



BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS
Videoconference Minutes
March 6, 2026

In attendance: David Volz (Chair), Nicholas Mathew (Vice Chair), Gustavo Manso (UCB), Leah Hibel (UCD), Andrea De Vizcaya Ruiz (UCI), Kelly Kay (UCLA), Joel Spencer (UCM), Manu Sridharan (UCR), Adrian Ioana (UCSD), Michael Stryker (UCSF), Todd Squires (UCSB alternate), Matthew Shahmaram (Undergraduate Student Representative), Jose Aguilar (Graduate Student Representative), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Associate Vice Provost & 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 of Admissions Analytics, Undergraduate Admissions, GUEA), Tongshan Chang (Director, Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)), Matt Reed (Senior Institutional Research & Planning Analyst, IRAP), Ahmet Palazoglu (Chair, Academic Senate), Susannah Scott (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

I. Consent Calendar

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

Action: The February 6th BOARS minutes were approved.

II. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair & Susannah Scott, Vice Chair, Academic Senate

In January, the Regents received a detailed overview of the governor's budget for UC. A number of general obligation bonds are advancing in both the Assembly and Senate including an affordable housing bond for \$10B from which UC hopes to benefit along with the \$23M California Science and Health Research Bond sponsored by Senator Weiner. State Government Relations (SGR) at UCOP is coordinating with campuses to showcase research across the system and connect with legislators to stress the importance of this research funding. The Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against UCLA last week charging the campus with Title VII violations and, unless it is settled, this could lead to a jury trial in federal court. Feedback from the systemwide review of the proposed policy on Information Technology Accessibility was shared with the policy owners during Academic Council's meeting last week. Senate leadership worked with Academic Personnel to develop guidance for faculty if the UAW goes on strike. Vice Chair Scott indicated that the Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs Task Force will soon complete its report which will offer guidelines for assessing online degree programs.

III. Chair's Updates

During the February 17th meeting of the California State Assembly Subcommittee No. 3 on Education Finance, President Milliken and the chancellors of the California Community College

(CCC) and California State University (CSU) systems were asked about the Common Course Numbering (CCN) project where Budget Subcommittee Chair Alvarez expressed frustration with the lack of progress. Chair Volz indicated that headway has been made with the CCN templates, suggesting there is a lack of communication between the three segments and the legislature. The February 20th Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) meeting included a presentation by the CCC Chancellor's Office about dual enrollment which highlighted DataVista, a database that has data on trends in dual enrollment course-taking. This meeting also involved planning for the annual Legislative Day in Sacramento on March 12th. Academic Council met on February 25th and the UCSD divisional Senate chair shared that UCSD was notified of a formal request by State Senator Niello to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee for an audit of the Senate Administration Workgroup on Admissions report. Chair Volz and Analyst Abrams received confirmation from SGR of this request for an audit which comes on the heels of an inquiry at 35 selective universities launched in January by U.S. Senator Cassidy of Louisiana.

IV. Discussion with Professor Michal Kurlaender about UCSD's Senate-Administration Workgroup on Admissions Report
Michal Kurlaender, Chancellor's Leadership Professor, UC Davis

Professor Kurlaender has over 20 years' experience investigating students' educational pathways, in particular K-12 and post-secondary alignment, and access to and success in higher education. Professor Kurlaender works closely with all public K-12 and higher education segments in the state. Professor Kurlaender will provide additional context for her recently CalMatters commentary on UCSD's report on admissions. Professor Kurlaender began by noting that academic preparation is the best predictor of college success and that preparation is uneven across the state. Academic rigor in high school is associated with outcomes including higher test scores, likelihood of enrolling in and completing college, and higher earnings. The rates for indicators such as completing A-G requirements or taking Advanced Placement (AP) or dual enrollment courses are lower for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and there is significant variation among students and across schools.

Professor Kurlaender described K-12 standards and assessments, beginning with California's adoption of Common Core State Standards about 15 years ago. The standards are more rigorous, aligned to the expectations of college, and integrated across subject areas. The Smarter Balanced Assessments were adopted to evaluate the standards and these assessments are criterion reference tests and have four performance levels. The CCC and CSU systems utilize Smarter Balanced for placement and the "standard nearly met" signals conditional readiness for college as the 11th grade test has sound indicators of preparation. An analysis was conducted to identify how the new standards, through Smarter Balanced, compare to the SAT and high school grade point average (HSGPA) as indicators of first-year college GPA and persistence to year two. The analysis looked at a cohort of students pre-pandemic and prior to the elimination of standardized tests for admissions at UC. This analysis found no meaningful difference between HSGPA and Smarter Balanced versus HSGPA and SAT, HSGPA alone is a good indicator, and HSGPA and Smarter Balanced have predictive power similar to HSGPA and SAT. However, these predictive measures are weaker for socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and all of these high school indicators become poor predictors of persistence to year two. When looking at the distributional characteristics of the top UC applicant pool using these different assessments, HSGPA or Smarter Balanced alone leads to more low-income students than does the SAT on its own.

