

University of California Academic Senate
Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)
Minutes of Meeting
February 5, 2010

I. Announcements

- o *Sylvia Hurtado, BOARS chair*

January Academic Council Meeting: Council endorsed a BOARS [memo](#) responding to external groups who are concerned about the potential impact of the admissions reform policy on diversity and the ability of their communities and constituencies to access a UC education. Council also endorsed a [BOARS memo](#) urging UC to maintain funding for StatFinder.

Two recent California Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) reports—“[Improving State Oversight of Academic Expansions](#)” and “[Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts—Coordinating Higher Education in California](#)”—call for improving coordination within California higher education and increasing the state’s influence and control over the development and approval of new programs and schools at UC and CSU. The LAO cited UC’s admissions reform policy as one example of a policy that encroaches on another segment. The LAO overlooked intersegmental faculty collaboration within ICAS and elsewhere.

Testimony in Sacramento: On Tuesday, Chair Hurtado and Academic Senate Chair Powell gave testimony at a hearing of the Joint Commission on the Master Plan for Higher Education. Chair Powell spoke as ICAS chair, and his presentation had an intersegmental focus. Chair Hurtado described UC’s progress on a-g approval for CTE, intersegmental collaborative efforts to improve transfer, and the admissions reform policy scheduled for 2012.

The next day, UC faculty leaders—former BOARS chairs Michael Brown and Mark Rashid, and current BOARS member Joe Watson—as well as Steve Juarez, UC’s state government relations director, met with legislative staff from the education committees and ethnic caucuses of the California Legislature to discuss UC’s new admissions policy. Professors Brown and Rashid described how the ETR policy developed, UC’s goals and rationale, and the unreliable nature of the controversial simulations. They made the point that ETR is an inherently fairer way of establishing eligibility, and that local selection and admission issues should be addressed separately. UC representatives expressed their commitment to continued dialogue and outreach to ensure the policy’s success.

Professor Watson said he felt the meeting was positive. At the end, some attendees commented that they were no longer anxious about the policy. Legislative staff who were generally neutral or supportive also noted the difficult political position they are in with respect to its critics, whom they have worked with in the past and greatly respect. They asked what could be done to improve educational access and success for their communities. A member of the Black Caucus asked for UC to interact more with African-American organizations such as the NAACP.

Other Updates: The UC Commission on the Future Access and Affordability Working Group is meeting today to consider principles for undergraduate access and affordability. Chair Hurtado announced the possibility of an electronic meeting of BOARS and future guests that may be of interest to the group.

Discussion: BOARS should extract talking points from its diversity impact memo and develop a simple one-page table outlining each assumption of the different simulations and its projected

impact. Many readers will be lost in the details; BOARS should move away from an abstract discussion of the assumptions and emphasize the extent to which the simulations are unreliable and involve variables that cannot be predicted or controlled. UC needs shorter, punchier, “Twitter-size” messages that highlight the progressive, democratizing nature of the reform—for example, under ETR, nearly 90% of California high schools will double the number of students guaranteed admission.

Chair Hurtado noted that BOARS wants to review simulations to determine which analyses to release before UCOP releases them to external groups or individuals. Provost Pitts agreed to coordinate these decisions with BOARS. He recommended that UC engage in an outreach campaign to brief civil rights groups about the reform and enlist their help to increase and maximize applicants from underrepresented populations.

It was suggested that Eligible in the Local Context (ELC) be referred to as Guaranteed in the Local Context (GLC).

II. Consent Calendar

1. Approval of the January 9, 2010 BOARS Minutes

Action: BOARS approved the January 2010 minutes.

III. Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates Meeting Update

- o *BOARS Vice Chair Bill Jacob*

Report: This is ICAS’ “year of advocacy,” so the Committee met in Sacramento yesterday and will hold its remaining 2009-10 meetings there. The February 4 meeting included governmental relations staff from each of the three segments, who noted that there is strong bipartisan concern about textbook affordability and a sense that faculty can do more to address the problem. Some legislators view faculty as obstacles to change.

