Chair  
Academic Senate

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Henning Bohn".

Re: BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

The Santa Barbara Division widely distributed BOARS' recommendation to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement. All seven of the responses that were submitted support this proposed change. However some groups emphasized related issues that should be taken into consideration

BOARS states that "the UC strongly values the ability of students to write well." Our Undergraduate Council (UgC) concurs and stresses the importance of communicating to applicants, their families, and the public that the proposed change is not an indication that the institution values writing skills any less. UgC believes that it is critical for campus admissions committees to heed BOARS' encouragement to "reflect upon and articulate how they evaluate applicant's writing ability in comprehensive review and to clearly convey this to applicants."

Meeting the specified minima for these examinations is one of the ways in which students may fulfill the UC Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). Though students have the option to sit for the Analytical Writing Placement Examination (AWPE), it also has documented flaws and is considerably more expensive for students than the ACT Writing Test or the SAT Essay exam (approximately \$100 versus less than \$20). Therefore, although the latter will no longer be mandatory, UC should clearly communicate to prospective applicants that successful completion of the ACT Writing Test or the SAT Essay exam remains an option for fulfilling the ELWR. UC has agreed to accept a score of 680 or better on the SAT, Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing to satisfy the ELWR, but this is currently only a pilot program and needs to be revisited by the University Committee on Preparatory Education.

The Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Relations with Schools (CAERS) has been aware of the plans to eliminate this requirement, and understands the rationale BOARS has presented. Although two CAERS members voted against the recommendation, it was supported by the rest of the committee.

BOARS' recommendation was also endorsed by the Committee on Diversity and Equity, Committee on International Education, and the Faculty Executive Committees of the College of Engineering, College of Letters and Science, and Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. Some of these groups echoed the concerns raised above by the Undergraduate Council.



1156 HIGH STREET  
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95064

Office of the Academic Senate  
SANTA CRUZ DIVISION  
125 CLARK KERR HALL  
(831) 459 - 2086

March 23, 2020

KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, Chair  
Academic Council

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Chair Bhavnani:

The Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate has completed its review of the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement. The Committees on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Admissions and Financial Aid, Planning and Budget, and Teaching participated in the review. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) also responded but provided no comment. The committees were unified in their support of the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement. CPB and CAFA point out that the essay plays no role in UCSC's admissions decisions, which resonates with CAAD's point- that there is no need to add additional barriers to entry for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly a test requirement. Finally, as CPB observes, only three institutions outside of the UC still require the ACT/SAT essay.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important piece of admissions policy. The short substantive responses are included herein for your reference.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Lau, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kimberly Lau".

Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Enc: CAAD Re:Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force and the BOARS Recommendation to  
Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement  
CAFA Re:Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay  
Requirement  
CPB Re:Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement  
COT Re:Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT/ACT Essay  
Requirement

cc: Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget



March 20, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force and the BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD) reviewed the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF), the STTF minority statement, and David M. Smith's research on the statistical advantage of a "top sitting" reporting policy for students who take the SAT multiple times. CAAD also reviewed the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement.

Report of the Standardized Testing Task Force

CAAD raises the following questions and comments:

1. How can the ELC pathway be expanded allowing for the admission of more students (Report of the STTF, Pg. 6, Section 2), before first analyzing the admissions process to identify where disproportionate declines in underrepresented students occur (Report of the STTF, Pg. 6, Section 3), and expanding student academic support services (Report of the STTF, Pg. 6, Section 4)? It seems unwise to admit more students unless and until we have identified and acquired the necessary resources to successfully support them throughout their college careers.
2. Does assessment for admission include any non-quantitative indicators of success, such as involvement in extracurricular activities, commitment, perseverance and work ethic? Are admissions interviews ever conducted, and if not, would that be something the university might consider for some applicants?
3. CAAD supports the report's recommendation to develop a new admissions assessment to replace standardized tests. Standardized testing stands as a barrier to entry for students in several respects, including the resources (time, money, transportation) needed to participate in the standardized test taking process. Many students may be discouraged from applying to college due to the standardized testing requirement.
4. The report notes that while standardized test scores are a flawed means of assessment, it appears that the UC system has used them in a reasonable way as one factor reviewed amongst others in admissions. CAAD is hesitant to support the minority opinion of phasing out use of standardized test scores in admissions, prior to the development of a new suite of assessments to replace them, without further information about what would be used to assess applicants in the interim. Without that information, CAAD is concerned that new inequities would be introduced into the process. For instance, placing greater importance on high school GPA in the absence of standardized test scores would not account for the varying grading standards across California schools (Report of the STTF, Pg. 4).
5. It would be beneficial to have more information on how the admitted applicant pool would be affected before removing standardized test scores as an assessment factor. One suggestion: run a simulated admissions cycle using past years' data without taking standardized scores into

