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

April 29, 2021

MICHAEL DRAKE, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Re: Suspension of Admission by Examination

Dear President Drake,

At its April 28, 2021 meeting, the Academic Council approved BOARS' recommendation to ask the University to suspend the use of the Admission by Examination eligibility pathway for undergraduate admission.

The path to admission by examination alone is described in Senate Regulation 440.¹ It is used by only a small number of students each year, but immediate action is needed to conform with the UC Regents' decision in May of 2020 to phase out the use of the SAT and ACT in admissions decisions at the University. In halting the use of these examinations, the Regents also removed the examinations BOARS has sanctioned for admission under Senate Regulation 440.

The long term future of this pathway depends largely on the outcome of the study underway to determine the feasibility of a role for the Smarter Balanced Assessment in UC admissions. Following this study, it is possible that BOARS may recommend to the Academic Senate a permanent amendment or repeal of Regulation 440. This process takes several months, however, and action is needed now because Graduate, Undergraduate, and Equity Affairs must announce the suspension of this eligibility pathway to students and counselors preparing for admissions to fall 2022.

Our Senate Parliamentarian advised us that a formal request to you for temporary suspension of the Regulation would be the soundest and most transparent way forward. BOARS' letter requesting the suspension is enclosed. We respectfully ask that you inform the Regents of the change. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Gauvain".

¹ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#r440>

Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Provost Brown
Vice Provost Gullatt
Executive Director Yoon-Wu
BOARS
Academic Council
Chief of Staff Kao
Senate Directors
Senate Director Baxter

Encl.



BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)

Eddie Comeaux, Chair

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Assembly of the Academic Senate

1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor

Oakland, CA 94607-5200

April 22, 2021

**MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

RE: Proposed Elimination of “Admission by Examination”

Dear Mary,

The Board of Admission and Relations with Schools (BOARS) continues to grapple with the outcomes of the Board of Regents May 2020 decision to phase out the use of standardized tests in admission decisions to the University of California. The current admission options¹ include Admission by Examination, which was designed to offer California high school graduates who did not complete A-G requirements an alternate route to eligibility and admission (SR 419, 440). For the Fall 2020 admissions cycle, only ~50 students systemwide availed themselves of this option.

Given the absence of any sanctioned examinations for University eligibility or admission, and given the existence of room under the Admission by Exception cap by campus for students in this and similar circumstances (SR 464), and given that Entitled to Review (SR 452) considerations will still apply, BOARS voted 9-0-1 to eliminate the category of Admission by Examination.

While the process of formal Academic Senate review and possible rescission unfolds, and while the University considers the creation of a new admission test that may also be used in Admission by Examination, BOARS asks the Council to recommend that the President immediately suspend this admission category so that the Office of Graduate, Undergraduate, and Equity Affairs may communicate the suspension to students and counselors preparing for admissions to fall 2022.

Thank you for your support,

Sincerely,

Eddie Comeaux
BOARS Chair

Encls.

cc: Members of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)
Executive Director Baxter, Systemwide Academic Senate
Vice Provost Gullatt, Graduate, Undergraduate, and Equity Affairs
Executive Director Yoon-Wu, GUEA

¹ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#art4chap3>

Admission by Exam

For more than 25 years, UC has included a pathway for undergraduate admissions by examination alone. Students who do not meet the minimum requirements for freshman admission may be considered for admission to UC on the strength of their test scores (i.e., Admission by Exam). In general, this method of consideration is for students who have been unable to meet the regular subject requirements and/or earn a high school diploma because of unique circumstances, such as non-traditional education or long-term illness.

UC Academic Senate Policy Governing Admission-by-Exam

Chapter 2. Admission to Freshman Standing

Article 3. Minimum Requirements for Admission for Graduates of Secondary Schools in California

440. Applicants for freshman admission who do not satisfy the requirements of Regulation 419 or 424 may submit scores on admissions examinations as specified by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools. Applicants who have achieved satisfactory scores, as determined by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools, are entitled to a review of their application for admission. (Am 4 May 95) (Am 17 June 2009).¹

Prior to 2012, Admission by Exam was a guaranteed admission path for California resident freshman applicants. However, when the fall 2012 admission policy went into effect, Admission by Exam became a category in which students were entitled to review (ETR) and no longer guaranteed admission.

