

Minutes of Meeting – May 6, 2005

Approved June 15, 2005

I. Consent Calendar**A. Approval of BOARS April 15, 2005 Meeting Minutes**

ACTION: The minutes of the April 15, 2005 BOARS meeting were approved with minor modifications.

II. Report on Conference “Dropouts in California: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis”

- Maria Ledesma, Graduate Student Representative, UCLA

REPORT: Graduate Student Representative Maria Ledesma reported to the committee on her attendance at the “Dropouts in California: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis” conference that was held in Los Angeles on March 24th. The conference was supported by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation and was co-sponsored by The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Californians for Justice, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), Public Advocates, Inc., the University of California All Campus Consortium On Research for Diversity (UCACCORD), Justice Matters Institute, and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE).

The conference highlighted the fact that California’s high school dropout rates are much more dire than reported at both the state and national levels. According to research presented at the March 24th conference, California’s overall high school graduation rate is approximately 71 percent – 16 percentage points lower than the state’s official reported rate of 87 percent. The graduation rates for African-American and Latino students are even lower, 60 percent for Latino students and 57 percent for African-Americans.

The conference included discussion on the following specific topics: models of schools that have increased graduation rates; the issue of “ghost” students – incarcerated youth and those who are pursuing a GED – that are not included in graduation rate calculations; the perverse incentives for pushing students out of high school (e.g., raises school’s test score average if problem students dropout); and the need for implementation of the student identifier tracking system that was approved by the California legislature.

ACTION: BOARS will invite Charles Masten, Assistant Director of Admissions, to brief the committee on the development of the California student ID tracking system.

III. General Examination of UC Eligibility

- Michael T. Brown, BOARS Chair

The committee reviewed draft “Principles for Evaluating Eligibility Requirements.” The goal is to develop a set of principles that BOARS can use to guide its evaluation of the various components of the University’s eligibility requirements (e.g., Honors Level Course GPA bump).

Although BOARS articulated a set of eligibility principles last year, those principles focused on guiding changes to how eligibility is determined, not the evaluation of the individual components that comprise the eligibility requirements.

DISCUSSION: The committee discussed the purpose of eligibility and why UC uses this unique process. As defined by the Master Plan for Higher Education, part of UC's social contract with the state is to admit the top 12.5 percent of California's public high school graduates. Eligibility is the process by which the University defines and determines this top 12.5 percent of students. Members discussed the benefits and constraints of abiding by this Master Plan commitment. Defining the requirements for eligibility gives students a clear academic goal to work towards, and one member remarked that eligibility has allowed UC to remain a system of equal campuses. However, as greater numbers of students are graduating from high school and preparing for college, the constraint of defining only the top 12.5 percent of students as eligible, coupled with the understanding that the state does not provide funding for enrollments beyond those students generated by the 12.5 percent eligibility rate, forces UC to continually raise the minimum requirements for eligibility. This means that students that are qualified and capable of attending UC are no longer deemed eligible. This constant adjustment to the eligibility construct often has the greatest negative impact on underrepresented groups of students.

BOARS members made a number of recommendations for modifications to the draft principles for evaluating eligibility requirements, including:

- The primary criteria of eligibility requirements should be that they have predictive validity and select a high achieving and diverse student body; however, a secondary criterion of the eligibility requirements should be that they incentivize high achievement and college preparation.
- The eligibility requirements should allow students to be able to determine in advance if they are on track to achieving eligibility.
- The eligibility requirements should be transparent in that they are understandable. This does not necessarily mean that the requirements must lack complexity.
- Eligibility should be determined on the basis of a student's best use of the opportunities available to him or her.
- A fundamental attribute of the eligibility determination process is that it is a systemwide, not a campus-specific, determination.
- The University has always had subject requirements, so refer to "subject requirements" rather than "a-g requirements," which are the current form of the subject requirements.
- There should be a minimum floor of achievement required for each subject requirement; eligible applicants should "demonstrate mastery with respect to each subject requirement."

ACTION: Chair Michael T. Brown will make modifications to the draft "Principles for Evaluating Eligibility Requirements." A revised draft will be distributed to the committee for further feedback.

B. Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC)

DISCUSSION: The committee discussed the policy objectives of the Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) pathway and the additional information BOARS needs for its examination of the possibility of expanding the percentage of students eligible through ELC.

Displacement/Replacement Analysis

The committee agreed it would require further information on those students that would be displaced and those students that would replace them in the eligibility pool (the “winners/newly eligible and losers”) if the ELC percentage were expanded. This analysis should include information on the gains and losses in terms of the “representativeness” of the eligibility pool, including the effects of an ELC expansion on students from various racial/ethnic groups, geographic regions, API deciles and underrepresented schools.

