University of California Academic Senate
Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)

Minutes of Meeting – July 11, 2008

BOARS MEETING

<u>Attending</u>: Mark Rashid, chair (UCD), Sylvia Hurtado, vice chair (UCLA), David Anthony (UCSC), James Given (UCI), William Jacob (UCSB), Robert Jacobsen (UCB-alternate), Jeannie Oakes (UCLA), Peter Sadler (UCR), Joseph Watson (UCSD), Daniel Weiss (UCSF), Keith Widaman (UCD); Samuel Agronow (Associate Director, Admissions & Outreach-SAS), William Kidder (Special Asst. to VP, Student Affairs), Susan Wilbur (Director, Admissions), Michael LaBriola (Committee Analyst)

I.   Chair's Announcements – *Mark Rashid*

REPORT: On June 11, the Academic Assembly discussed the Council-approved proposal to reform UC's freshman eligibility policy. Chair Rashid was given the opportunity to describe BOARS' rationale for its original proposal. He also told the Assembly that BOARS still considers the 12.5x5 referral guarantee index optimal, but accepts 9x9 as a reasonable compromise. There was an attempt to postpone discussion of the item, but in the end, the Assembly passed the proposal by a vote of 38 to 12. Most of the opposing votes came from UCR, UCB, and UCSC.

There is a great deal of interest from the media about the proposal, and Chair Rashid has been fielding questions from reporters. Chair Rashid and Senate Chair Brown also met with President Yudof and Board of Regents Chair Richard Blum to brief them about the proposal in advance of the July 16 Regents meeting. President Yudof and Chair Blum agreed that the Regents should discuss the issue over at least two meetings, because they need time to get up to speed on the issue. The official Regents discussion item also notes that further consultation should be undertaken with chancellors, students, alumni, and others before final action is taken. BOARS members agreed that the Senate should have the opportunity to address any further questions or concerns arising from this consultation.

BOARS's February 2008 motion regarding American Indian Tribal Affiliation as a Factor in Undergraduate Admissions and Comprehensive Review Selection Criterion #13 was forwarded to the Academic Council yesterday.

II.   Consent Calendar

➤ June 6, 2008 meeting minutes

ACTION: BOARS approved the consent calendar pending small changes.

III.   Consultation with the Office of Admissions - *Director of Admission Sue Wilbur*

ISSUE/REPORT: Admissions Director Wilbur asked BOARS to consider the requirements for non-California resident domestic students under Entitled to Review, if passed. UC received 16,000 applications from out-of-state students last year, 11,000 of which were domestic non-residents. Both international and domestic non-resident students are held to a slightly higher standard for admission: they must have a minimum 3.4 GPA (weighted and capped) and do not have the advantage of the Honors grade point "bump" or the referral guarantee. International

students tend to be well-qualified and tend to apply disproportionately to UCB and UCLA, but reviewing their applications takes a lot of time and effort for a very small yield rate. A logical extrapolation from current policy would provide that non-domestic students who apply to UC could be in the ETR pool, but would not be afforded a guarantee of admission via referral.

DISCUSSION: BOARS members agreed that continuity and consistency argue for maintaining current policy, and any change will require a well-reasoned and well-articulated rationale. A lower minimum GPA will invite more out-of-state applicants with corresponding workload considerations. There is also a public relations value in maintaining a higher minimum standard for out of state students. BOARS should consider the topic in a broader context – i.e., should UC's position be that no denied in-state student is displaced by an out-of-state student with similar qualifications? What principles should guide non-resident admissions and enrollment?

ACTION: BOARS decided to leave the GPA requirement in place with the expectation that the committee will engage in a broader discussion about principles in the future.

IV.   Shared Admissions Review

ISSUE/REPORT: The Admissions Processing Task Force (APTF) met on June 30. Two APTF work teams are drafting plans for a system that will allow campuses to share reviews of freshman applications. The work teams are developing two scoring protocols – the first based on a human-based holistic read of the application, and the second a "machine" score based on an automated algorithmic assessment of individual Comprehensive Review criteria.
    Chair Rashid's draft Machine-Score Abstract was included in the agenda (*Enclosure 4*). It includes a set of algorithms that assign a figure of merit on a 0-100 scale for each Comprehensive Review criterion. The algorithms are narrowly focused. Since information about certain CR criteria, such as "special talents" cannot be extracted from the application through an algorithm and isntead require a human read, the machine score will be designed to flag indicators for potential further investigation by human readers. Sam Agronow added that the algorithms are not necessarily "transparent" to the average reader, but a high level of nuance and complexity is required to produce sound data. The protocols do need substantial further refinement.
    Vice Chair Hurtado reported that UCB and UCLA are starting to agree more about how to rate students in comprehensive review. This fall, holistic score data generated at UCLA and UCB will be made available for the first time to other campuses to use alongside their own rating system. UCB and UCLA will also share files flagged for supplemental review. Several campuses are sending representatives to UCLA on August 7 for training on scoring methodology and score reading. There is strong interest in finding new ways of identifying "diamonds in the rough," possibly by breaking down the single holistic score into sub-scores.

