UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS
Meeting Minutes
October 2, 2026

In attendance: David Volz (Chair), Joel Spencer (Vice Chair), Lisa Barcellos (UCB), Leah Hibel (UCD), Loraine Lau-Gesk (UCI), Kie Zuraw (UCLA alternate) (videoconference), Kevin Dawson (UCM), Kelly Huffman-Neal (UCR) (videoconference), Adrian Ioana (UCSD), Igor Mitrovic (UCSF), Todd Squires (UCSB), Bruno Sansó (UCSC), José Aguilar (Graduate Student Representative) (videoconference), Francisco Ornelas (Undergraduate Student Representative) (videoconference), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Associate Vice Provost and Executive Director, Undergraduate Admissions, Graduate, Undergraduate, & Equity Affairs (GUEA)), Chase Fischerhall (Director, A-G & Transfer Articulation Policy, GUEA), Angelica Moore (Director, Undergraduate Admission Policy & Communications, GUEA) (videoconference), Liz Terry (Manager, Admissions Analytics, Undergraduate Admissions, GUEA), Tongshan Chang (Director, Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)), Matt Reed (Senior Institutional Research & Planning Analyst, IRAP) (videoconference), Susannah Scott (Chair, Academic Senate), Amani Nuru-Jeter (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Ken Feer (Principal Policy Analyst) (videoconference), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Volz thanked members for serving on BOARS and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2026-2027 academic year. Chair Volz explained the role of BOARS and noted that, if approved by the Academic Senate and UC Regents, any actions, recommendations, or position statements originating from BOARS have the potential to significantly impact the K-12 system and thousands of students and families within and outside of California. It is critical that, over the course of this academic year, each member actively engages in discussions and represents the views of their campus. Members should also negotiate in good faith and be willing to cede on certain terms in order for BOARS to reach consensus on complex issues.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: Today's agenda items and their priority were approved.

III. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Susannah Scott, Chair & Amani Nuru-Jeter, Vice Chair, Academic Senate

Chair Scott announced that Governor Newsom and Senator Scott Wiener recently signed Senate Bill 895 which will put a $7.5B research bond on the March 2028 ballot to fund the California Foundation for Science and Health Research. Chair Scott summarized legal actions involving UC and the federal government as well as federal rules and proposed rules related to higher education. The UC Office of the President has launched the search for a new systemwide provost and Chair Scott is a member of the search committee. Regent Chair Anguiano intends to educate the Board

about standardized testing issues by inviting a series of guest speakers to Board meetings. During the Board's July meeting, Chair Anguiano announced that the Regents will decide in July 2027 whether to reinstate standardized testing in any form as a UC admission requirement. Chair Scott emphasized that members are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the committee's deliberations and decisions.

IV. Chair's Updates

Chair Volz encouraged members to review Senate Bylaw 145 and the 2025-2026 annual report. Chair Volz reviewed confidentiality and communication protocols and explained what information BOARS members can share with their divisional Senate admissions committees to enable them to make informed decisions. Members were advised about potential consequences for failing to respect confidentiality and that all emails between BOARS members or via the listserv are subject to public records act requests.

V. Orientation & Preparation for Presentations by Standardized Testing Organizations

Chair Volz explained the July 2026 charges from Academic Council to BOARS related to studying the use of standardized test scores in UC undergraduate admissions and reviewing UC's A-G framework. In late July, Chair Volz contacted the testing organizations that will join BOARS today to request reports on format, modality, and scoring systems and the test preparation resources freely available and accessible to all California high school students, along with concordance and predictive validity studies. The November 6th meeting will be dedicated to consultation with a number of stakeholders, including several authors of the 2020 Standardized Testing Task Force report and campus Admissions Directors and Enrollment Management Leads. UCOP's Institutional Research & Academic Planning will share updated data about 1) admissions and student outcomes following elimination of standardized testing and 2) math enrollment trends by campus since 2019/2020.

The December 4th meeting shall include discussions about the information presented by the testing companies and various stakeholders during the previous meetings and about the first draft of the report to Council as well as an initial discussion about recommendations for the potential use of standardized tests for first-year admissions. The first draft of the report will only contain 1) background information, 2) a summary of the format, modality, and scoring system of the Digital SAT, Enhanced ACT, and 11th Grade Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment, 3) a summary of the current test prep resources that are freely available, 4) available data from concordance and predictive validity studies, and 5) a summary of perspectives provided stakeholders. Following the December 4th meeting, Chair Volz will incorporate the initial recommendations into the draft and BOARS will review the second version of the report on January 8th.

Members will consider and vote on the final draft of the report during the February 5th meeting which will then be formally transmitted to Academic Council by February 12th. Over the next five months, Chair Volz will update Council on the work of BOARS and Council will make a decision on February 24th regarding distributing the report for systemwide review. BOARS will revise the report as necessary to address issues raised by the systemwide review and the final report will be submitted to Council in April and to the Assembly for endorsement in May. Upon approval by Assembly, the president will transmit the report to the Board of Regents for final approval.

