

**BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)  
ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

**TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:**

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) met ten times in Academic Year 2016–17 to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in [Senate Bylaw 145](#), to advise the President and Senate agencies on the admission of undergraduate students and the criteria for undergraduate status. The major activities of BOARS and the issues it addressed this year are outlined briefly, as follows:

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE REGENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**

BOARS’ annual [\*Report to the Regents on Undergraduate Admissions Requirements and Comprehensive Review\*](#), submitted in late January, discusses freshman and transfer application, admission, and SIR (Statement of Intent to Register) outcomes under comprehensive review for the years 2012–2016; first-year UC performance outcomes for students who entered UC in fall 2015; efforts by BOARS to enhance the transfer admission path and to ensure that admitted nonresidents compare favorably to California residents; diversity outcomes; a summary of each UC campus’s comprehensive review process; and challenges associated with the future of the referral guarantee. The report notes that the push to enroll 5,000 new California resident undergraduates had a noticeable effect across the admission cycle in 2016, as campuses admitted more students from deeper into their applicant pools to meet the higher targets, and the report discusses several significant changes in 2016 outcomes that follow from these efforts.

**AUGMENTED REVIEW AND LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

- ***Policy on Augmented Review in Undergraduate Admissions***

At multiple meetings, BOARS discussed President Napolitano’s request to the Senate for a systemwide policy on the use of letters of recommendation in undergraduate admissions. The request was prompted by a 2015 proposal from the Berkeley campus to seek letters of recommendation from all applicants, and concerns from faculty, administrators, Regents, and others that allowing one campus to require letters as a condition of admission would be inconsistent with the principle of maintaining a single undergraduate admissions policy and consistent application requirements for all UC campuses. The proposal also raised concerns about the extent to which a letters requirement could unintentionally disadvantage vulnerable student populations.

BOARS solicited input from campus admissions committees and directors, high school counselors, and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE). Based on feedback BOARS received from these groups about the workload burden associated with letters for nearly 200,000 UC applicants and the ability of students who attend under-resourced schools to obtain high-quality letters, BOARS decided against recommending a systemwide policy requiring letters from all UC applicants.

Instead, a BOARS subcommittee led by Vice Chair Comeaux crafted a policy on Augmented Review in Undergraduate Admissions that allows letters on a limited basis. Following Academic Council and Assembly approvals, the UC Regents voted unanimously in July to adopt the policy,

now codified as [Regents Policy 2110](#). The policy outlines guidelines and criteria for an additional review of select applicants who fall in the margins for admission, but whose initial application yields an incomplete picture of their qualifications or presents extraordinary circumstances that invite further comment. It outlines three types of supplemental information a campus may request from up to 15% of applicants in a given admissions review cycle: 1) a questionnaire inviting the candidate to elaborate on special talents, accomplishments, extraordinary circumstances, and their school/home environment; 2) 7<sup>th</sup> semester grades; and 3) up to two letters of recommendation. The policy states that campuses may solicit letters only from applicants selected for augmented review, applicants considered for admission by exception, or applicants given a special review in other specific situations.

BOARS will monitor implementation and outcomes from the policy, including applicant responses to campus requests for supplemental information and the effects of letters of recommendation. BOARS views the policy as a starting point it can revisit if relevant new information comes to light.

- ***Berkeley Letters of Recommendation Pilot and Studies***

BOARS also discussed outcomes from the UC Berkeley letters of recommendation pilot project and two studies Berkeley commissioned to better understand the effect of letters on admissions at that campus. The pilot followed an agreement between the Academic Council and Berkeley in 2015 that permitted Berkeley to solicit letters from applicants receiving an initial review score of “possible” based on their application materials or later in the review process. Berkeley Professor of Public Policy and Economics Jesse Rothstein joined BOARS in November 2016 to discuss his study of letters in the fall 2016 Berkeley admissions cycle and to gather advice about an expanded study of letters in the fall 2017 cycle focused on how letters affected underrepresented students. Professor Rothstein returned to BOARS in July 2017 to discuss outcomes from the study, which attempted to isolate the effect of the letters and examine whether their inclusion affected the relative admissions chances of Berkeley freshman applicants from underrepresented groups. The study found that the invitation to submit letters may have reduced the share of admitted students from underrepresented groups, but that the invitation had a positive effect on their likelihood to enroll.