DISCUSSION: Committee members suggested incorporating data on California high school quality into Machine Score algorithm #7, which addresses the quality of academic performance relative to the context of opportunity. This quality could weigh such factors as curricular rigor, teacher quality, concentration of poverty, and percentage of English language learners, with performance in this context indicative of a student's ability to overcome obstacles. Incorporating more machine-readable data into the application could also help capture information about special talents or circumstances. BOARS should also develop an overall decision algorithm.

V.   Report to The Regents about the Alignment of the New SAT with BOARS' Testing Principles

ISSUE: In 2003, The Regents provisionally approved UC's current required testing pattern, pending a report from BOARS about the extent to which the new SAT I aligns with BOARS' January 2002 "testing principles." Those principles recommend that admissions tests do more to measure curriculum-based knowledge and skills and to serve a diagnostic and prescriptive function by helping students, teachers, counselors, and parents identify students' academic strengths and weaknesses. Over the last two years, BOARS and the BOARS Testing Subcommittee have consulted the College Board and various testing experts to assess the degree to which these goals are being met. Representatives of the College Board also met in-person with BOARS in December 2007 to answer questions. BOARS' Testing Subcommittee Chair Daniel Weiss has drafted a set of follow-up questions and data requests for the College Board.

DISCUSSION: The new SAT takes steps in the right direction by removing the analogies and quantitative comparisons sections, which showed a high "differential item functioning" bias against underrepresented groups. But it is hard to argue that the test matches BOARS' previously articulated principles and goals. Follow-up questions to the College Board should focus directly on those principles and goals. There was a comment that it might not be possible for a standardized test to provide a diagnostic or prescriptive feedback function. BOARS' principles may be hinting at the need for UC to develop its own admissions test.

Professor Weiss noted that BOARS should request clarification from the College Board about its assertion that the SAT is "closely aligned" with the California Content Standards, which seems to conflict with a recent study that rates that alignment at 37%. BOARS should also request an analysis of the relationship between background variables and the SAT Reasoning and selected SAT Subject tests, as well as the difference in predictive validity between the multiple choice questions and the essay in the new writing test. It was noted that the new SAT does not offer much diagnostic feedback about writing, and that teaching to the essay portion of the Writing test will help teach students how to write. BOARS' report should focus on the differences between the old and new SAT and emphasize the importance of the feedback loop.

Sam Agronow pointed to his November 2007 study, which found that the new SAT Reasoning Test is more predictive of UC GPA that the old SAT.

ACTION: Chair Rashid, Daniel Weiss, and Chair Brown will draft a letter to the College Board with the follow-up questions.

JOINT MEETING WITH ADMISSIONS DIRECTORS

Attending: BOARS members, Susan Wilbur, Samuel Agronow, William Kidder, Michael LaBriola, Nina Robinson (Director, Policy & External Affairs, SAS)
Admissions Directors: Mae Brown, UCSD, Pamela Burnett, UCD, Merlyn Campos, UCR, Michael McCawley, UCSC, Walter Robinson, UCB, Encarnacion Ruiz, UCM, Vu Tran, UCLA, Christine Van Gieson, UCSB, Brent Yunek, UCI

I.   Announcements and Introductions – *Mark Rashid*

REPORT: Chair Rashid said it is important for BOARS and the Admissions Directors to meet once a year. He said all policy is personal; college admissions decisions are forks in the road for real individuals, and faculty and Admissions Directors should strive to be proud of every single policy and admissions decision. He added that incoming BOARS Chair Sylvia Hurtado and Vice Chair William Jacob will be an extraordinary and effective team for the committee next year.

ACTION: The Admissions Directors thanked Chair Rashid for including them in policy discussions. They presented him with a gift and several rounds of applause in appreciation for his leadership and service as BOARS chair.

