

BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS

Minutes of Meeting – October 8, 2004

Approved 11/15/04

I. Consent Calendar – Approval of Minutes

ACTION: The minutes of the September 24, 2004 meeting will be distributed electronically to the committee for approval.

II. Geographical Preferences in Selectivity

ISSUE: In response to recent debate about the practice of local geographic preferences in admissions, BOARS is examining whether Selection Criterion #14 of the *Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admissions* needs to be revised or its intent clarified. Criterion #14 states that campuses may use “location of the applicant’s secondary school and residence” as selection factors for the admitted freshman class, and that “these factors shall be considered in order to provide for geographic diversity in the student population and also to account for the wide variety of educational environments existing in California.”

DISCUSSION: The committee identified two different types of geographic preferences in admissions: (1) preferences that help a campus to assemble a student body representative of the geographic distribution of the state’s population; (2) preferences given to applicants from a campus’s local area. Members agreed that the original intent of Criterion #14 was to encourage geographic diversity and representation from students across the state, but not to support local preferences in admissions. Arguments both in favor of and against local geographic preferences in admissions were identified and discussed:

Arguments in Favor of Local Geographic Preferences

- A campus cannot be neutral to its surrounding area since it is embedded in and has an impact on the local community.
- Local geographic preferences might help eliminate a local community’s feelings of disenfranchisement from the University.
- There may be legitimate cases in which a student may not be able to attend college away from home.
- The University already has a strict local criterion in place – it gives preference to state residents. What is wrong with a campus being even more preferential to its local region?

Arguments Against Local Geographic Preferences

- The University has a responsibility to the state and its entire population, not just its local area.
- The University, as a statewide system, needs to be careful about practices that distinguish and separate campuses from one another.

- Creating a local preference doesn't directly solve the problem of disadvantaged local schools not sending a representative number of admits to the University, but instead would also favor privileged students that live in the local area.
- Those students who have legitimate reasons for needing to attend college close to home can be identified through other means.
- Local geographic preferences are unfair to those students that do not live close to a campus and there is no way to articulate an academic rationale for employing such preferences.

Creating Positive University-Community Relationships

The committee agreed that it was important for campuses to develop positive relationships with their local communities. The University should not be seen as being isolated from the community from which it obtains resources (e.g., land, utilities). Many members felt that offering local admissions preferences was not an appropriate method of achieving the goal of positive university-community relationships – the University should be working with communities to improve the K-12 education system rather than just simply admitting more local students through a geographic preference program. If the University wants to solve the problem of underrepresented local districts in admissions, it would be more effective to strengthen the relationship between outreach, which is primarily conducted locally, and admissions.

It was noted that outreach efforts do not have to be limited to a campus's local area, but can also be extended to statewide communities. The UCLA Statewide Migrant Student Leadership Institute (<http://centerk.gseis.ucla.edu/msli.htm>) is an example of a program that impacts the college attendance rates of communities statewide that are traditionally underrepresented at the University. This program hosts a cohort of high school students, selected from the various migrant regions throughout the state, for a summer residential program that includes academic preparation and leadership development.

One member remarked that a central goal of admissions policy is to influence high schools. For example, the Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) was developed as an outreach tool that would have an effect on not only the students, but also the high schools (e.g., curricular offerings, relationship with UC). Members briefly discussed possible ways to strengthen the outreach effect of the ELC program (e.g., campuses guaranteeing selection of some percentage of ELC applicants).

Resolution

A motion was made for BOARS to adopt the following resolution on Selection Criterion #14:

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) affirms the goals and language of Selection Criterion #14 of the "Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admissions." The reference in Criterion #14 to geographic location should not be construed to permit preferences that advantage students from a campus's local area purely on the basis of geographic proximity.

ACTION: BOARS' Resolution on Selection Criterion #14 was approved in a vote of 9 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention. The resolution and its accompanying draft statement on geographical preferences in admissions will be circulated electronically to the committee members for final revisions and approval.