Discussion: A member expressed concerns about the limited amount of time the committee has to complete its review of the A-G framework between February and May. Chair Volz relayed concerns about the limited amount of time allocated for the review of the A-G framework to Academic Council during its July 22nd meeting. The initial report to Council in May 2027 will focus on the overall A-G framework rather than the articulation criteria within each of the subject areas. A member would like to see outcome data for students who place in introductory math courses.

VI. Presentation by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) on the ACT

Kasey Urquídez, Ed.D., Senior Director, Higher Education, ACT, Higher Education & K12 Partner Engagement; Joanna Gorin, PhD, Vice President, Measurement, Research & Development; Colin Dingler, PhD, Senior Director, State & Federal Policy; Xin Li, PhD, Lead Psychometrician; Jeff Allen, PhD, Principal Research Scientist; & Heather Buzick, PhD, Senior Director, Measurement, Research & Development

According to Senior Director Urquidez, the enhanced ACT is shorter (125 minutes vs 195 minutes for the legacy test) and available in both paper and online formats with the same 1-36 score scale. ACT's free preparation resources for California high school students include full-length practice tests in digital and paper formats, subject-specific questions, study guides, instructional videos, accessibility tools, and free online classes through Kaplan. ACT also provides a Counselor Toolkit with presentations, registration guidance, retesting information, and fee-waiver resources to help counselors support students and families. The ACT Fee Waiver Program allows eligible students to register for up to two ACT tests at no cost and provides additional benefits, including access to certain Kaplan preparation courses, free score reports, and college application fee waivers at participating institutions.

Vice President Gorin presented evidence on score comparability across different test forms and delivery modes which showed, through equating studies, that scores remain equivalent regardless of when or how the test was taken. Studies of the predictive validity for the enhanced ACT test shows positive relationships between ACT scores and admissions, placement, and degree completion college outcomes across different demographic groups. Senior Director Urquidez reported seeing an uptick in California students signing up for the ACT and confirmed the opening of more test centers to respond to demand.

Discussion: Multiple questions were addressed regarding test proctoring, sample sizes in studies, handling of repeated test attempts, placement accuracy methods, and accommodations for students with disabilities. The super scoring policy establishes that, when a student takes the ACT a second time, any subject scores that they have that were higher than that first time become part of the overall composite. The default methodology for predictive validity would be to use a student's last ACT test score and research is being conducted on the predictive validity of the super score. The committee requested more granular stratification including predictive validity by disability status, race, ethnicity, gender, family income level, and rural/urbanicity. The current policy is that students have to take the English, Reading and Math sections of the ACT.

VII. Presentation by the College Board on the Digital SAT

Kedra Ishop, Senior Vice President, Higher Education, Membership, & Access; Priscilla Rodriguez, Senior Vice President, College Readiness Assessments; Tom Proctor, Executive Director, SAT Psychometrician; Emily Shaw, Executive Director, Research; & Leo Cota, Senior Director, Strategic Higher Education Initiatives

Senior Vice President Ishop announced that the College Board would provide free SAT School Day testing for all California high schools for two years if UC were to adopt a testing policy. Senior Vice President Rodriguez highlighted the predictive validity of the digital SAT, sharing research that shows SAT scores improve the prediction of college outcomes by 15% above high school grade point average (GPA). The College Board's free SAT preparation resources include eight scored, full-length practice tests through the Bluebook app, personalized practice, official preparation through Khan Academy, free peer tutoring through Schoolhouse.world, and educator question banks. Educator question banks are aligned to every state's high school standards, so educators can bring SAT questions into the classroom and show how they connect to what students are already learning. Research indicates that students completing one, two, or three or more full-length practice tests scored approximately 25, 45, and 61 points higher, respectively, than comparable students who did not complete practice tests. Millions of students use these resources annually, making the free practice ecosystem the leading method of SAT preparation.

Executive Director Shaw presented findings from a validity study which demonstrated that SAT scores provide valuable information about student performance, particularly for science, technology, engineering and mathematics majors, across different income and demographic groups. The transition from the paper SAT to the digital SAT primarily changed test delivery and score computation, while maintaining the intended content and uses of the assessment. A concordance study involving approximately 22,000 participants, with about 13,000 completing both versions, established a common score scale and demonstrated strong correlations between the assessments in reading and writing and mathematics. The digital SAT meets or exceeds the paper test's score reliability estimates, supporting consistent measurement of student performance across administrations. The College Board's goal was to ensure that students' scores could be used similarly regardless of which test format they took.