## **NONRESIDENT ADMISSION**

- ***Compare Favorably Report to President Napolitano***

BOARS’ July 2017 [report to President Napolitano](#) on the “Compare Favorably” policy for nonresident admission responds to the President’s fall 2016 request to the Senate to clarify the policy’s (1) compliance with the California Master Plan for Higher Education; and (2) its consistency with the University’s overall freshman admission goals, comprehensive review policy, and holistic review processes in place on UC campuses. A 2016 State audit had criticized the policy and the University’s nonresident admission and enrollment practices. BOARS’ report summarizes the Committee’s efforts to analyze the issues associated with comparing residents and nonresidents and to consider several alternative measures for the evaluation.

The report describes how quantitative measures of academic preparation (average high school GPA and test scores) compared for admitted California resident and nonresident freshmen in 2016, and how academic outcomes at UC (first-year GPA, persistence and probation rates) compared for resident and nonresident freshmen who first enrolled in fall 2015. The report also

describes an analysis of similar outcomes across several specific admitting units on campuses, and it details what BOARS learned from a series of regression analyses examining the relationship between test scores and high school GPA on first-year UC performance.

The report concludes that the existing Compare Favorably policy provides appropriate flexibility for campuses while maintaining the University's primary responsibility to California students and ensuring that campuses are admitting nonresidents who perform at least as well as California residents. In the report, BOARS does not recommend changing the policy but indicates that it will continue to monitor campus compliance, report outcomes on an annual basis, and suggest adjustments as data warrant.

- ***Annual Systemwide Compare Favorably Report***

BOARS also issued its [annual "Compare Favorably" report](#) on 2016 nonresident admissions. Like the special report to the President, the annual report summarizes systemwide and campus outcomes for the policy, focusing on comparisons of high school GPA, SAT score, and first-year UC GPA and persistence for residents, domestic nonresidents, and international nonresidents for each campus. The report notes that based on those limited measures, the University is meeting the standard on a systemwide basis, although outcomes vary on specific campuses. The report emphasizes that GPA and test scores are narrow, imperfect measures for the assessment, given campuses' use of 14 comprehensive review factors.

#### **AREA "D" WORK GROUP AND PROPOSED REVISIONS TO SENATE REGULATION 424**

In January 2017, BOARS charged a UC faculty work group with proposing revisions to the area "d" (laboratory science) requirement for freshman admission ([Senate Regulation 424.A.3.d](#)), to better align UC's expectations for high school science preparation with the expectations for high school science curricula based on California's adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for K-12, which include four science categories: Physical Sciences; Life Sciences; Earth and Space Sciences; and Engineering, Technology and Applications of Science.

The work group included faculty from all ten campuses who represented a broad range of science and science education disciplines. It met four times in spring 2017, and ultimately recommended revisions to policy that require approval by the greater Senate. The revisions to Senate Regulation 424 include: 1) increasing the minimum area "d" requirement from 2 units (3 recommended) to 3 units, while continuing to require 2 units of coursework that "provide basic knowledge in at least two of the fundamental disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics"; and 2) changing the name of the area "d" subject requirement from "Laboratory Science" to "Science." BOARS also approved the working group's recommendation to broaden options for science disciplines that can fulfill the third year area "d" requirement. Under the new policy, high school students would be able take a third course from the three fundamental disciplines listed in the regulation, or select a third course from other disciplines reflected in the NGSS, including earth and space sciences, interdisciplinary sciences, computer science, engineering, and applied sciences. The options would be reflected in the [A-G Guide](#). The Academic Council approved BOARS' request for a systemwide review of the proposal.