III. Comprehensive Review Report Preparation

ISSUE: BOARS annual report on Comprehensive Review will be presented at either the January or March Regents meeting. A timeline for the completion of this report needs to be established.

ACTION: Director Susan Wilbur will notify BOARS of the due date for the committee's report to the Regents on Comprehensive Review.

ACTION: The committee will discuss possible expansion of the items covered in the Comprehensive Review report.

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

Susan Wilbur, Director, Undergraduate Admissions

REPORT: Director Susan Wilbur reported to the committee on the following items:

Counselor Conference Focus Groups

Each of the UC Counselor Conferences this year had a focus group component, which gave the University an opportunity to receive firsthand information directly from the high school counselors. The committee was provided with a draft summary of the high school focus group discussions (distribution 1).

DISCUSSION: BOARS members expressed interest in the attendance rates and representation of high schools at these conferences. The committee also questioned whether there are any issues that constrain counselors from attending the conferences (e.g., cost, timing, lack of communication). It was suggested that UCOP consider offering scholarships to school districts that are unable to attend due to limited financial resources.

ACTION: BOARS members are asked to provide Director Susan Wilbur with feedback on the focus group discussion summary and suggestions for possible next steps for action.

ACTION: Director Susan Wilbur will provide BOARS with demographic information on the attendance at the counselor conferences (e.g., rates of attendance by API deciles).

Meeting with Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs

The Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs have expressed an interest in being included again as participants in the annual joint meeting between BOARS and the Admissions Directors.

V. Creating a Strategic Vision of Admissions Policy

A. Academic Preparedness of Admitted Students

ISSUE: As part of its plan to create a strategic vision of admissions policy, BOARS is examining the relationship of admissions policy with the academic preparedness of admitted students.

DISCUSSION: To begin consideration of academic preparation and its relation to admissions requirements and policies, the committee reviewed preliminary analyses of the academic admissions criteria of students with a first-year UC GPA < 2.0 compared to those students with a GPA ≥ 2.0 (distribution 2). Members concluded that although the preliminary analyses indicate there may be some relationship between academic indicators and college performance, they also show that students performing well during their first year of college and those not performing well come from all levels of the eligibility pool. Members made suggestions for improving the usefulness of the analyses, including:

- add statistical analysis to the graphical context (e.g., rates of students receiving a low GPA)
- examine correlations with other admissions criteria and information (e.g., API deciles of the applicant's high school)
- conduct logistic regression analysis that controls for input variables (e.g., high school GPA and API deciles) and includes campus dummy variables

Assessing Success

The committee questioned how to best assess "success" in college and how to identify students that will excel in the UC environment. Members agreed that any analysis of success must look beyond first-year college GPA. There are limitations in using only GPA to evaluate success, for example the usage of grading curves dictates that some students will fail a course. Members agreed that success should be defined by multiple criteria, including some criteria not typically used to define success (e.g., measures of engagement).

Admissions Criteria

Once measures of success have been determined, BOARS would like to examine the correlations between these outcomes and multiple admissions criteria. This would help the committee to learn more about the characteristics of those students that are not succeeding at the University and identify possible admissions criteria that need to be reconsidered or new criteria that should be factored into eligibility determinations (e.g., measures of motivation). One question to be examined is the relation between success and an applicants' proximity to the eligibility boundary. Members suggested using a distance function or linearly ranked logistic regression analysis to quantify an applicant's level of eligibility. It was noted that the Eligibility and Admissions Study Group's final report contained information on first-year measures of success (GPA, persistence, and average units completed) of students grouped into bands of high school GPA and SAT I score. Members felt that such analysis was limited because it does not reflect the degree to which a student is eligible.

B. Relation to University Mission

Due to a lack of time, this item was postponed.

