

BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS

Minutes of Meeting

July 17, 2020

I. Consent Calendar

Approval of BOARS July 17, 2020 Agenda

Action: The agenda was approved as noticed.

II. Chair's Announcements

Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

The University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) is considering the creation of a task force to study new options for fulfilling the Entry Level Writing Requirement and the Analytical Writing Placement Exam.

III. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Council Chair

Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Vice Chair

- Proposition 16: The Regents and the Academic Council support passage of Prop 16, which would overturn Prop 209, thus allowing state agencies to again consider race and ethnicity in various decisions, including university admission.
- Standardized Testing Feasibility Study: The Provost is expected to begin populating the task force soon. The Academic Council has already made suggestions regarding composition and timeline.
- Climate Change: A task force to develop a charge for a subsequent task force has completed its work. UCOC is working to populate the committee, which will be led by incoming Council Vice Chair Horwitz.
- New UC President: Michael Drake has been announced as the next UC president. The Academic Advisory Committee is pleased with the selection, but has concerns about the process.
- Budget: The budget is still in flux. No final numbers are expected until the fall.
- Reopening: Decisions about furloughs or pay cuts have not yet been made. The recent COVID-19 surge in California is causing many to reevaluate past positions. Online access is a concern for many. Student behavior once on campus is notoriously difficult to prescribe.

- Foreign Student Visas: The federal government has reversed its position, and UC will continue to monitor the situation closely.
- Extending Faculty Diversity Task Force: The task force has issued their report, which has three main recommendations for retention, focusing on networking and mentoring, service and leadership, and expression groups. A successor task force will be empaneled.

IV. Use of Standardized Tests Going Forward

1. Admission by Examination

This option is used by students who are otherwise ineligible for admission, such as students who do not complete A-G coursework, those who may be home schooled, or are non-traditional applicants. Use of this option preserves Admission by Exception slots. Use of this option is uncommon to rare. Members asked for the demographic breakdown of students admitted by examination, but it was noted that historical data may not be indicative given the COVID crisis and its still-unknown impacts to education. Some members asserted that no pathway to admission should be closed at this time, even though more guidance may be needed. New score thresholds can be approved as conforming amendments while BOARS reconsiders the option more fully once more data are available. UCOP has proposed a concordance table based on recent changes to the exams, which BOARS approved.

2. Test Optional versus Test Blind

During this period of transition, BOARS should develop broad guidelines while UCOP develops FAQs. Eventually the Comprehensive Review policy will need to be amended to remove test scores as a factor, and the Regents will be asked to approve revised guidelines. Because UC has a single application, each campus will have the option of whether to consider test scores that are submitted. Each campus must decide what review process it will use this fall, within the parameters that BOARS will generate.

Many are concerned that changes to the testing policy will make it more difficult for the campuses to illustrate that non-resident admits compare favorably to California resident admits. Members note that the standardized tests administered outside of California run the same risks and have the same pitfalls as those administered in California. Many wonder if it is fair to ask non-resident applicants to submit test scores when California applicants do not have to do so. Alternate metrics for Compare Favorably reporting should be considered. Evaluating non-resident applicants “in context” is needed but difficult.

See also Item V.2 below.

3. Scholarship Awards, Course Placement, and NCAA Eligibility

Some departments use standardized test scores to determine scholarships or course placements. Will only those applicants who opt to send scores be eligible? NCAA testing eligibility filings go directly to the NCAA. However, since these are not admissions questions, BOARS takes no position.

4. Advice to Campuses

BOARS notes that campuses can decide whether or not to use test scores for admission consideration for fall 2021 and 2022, but given the requirement to be test blind in two years, campuses should be mindful of the impending transition and optimize their processes to smooth the transition.

Evaluation of non-resident applications, whether test blind or test optional, is at campus discretion and should be clearly communicated.

V. Consultation with the Office of the President – Graduate, Undergraduate, and Equity Affairs

Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Executive Director, Undergraduate Admissions

Monica Lin, Director, A-G and Transfer Policy Analysis and Coordination

Tongshan Chang, Manager, Institutional Research and Academic Planning

1. Proposed TOEFL Changes

Due to the COVID crisis, changes to the TOEFL have been implemented. UCOP recommends temporary adoption of new standards and a pilot program with Duolingo in the circumstances. Since TOEFL is not considered “high stakes,” cybersecurity concerns are minimal. Test reliability can be accessed by the campuses vis-à-vis AWPE and local placement exams.

BOARS approved the Duolingo proposal for use through fall of 2022.

2. Non-Resident Admissions

There are several policies that require emendation following the Regents testing decision earlier this summer. For rising sophomores, information is needed to aid academic preparation. The state audit will be released in the fall, and further action may be needed. How precisely non-residents should Compare Favorably to California residents requires additional consideration. Traditional metrics of high school GPA, test scores, first year academic performance, and persistence to second year may no longer be sufficient in the eyes of some. The Senate should be proactive in this area. Some assert that elite non-resident applicants are unlikely to be impacted by testing requirement changes, but some well-performing California applicants might be disadvantaged by not having their scores considered.

BOARS will form a working group to draft new language for non-resident admissions.

3. California High School Accreditation

Following presentations by WASC and Cognia, as well as the submission of supplemental data by both, UCOP recommends that BOARS encourage California high schools to use WASC as their accreditor because WASC is best positioned to address student needs in California. Members agree that WASC has more history and connections in California, which places them in a good position. Further, the schools WASC currently accredits show more diversity in schools served. Some wonder if this will become a closed loop, preventing competitors from gaining the necessary foothold to become more viable.

BOARS supports encouragement of WASC as the California high school accreditor for a period of 2 years, after which the question will be revisited.

BOARS will develop principles for accreditor evaluation in the fall.

VI. Research Proposal to Study the Causal Impact of Being Admitted to UC Campuses

Julian Betts, UCSD and Executive Director, San Diego Education Research Alliance

Professor Betts has proposed a research project that, if granted access to certain data, would include a report for BOARS assessing the degree to which each campus boosts its admission rate for students who just meet statewide index requirements, relative to those who just miss the requirement. COVID impacts, however, may necessitate a delay in launching the project.

BOARS will return to this question in the fall.

VII. Legacy Admissions

Although UC does not engage in legacy admissions, the University is again being called upon to publicly clarify its position.

BOARS approves the draft statement included in the agenda packet for public posting.

VIII. Admissions Flexibility

BOARS must work quickly to issue final guidance to the campuses, and BOARS members are reminded that their term of service continues through August 31. Contextualization will be more important than ever when evaluating applications over the next few admission cycles.

BOARS will continue to work on guidance verbiage off-line.

IX. Executive Session

Note: Item not addressed.

Adjournment 4:15 pm.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Analyst

Attest: Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

Attendance:

Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

Madeleine Sorapure, BOARS Vice Chair

Deborah Swenson, UCD

Susana Cohen-Cory, UCI

Barbara Knowlton, UCLA

Matt Hibbing, UCM

Sheldon Tan, UCR

Skip Pomeroy, UCSD

Andrea Hasenstaub, UCSF

Mark Gordon, UCSB

Juan Poblete, UCSC

Alexis Zaragoza, Undergraduate Student Representative

Carlos Galan, Graduate Student Representative