

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**                      **ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**November 4, 2016**

**I.      Consent Calendar**

- Approval of BOARS November 4, 2016 agenda
- Approval of BOARS October 7, 2016 draft minutes

**ACTION: BOARS approved the consent calendar.**

**II.     Announcements**

- *Henry Sanchez, BOARS Chair*

October Academic Council Meeting: A portion of the October Council meeting was set aside for a joint meeting with the Council of Vice Chancellors that focused on the consequences of adding 5,000 undergraduates to UC campuses in fall 2016, and 2,500 more in each of the next two years, without sufficient per student marginal cost funding support from the state. Senior UC leaders also previewed budget discussions scheduled for the November and January Regents meetings. The President noted that the University's long-term fiscal health depends on expanding the traditional two-part revenue model involving state support and tuition, to a four-part model involving philanthropy and entrepreneurship.

Area "d" Work Group: Chair Sanchez has asked the Senate to appoint three additional faculty members from Computer Science departments to the Area "d" Work Group. The Work Group was empaneled last year to review UC's laboratory science ("d") undergraduate admissions requirement, and to revise it, as needed, to align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Chair Sanchez hopes the computer science faculty will help focus efforts on ways area "d" might be more inclusive of computer science. The Work Group will begin meeting this fall.

County Office Education Meeting: Chair Sanchez spoke to the California Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee Science Subcommittee, a group that brings together County Office of Education science specialists, about UC's work to align the "a-g" criteria with the NGSS and the Common Core standards.

**III.    Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership**

- *Jim Chalfant, Academic Senate Chair*

Enrollment Funding Concerns: The University enrolled 5,900 new undergraduates last year, well above the 5,000 target mandated in the agreement with the Governor. However, the state is funding the new enrollments at only \$7,400 per student, well short of the \$10,000 marginal cost figure used in the past, and it expects UC to meet full marginal cost by redirecting money from funds UC previously used for nonresident financial aid. The Academic Council is concerned that UC will be unable to absorb new enrollments without further harming educational quality.

Joint Council/COVC Meeting: At their joint meeting in October, the Academic Council and the Council of Vice Chancellors discussed challenges associated with the additional enrollments, alternative revenue strategies, and the need to restore and enhance educational quality. Council members expressed concern that the state is providing UC with fewer resources and accepting a lower level of quality just as the University is opening its doors to more under-represented groups. They also noted that it is more difficult to make a case for declining quality when UC's national rankings remain high.

Upcoming Regents Meetings: In November, the Regents will discuss a preliminary 2017-18 UC budget focused on expenditures. Budget discussions will continue in January when the Regents review a proposed policy on nonresident enrollment and a possible tuition adjustment. Chair Chalfant has asked the University Committee on Planning and Budget to discuss a possible Council position on nonresident enrollment for Council's review in December.

UCEP Report: Chair Chalfant has forwarded Provost Dorr a [report](#) from the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) on the Credit by Examination option, which provides a way for students to earn credit for a course based on their performance on an exam. The report recommends best practices to help eliminate inconsistencies in the way campuses apply the option.

International Thinking Day: The UC chancellors are organizing an "International Thinking Day" in March to discuss a range of issues associated with the internationalization of the University, including international relationships and research partnerships, potential joint PhDs with foreign institutions, and ways to promote education abroad among undergraduates.

Travel Risk Management: UCOP wants to improve its ability to locate faculty and students traveling abroad to better assist them in the event of an emergency. UCOP will be encouraging faculty to register their international itineraries with iJet, a risk services company that provides health and safety information for travelers. UCOP will also propose a registration requirement when students are involved in travel.

Transfer: Chair Chalfant recently met with Senate faculty colleagues at CCC and CSU to discuss ways to further improve the transfer path from the community colleges to the four-year universities. One idea is to develop an associate degree for transfer (AD-Ts) based on UC Transfer Pathways for majors like chemistry that do not fit into the 60-unit cap currently used for AD-Ts.

#### **IV. Campus Reports/Issues**

BOARS members briefed the committee on the issues being discussed by their admissions committees. Several members noted that their committees used initial fall meetings to bring new members up to speed on campus and systemwide admissions issues.

- The Berkeley AEPE is analyzing outcomes from a new checklist of non-cognitive personal qualities implemented for fall 2016 admissions that are intended to help application reviewers evaluate evidence of leadership, love of learning, cross-cultural engagement,

creativity, and other factors, in order to make finer distinctions between candidates. AEPE is also reviewing outcomes from its new student-athlete admissions policy.