II.   Proposal to Reform UC Freshman Eligibility – Campus Issues and Reports

DISCUSSION: Chair Rashid invited the Admissions Directors to share campus-specific expectations, hopes, and concerns for the eligibility reform proposal.

➢ General hopes and concerns about the new ETR applicant pool

The impact will be different from campus to campus, but the most competitive and selective campuses expect to receive more applications – good news in that the applicant pool should be deeper, richer, and more diverse. There is some concern at the less selective campuses, however, about the impact of the new policy on the referral pool, which typically provides Merced with about 200 students and Riverside with 400 students. These concerns include uncertainty about who will be in the new referral pool and who might be displaced. Some Admissions Directors also noted that they welcome the opportunity to re-examine current Comprehensive Review practices.

Hopes and concerns about diversity

➢ Admissions Directors noted their hope that a broader applicant pool will help enhance geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity. There is some uncertainty, however, about what ETR's real effect will be on diversity, particularly for the African-American pool. One campus noted that some of the high schools that send diverse groups of students to UC are concerned that the new guaranteed referral index will create new barriers for African-American and Latino students.

➢ It would be bad to raise expectations for increased diversity and access and then not have the outcomes match the projections.

➢ If the policy is passed UC may need to direct additional resources to new or more support services to help additional cohorts of first generation students and others with special needs.

Concerns about the fiscal impact of extra workload

➢ Some Admissions Directors are concerned that they will be unable to build the capacity necessary to process the new applications while simultaneously maintaining current levels of quality without additional resources. Some campuses currently read every application they receive, and Merced and Riverside commit to comprehensively reviewing every student they deny. High school counselors are also concerned about the time and effort required to learn a new system.

Communicating the changes to key constituencies

➢ Several campuses expressed concern that the media are already sending messages and shaping perceptions about ETR that may be contrary to the facts. UC should begin communicating clear, logical messages about ETR now to key constituencies and stakeholders, including students, parents, counselors, the legislature, and CSU. Specifically, UC should address misperceptions about the goals of the proposal, the new GPA requirement, the elimination of the SAT Subject test requirement, and a suspicion that ETR is an attempt to get around Proposition 209.

➢ ETR is an opportunity to develop new marketing strategies – e.g., Internet tools, an "Admissions Facts" website – to sell the new system and help students and counselors better understand admissions policy.

➢ Some students and parents are concerned about the effect of ETR on the referral guarantee, specifically that good students from top "feeder" high schools who have traditionally been able to count on the guarantee may feel that they are losing an "historic" entitlement, despite the fact that less than 1% of those students accept referrals.

Concerns about academic quality at UCR and UCM

➢ Admissions Directors at some of the less selective campuses are concerned about the potential impact of ETR on student quality. Merced and Riverside depend on the referral pool to enroll good students. At the same time, UCR's aggressive growth plan drives its enrollment targets, and there is concern that ETR may shrink the referral pool and make it easier for that campus to admit unqualified students to meet those targets. Students in the new referral pool, however, are projected to have higher test scores and GPAs, and ETR could create more latitude in admissions decisions.

➢ Applying to UCR or UCM may now become a standard piece of advice from counselors to students. There may also be a positive effect on education if faculty feel they are selecting more students rather than having them selected by the referral pool.

Other comments:

➢ UC is a single system comprised of ten campuses, and reinforcing that relationship could lessen the disappointment of being offered a referral pool slot.

➢ Chair Rashid mentioned that campuses receive hundreds of applications every year from high achieving but technically ineligible students who may be ineligible for reasons that do not bear on their ability to be successful at UC. Behind those numbers are many other similar students who do not even apply. ETR will encourage more students to apply to UC and make more students visible to the University. It will be up to individual campuses to accept or deny them and faculty should control the admissions selection policy on campuses.

- Students who do not complete the required a-g pattern will be ETR. If they do not complete all 15 a-g requirements by the end of their senior year, they can be admitted through Admissions by Exception.

- A correction needs to be made to earlier data estimating that 2200 students with GPAs of 3.5 and above were deemed ineligible for technical reasons. The figure is more like 1400.

- The Regents have asked the faculty to achieve academic excellence and diversity in admissions. Diversity and fairness tend to occur simultaneously. The Senate's goal is to institute a fairer system.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm
Minutes prepared by: Michael LaBriola;
Attest: Mark Rashid