ICAS also met with UC Student Regent designate Jesse Cheng and the president of the CCC Student Senate who discussed a statewide student rally planned for March 1 in Sacramento.

ICAS is preparing briefing papers for the Master Plan Commission about higher education issues; is discussing differences and commonalities between IGETC and CSU’s general education pattern for transfers; and is forming a subcommittee to develop a Health Sciences Master Plan. ICAS is also drafting a statement about Achieve, Inc. Vice Chair Jacob was asked to draft proposed updates to the 1986 Science Competency Standards.

Provost Pitts encouraged BOARS to consider even partial solutions to problems like the general education transfer curriculum. Any progress in cross segmental cooperation and congruence would be helpful.

IV. Consultation with UCOP

Susan Wilbur, Director of Admissions:

Enrollment Reductions: UC will seek to reduce the overall enrollment of freshmen by 1,500 this year (down slightly from the 2,300 reduction last year) and increase transfer student enrollment of by almost 500. UCOP has assigned specific targets to all campuses except Merced, but there are no incentives to meet targets or punishments for missing targets.

Wait List: UCOP is rolling out a new wait list system for freshmen only. All campuses will participate except UCLA, which feels it can manage its own enrollment, and Merced, which will use the referral pool. (Riverside also will look to the referral pool for select majors.) Admissions notices will invite some students to opt-in to the wait list, and campuses will use comprehensive review to select students from the wait list. Students who submit an SIR to one campus can later accept a wait list offer from another campus, but will not be able to appeal to be on a wait list. Campuses cannot afford to over-enroll and the wait list will help them meet targets. The current environment is one of increasing yield uncertainty that goes far beyond UC. UC has strongly encouraged campuses to admit as many students as they can and not to under-admit.

Admissions Directors Meeting: The Admissions Directors noted that more constituencies than usual want to participate in enrollment planning discussions on every campus. Some campuses are also taking unusual steps this year, like sending out notifications to ELC-eligible students before January. Other campuses are planning to send admissions notifications earlier than usual.

American Indian Initiative: UC sent a letter to fall 2010 applicants who self-identified as American Indian/Native American to tell them about BOARS' decision that students who are members of federally recognized tribes could receive additional consideration under Comprehensive Review Selection Guideline 13, which mentions "the applicant's life experiences and special circumstances." The letter has yielded a very positive response. For the 2011-12 admissions cycle, the supplementary questions will be embedded in the admissions application.

ETR Website: The Office of Admissions is developing new websites for the admissions reform policy. There will be a total of three websites: the existing site, intended for policy makers; a site for counselors; and a third site for students. UC also is developing a series of Webinars to inform staff about the new policy.

Discussion: The wait list will give a few more students the chance to enroll at the campus of their choice, but it is a risky experiment because it could lead to unexpected yield and over-enrollment at the less selective campuses. Yield uncertainty and the financial risk of missing enrollment targets will encourage campuses to under-enroll.

It was noted that campuses can and should share information about who is being admitted to help each meet targets. Director Wilbur said there will be more complete information available earlier this year. Campuses will upload systemwide decision statuses on March 4.

Provost Pitts said some campus have expressed an interest in enrolling more non-resident undergraduates. BOARS may want to consider its position on non-resident enrollment in the context of inadequate state funding. Chair Powell added that the UC administration needs to take a coherent, strategic stance on the issue. It was noted that BOARS supports enrolling non-residents as long as UC can maintain its Master Plan commitment to residents, in the context of appropriate enrollment funding from the state.

Sam Agronow, Deputy Director, Institutional Research:

Monday is Deputy Director Agronow's last day at UCOP. He has been working with Institutional Research Coordinator Tongshan Chang to ensure transitional support for BOARS until a new Deputy Director is hired. On Monday, StatFinder will be updated with applicant, admit, and enrollment data for fall 2009 freshmen and transfers, and new persistence, graduation, and time to degree statistics. He said UC's systemwide freshmen persistence rate, the systemwide four year graduation rate for the 2005 entering class, and the five year graduation rate for the 2004 entering class reached an all time highs.