#### **TRANSFER ADMISSION**

BOARS helped lead the University's response to a range of issues and concerns about community college transfer.

- ***Letter on Transfer Pathways***

In May 2017, Chair Sanchez sent a letter to campus admissions directors, associate vice chancellors for enrollment management, campus Senate division chairs, and Senate executive directors updating them on the status of the UC Transfer Pathways project and providing guidance about the use of the Transfer Pathway course expectations in campus selection processes.

- ***UC Transfer Pathways Articulation Analysis***

UCOP briefed BOARS on the ongoing effort to analyze articulation agreements and gaps between UC and the California Community Colleges (CCC) for courses in the 21 UC Transfer Pathways: 1) to determine if there is agreement among the nine UC undergraduate campuses about whether a given course offered at each of the 113 CCCs is acceptable as fulfilling a specific UC Pathway course expectation; and 2) to identify articulation gaps between a specific UC campus or campuses and a specific CCC for a given Pathway course expectation. The next stage involved identifying all relevant courses at each CCC that fulfill one or more UC Pathway course expectations and confirming that UC will apply credit for each course. All Pathway courses are published on the [UC Transfer Pathways Guide](#), a new online resource that shows which UC-transferable courses from ASSIST meet the specific course expectations for a given Pathway.

- ***Increasing Transfer Enrollment to the 2:1 Ratio***

BOARS discussed UC's progress meeting the 2:1 freshman-to-transfer enrollment ratio target included in the Budget Framework Agreement with the state, individual campus strategies for increasing the number of qualified applicants and SIRs to meet the target, and barriers to achieving that goal, including a lack of qualified transfer applicants, strong regional competition for transfers, and higher demand at the freshman level. BOARS expressed its commitment to the transfer admission path and support for the Master Plan mandate to reserve a sizable portion of enrollments for transfers, as well as its support for positive measures such as increasing transfer outreach and recruitment, strengthening student support services to ensure the success of admitted transfers, and expanding programs like UC Transfer Pathways that provide clear preparation roadmaps for transfers. BOARS also believes the University must balance the mandate for transfer enrollment growth with the higher demand for access at the freshman level.

- ***Associate Degrees for Transfer***

BOARS discussed a meeting UCOP hosted in May 2017 for UC and CCC faculty from physics and chemistry departments to consider possible Associate Degrees for Transfer based on the UC Transfer Pathways.

## **ADVANCING DIVERSITY**

BOARS discussed efforts to expand diversity on campuses, including strategies to increase applications from underrepresented students and the yield of those students after they are admitted.

- ***Support for ELC-Only Pathway***

In February 2017, Chair Sanchez issued a letter to campuses reaffirming the value of guaranteed students and the need for all campuses, including the most selective, to prioritize California residents who are eligible for the guarantee via *ELC-only*. The letter referenced a new systemwide program that encourages campuses to admit more applicants who are eligible for an admissions guarantee through the ELC-only pathway and who graduated from a high school designated as Local Control Funding Formula Plus (LCFF+). In the past two admissions cycles, UC has been flagging applicants meeting those criteria and encouraging campuses to give them an additional review to achieve a 4% target as a proportion of overall admits. The state is funding additional outreach and academic support services targeted to the students.

- ***Simulation Analysis of UC Admissions***

BOARS asked UCOP to produce a study illustrating how changes in UC’s undergraduate admissions policy have influenced the student profile of admitted freshmen. The study employed an algorithm that mimics an admissions process based only on GPA and standardized test scores to identify the group of students who would have been admitted through that process, compared to real outcomes under comprehensive review using 14 factors. The study showed that comprehensive review has led to the admission of a higher number of students from underrepresented minority groups and from low-income and first generation college backgrounds, especially at the more selective UC campuses, than would have been admitted using more narrow academic indicators.

- ***Support for Undocumented Students***

BOARS discussed the uncertainty created by the results of the national election, particularly for undocumented members of the UC community, and initiatives the University was undertaking to better support undocumented students.