account. Further, measures beyond performance in the first year need to be considered. It is well known that URM students struggle in the adjustment period of the first year.

6. Until a new assessment suite is developed to replace standardized test scores, CAAD supports averaging test scores when assessing students who have taken the ACT or SAT multiple times, rather than taking the highest score of multiple sittings. As noted in David M. Smith's research on this subject, students who can afford to take a standardized test multiple times wind up with an average increase in their test score when only the top score is assessed. Taking the average of multiple scores would help reduce the disadvantage of students who are only able to take the test once.
7. CAAD questions whether the scope of the inquiry into our use of standardized test scores should be expanded to address systemic inequalities that start much earlier on. One of the largest barriers to student success in college is attending underfunded K-12 schools. To truly even the playing field for UC applicants, the larger issue of funding disparities in California public schools must be examined.

#### BOARDS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement

CAAD endorses the BOARS recommendation. If ACT/SAT essay scores are not being used at UC campuses for admissions decisions, then this should not be a requirement for applicants. As noted in the recommendation, with other time and cost burdens already placed on California college applicants, there is no need to add additional barriers to entry, particularly ones that most affect students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond on this matter.

Sincerely,

\s\

Elizabeth Abrams, Chair  
Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Jeremy Hourigan, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

March 13, 2020

KIMBERLY LAU, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Kim,

During its meeting of March 4, 2020, the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) discussed recommendation from the systemwide Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement for undergraduate admission. CAFA understands the arguments presented by BOARS and agrees with them and would like to emphasize that UCSC does not consider the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test in any part of its admissions decisions.

Sincerely,

/s/

David Smith, Chair  
Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

cc: Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching

February 20, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

**Re: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test Requirement  
Systemwide Review of the Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF)**

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed both reports regarding BOAR's proposal to eliminate the SAT essay/ACT Writing Test Requirement, and the report and recommendations of the Academic Council Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF).

We endorse the Standardized Testing Task Force's (STTF) recommendation to retain the requirement that prospective University of California students must submit standardized test scores. Even after admission, standardized tests are a valuable tool to place students at the appropriate level in writing and mathematics courses:

- Students can satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) by obtaining a suitable score in standardized tests. Students who do not satisfy ELWR by this method can take the UC Analytical Writing Placement Examination (AWPE). Our experience is that students who are required to take the AWPE sometimes do not do so and have to take an ELWR course at UC, perhaps unnecessarily. The practical result of channeling all students through the AWPE will be an increase in the number of students who have to unnecessarily take an ELWR course, which is bad for the students and expensive for the university.
- In introductory mathematics (calculus) courses, data analysis shows that standardized test scores are the best predictor of how well a UC Santa Cruz student will do in a course, i.e. which course they should be placed in. Of course, as with the AWPE, we provide students with an alternative placement examination in case their standardized test scores are not truly reflective of their level. But considering the well-known high impact of delay in the introductory mathematics sequence, it would be foolish to deny students the opportunity to use their standardized test scores to test into a higher-level class.

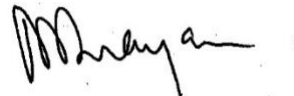
We note the STTF's conclusion that the use of standardized test scores in a holistic context allows possible negative aspects of these tests to be controlled, and that the lower than expected percentage of underrepresented minorities at UC is due to other factors. Thus, removing standardized test scores will make little difference to the admission process and harm the student's post-matriculation.