Action: BOARS members gave Deputy Director Agronow a round of applause in appreciation of his dedicated service to BOARS and UC, particularly in the admissions reform effort.

V. Pending Analyses for BOARS

1. New ETR Simulations

In January, BOARS requested an alternate projection of applicants and admits under ETR, had it gone into effect in 2007, based on a model suggested by Professor Mark Rashid, which follows the President's request that the Senate continue to study the policy. Chair Powell approved the limited release of this January analysis—"Model 1"—for the meeting in Sacramento with legislative staff. A UC Berkeley professor has requested a copy of the analyses.

The original fall 2009 analysis and the January 2010 analysis are based on different assumptions about applicant behavior. The fall 2009 analysis assumes that the new eligibility policy will lead to a much greater increase in the UC applicant pool than Model 1, which assumes a more modest change. The fall 2009 simulation looks at cohorts of high school graduates who were UC eligible or ineligible and who enrolled at UC or at other institutions in 2007 and assigns them a probability of applying to specific UC campuses under ETR. The January 2010 analysis assumes that ETR will stimulate an overall 12% increase in applications to the UC system. Professor Rashid believes this latter analysis is more realistic about the number of new applicants. The admit simulations depicts race neutral projections across the UC system. The accuracy of all assumptions is doubtful, however, because they are based on at least three hypothetical variables: applicant behavior, campus behavior in admissions decisions, and yield.

There are two different assumptions for UC Riverside because there is an anomaly in the CPEC data that overestimates enrollment yield at Riverside. Version 1 uses the yield rate from the CPEC study, which is overinflated, to project the number of admits. In Version 2 the target enrollment and the number of admits is the number who were not in the referral pool in 2007.

Deputy Director Agronow also collaborated with Vice Chair Jacob on two additional simulations—"Model 2a" and "2b"—which apply weights to the probability of application to UC based on high school API (Academic Performance Index) bands (1-10). Model 2a gives more weight to low API bands, and 2b gives more weight to middle API bands. There are also tables comparing the impact of these extra weights with "Model 1." These focused analyses reveal more favorable results in terms of the diversity of applicant and admit pools. The point of the modeling is to examine how behaviors in different API bands may affect the applicant pool and where UC can achieve the biggest diversity impact with intervention and outreach. The exercise highlights the importance of communicating the ELC 9% to students in low API schools and their parents.

Discussion: The policy's critics probably will never be convinced, but BOARS must emphasize that it conducts analyses continually, and these simulations are part of an ongoing study. As with any simulation, they are projections, not reality. Many people will focus on UCLA and UCB and ignore other campuses and the systemwide numbers, and BOARS should emphasize that it makes decisions about the UC system, not individual campuses. The memo and tables should be consistent in the way they refer to the studies, and the cover should include bulleted changes and impacts. One goal of ETR is to bring in students who have not traditionally had access to UC, but equalizing access naturally means that when the proportion of some groups increase, others decrease.

Action: A motion to release the "Model 1" analysis passed by a vote of 9 in favor, 1 opposed.

2. Analyses of Retention Data by Expert Panel

A UCLA professor made a Public Records Act request for systemwide admissions data to analyze his “mismatch” hypothesis,” which posits that under affirmative action underrepresented minorities were being admitted on the basis of race to more selective UC campuses where they could not succeed, but under Proposition 209 they are now being admitted to campuses where they are more likely to succeed. Chair Hurtado suggested that BOARS appoint an expert panel to review these data, conduct its own study of retention and academic outcomes, and report to BOARS. She is also concerned that the results of the study could have a negative impact on UC’s ability to recruit and enroll underrepresented students.

Deputy Director Agronow noted that the data include 1994-2007 statistics on applicants, graduation and retention. They do not reveal the identity of individual students or specific racial identification beyond underrepresented minority. There are close to one million records.