Assistant Director Roger Studley informed the committee of the data limitations for conducting a displacement/replacement analysis of ELC expansion. The information contained in the ELC Transcript Evaluation database would allow reliable analysis of an expansion of the ELC percentage up to approximately 6 percent; however, any expansion beyond that range would require the use of other data sources that contain less precise information. It was recommended that a two-staged analysis be performed: (1) a simulation of expanding ELC to 6-7 percent using the ELC Transcript Evaluation database, and (2) a simulation of expanding ELC beyond 6-7 percent using other data sources.

College Outcomes Analysis

The committee agreed it would need information on the college outcomes of students admitted via the current and an expanded ELC pathway. Questions about the likely performance of students newly admitted by an expanded ELC pathway are likely to be raised by the Senate, The Regents and the public. This analysis should include performance analyses of students from every API decile and those students that are “newly eligible.”

The committee was informed of the data limitations for conducting college outcomes analysis of students admitted through an expanded ELC pathway; UC might not have sufficient performance information on students closer to the boundary of an expanded pool because these students were not admitted to the University.

Behavioral Analysis

Some members felt that the decision to expand the ELC pathway should be primarily based on whether the program motivates students to fulfill UC’s requirements and become eligible. Does ELC increase applications from schools that are underrepresented in the eligibility pool? Would expansion of ELC have an even greater motivating effect on students?

ACTION: Assistant Director Roger Studley will conduct a two-staged analysis of displacement/replacement effects of ELC expansion for BOARS consideration. College outcomes data for students at different ELC percentage levels will also be provided.

ELC Pilot Program

Vice President Winston Doby suggested that BOARS might consider conducting a pilot program in which ELC is expanded on a trial basis. This would allow analysis of the efficacy of expanding the ELC pathway. BOARS would then be able to review reliable data on whether students in the expanded ELC pool fulfill the requirements to become eligible and apply to UC, and how they perform at UC. Such a pilot program would help better inform whether ELC should be expanded on a permanent basis.

The committee discussed how such a pilot program might be conducted. If ELC were expanded, even on a provisional basis, it would still require a decrease in the Statewide Eligibility pathway pool. Some suggestions for damping the displacement effect of such a program included:

- The Admissions by Exception (AbyE) pathway was designed in part to allow the admission of students through experimental programs; and therefore, students admitted through an ELC

expansion pilot program could be admitted via AbyE. Concerns were raised, however, that treating these students as AbyE admits, rather than ELC admits, could impact the validity of the study. If the AbyE policy were used for this purpose, it would require the pilot to be designed as a double-blind study so that both the applicant and the campus do not know the student is in the expanded ELC pool.

- Conduct the experimental ELC program with only a random sample of students in the expanded pool. Members expressed concerns that using a random sample of students might lead to legal problems. Students and their parents are aware of their class rank in high school and would question why a student with a lower class rank received an ELC letter when they did not.

BOARS members concluded that the committee should further consider the possibility of conducting a pilot ELC expansion. It was also noted that instituting such an experimental program would require the campuses to agree to participate and the approval of The Regents.

ACTION: A subgroup of BOARS members will explore the possibility of conducting a systemwide ELC expansion pilot program. This subgroup consists of Chair Michael T. Brown, Vice Chair David Stern, Members Bob Jacobsen, Bob Reilly, and Dick Flacks. Associate Director Judy Kowarsky will assist with this effort.

VI. Role of Honors Level Courses in College Admissions

- Sam Agronow, Associate Director, SAS
- Judy Kowarsky, Associate Director, SAS
- Saul Geiser, CSHE Research Associate

ISSUE: Senate Regulation 424 currently allows a grade point advantage for admissions purposes for a limited number of “honors level” courses:

Grades in up to 4 units of certified honors level courses, a maximum of two of which can be taken in the 10th grade, from the areas of history, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and language other than English, will be counted on the scale A=5, B=4, C=3. Grades in all other units will be counted on the scale A=4, B=3, C=2.

As part of the committee’s general review of eligibility components and in anticipation of the final report of the Academic Senate’s AP/Honors Task Force, BOARS is currently reassessing the appropriateness of this policy for calculating GPAs for UC freshman admissions purposes.

DISCUSSION: The committee reviewed a draft final report of the AP/Honors Task Force, a statement on the AP/Honors Point Advantage from the UCSC Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid, and a letter from Associate Vice President Dennis Galligani conveying his thoughts regarding the “AP/Honors” issue. Members were interested to learn from the draft Task Force report that very few universities use an admissions grade bump for AP or Honors Level courses. The committee’s discussion focused primarily on three areas:

Access Questions

Members expressed continued concerns about the availability of and access to Honors Level courses for all high school students, especially for underrepresented students and students from lower API schools. The availability of Honors Level courses has been difficult to assess because of a lack of accurate information – school master course schedules often list courses that are rarely offered and UC has very limited data on students from the lower API schools because very few of these students apply to the University. It was noted that data gathered by UC ACCORD

indicate that underrepresented minority students are more likely to be tracked out of or experience difficulties obtaining access to Honors Level courses.