CEP also notes the STTF's recommendation to study and expand student academic support services, report on existing programs and then evaluate them, followed by designing and evaluating new support programs. This seems a long and laborious process. At least at UC Santa

Cruz, it is evident to us that students need more academic support, both for the strongest students — through a well-designed honors program — and the weakest. While we should certainly see what works most effectively elsewhere, we do not think that we need such a long chain of steps before anything is done.

CEP has no comments on the recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay requirement.

Sincerely,



Onuttom Narayan  
Chair, Committee on Educational Policy

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity  
Don Smith, Chair, Graduate Council  
Jeremy Hourigan, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

March 16, 2020

Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate

**RE: Systemwide Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the SAT/ACT Essay Requirement**

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Teaching (COT) reviewed the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) recommendation to eliminate the SAT/ACT writing requirement on March 10, 2020. The BOARS memo makes a compelling case for eliminating this requirement, given that it is not currently used in admissions decisions. We are supportive of the elimination of this requirement given the lack of benefit to the admissions process and the unnecessary burden it places on students applying for admission to UCSC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen Callanan".

Maureen Callanan, Chair  
Committee on Teaching

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid  
Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity  
Onuttom Narayan, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

March 13, 2020

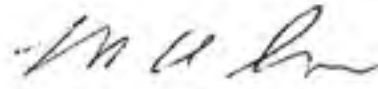
Kimberly Lau, Chair  
Academic Senate

**RE: Review of BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT Essay Requirement**

Dear Kim,

At its meeting of February 27, 2020, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the proposal from the systemwide Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to eliminate the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test requirement. The report presented three compelling considerations, including that 1) only three institutions outside of the UC still require the ACT Writing Test or SAT essay, 2) our own UC admissions officials do not consider the scores given concerns about scoring criteria and validity, and 3) strengths in written expression can be better assessed through other aspects of the application. Given these considerations, CPB supports the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the SAT essay/ACT Writing Test requirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Schumm', is positioned above the typed name.

Bruce Schumm, Chair  
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: CAAD Chair Abrams  
CEP Chair Narayan  
COT Chair Callanan



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

9500 GILMAN DRIVE  
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92093-0002  
TELEPHONE: (858) 534-364  
FAX: (858) 534-4528

March 25, 2020

Professor Kum-Kum Bhavnani  
Chair, Academic Senate  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) Recommendations

Dear Professor Bhavnani:

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) Recommendations were circulated to standing Senate committees for review. Responses were received from the Divisional Committee on Admissions. The recommendations and the Committee's response were discussed at the Divisional Senate Council meeting on March 16, 2020. Senate Council endorsed the report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Maripat Corr".

Maripat Corr, Chair  
San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

Cc: Steven Constable, Vice Chair, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate  
Ray Rodriguez, Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate  
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate  
Robert Pomeroy, Chair, Committee on Admissions  
Ashley Welch, Senate Analyst  
Lori Hullings, Associate Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate





UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, DIVERSITY,  
AND EQUITY (UCAADE)  
Mona Lynch, Chair  
lynchm@uci.edu

ACADEMIC SENATE  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200

March 20, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI**  
**CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**Re: UCAADE's Comments on BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT/SAT  
Essay Requirement**

Dear Kum-Kum,

I am writing on behalf of the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) to express the committee's strong support for the BOARS recommendation to eliminate the ACT/SAT essay writing tests as part of the standardized testing requirements for UC admissions.

Our committee concurs with BOARS that this test does not sufficiently aid in the admissions process, especially in light of the increased resource costs to applicants that are associated with taking this additional test. Moreover, given that these assessments are very rarely used in undergraduate admissions by institutions outside of the UC system, our applicants are especially burdened by this requirement.