Discussion: It was wrong if campuses ever admitted unqualified students who then went on to fail, simply to boost their diversity statistics. Campuses have to be careful that a desire to increase low income and first generation representation does not promote failure.

There is little to gain by addressing the political questions about Proposition 209. It is more important for BOARS to study how well students are doing and whether there are areas of disparate impact to address with corrective action. BOARS should consider establishing benchmark criteria to measure the success of the admissions process and UC’s efforts to serve certain populations. For example, what rate of retention and graduation would BOARS find acceptable or unacceptable in the categories of race, low API school, first generation, and low income?

It was noted that ELC opens UC to students who already have the academic habits that allow them to “learn to learn,” regardless of race and SES. Any retention study should focus on the transition to comprehensive review and be informative beyond first year GPA—for example, do UC’s diverse students distribute themselves as competitive candidates for UC’s own graduate and professional school programs? It would be useful to collect data from campuses about how they address retention issues, and to find out what questions they have that could be addressed in a study.

Action: BOARS voted unanimously that Chair Hurtado should confer with the UC Director of Institutional Research about the feasibility of a study of retention and academic outcomes.

VI. Targeting ELC Eligible Students for Recruitment and Selection

BOARS asked the Office of Admissions to discuss how UC can ensure the early identification of students guaranteed for admission through the expanded Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) program before the new admissions policy takes effect—and whether there is an easy way to identify ELC students without the expensive transcript analysis at the beginning of the process, so there can still be an ELC notation on the file before the review.

Director Wilbur said she believes it is now less likely that an appropriate solution can be found, and she will try to make the case that UC needs to continue the current system.

VII. Considering Weight of Academic Factors in Comprehensive Review

Professor Joe Watson distributed a UC San Diego analysis of its applicant pool and admission rate by high school GPA and SAT quintiles, broken down by ethnicity, income, and First

Generation College status. He noted that the provost had mentioned in January that campuses may want to consider the weighting of academic factors in comprehensive review. He said the data show that UCSD does give a bump for First Generation College status, low-income status, and fourth and fifth API quintile schools. For UCSD, the low admission rate of African-Americans is due to disparate academic preparation, not comprehensive review factors, even when preferences are given to underprivileged students.

VIII. Comprehensive Review Report

BOARS reviewed a matrix of campus comprehensive review processes compiled by graduate student representative Cindy Mosqueda. It summarizes the use of weights, points, ELC, A by E, augmented review, and achievement in context, as well as reader training and quality control efforts, faculty involvement, and changes in CR processes since 2003. Members noted some clarifications and agreed to further verify and add information to the matrix with the help of their admissions committees and directors, including more detail about the number and nature of external readers, and whether the campus analyses disparate impact.

Chair Hurtado noted that the report will help campuses compare their processes and consider what changes may be needed between now and 2012. Another goal is to give the public more confidence about the fairness and reliability of CR processes. She encouraged members to submit ideas for potential outreach initiatives that will encourage students to apply and ensure their preparation for admission in 2012.

Chair Hurtado noted that she and Vice Chair Jacob recently visited UC Santa Cruz to speak about comprehensive review to the UCSC admissions committee (CAFA), which recently adopted one year experimental changes to CR—reducing the human read component by 50% in favor of more reliance on an index. Chair Hurtado encouraged CAFA to develop a philosophy to guide the selection of students by considering the characteristics the campus values in undergraduate education, and then to incorporate and appropriately weigh those factors in the selection criteria in order to meet those goals.

Discussion: The visual learners will find the CR matrix helpful. It was noted that UCOP conducts a disparate impact study each year. Council meets on April 7 with the chancellors and would be interested in reviewing a draft of the report if it can be ready by then.

Early outreach, in grades 8 and 9 is crucial. Outreach also has to get to the home, not just the schools. It would be useful to have a letter or email from the President to every eighth grader outlining what needs to be done.

Action: Analyst LaBriola and Chair Hurtado will update the matrix and send it to members to update along with more specific questions.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm
Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola
Attest: Sylvia Hurtado