

BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS

Minutes of Meeting

November 1, 2019

I. Consent Calendar

- Approval of BOARS November 1, 2019 agenda
- Approval of Memo to Academic Council requesting data report from UCB regarding Letters of Recommendation in Augmented Review

Note: item not addressed.

II. Introductions

Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

BOARS Members

Admission Directors and Associate Vice Chancellors for Admission

III. Consultation with Admission Directors and UCOP Office of Student Affairs

1. Goals of Admission Reviews: BOARS asks the Admission Directors to provide an overview of their Comprehensive Review process, including interaction with faculty admission committees, and reader training.
Berkeley: Berkeley uses holistic review, assessing excellence in the local context. “Landscape” is being adopted to provide additional local context. Readers attend a 2-day training, and admission officers meet twice a month with the faculty admission committee for test reads and transparency. Best practices regarding the assessment of non-cognitive factors are sought.
Davis: Davis uses holistic scoring in its comprehensive review. The tie-breaker is being reassessed. Approximately 60 readers are used annually, and each receives annual implicit bias training in person, though an online training has been added this year as a back-up device. A replacement for API scores is needed.
Irvine: Irvine is focusing on better assessing non-academic talents and working with specialty schools to do so. Some wonder if the campus relies on numerical data too heavily.

Los Angeles: Los Angeles uses holistic scoring in its comprehensive review. Each application is read twice, and weights are assigned to context factors – applications from a student’s high school to that UCLA school, to UCLA as a whole, and to UC as a whole. UCLA employees around 230 readers, in addition to permanent admission staff. Admissions officers meet monthly with the local faculty admission committee. Readers are curated with diversity metrics in mind. Specialty schools make their own admission decisions after receiving comprehensive review scores from the admission office. Better neighborhood data is sought.

Merced: Merced uses a fixed weight scale with three parts: academic index, academic context, and personal information. In-person reader training is accompanied by weekly meetings between the admission office and the local faculty admission committee. The campus will soon become “selective,” which may change review procedures.

Riverside: Riverside uses a fixed weight scale for comprehensive review. Significant weight is given to GPA and test scores, but the campus is in process of changing to holistic scoring. The admission office is working closely with the local faculty admission committee to address concerns regarding reader training.

San Diego: San Diego uses holistic scoring in its comprehensive review. Implicit bias training occurs annually. Readers are rated to determine if they will be invited back. Each application is read twice, and admission office staff conduct high school visits for additional insight into local context. Some worry about the rate of turnover among readers and on the local faculty admission committee, but everyone finds the student readers and representatives quite valuable.

Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara uses a fixed weight system, assessing academic criteria, SES factors, and the 14 comprehensive review criteria. Admission officers meet regularly with the local faculty admission committee.

Santa Cruz: Santa Cruz uses holistic scoring and local context data to assess applications. Approximately 45 readers are hired annually, and each receives a week-long training. The local faculty admission committee annually reviews norming standards. Best practices for assessing student achievement and improvement are sought.

2. Use of Persona Insight Questions (PIQs) and Extracurricular Activities in Admissions:

Verifying claims made in applications is a concern throughout higher education. UC conducts limited random samples for verification purposes, and this is more than most institutions do. UC is also launching a plagiarism check pilot program to help assess essays and written statements.

There is debate about how best to assess PIQ responses, whether focus should be on vocabulary or narrative, for instance. Some worry that the way questions are phrased could elicit a certain mental frame. How should instances of self-identification be handled by readers, such as when, in an essay, an applicant notes that growing up X ethnicity led to certain obstacles? Some suggest applications should be read in a certain

order to preserve reader objectivity, perhaps not showing test scores or GPAs until after essays have been read. Volume and reader fatigue also present concerns.

3. Internal Audit Next Steps/External Audit Preview

With Matt Hicks, Systemwide Deputy Audit Officer

UC's internal audit's first phase, which focused on process, has completed, and all locations have received their management corrective actions (MCAs) for implementation over the fall and by next May. The second phase of UC's internal audit will be sample testing Admission by Exception (AbyE) and special talent admits versus stated standards. Statistical data would be best, but the small-N and inconsistent use of AbyE across the campuses could preclude that outcome. Demographic profiles and persistence of special talent and athletic admits will be scrutinized, similar to the upcoming state audit. Additionally, an assessment of the appeals process and outcomes will be conducted during phase II, but under the same scope as the process assessment conducted in phase I. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Diego have been singled out for detailed scrutiny. The tests will be against the standards in place at the time of admission. Non-residents may also be selected for extra scrutiny due to political concerns outside UC.