Mona Lynch  
Chair, UCAADE



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (UCAF)  
Sarah Schneewind, Chair  
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February 5, 2020

**KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC SENATE**

**RE: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL STANDARDIZED  
TESTING TASK FORCE AND THE PROPOSAL FROM THE BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND  
RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS TO ELIMINATE THE SAT ESSAY/ACT WRITING TEST  
REQUIREMENT FOR UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION**

Dear Kum-Kum,

The Task Force report is convincing, their recommendations are reasonable, and BOARS does not make a case that could change either of those things. UCAF endorses the report and its conclusions, with admiration for the careful scholarly work and deep ethical concern that went into it. UCAF appreciates the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Schneewind*

Sarah Schneewind, Chair  
UCAF

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT**

- Janet Napolitano

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PROVOST**

- Michael T. Brown

**VII. (CONTINUED) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**A. Academic Council**

- Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair

**3. Nomination and election of the Vice Chair of the 2020-2021 Assembly [ACTION]**

Senate Bylaw 110.A., which governs the election of the Vice Chair of the Assembly, states: “The Assembly elects a Vice Chair who is a Senate member from a Division other than that of the incoming Chair, to assume office the following September. The Academic Council submits a nomination. Further nominations may be made by the Assembly members from the floor, and on written petition by twenty-five Senate members. The Vice Chair also serves as Vice Chair of the Academic Council. The following year the Vice Chair becomes Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council. Neither the Chair nor the Vice Chair may serve as a Divisional Representative.”

In accordance with Bylaw 110.A, the Academic Council submits its nomination of Professor Robert Horwitz of UC San Diego as 2020-2021 Assembly Vice Chair. Professor Horwitz was selected as the Council’s nominee at its April 1, 2020 meeting. His qualifications and personal statement are as follows:

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**Robert Britt Horwitz**  
**Department of Communication**  
**University of California, San Diego La Jolla, CA 92093-0503**

**Education**

Ph.D. in Sociology, Brandeis University, 1983.  
A.B. with honors in Social Thought and Institutions, Stanford University, 1974.  
California public schools K-12.

**Major university service and professional experience**

2018-19	Chair of the divisional Academic Senate, UCSD.
2017-18	Vice-chair of the divisional Academic Senate, UCSD.
2013-15	Committee on Academic Personnel; Chair 2014-15.
2008-11	Co-Director, Thurgood Marshall College Dimensions of Culture Core Curriculum and Writing Program, UCSD.
2004-06, 2001-02, 1992-95	Chair, Department of Communication, UCSD.
1995-96	Fulbright Research Scholar at the University of Cape Town. Member of South African National Telecommunications Policy Project Executive Team under Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Z. Pallo Jordan.

**Scholarship**

**Books**

*America's Right: Anti-establishment Conservatism from Goldwater to the Tea Party* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013).

*Communication and Democratic Reform in South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

*The Irony of Regulatory Reform: The Deregulation of American Telecommunications* (Oxford University Press, 1989).

### **Most recent articles**

"Politics as Victimhood; Victimhood as Politics." *Journal of Policy History* Vol. 30, No. 2 (Spring 2018).

"The Politics of Pity – A Response to Wolfgang Streeck's 'Trump and the Trumpists'." *Inference: International Review of Science* (Vol. 3, No. 2, 2017).

**Graduate advising:** Chair/co-chair of 16 completed PhDs (another 6 in process).

### **Statement of Challenges and Priorities**

The University of California, in theory, may be the closest thing to a democratically governed institution as you will find. Shared governance is unusual in American universities, yet it is crucial to the UC and I would argue that in no small measure it is what has made UC and its mission successful. Mind, I am not a starry-eyed naif. I recognize that the Academic Senate is often the junior partner in the complex relationship of governance. I know that most of the time the Regents and the administration set the overall agenda, although the Academic Senate has been delegated the responsibility for education and conferring degrees. In these governance processes, faculty participation in policy-making – thoughtful, deliberate, and, yes, sometimes slow – is crucial, and its judgments most often correct.

