

**Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**November 6, 2020**

**I. Announcements**

*Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair*

1. Agenda Overview
2. Feasibility Study

A joint Senate-administration working group has been formed to determine whether it is possible to create a new standardized test for University admissions within four years. The SAT and ACT are not under consideration for modification, but the Smarter Balanced Assessment is. The working group will use fairness and equity lenses. More data is needed to assess the SBA. The recommendations are due December 2, before additional data will be available. Many are concerned that because admission decisions are not the original purpose of SBA, it could become a high stakes test. Many are also concerned that test administration differences by school could lead to cheating. SBA is administered to public school students in California as well as a dozen other states.

3. Other Committees: ICAS, UCOPE, ASSIST

UCR Representative Tan will serve as substitute at the December 10 ICAS meeting.

A UC-CCC transfer task force is finalizing its charge.

UCOPE is assessing writing placement and assessment. The Entry Level Writing Requirement is under scrutiny.

**II. Ethnic Studies A-G Proposal**

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

Director Lin noted the changes in the proposal from last month. BOARS is asked to determine whether the new ethnic studies requirement should fall under area A (history/social science), G (college-prep elective), or any A-G designated course, and whether the requirement should count for a half or full credit. Members posit that more options and flexibility would benefit students. AP courses might be eligible for designation, but any curricular revisions would need to be approved by the College Board, which own AP curricula. A similar process would be needed for International Baccalaureate courses and the like. Legislation currently pending before the state would require one semester for high school graduation, but UC could recommend more. Also, the state is still developing its ethnic studies model curriculum. There are only about 500 ethnic studies courses in California currently, from 2500 schools. Any proposed requirement would not take effect until 2030.

BOARS recommends option 4b with a strong recommendation for a second semester of ethnic studies instruction.

### **III. Systemwide Review Items**

#### **1. Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report**

*Chair Comeaux and Vice Chair Sorapure, Lead Reviewers*

The report suffers from bad framing and ignores the history of online instruction at UC. Online education does not address access or capacity concerns. The “digital divide” is real, and more reliance on online instruction could have differential impacts. Quality assessment should be strengthened. Some worry that faculty could be divided into in-person and online teaching cohorts.

Analyst Feer will draft a response for committee approval.

#### **2. Proposed Revisions to Senate Regulation 630**

*David Smith, UCSC, Lead Reviewer*

The proposal allows departmental flexibility, not a campus-wide exception.

Analyst Feer will draft a response for committee approval.

### **IV. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership**

*Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Chair*

*Robert Horwitz, Academic Council Vice Chair*

- Curtailment proposal: Many find the proposal too vague and expect it will lead to differential outcomes by campus. Other groups are submitting similar feedback, and a second iteration is likely.
- The University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) is considering a task force to assess the Entry Level Writing Requirement.
- A review of the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) is forthcoming. The review was started over a year ago, so comments will need to be forward thinking.
- Climate Crisis: The Senate is still developing a strategy and specific goals. The Senate has been invited to the UCOP Global Climate Leadership Council this year.
- Feasibility study: Discussion of possible modifications to the Smarter Balanced Assessment are ongoing, but many note that SBA is not intended to assess student achievement but school success. Access to data has been slow, and cheating remains a concern, as well. It is unlikely that a new test could be created from scratch in the time line provided by the Regents. Too many changes to SBA could have negative impacts to test administration and may not have incremental value.

### **V. Consultation with Admission Directors and Enrollment Management Leads & Consultation with the Office of the President – Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs**

1. How has the review process changed absent standardized tests for California residents and non-residents? What additional changes to you foresee?