Discussion: Professor Kurlaender reported that future analyses will look at preparation and success rates in specific majors and will address if calculus is necessary for certain majors. Math options in K-12 have been diversified to offer students different pathways. Smarter Balanced should be leveraged because it can provide important information about preparation for specific majors at UC, is taxpayer funded, and is aligned to high-quality standards. Should this assessment become a high-stakes test for students, it would perform similarly to the SAT. It may be beneficial to think about how Smarter Balanced can be leveraged for eligibility and placement and not for admissions.

A member speculated that Smarter Balanced might be limited to placement into pre-calculus and not advanced math topics, and Professor Kurlaender encourages math faculty to look at this assessment. A concern is that departments use a single high-stakes test for placement although this is inconsistent with the guidelines for proper use of assessments and employing multiple measures would be helpful in light of questions about high school grade inflation. An analysis by UCSD found that strong performance on the SAT correlates well with strong AP test scores and therefore with good performance in the introductory calculus courses, but these data are not currently available for Smarter Balanced. UC campuses are faced with the challenge of increasing capacity in order to admit all of the talented students who are likely to succeed. Students were self-selecting to not apply to UC when standardized tests were used for admissions, and test-free policies changed the diversity of who applied to UC but not necessarily who enrolled.

V. Potential Systemwide Changes to Undergraduate Admissions Policies

Chair Volz asked members to consider the pros and cons of three options for potential systemwide changes to undergraduate admissions policies to address math preparation and placement issues: 1) the use of 11th grade Smarter Balanced scores for math placement; 2) revisions to articulation criteria for Area C courses; and/or 3) implementation of standardized testing for math placement and/or admissions. The goal for this discussion is to identify in what directions BOARS would like to move forward.

Discussion: Associate Vice Provost Yoon-Wu explained that the Regents would need to approve the use of standardized tests, including Smarter Balanced, for admissions and an agreement between UC and the California Department of Education would be required to acquire scores for placement purposes. Members think California students could submit Smarter Balanced scores and that it would make sense to have out-of-state students submit SAT or ACT scores. Some members assert that campuses should have the ability to utilize standardized test scores for admissions as they see fit. Revising the articulation criteria for Area C courses would be a longer-term endeavor that would require a workgroup with subject matter expertise.

The lack of math preparation may not be the direct result of the elimination of standardized tests or any other single factor. Any decisions BOARS makes should be grounded in evidence and take into account things like the emergence of artificial intelligence, the context of a student's performance, and how the campuses use each component of the application. Admissions would be improved with the use of a standardized measure across the system which also provides a way to measure an individual's abilities. Vice Chair Mathew remarked that what UC requires has a disproportionate effect on what happens in K-12.. It is incumbent on UC to interact with high schools to determine what is happening in terms of learning. This discussion suggests that members are interested in considering the use of 11th grade Smarter Balanced scores for California residents, and SAT/ACT scores for non-residents, for admissions and revisions to the criteria for Area C to align with the

ICAS math competencies statement, whereas there is little support for the use of standardized testing for math placement decisions after matriculation.

VI. Special Charge to BOARS from Academic Senate Chair Palazoglu
Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair, Academic Senate

Chair Palazoglu described the wider context that prompted the creation of a special charge for BOARS and emphasized the importance of this committee leading the in-depth review of UC's admissions policies and college preparation issues. BOARS will lay out a timeline for this endeavor that will allow for robust consultation with external stakeholders. Chair Volz indicated the roadmap will delineate shorter- and longer-term goals. Studying the A-G framework will be a longer-term effort because it will entail engaging with subject matter experts and UC's K-12, CCC, and CSU partners.

Discussion: Members had a brief conversation about the high-profile nature of this effort. Analyst Abrams urged members to take full advantage of the opportunity to structure the roadmap. While there is a sense of urgency coming from some stakeholders, Chair Volz recommends that BOARS maintain its focus on doing what is best and impactful for students and the system. The committee will be tackling complex problems that have emerged over many years, so it is essential to be deliberative and seek input from the right people. BOARS will start brainstorming the elements of the roadmap in April, review an initial draft in May, and submit the first version of the document to Senate leadership at the end of May.

VII. Vote on a New Minimum Score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet Based Test (TOEFL iBT)

BOARS has previously discussed the need to set a new minimum score for the TOEFL iBT and members received data and a recommendation from Undergraduate Admissions. Today, members are to vote on setting a score of 4 or 4.5 for the new minimum.

Discussion: Manager Terry confirmed that the TOEFL iBT is just one of the tests students can use to meet the English proficiency requirement along with Duolingo, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams.

Action: A motion to set a minimum score of 4.5 was made and seconded and members voted unanimously in favor. Chair Volz will transmit a memo to Chair Palazoglu reporting approval of the new score.