4. Admission by Exception (AbyE) Policy Review: Disproportionate scrutiny is being paid here, given the low numbers of students granted admission in this manner, less than 2% per class on most campuses. Nevertheless, patterns may emerge in usage that could lead to creative solutions.

5. Strengthening Relations: The admission directors will be invited to join more frequently by videoconference, in addition to in-person consultation in November and June.

IV. Debrief

Note: Item occurred in executive session; other than action items, no notes were taken.

V. Admission by Exception (AbyE) Policy Review

BOARS is asked to revise the AbyE policy in light of the "Varsity Blues" scandal, and as directed by Assembly Bill 1383. Currently, AbyE admits are capped at 6% per campus, with 4% for those lacking limited academic criteria and 2% for those designated to have a special talent, such as in the fine arts or athletics. Most campuses do not reach the 6% cap. Knowing the types and frequencies of academic deficiencies that lead to AbyE would usefully inform discussion. The treatment of non-residents should also be clearer in revised guidelines.

Action: Chair Comeaux and Vice Chair Sorapure will draft revisions for discussion.

VI. Campus Reports

Chair: Chair Comeaux reported that the Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) continues its work assessing data related the SAT and ACT and UC admissions. Methodological discussions and debates about how to draw conclusions from inconclusive data are common. The impact of non-test factors on the outcomes used to assess admission decision efficacy complicates analysis.

Berkeley: 1) A diversity assessment of admission, outreach, and climate has revealed that climate is a larger problem than admissions. 2) Clarity regarding the Letter of Recommendation assessment is sought. Many campuses use Augmented Review.

Davis: (absent)

Irvine: 1) Discussions about alternatives to standardized tests are occurring. 2) International student preparation programs are being assessed.

Los Angeles: 1) An athletics admission task force is being formed. 2) The local committee had a discussion about pending lawsuits regarding standardized testing usage.

Merced: 1) Impacted majors are arising, and enrollment strategies are being developed. Physical plant concerns are being raised in parallel. 2) The transfer admission rate is inching closer to meeting the 2:1 ratio. Best practices for establishing relations with local CCCs are sought.

Riverside: 1) Plans for launching holistic review continue. 2) Audit responses are being developed.

San Diego: 1) An undergraduate tribal initiative is up for a vote. 2) A capacity-based admissions workshop will address how to handle an increase in “undeclared” majors hoping to gain access to a capped major. 3) Use of the waiting list as an enrollment strategy has been proposed.

San Francisco: UCSF continues not to admit undergraduates.

Santa Barbara: 1) Meetings with the athletic admission committee are occurring regularly. 2) Enrollment targets for all majors, not just the impacted ones, are being set. Capacity-based enrollment has been proposed.

Santa Cruz: The selection mechanism is being adjusted so that ELC designations are for low-performing schools only.

Graduate Student: 1) The federal Supreme Court will hear another DACA case soon, and many are worried about how it will rule. 2) UCR is forming an African-American student retention task force.

Undergraduate Student: Retention strategies should include improvements to financial aid processes and greater support services for transfer students.

VII. Executive Session

Note: In executive session, other than action items, no notes are taken.

Action: UCLA Representative Knowlton will represent BOARS on the IGETC Standards Subcommittee.

Adjournment 4 pm

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Analyst

Attest: Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

Attendance:

Eddie Comeaux, Chair

Madeleine Sorapure, Vice Chair

Jabari Mahiri, UCB

Susana Cohen-Cory, UCI

Barbara Knowlton, UCLA

Matt Hibbing, UCM

Sheldon Tan, UCR

Skip Pomeroy, UCSD

Andrea Hasenstaub, UCSF

Mike Gordon, UCSB

Juan Poblete, UCSC

Carlos Galan, Graduate Student Representative

Alexis Zaragoza, Undergraduate Student Representative