

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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*Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

February 1, 2010

**MARK YUDOF, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Defunding of StatFinder

Dear Mark:

The recent decision to withdraw funding from the StatFinder program has generated considerable concern among members of BOARS, which brought the matter to the attention of the Academic Council. Council unanimously concurred with BOARS' assessment that UCOP should continue to fund StatFinder through an outside vendor until an in-house substitute is functioning.

The Council believes that the availability of StatFinder or its successor is critical to UC's ability to provide accurate information to the public about UC admissions results and related information that is important both to potential UC applicants and those who advise them and to members of the public who are concerned about the effects of UC's eligibility and admissions policies. The availability of this information is also a strong indicator of UC's commitment to accountability.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry C. Powell", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Henry C. Powell, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Larry Pitts, Interim Provost
Nina Robinson, Director of Policy & External Affairs, Student Affairs
Sue Wilbur, Director of Admissions
Judy Sakaki, Vice President, Student Affairs
Academic Council
Martha Winnacker, Academic Senate Executive Director



BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)

Sylvia Hurtado, Chair
sylvia.hurtado@gmail.com

Assembly of the Academic Senate
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January 25, 2010

HENRY POWELL, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: Defunding of StatFinder

Dear Harry,

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) is concerned about a recent decision by Provost Lawrence Pitts to defund the UC [StatFinder](#) website, which allows the public to view demographic, admission, enrollment, graduation, and retention statistics for freshmen and transfers by individual California high school or community college.

BOARS is sensitive to the realities of the budget context in which the University of California is operating, and the fact that UCOP is being forced to make difficult decisions about many worthy priorities. However, BOARS believes that UCOP should elevate StatFinder to a higher position on its list of priorities, as it will be a critical tool in demonstrating the success of the admissions reform policy, and more generally, to UC's continued public relations and accountability efforts. It is difficult to imagine a worse time to risk limiting the easy access of the public to up to date relevant college admission information than the years immediately preceding and following implementation of the new ETR admissions policy.

StatFinder is worth the continued investment. It allows the public and members of the University an easy means of accessing data about admission trends over time, and it will be more important than ever for the public to have accurate, up-to-date information after the admissions reform policy takes effect in 2012. StatFinder is the best means of communicating to the new pool of potential UC applicants and their counselors, teachers, and parents, information about the typical preparation of successful applicants from their school. Defunding StatFinder conflicts with UC's stated commitment to transparency and accountability.

Our understanding is that no new data will be added to the database after February 8, 2010, when UC's contract with the vendor, MPR, Inc., ends. Although StatFinder will be maintained online and will not be "out of date" until August 2010, when the next update would have been scheduled, two years of data will be omitted temporarily until the provost's long-term plan to transform StatFinder into a less expensive in-house operation can be implemented.

The Department of Information Resources and Communications (IR&C) estimates that UCOP's Decision Support System (DSS) could replace StatFinder in July 2012. The cost of maintaining the StatFinder contract with MPR until July 2012, at \$319,000 per year, is not trivial in these difficult economic times, but is still relatively inexpensive. Most importantly, the StatFinder website is an aid to savings in that many individuals, both on UC campuses and external to UC, have been able to find what they need without contacting UCOP staff. Data requests are likely to increase once individuals are unable to compare data in these intervening years. We recommend that UC negotiate a reduced cost with an outside vendor while the in-house operation is ramped-up. Given the current budget constraints, it may be that this point is negotiable with those interested in doing business with UC.

While the provost's plan calls for temporary defunding, we fear that once StatFinder has been defunded, it will be more difficult to re-fund and re-establish momentum for the project even through the new Decision Support System. We urge UCOP to preserve this critical resource which helps UC maintain its capacity to serve the people of California effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sylvia Hurtado". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sylvia" and last name "Hurtado" clearly distinguishable.

Sylvia Hurtado
BOARS Chair

cc: BOARS
Martha Winnacker, Senate Executive Director