VIII. Systemwide Guidance: Developing Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) Programs at UC Campuses

Chair Volz asked members to offer feedback on the guidance to campuses for the development of ADT programs.

Discussion: Each campus will need to take whatever approach for developing ADTs they believe is appropriate. The guidance should be clear about what having an ADT means for admission, so Chair Volz will incorporate the language from the legislation into the document.

IX. UC Academic Senate's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Workgroup Report

The report from the Senate's workgroup includes recommendations related to the impact of AI on undergraduate and graduate admissions. The Workgroup encourages the use of AI for streamlining review and selection of applicants for undergraduate admission. BOARS should consider if any components of the application should be strengthened to address the potential misuse of AI.

Discussion: Members described their divisional committees' thinking about the use of AI tools in the admissions process. The UCB admissions office has specific instructions for readers about spotting AI in applications. It may be impossible to prevent applicants from using AI, therefore less importance might be placed on responses to the personal insight questions (PIQs). AI might be viewed as an extension of consultants for college admissions but it is a tool accessible to a wider swath of students. Undergraduate Admissions has a process for verifying statements in the application if there is a question about veracity. The PIQs send a message about what UC values and is looking for in students. Chair Volz commented that how AI is used to streamline the admissions process is under the purview of campus administrators.

X. Policy for Reviewing Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and A-Level Exams

Chair Volz welcomed the chairs of the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) to the discussion about a proposed policy created by GUEA for reviewing/re-reviewing AP, IB, and A-Level exams in a timely and consistent manner. GUEA has recommended that BOARS develop and publish a standardized evaluation rubric that provides metrics to help faculty assess the exams. Members are asked to provide input on the questions that should be used for the assessment; if there should be a generic list of questions and a rubric that applies to all external exams or if they should be specific to AP, IB, and A-level exams; and if BOARS should develop a decision tree defining the conditions when an exam is approved or not.

Discussion: Associate Vice Provost Yoon-Wu explained the inconsistencies that have resulted when there is not a systemwide level of approval. An additional issue to consider is when credit by exam can be used to fulfill requirements for the California General Education Transfer Curriculum. UCOPE's involvement with credit by exam may extend beyond the Entry Level Writing Requirement, so it makes sense to include this committee in the assessment process. One concern is the burden that the evaluation of exams adds to faculty workload since this is unpaid labor. Members feel the questions should be general enough to apply across different exams. UCEP Chair Sugar pointed out that decisions about whether an external exam meets a pre-major or major requirement are made at the divisional level by the program that requires that particular course.

Subject matter expertise is important to identifying that the level and content of the course is correct for meeting an A-G admissions requirement but it is unnecessary to indicate if an external course replaces a specific course at a UC campus. Another factor is what faculty consider to be a college-level course. The expense of college creates an incentive to attain a degree quickly, making the ability to enroll with credit permitting students to bypass first year UC courses attractive. At the same time, it is the purview of faculty to decide if receiving a score of 3 on an AP course (the equivalent of a grade of C) is sufficient to prepare students for the second-year courses. Thought should be given to limiting the total number of units students can receive with credit by exam. Chair Volz will draft a standardized rubric for members to consider in May and there will be further deliberation about this matter. Analyst Abrams suggested that BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE prepare a

public-facing white paper that acknowledges the expense of college while also outlining the rationale for why faculty want students to take UC's courses. The white paper might serve to discourage students from overloading on credit for prior learning. In consultation with UCEP and UCOPE, Chair Volz proposes discussing a possible limit on the number of units that can be used to fulfill program requirements for a UC degree in May.

XI. Member Reports/Campus Updates

UCSB: The committee is focusing the development of ADTs. The campus has a new Executive Vice Chancellor so there are discussions about what might change as a result.

UCLA: The committee's vice chair and the chair of the Undergraduate Council are collaborating on the creation of a working group to look at math placement issues.

UCI: The committee is discussing math placement and will meet with the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and the Division of Undergraduate Education to make a plan for how the campus will investigate this issue.

UCSC: The campus received a decreased number of applications overall and for computer science in particular compared to last year, and the decline might be related to the lack of housing at this campus. The committee is discussing ADTs.

UCSD: The campus has implemented the math index and the initial projections for fall 2026 indicate that about half of the seats for preparatory math can be eliminated.

UCB: The committee talked about the UCSD workgroup report on admissions and will seek more information in an effort to understand why math preparation has suffered.

UCR: The committee discussed ADTs and the campus is prepared to develop ADT pathways.

UCM: The math departments are working with the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education to analyze data related to math preparation. The number of applicants for computer science at this campus has also declined and there are debates about increasing admissions.

XII. New Business/Executive Session

No new business was introduced, and executive session was not held.

The meeting adjourned at: 3:09 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: David Volz, Chair