Riverside is still using a fixed-weight model, but COVID-related issues complicate the process. Pass/Fail grades are on the rise, and many expect downstream learning deficits to manifest. Berkeley added more contextual information for readers. Landscape was used last year, and this year, AP Ledger will be used. Reviewers look to see if applicants maximize their available curriculum and making the most of local opportunities. The order in which information is presented in files was also changed this year. Reviewer consistency assessments are being documented. The bell-curve model of distribution is not viable for applicant outcomes, and the University's formal response to the state auditor report with the assumption that is is still being finalized. In order to better assess academic engagement, internal resources were reallocated. UCLA will add Landscape next cycle for greater contextualization. Applications get a third review in rare circumstances- only 3% in recent years.

San Diego is considering products similar to Landscape. Reviewers were instructed to assess rigor of academic program in lieu of test scores.

Santa Barbara encountered software legacy issues but successfully switched to test-free assessments. The order of information presentation has changed, and readers assess rigor, trajectory, and utilization.

Davis may add Landscape next cycle, and assessed applicants on the 13 remaining Comprehensive Review criteria.

Santa Cruz considered student achievements in math and English, and allowed more space for COVID impacts. The campus uses its own census data, rather than Landscape, for neighborhood contextualization.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment should remain low stakes if used. Adding a test would be against the popular tide, and demonstrating the value added would be difficult. Absent standardized tests, though, grade inflation and socio-economic status could be harder to control for. Compare Favorably data is also impacted.

2. What adjustments have been made to reader training?

Resources for reader training should be increased at every campus. The number of applications is expected to increase absent standardized test score requirements, and the impact of COVID on possible applications is unknown. Public calls for more resources for application reading and more standardized reader training could help campuses leverage resources. So far, no differential impacts by gender have been noted in application rates in the test-free environment.

3. To what extent are psycho-social (non-cognitive) variables used/accounted for before and after going test-free? To what degree does Augmented Review influence decisions? What is learned from Augmented Review that is not gleaned from the Personal Insight Question responses?

So far, the assessment of PIQ responses has not changed as they remain equally valuable as before. Some wonder if the PIQs could be rephrased to illicit more useful information. Better knowledge of neighborhoods and high school cultures, both inside and outside of California, would help assessment of applicants. Some campuses ask for school report forms for all high schools with applicants, again for both those inside and outside of California. But these forms are an additional reading burden.

Better student support for admitted and matriculated students is needed at all campuses.

4. How is UC communicating with applicants during this time of rapid change?  
Because there is so much uncertainty, it is difficult to provide information to potential applicants. But regular webinars, emails, and the like are employed, being mindful of the digital divide and the need to reach out to counselors directly, too.
5. How can BOARS reconsider Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) to increase access and reduce the number of applicants who receive referral?  
Few take up the referral pool option, but campuses are already over capacity anyway. Students from the referral pool often enroll at private universities or out of state public universities. UC routinely admits more than the top 12.5% of California high school graduates, but messaging that fact has proven difficult.  
BOARS formally received the ELC non-participating schools report from GUEA. More information is being solicited, but it seems some high schools do not want to disadvantage their high achievers by amplifying only a small percentage at their school and others have so few UC applicants that the administrative burden precludes participation.
6. How can BOARS and campus admission committees support campus admission offices?  
Public lobbying for greater resources and people power is needed.
7. Litigation Update  
Note: Item occurred in executive session; no notes were taken.

## **VI. Campus Updates**

UCD: Capacity is a concern in nearly every discussion.

UCI: Some schools provide specific guidance to application readers, especially for second review.

UCB: A revised freshman admission policy was recently posted.

UCSB: Should GPA calculations include +/- grades? Should grades from the first year of high school also be considered?

## **VII. Further Discussion**

None.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Analyst

Attest: Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

Attendance:

Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair

Madeleine Sorapure, BOARS Vice Chair

Sameer Srivastava, UCB

Deborah Swenson, UCD

Sergio Gago Masague, UCI

Barbara Knowlton, UCLA

Abbas Ghassemi, UCM

Sheldon Tan, UCR

Rebecca Plant, UCSD

Michael Stryker, UCSF

Mike Gordon, UCSB

David Smith, UCSC

Carlos Galan, Graduate Student Representative