- The UCSD admissions committee is discussing the need to maintain the integrity of its student-athlete admissions process and its strong academic outcomes, in the context of UCSD's possible move to D-I athletics.
- UCSC is considering a new policy that would limit admission into impacted majors.
- UCD is planning to return to an 8-point holistic review scale after finding that its new 14-point scale doubled the number of third reads required by policy. UCD requires a third (human) read when the predicted holistic review score that is based on an initial computer analysis of the application differs by more than one point with the holistic score in the second (human) read.
- The UCM committees on admissions and enrollment management are working together on a strategy for recruiting and enrolling enough academically strong students to meet the growth goals of the Merced 2020 Plan.
- UCR plans to analyze admission criteria for transfers and their success at UCR to better understand the impact of GPA cut-offs established by specific majors and colleges. The committee also wants to work more closely with admissions staff on outreach, and identify statistics UCR can use to advertise the relative bargain of a UC education.
- To address concerns that some CCC transfers arrive unprepared for upper division work in the sciences, the UCSB committee is studying the possibility of admitting transfers by major in some science programs.
- UCI is discussing the effects of the enrollment surge on campus infrastructure, particularly laboratory space, and on faculty and administrative workload. The Committee is also planning a joint effort with sister Senate committees on the topic of student success.
- The graduate student representative noted that students are concerned about how enrollment growth could affect the University's quality and reputation. He also noted that through his work with UC Scout, he has received inquiries from high schools expressing concern about UC's policy that online high school visual & performing arts course courses cannot meet the VPA ([area "f"](#)) requirement.

## **V. Consultation with UCOP**

- *Robin Holmes-Sullivan, Vice President for Student Affairs*
- *Stephen Handel, Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Director of Undergraduate Admissions*

Personnel Changes: UC Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions Han Mi Yoon-Wu has been promoted to the position of Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and Robin Holmes-Sullivan has joined UCOP as the new Vice President for Student Affairs. Ms. Holmes-Sullivan comes to UC from the University of Oregon, where she served as Vice President of Student Life.

Transfer Application Deadline: The President has authorized an extension of the transfer student application deadline for fall 2017 admissions. The final deadline for transfer applications will be extended to January 3, 2017 for most majors, except those announced as closed in December. November 30 is still the freshman admission deadline and November 1–30 remains the priority-filing period for both freshman and transfer applicants. UC estimates that 98% of majors will not close.

UC For You: “UC For You” is a recruitment program derived from the process for identifying students possibly eligible for an admissions guarantee through the Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) program. Each year, UC collects information from high schools identifying potential members of the ELC cohort and sends a letter notifying them they are in the top 15% of their school, encourages them to apply to UC, and invites them to attend a “UC For You” event on a campus throughout October. About 7,000 students attended a UC For You event this year.

Transfer Pathways: During the past two years, UC faculty met in groups to identify systemwide transfer-preparation course sequences for 21 popular majors. Today the 21 UC Transfer Pathways cover about 2/3 of total transfer majors. Now UCOP has turned the focus of the initiative to an analysis of articulation gaps between specific community colleges and the nine undergraduate UC campuses for courses in the 21 Pathways. UC faculty have addressed close to 75% of the gaps for the first ten Pathways. UCOP will return to the Senate, as needed, for guidance about closing gaps in Pathways with more complicated issues.

Discussion: A BOARS member urged UC to send clear messages to transfer students about the extension of the application deadline, to help avoid instances in which an applicant may find their intended major closed on December 1. It was also noted that UC’s inability to verify the instructional mode of a CCC course (online or in person) in a Transfer Pathway has led some UC faculty to reject articulation requests over concerns about identity verification and academic integrity in CCC online courses.

## **VI. Joint Meeting with Campus Admission/Enrollment Leaders**

Campus Admissions Directors and AVCs for Enrollment Management joined BOARS on the phone to discuss the President’s request for 1) a systemwide Senate policy on Letters of Recommendation (LOR), and 2) a Senate review of the “Compare Favorably” policy for nonresident admission. All campuses were represented on the call.

Letters of Recommendation: No campus expressed support for a policy that would require all applicants to submit LORs as a condition of admission. Several admissions directors and AVCs expressed concern about the operational burden associated with a systemwide LOR requirement. Last year, more than 200,000 individual students applied to an average of four UC campuses each. A systemwide LOR requirement would oblige campuses to hire more readers and develop additional “norming” training. The new policy would also increase high school counselor workload.

Directors/AVCs noted that a LOR requirement could compromise the fairness of the admissions process. The counselor resources available to California high school students vary dramatically by high school and income level, and a LOR requirement could hurt students from low-resourced public high schools with fewer counselors, and in turn create additional advantages for students who attend well-resourced private schools that are more accustomed to producing good letters. The college application process is already challenging for first-generation students, and LORs could add a new barrier.