When the administration engages the faculty in an early, open, and consultative way, the process of shared governance goes well. When the administration confers with the Senate as an afterthought, the process often does not go well, and, frankly, the initiatives are usually worse for it. A crucial job of Senate leadership is to remind the administration of the importance and value of faculty participation and input, and to defend/promote the Senate's part in shared governance. All this is prologue to a pledge to try make shared governance more robust. This is now more important than ever given the unknown impact on the University posed by Covid-19. The Senate must make sure that the central values of a public university are defended and bolstered in this unprecedented moment. I would not stand for election if I did not believe in the relevance and importance of the shared governance process. My career at UCSD, now going on 38 years, is marked by this belief. I have served as department chair, director of a college core curriculum, chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel, and chair of the divisional Senate.

One of the ways to make shared governance more vigorous for the Academic Senate to insert itself more directly into the policy agenda of the UC, locally and systemwide. For example, San Diego and other UC campuses have begun to do this with regard to the climate crisis, one of the most important issues of our time. We are actively engaged in an effort to press our campus to move beyond carbon neutrality and to implement de-carbonization in policies and practices, and integrate the climate issue into research and teaching. I am cheered that systemwide Senate committees and Academic Council are part of this effort. We should be engaged in other issues, such as the morale problem of Health Sciences Clinical X faculty and UC-affiliated physicians in the medical centers and hospitals. We should endeavor to better integrate Teaching Professors and Unit-18 Lecturers into the academic community of the University.

Other issues that I see will be before the Senate include, for example, the need to help the Regents understand how and why the UC, as a *research* university, is so different from the CSU. Among other

things, this means aggressively defending graduate education and graduate students. The recent events at UC Santa Cruz show that the TA wage does not allow graduate students to live in their academic communities, and underscores the need for the Senate proactively to develop policies to help them fulfill their obligations in the research and teaching mission of the UC. There is insight to be obtained by campuses that are moving towards different and hopefully better funding models for graduate education. Of course, this is largely contingent on the Regents and Legislature funding graduate education properly. Another issue is online education. Online education may be viewed as a way to disseminate knowledge by UC – and online is clearly amplified by the climate crisis and the Covid-19 situation. But online education must be done right and for the right reasons: the pedagogical justification must be foremost.

Let me end this letter by pointing to a related challenge that we face: being better at communicating what we do and highlighting the importance of the Senate to our own constituencies. At UCSD, the percentage of voting faculty in Senate elections is at best 25 percent. I imagine something like this number holds for the other campuses. Better communication about the Senate and greater participation by the faculty would, I hope, both improve faculty engagement and raise the Senate's standing in the power calculus of shared governance. I am not sure how to do this, but we need to try. I am honored to be asked to put myself forward as a candidate for Vice-chair. I will serve if elected.

**ACTION REQUESTED: The Assembly is asked to elect the 2020-2021 Assembly Vice Chair**

#### **4. Ratification of the 2020 Oliver Johnson Award [ACTION]**

The Oliver Johnson Award for Service to the Academic Senate is given biennially to a member or members of the UC faculty who has performed outstanding service to the Senate. Its broader goal is to honor, through the award to the recipient, all members of the faculty who have contributed their time and talent to the Senate.

Nominations for the award are made through Divisional Committees on Committees to the Universitywide Committee on Committees (UCOC). UCOC, in turn, submits the names of two nominees to the Academic Council. At its March 21 meeting, the Academic Council chose to honor both Robert Powell (UCD) and Manuela Martins-Green (UCR) with the 2020 Oliver Johnson Award. The Assembly is asked to ratify the Academic Council's choice of recipients.

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Re: Oliver Johnson Award Nominations

Dear Kum-Kum:

The University Committee on Committees (UCOC) is nominating Professor Robert Powell (UCD) and Professor Manuela Martins-Green (UCR) for the 2020 Oliver Johnson Award for Distinguished Leadership in the Academic Senate. We selected these two names from a handful of nominations, all of which reflected extraordinary service on both the divisional and systemwide level, as well as stellar records of academic achievement.