Discussion: Members inquired about the SAT School Day program and its implementation in California and details regarding test preparation access and demographics. Students cannot take individual sections of the SAT but the College Board could study this option. Disability status is not typically analyzed as a separate subgroup because testing accommodations are intended to provide students with disabilities an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. While sample sizes may limit the feasibility of such analyses, the College Board could consider examining predictive validity by disability status as part of a larger study. Members questioned whether the study adequately represented lower-income students and requested data for the bottom income quartile and students with missing income information.

Another question was whether income-stratified data were available for the concordance study to help assess potential limitations related to participant incentives and sample representativeness, and Executive Director Proctor indicated that income data were not collected for the concordance study and could not be obtained retrospectively. SAT School Day now serves approximately 65% of SAT test-takers, reducing barriers by providing free testing during the school day, while weekend testing remains more self-selecting with the demographic profiles of the two groups differing. The College Board will explore additional data on test-preparation participation and student demographics and how to expand opportunities to integrate SAT practice into classroom instruction. The discussion also touched upon potential challenges in rapidly expanding access if the UC system decides to reinstate standardized testing requirements.

VIII. Presentation by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium on the 11th Grade Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment

Rochelle Michel, Executive Research Officer; Jacqueline King, Consultant; & Tony Alpert, Executive Director, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, UC Santa Cruz Silicon Valley Extension

Consultant King provided a brief overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), explaining that the assessment was developed in alignment with the Common Core State Standards and is consistent with the new mathematics frameworks in California. The presentation also covered the SBAC's computer-adaptive nature, untimed format, extensive accessibility resources, and performance tasks designed by higher education faculty. Scores range from 2300 to 2900 for the English Language Arts portion and 2280 to 2900 for the Mathematics portion of the test and the achievement levels range from one to four, corresponding to demonstrating minimal grade-level knowledge and skills through demonstrating advanced knowledge, deep understanding, and full complexity. Executive Research Officer Michel shared data on student performance for English Language Arts and Math and explained how Smarter Balanced scores are used in California's multiple measures framework for California State University placement. A longitudinal study of California students looking at the relationship between SBAC scores, first-year GPA, and second-year persistence found that high school GPA was a stronger predictor than either SBAC or the SAT, but pairing high school GPA with SBAC scores yielded a more socioeconomically and racially ethnically diverse pool than pairing high school GPA with SAT scores.

Discussion: Members asked about test security measures and how students access information for essay prompts and about how to compare SBAC scores to other standardized tests like the SAT for admissions purposes, particularly regarding how to interpret scores from a population that includes all 11th grade public high school students rather than self-selecting SAT/ACT test takers. Smarter Balanced does not have access to the SAT/ACT data that would allow for a concordance study and differences in testing populations and constructs would require careful consideration in interpreting comparisons. It might be necessary for UC faculty to conduct analyses linking scores to knowledge and skills required for credit-bearing coursework. Members raised concerns about the unintended consequences if the SBAC were to be used for admissions to UC, including potential impact on student motivation and test security and questions were raised about test administration, and the potential for ceiling effects in the highest performance categories.

The committee questioned whether Smarter Balanced adequately addresses equity concerns, citing substantial disparities in English language arts and mathematics proficiency by disability status, as well as by race, ethnicity, and income. Presenters emphasized that the assessment is designed to minimize barriers to demonstrating knowledge and skills, while noting that differences in coursework and access to advanced learning opportunities may contribute to achievement gaps. The presenters also observed that Smarter Balanced assesses the 11th-grade public high school population, making its results different from those of assessments taken by more selective student populations. The committee asked whether predictive validity studies were available for CSU students to assess the relationship between 11th-grade Smarter Balanced scores, high school GPA, and the likelihood of achieving a first-year college GPA above 3.0. Executive Director Alpert indicated that they did not have access to CSU student data and suggested that the committee might be able to obtain the relevant information independently.

IX. Debrief & Next Steps

Chair Volz invited members to share their perspectives on the presentations specific to the ACT, Digital SAT, and 11th grade Smarter Balanced summative assessment.

Discussion: The discussion revealed ongoing concerns about test disparities by income and race/ethnicity, with participants noting that SBAC assesses the public high school population rather than just college-bound students. Chair Volz clarified that, if BOARS recommends that standardized tests be reinstated, BOARS does not have to recommend one particular test over another, and basic questions to be considered include whether a standardized test is needed by UC and how prospective students and different campuses will be impacted. BOARS needs to make a decision that is beneficial for the majority of students.

X. Member Reports/Campus Updates

UCM: The local committee has discussed the standardized test issue.

UCB: The committee received a faculty led presentation of local data related to standardized tests.

UCSB: The committee will consider establishing an enrollment management strategy to change how admissions are done.

XI. New Business/Executive Session

No New Business was introduced, and Executive Session was not held.

The meeting adjourned at: 4:06 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst
Attest: David Volz, Chair