Several Directors/AVCs spoke in favor of maintaining consistent application requirements and procedures for all UC campuses. They noted that different requirements would confuse students

and counselors. Several also spoke in favor of allowing campuses to continue using LORs for their supplemental/augmented review processes, which may include requests for additional information, including letters. They noted that students are not always able to self-advocate effectively, and a well-written letter can help students, including URM students, make the case for admission by providing additional illuminating information about accomplishments, academic promise, and UC readiness. Directors/AVCs noted that the new Personal Insight questions on the UC application were intended to give students an additional opportunity to define themselves, gather information campuses would normally collect in an augmented review, and perhaps eliminate the need for augmented review.

**Compare Favorably Policy:** Directors and AVCs noted that in general, campuses must admit nonresidents at a higher rate to meet a given enrollment target, because nonresidents accept offers at a lower rate compared to residents. Some UC campuses have deep pools of academically strong nonresident applicants, and can more easily meet the compare favorably standard. Other campuses with fewer nonresident applicants find it more challenging to meet the policy.

Directors/AVCs noted that it is important to consider UC academic performance in the compare favorably assessment, as international students, on average, outperform domestic residency groups at UC in terms of GPA, rates of persistence, and rates of graduation. Directors/AVCs noted that nonresident persistence rates may be influenced by factors other than academic ability, including finances and cultural adjustment difficulties. It was noted that the recent elimination of financial aid for nonresident undergraduates may amplify the effect on persistence rates. Moreover, the declining yield rate for domestic nonresidents may signal that UC is pricing itself out of the market. Directors/AVCs also suggested analyzing outcomes by admitting unit, as some programs and majors are more selective and more popular with nonresidents. They noted that campuses cannot always verify an applicant's residency status until they receive the statement of legal residence with the Statement of Intent to Register (SIR).

Directors/AVCs noted that they are committed to the compare favorably standard, but also find the policy challenging to interpret and implement. On the other hand, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for campuses to adhere to the standard proposed by the auditor, based on an older interpretation of the Master Plan requiring every nonresident to "stand in the upper half of those ordinarily eligible." The 1960 Master Plan is less valid in the context of 2016 State funding and demographics. Campuses set resident and nonresident enrollment targets by balancing multiple factors, including the University's obligation to residents, revenue and state support, and diversity goals related to nonresidents. BOARS should not change policy simply in response to political pressure.

## **VII. Compare Favorably Assessment and Policy**

BOARS discussed the President's request to review the "Compare Favorably" policy for nonresident admission. Campus admissions committees are discussing the request, and the UCOP Office of Institutional Research is seeking guidance from BOARS about alternate or additional analyses that can support decision-making.

BOARS members summarized their local admissions committees' initial discussions about the compare favorably policy. Several committees opined that BOARS should reaffirm its core policy and continue to consider SAT, high school GPA, and UC academic performance in the assessment. Committees expressed support for narrowing the focus of UC academic performance measures to first-year GPA and academic probation rates (GPA below 2.0), and for emphasizing the SAT as a global, standardized measure, over high school GPA, which carries vastly different meanings in different educational contexts.

BOARS members noted that the policy should have a strong justification grounded in clear principles. BOARS should acknowledge that while nonresident tuition revenue helps address budget shortfalls, faculty believe nonresidents enhance the academic experience for all students and want all admitted students to succeed regardless of their home state or continent. It was noted that less selective campuses with fewer international applicants are struggling to build an international student cohort, and must go deeper into the applicant pool to meet a given enrollment target. BOARS should explain how campuses implement the compare favorably policy, but also acknowledge that the flexibility of the policy is appropriate and policies are refined as circumstances change. BOARS should also outline why the "upper half of the admit pool" is unworkable.

### **VIII. Letters of Recommendations Pilot and Policy**

BOARS discussed next steps for the UC Berkeley Letters of Recommendation Pilot Project and the President's request for a systemwide policy on the use of Letters. Chair Sanchez asked BOARS members to gather input from their campus admissions committees about the potential role of LORs on their campus, and the design components of a study by Berkeley Professor Jesse Rothstein that will help BOARS make an informed decision about a systemwide policy.

A BOARS member noted that extending the Pilot from applicants designated "possible" admits only, to all applicants, would provide a more complete view of the effect of LORs, by eliminating a potential bias associated with the application reader having knowledge of the applicant's "possible" status.