VI. Admissions by Exception Guidelines

David Stern, BOARS Vice Chair

ISSUE: The policy on Undergraduate Admissions by Exception (AbyE) grants campuses the flexibility to admit a small proportion of students that do not fulfill all of the eligibility requirements, but who demonstrate a high potential for success at the University (<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/policies/6160.html>). In accordance with the

AbyE policy, up to 6 percent of newly enrolled freshman may be admitted by exception at each campus; however in recent years the percentage of newly enrolled freshman admitted by exception has declined to less than 2 percent. BOARS is currently developing *Guidelines for Admissions by Exception* to aid the campuses in make greater use of this admissions pathway.

DISCUSSION: Vice Chair David Stern explained to the committee what changes had been made to the draft AbyE Guidelines after the July BOARS meeting (distribution 3). Members expressed the following concerns about recommending that campuses make greater use of the AbyE policy:

Enrollment Funding

BOARS members questioned whether the budget would provide sufficient funding for the campuses to admit the full number of students allowable under the AbyE policy. Others expressed concerns that the recommendation would become an unfunded mandate. It was noted that every campus is allocated a number of budgeted enrollment slots, the funding for which is based on an agreement with the state regarding enrollment numbers.

Workload Issues

BOARS members expressed concerns about increasing the workload of admissions offices if campuses implemented new procedures to review and admit a greater number of the students via the AbyE policy. Some members suggested that the workload might actually be reduced since campuses that have an initial screening process to identify ineligible students might eliminate this time-consuming procedure and instead consider all applications during the comprehensive review phase. It was noted that an arrangement has been made for the admissions budget to be augmented through the increased student fees.

ACTION: Vice President for Budget Lawrence Hershman will be invited to the next BOARS meeting to discuss funding for comprehensive review and the relationship between enrollment budgets and the eligibility pool.

Implementation Examples

A number of possible implementation options for AbyE were discussed:

- Berkeley routinely sends an admissions questionnaire to some applicants to obtain further information about them. Such a questionnaire might be used as a tool for identifying students eligible for AbyE.
- UCLA formerly had a “High Potential Program” (1968-1971) that focused on students across the state that were active in their communities but did not meet the full requirements for admission to the University. Participants were offered one year of preparation courses, along with tutoring and counseling. After completion of certain criteria, participants in the program were offered admission to a UC campus through AbyE.

Advertising Issues

The committee agreed that AbyE must be advertised in such a way that all applicants are aware of this potential pathway to the University. Any information provided about AbyE must make it clear that it is not a new initiative, but rather an existing University policy. It was suggested that a Q&A document might also help to educate the administration about the importance of using AbyE and answer any concerns they might have about implementing this policy more fully on their campuses (e.g., budgetary concerns).

ACTION: Director Nina Robinson will draft a Q&A document on AbyE.

ACTION: The draft Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Admissions by Exception were approved unanimously with the following amendments:

- Eliminate the procedural recommendations (#7-8) from section II of the guidelines.
- Revise criteria #5 of section III of the guidelines to read “Applicants whose enrollment would contribute to a campus fulfilling its plans to establish or build new majors or academic programs.”

ACTION: The draft AbyE guidelines and Q&A document will be sent to the Divisional Senate Admissions Committees, Admissions Directors, and Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs for feedback and information about potential implementation plans. Those reviewing the draft will also be asked for input on the possibility of changing the name of the AbyE policy. Responses will be due back to BOARS by November 30th for consideration at the December committee meeting.

VII. Analytic Subcommittee

David Stern, BOARS Vice Chair and Subcommittee Chair

Due to a lack of time, this item was postponed.

ACTION: BOARS will hold a teleconference to discuss and prioritize the agenda of the Analytic Subcommittee.

Meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m.
Attest: Michael Brown
Committee Analyst

Minutes drafted by
Kimberly Peterson

Distributions:

1. 10/7/04 Draft Summary of High School Focus Group Discussion: 2004 UC Counselor Conferences
2. 10/7/04 preliminary data on the distribution of students by first year UC GPA, academic discipline, and ELC status (2002)
3. 10/4/04 Revised Draft BOARS' Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Admission by Exception (distributed electronically prior to meeting)
4. 9/29/04 Summary of BOARS Analytic Subcommittee Conference Call (distributed electronically prior to meeting)