### **SMARTER BALANCED**

BOARS discussed a potential role in UC admissions for Smarter Balanced, an assessment system aligned with California’s Common Core State Standards for English language arts and math. In May 2017, California Board of Education President Michael Kirst, Deputy Superintendent of the CA Department of Education Keric Ashley, and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Executive Director Tony Alpert joined BOARS to discuss how the University might incorporate Smarter Balanced assessments into its evaluation of students for undergraduate admission, in addition to, or in lieu of, existing assessments. BOARS endorsed a plan to pursue two studies to support BOARS’ deliberations: 1) an independently funded campus-specific study to analyze how Smarter Balanced scores compare with existing admission criteria for students entering UC Davis and how well they predict student performance in first-year courses there; and 2) a UC systemwide study of Smarter Balanced assessment scores in relation to other admissions factors currently in use, as well as first-year student outcome metrics.

### **VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS (VPA) SUBJECT REQUIREMENT (“F”)**

In February 2017, BOARS approved a policy change related to the [Visual and Performing Arts \(VPA\)](#) (“F”) requirement for freshman admission that will allow California high schools, programs, online publishers, and online schools to submit online VPA courses to UC for review and potential approval in area “F” with no restrictions tied to the mode of course delivery. Prior policy required VPA courses to combine any online delivery with face-to-face interaction

between student and teacher, regardless of the specific discipline. As a result, online high school courses in dance, music, theater, visual arts, and interdisciplinary arts were not previously eligible for area “f” approval.

#### **PARENTAL ALUMNI STATUS ON THE UC APPLICATION**

In October 2016, Provost Dorr and Senior Vice President Henderson joined BOARS to discuss a UCOP proposal to add a place on the UC application for students to designate their parents’ UC alumni status. Last year BOARS raised concerns that the request could falsely suggest that alumni information might affect an admission decision and could also discourage some students from applying. Provost Dorr and Senior Vice President Henderson reported that feedback from BOARS and others had led to a decision to withhold any questions about parents’ college of graduation from the application.

#### **JOINT MEETINGS WITH THE UC ADMISSIONS DIRECTORS**

The Admissions Directors and AVCs for Enrollment Management joined BOARS on the phone in November 2016 to discuss the President’s requests for a systemwide policy on Letters of Recommendation and a review of the “Compare Favorably” policy. BOARS and the campus Admissions Directors also held their annual half-day joint meeting in July to discuss outcomes from the 2017 admissions cycle; issues and challenges associated with nonresident admission; transfer admissions issues, including the 2:1 freshman-to-transfer enrollment ratio, transfer access to capped majors, and the role of the UC Transfer Pathways in comprehensive review; results from the new Personal Insight questions on the UC application; implementation of the Augmented Review policy; and strategies for expanding student diversity in the context of increasing selectivity.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND BRIEFINGS**

**Campus Reports:** BOARS set aside a portion of each meeting for updates from faculty representatives about issues being discussed on their admissions committees and campuses. These briefings touched on a wide range of topics, including local holistic review processes; best practices for increasing diversity and enhancing outreach to underrepresented populations; individual campus strategies for meeting the 2:1 freshman:transfer enrollment ratio; strategies for addressing impaction in majors and boosting enrollment in under-enrolled majors; the effects of the enrollment surge on campus infrastructure and faculty workload; local analyses of student success factors; the effect of potential new federal immigration policies on undocumented students; and strategies to ensure strong English language skills in international admits.

**Senate Leadership Briefings:** The Academic Council chair and vice chair attended a portion of each BOARS meeting to brief the committee on business from Council and Regents meetings, and other systemwide issues of particular interest to BOARS or of general interest to the faculty. These briefings included the status of negotiations with the state around the budget and enrollment funding; proposed legislation affecting the University; the Regents’ nonresident enrollment policy; and the State audit of UCOP.