Berkeley representative Professor Brilliant noted that the Berkeley AEPE shares BOARS' concerns about equity. It views LORs as a way to increase equity by incorporating additional information about non-cognitive factors into the read. AEPE believes the jury is still out on the question of whether LORs further advantage the advantaged, and/or disadvantage the disadvantaged. It supports a more precise analysis of counselor resources and the ratio of counselors to UC applicants in high schools. An appropriate systemwide policy would permit campuses to decide for themselves about the use of LORs, and UC currently allows campuses to have individualized augmented review processes that may include a request for letters.

Associate Vice President Handel remarked that the President has asked for a systemwide policy on LORs that is uniform across campuses. Campuses are concerned that a systemwide policy requiring LORs would pose a significant workload burden for campuses, which combined received more than 800,000 individual applications last year. He noted that UCOP is unsure what problem Berkeley solves with LORs. If it is to emulate highly selective private institutions, UC admits a higher proportion of low-income and first-generation students than Ivy League schools

without the LORs. UCOP is also concerned that Berkeley admits were less diverse this year and that LORs could have contributed to the decline. Some Regents also have expressed concern that LORs will contribute to the admissions “arms race” and have a disproportionate effect on URM students. It is unclear what information LORs provide beyond the 14 comprehensive review criteria and that is not contained in the Personal Insight questions on the application.

## **IX. Analysis of the Role of Letters of Recommendation and Augmented Review**

- *Jesse Rothstein, Professor of Public Policy and Economics, UC Berkeley*

Professor Rothstein joined BOARS to discuss his July 2016 study of Berkeley undergraduate admissions and to consult BOARS about the design components of an expanded 2017 study.

The 2016 study focused on the impact of the addition of Letters of Recommendation (LORs) and the elimination of Augmented Review on the admission of underrepresented students. It used a predictive value generated from all available quantitative indicators on the application (the “admissions score”), to predict the probability of admission in the 2015 cycle compared to actual outcomes. It then applied the admissions score in a series of regressions to analyze the effect of LORs in the 2016 cycle for the 14,000 CA resident students who received the ranking of “possible” who were invited to submit LORs. Students were ranked “possible” based on an initial computer-generated read, or later in the process after a human read.

The study found that the LOR request may have reduced the chances of admission slightly (2-3%) at the yes/maybe threshold, and increased chances by a similar margin at the maybe/no threshold. There did not appear to be a differential effect of the request on disadvantaged and underrepresented applicants, defined collectively as students from underrepresented minority, first-generation college, low-income, and low API school backgrounds.

It was difficult to isolate and identify the specific effects of LORs, because Berkeley changed several elements of its admissions policy simultaneously. The expanded use of wait lists at Berkeley was an additional complicating factor, as underrepresented populations are more likely to turn down a wait list spot.

The new study will address several policy and research questions to examine the overall effect of LORs and their differential effect on applicants from underrepresented groups. It will examine whether LORs hurt disadvantaged students unable to secure good letters or allow them to show strengths that quantitative indicators do not reveal. It will also examine the role of qualitative information in holistic review decisions; characteristics of LORs (identity of writer, length, content) that lead to different outcomes relative to no LORs; and long-term academic outcomes at UC to determine if LORs lead to better decisions.

Professor Rothstein is considering measures for testing how readers evaluate a given application with and without a LOR in ways that do not interfere with the admissions process. One idea is to hire supplementary readers after the end of the season to re-read applications without LORs and to compare scores from those unofficial reads to the official read with LORs.

Professor Rothstein believes that 10,000 applications will provide a large enough sample to gauge the average effect of a LOR request on the holistic review score. However, it will be

challenging to measure the incremental effect of the qualitative information contained in a Letter compared to the qualitative information in the new personal insight questions on the UC application. It will also be challenging to measure the impact of LORs within the limited scoring scale of “yes,” “no,” and “possible.” To help assess whether admissions decisions are better with LORs, Professor Rothstein also wants to evaluate long-term academic outcomes at Berkeley, and if possible, the outcomes of Berkeley applicants who attend other UC campuses or universities.

**Discussion:** BOARS members noted that the study should separate URM students from the other three indicators of underrepresented status to account for the preferences UC gives by policy to applicants from low income, first generation, and low API high school backgrounds, a preference it does not extend to URMs. Members encouraged Professor Rothstein to examine the differential effects of the personal insight questions on the UC application. One member expressed concern that information in the letters, such as the applicant’s name, may reveal details that could introduce bias. It was suggested that UC ask the College Board to conduct a study on UC applicants who apply to other colleges that require letters.

## **X. Executive Session**

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Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm  
Minutes Prepared by Michael LaBriola, Principal Committee Analyst  
Attest: Henry Sanchez