#### **Robert Powell (UCD)**

More information on Professor Powell can be found in the enclosed letter from the Davis Division. Some highlights of his Senate service:

Professor Powell began his Senate service in 1988 as member of the Divisional Research Committee, became its Chair in 1989, and served in that capacity until 1992. He subsequently became involved in

budget issues at Davis and has served on its Committee on Planning and Budget, including a year as Chair. In 2003 he was elected to the Divisional Committee on Committees, which he chaired in 2005. He became Vice Chair of the Divisional Senate in 2006 and Chair in 2008. He was re-appointed Chair in 2010. In 2009 he co-chaired the Committee on the Future of UC Davis.

At the local level, Professor Powell chaired the Davis Academic Senate for three years (2008-2011). He served as chair for three years and led the Senate at a crucial time of then Chancellor Katchi's transition. He also co-chaired the search committee for a new Provost and led the development of a structure for streamlining course approvals, which is now being operationalized. In addition, he also took charge and developed a Senate briefing book for incoming President Napolitano, a work that to this day lays out the importance and critical role of self-governance in promoting UC excellence.

At the UC System level Professor Powell served as Vice Chair (2011-2012) and Chair (2012-2013) of the University-wide Academic Senate and he was one of the two Faculty Representatives to the Board of Regents. In 2012-2013, he chaired the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) which coordinates activities among the three public higher education segments in California.

### **Manuela Martins-Green (UCR)**

More information on Professor Martins-Green can be found in the enclosed letter from the Riverside Division. Some highlights of her Senate service:

Professor Martins-Green's record of continuous Academic Senate service began in 1999, when she was an assistant professor. As detailed on the attached short CV, she has served a number of important and influential roles (e.g., Chair) on Committee on Committees, the Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity (CODEO), the Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity, committees on Campus Climate and Communication, and Faculty Welfare.

As chair of the Riverside division of the Academic Senate (2004-2006), Martins-Green successfully transformed the structure of the UCR Academic Senate office from what past chair of the UC Academic Senate George Blumenthal describes as "the weakest in the system" to one that was adequately staffed by systemwide standards, more functional, and "vibrant even many years after her term ended." As Senate chair, "she changed the culture" by bringing more resources and staff to the Senate office (e.g., increasing FTE from 2 to 5.5) and by elevating the visibility of the UCR Senate to the UCR administration and the systemwide Senate in multiple ways. She ensured that CODEO had a permanent position in the Executive Council and sufficient role within the Division and moved the Committee on Academic Personnel from within the VPAP office; this significant shift enabled the Senate to take "full ownership of its responsibilities within the merit and promotion process" and inaugurated a "resurgence of Senate activities at UCR" that motivated junior faculty to become more involved in shared-governance activities. For her effective efforts to substantively improve the welfare of UCR faculty, Martins-Green was awarded the 2008 Distinguished Service Award for the UCR campus.

Martins-Green's commitment to diversification of the professoriate is evident in her various roles as member and chair of the CODEO (2009-11, 2014-17), the UC-wide Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (UCAAD, 2012-4), and member of the Faculty Welfare Committee (2019-22). Not only did she initiate many changes that improved the welfare of the UCR faculty over the course of her service, she also successfully advocated for expanding the UC President Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) and developed the UCR Postdoctoral Association. The expansion of the PPFP "has helped advance faculty diversity on all of the [UC] campuses" and the establishment of the UCR Postdoctoral Association contributed to "ensuring all members of the University community are treated fairly."

Enclosed are Professors Powell and Martins-Green's nomination materials, as submitted by their respective Divisions. If you have any questions about these nominees, please let me know.

Best,  
Pamela M. Ling  
Chair, University Committee on Committees

**ACTION REQUESTED: The Assembly is asked to ratify the 2018 Oliver Johnson Awardees**

**VIII. UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY WELFARE REPORT**

- Jean-Daniel Saphores, Chair, University Committee on Faculty Welfare

**IX. SPECIAL ORDERS**

- A. Consent Calendar [NONE]

**X. REPORTS ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES [NONE]**

**XI. PETITIONS OF STUDENTS [NONE]**

**XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS [NONE]**

**XII. NEW BUSINESS**