**Office of Admissions:** The Office of Admissions provided regular briefings throughout the admissions cycle on application, admissions, and SIR outcomes for freshman and transfer students from different demographic groups and residency categories. They also provided

valuable information to BOARS about transfer policies, initiatives, and legislation; admissions messaging; feedback from counselor conferences; high school and “a-g” course certification issues; the Next Generation Science Standards; recruitment programs targeting the ELC cohort and other specific populations; the status of UC campus implementation of the UC Transfer Pathways; and other topics.

**Presentation on Demographic Trends:** In December 2016, Associate Vice President Handel presented data on California demographic trends and their implications for UC enrollment and diversity, to provide BOARS with a long-term perspective on UC’s educational goals and challenges.

**Personal Insight Questions:** UCOP briefed BOARS on the 2017 UC application’s eight new “Personal Insight” questions for freshmen and transfers developed by admissions directors in 2015; data on utilization of the questions; and feedback from admissions reviewers, counselors, and students about the benefits of the questions.

**Transfer Pathways Guide Website:** UCOP briefed BOARS on the December 2016 launch of the [UC Transfer Pathways Guide](#) online resource for prospective UC transfers and its new Course Finder tool that allows prospective transfers to determine which CCCs offer specific Pathway courses that fulfill the UC Transfer Pathway they are following.

**College Readiness Audit:** BOARS reviewed a State auditor [report](#) on the availability of “a-g” courses in 11 California high school districts. The Auditor issued no recommendations for UC and provided a favorable evaluation of the University’s processes for “a-g” course submissions and reviews.

**UCEP Report on Alternative Credit:** BOARS reviewed a UCEP report on campus policies for awarding UC credit for Advanced Placement exams, and for applying that credit to UC graduation requirements for specific majors and/or for general education requirements.

**Global Politics HL International Baccalaureate Exam:** BOARS approved the recommendations of UC faculty content experts charged with determining whether UC should award elective credit for scores of “5” or higher on the new International Baccalaureate HL Global Politics exam.

**PTE Academic Proposal:** BOARS reviewed a proposal for recognition by the UC system of the Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic as an approved English language test for undergraduate international applicants who are non-native English speakers.

## **BOARS REPRESENTATION**

BOARS Chair Sanchez represented the committee at meetings of the Academic Council, the Assembly of the Academic Senate, the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) and the ICAS IGETC Standards Subcommittee. Vice Chair Comeaux represented BOARS on the Systemwide Strategic Admissions Taskforce (SSAT) and the Education Financing Model Steering Committee.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

BOARS collaborated closely with UCOP and benefited from regular consultations with Vice President for Student Affairs Robin Holmes-Sullivan, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Admissions Stephen Handel, Director of Undergraduate Admissions Han Mi Yoon-Wu, and Director of Academic Preparation and Relations with Schools and Colleges Monica Lin. BOARS also received valuable support and advice from Institutional Research Coordinator Tongshan Chang and Institutional Research and Planning Analyst Matt Reed, who provided the committee with critical analyses and data related to the Report to the Regents and the Compare Favorably analyses. Adam Parker made key contributions to the annual report to the Regents and the Compare Favorably report to the President. BOARS also appreciates the contributions of UCAADE Chair and BOARS Liaison Amani Nuru-Jeter, and the faculty who attended BOARS meetings as alternates for regular committee members: Mark Brilliant (UCB), Ignacio Navarrete (UCB), Jade Jenkins (I), Uma Jayakumar (R), David Volz (R), and Rita Mehta (SC).

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Sanchez, Chair (SF)	Maribel Bueno Cachadina (SB)
Eddie Comeaux, Vice Chair (R)	Melissa Famulari (SD)
Frank Worrell (B)	Christopher Viney (M)
Patrick Farrell (D)	Kevin Heller, Graduate (D)
Ann Sakai (I)	
Eddie Comeaux (R)	Jim Chalfant, <i>ex officio</i>
David Smith (SC)	Shane White, <i>ex officio</i>
Adrienne Lavine (LA)	Michael LaBriola, Committee Analyst