Incentivizing Rigor

Some members expressed concerns about eliminating the Honors Level grade bump even though studies have shown the best predictor of UC performance is unweighted, rather than weighted, high school GPA. These concerns are based on the idea that the Honors Level grade bump policy provides an incentive for students to take the most rigorous courses and for high schools to offer Honors Level courses. The committee discussed whether providing a GPA advantage was the best and most appropriate way to incentivize rigorous coursework and if there might be an alternative mechanism to encourage this behavior. Some members questioned whether most of the Honors Level courses are truly more rigorous than standard level high school courses and suggested that UC might examine how students who took different levels of a high school course perform at UC. It was suggested that even if the Honors Level grade bump was eliminated for eligibility purposes, students still have an admissions-related incentive to take these courses because the Comprehensive Review selection criteria allow campuses to weigh an applicant's number of and performance in Honors Level courses in the context of the availability of these courses at the applicant's high school.

Replacement Effect

The committee agreed that a next step for evaluating the honors level GPA policy is to examine the "replacement effect" of a change to this grade weighting policy. At this point BOARS has only reviewed analyses that identify those students that move out of eligibility when the honors level grade bump is eliminated ("displacement effect"), but the committee must also consider those students that might become eligible by a change in the grade bump policy. This analysis should include simulations of changes to UC's eligibility requirements in three areas: the minimum GPA, test score, and the eligibility index (a combination of both GPA and test score).

VII. Consultation with Office of the President – Student Academic Services

- Sam Agronow, Associate Director of Admissions

REPORT: Associate Director Sam Agronow presented a finalized "Are you eligible for UC?" printed worksheet to the committee. This worksheet has been field-tested and 100 percent of the students completed the worksheet correctly. The worksheet will be printed in the *UC Notes* and sent to high school principals.

BOARS members were also provided with a sample printout of a new online admissions eligibility calculator that is currently in development. This calculator allows students to input their GPA and test scores to determine if they are eligible for UC admission via the statewide eligibility pathway.

DISCUSSION: Members suggested some minor modifications to the eligibility determination worksheet: replace "e.g.," with "for example;" replace "take 2 SAT Subject Tests" with "take two SAT Subject Tests." It was also suggested that printed documents, such as the "Are you eligible for UC?" worksheet, should include links to the online eligibility calculator.

VIII. Status Report: Development of Inclusiveness Indicators

- Sam Agronow, Associate Director, SAS

Draft data presentations on the path to the University of California for underrepresented minority students from California Community Colleges was provided to the committee members prior to the meeting. Due to a lack of time discussion of this item was deferred.

IX. Testing Subcommittee Report: Eligibility Index Update

- Mark Rashid, Testing Subcommittee Chair

Testing Subcommittee Chair Mark Rashid made a motion for BOARS to endorse the implementation of the statewide eligibility construct for Fall 2006 as is presented in the “Are you eligible for UC?” worksheet. It was noted that this implementation aligns with the fundamental policy for constructing the Fall 2006 eligibility index approved by the committee at the February meeting.

ACTION: The motion to endorse the implementation of the Eligibility Index for Fall 2006 was unanimously approved.

X. Comprehensive Review Report

- Michael T. Brown, BOARS Chair

REPORT: There have been some continued data delays (e.g., reprogramming issues) that have stalled the committee’s ability to complete a Comprehensive Review report this year. Provost M.R.C. Greenwood, Regent Joanne Kozberg, and Academic Council Chair George Blumenthal have agreed to BOARS’ recommendation to prepare a two-year Comprehensive Review report. Chair Michael T. Brown and the Student Academic Services office have developed a timeline for the delivery of the data needed for BOARS to complete this report. BOARS will finalize the two-year Comprehensive Review report this summer (via email and teleconferences) in time for the report to be reviewed by the Academic Council and presented to The Regents in November.

XI. Admissions by Exception Guidelines

Due to a lack of time discussion of this item was deferred.

ACTION: A subgroup of BOARS will craft revisions, based on the feedback received from campuses, to the draft Admissions by Exception Guidelines. The subgroup consists of Chair Michael T. Brown, Vice Chair David Stern and Member Dick Flacks, and will be assisted by Director Nina Robinson and Analyst Kimberly Peterson.

Meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m.
Attest: Michael T. Brown

Minutes drafted by
Kimberly Peterson
Committee Analyst