The current exams used for Admission by Exam are the ACT or the SAT as well as two SAT Subject Tests. With UC’s recent shift in policy to no longer consider SAT and ACT scores within its freshman admission process and the abrupt discontinuation of the SAT Subject Tests, Admission by Exam requires reconsideration as an option for establishing eligibility for freshman applicants.

The most recent data (see Table 1) show that very few students are admitted under Admission by Exam.

Table 1. Freshmen Admitted by Exam

Term	Systemwide Total
Fall 2017	63
Fall 2018	150
Fall 2019	70
Fall 2020	50

Source: Final applyUC/UCAP files

Given the challenges on fairness, repeated concerns with security and fraud, as well as the national movement to de-emphasize standardized test scores and increasing resistance to high-stakes testing, the time is ripe for BOARS to consider the appropriateness and necessity of an Admission by Exam policy.

For a small number of students who are homeschooled or who do not earn a traditional high school diploma, Admission by Exam has provided a path for students to be entitled to a review for admission to UC. Students who frequently change schools (both within California and out of state) and do not have the opportunity to complete the A-G curriculum (e.g., foster youth), and/or exceptionally gifted and talented students who do not complete a traditional secondary school education have also used Admission by Exam to demonstrate readiness for UC. However, even without Admission by Exam, campuses have the ability to admit students with these special circumstances under the Admission by Exception policy.

¹ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#r440>

If BOARS endorses the preservation of Admission by Exam as a means toward meeting freshman admission requirements, then an alternative test(s) must be identified. A few possible options include GED,² AP exams,³ and SBAC; however, this would require further analysis to determine appropriateness as a measure of college-readiness and use for the purposes of admission.

² https://ged.com/wp-content/uploads/College_admissions_guide.pdf

³ <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/faqs/im-homeschooled-how-can-i-take-ap-exam>
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/ordering-fees/ordering-exam-materials/special-ordering-circumstances/home-schooled-student>

**University of California
Freshman by Regular and By Exception Admissions**

	Regular			By Exception		Total		% By Exc of Total	
	Appl	Reg Adm	Reg Enr	By Exc Adm	By Exc Enr	Adm	Enr	Adm	Enr
Fall 2020									
Berkeley	88,062	15,374	6,102	16	15	15,390	6,117	0.1%	0.2%
Davis	76,897	35,615	6,144	30	0	35,645	6,144	0.1%	0.0%
Irvine	97,938	29,254	5,744	47	21	29,301	5,765	0.2%	0.4%
Los Angeles	108,870	15,528	6,323	74	63	15,602	6,386	0.5%	1.0%
Merced	25,923	21,757	1,917	225	34	21,982	1,951	1.0%	1.7%
Riverside	49,442	31,694	4,757	828	100	32,522	4,857	2.5%	2.1%
San Diego	100,062	36,391	6,406	243	43	36,634	6,449	0.7%	0.7%
Santa Barbara	90,961	33,324	4,822	60	25	33,384	4,847	0.2%	0.5%
Santa Cruz	54,988	34,132	4,039	1,459	154	35,591	4,193	4.1%	3.7%
Fall 2019									
Berkeley	87,397	14,264	6,442	14	12	14,278	6,454	0.1%	0.2%
Davis	78,093	30,234	5,894	124	63	30,358	5,957	0.4%	1.1%
Irvine	95,565	24,740	6,000	620	69	25,360	6,069	2.4%	1.1%
Los Angeles	111,321	13,594	5,801	126	119	13,720	5,920	0.9%	2.0%
Merced	25,424	18,110	2,078	184	27	18,294	2,105	1.0%	1.3%
Riverside	49,515	27,320	4,681	664	96	27,984	4,777	2.4%	2.0%
San Diego	99,114	31,110	5,989	90	34	31,200	6,023	0.3%	0.6%
Santa Barbara	93,446	27,546	4,899	80	36	27,626	4,935	0.3%	0.7%
Santa Cruz	55,796	26,936	3,426	1,692	285	28,628	3,711	5.9%	7.7%
Fall 2018									
Berkeley	89,607	13,301	6,012	0	0	13,301	6,012	0.0%	0.0%
Davis	78,022	31,961	6,392	85	1	32,046	6,393	0.3%	0.0%
Irvine	95,059	26,403	5,534	933	258	27,336	5,792	3.4%	4.5%
Los Angeles	113,754	15,843	6,119	127	121	15,970	6,240	0.8%	1.9%
Merced	25,131	16,497	2,191	131	23	16,628	2,214	0.8%	1.0%
Riverside	49,079	24,296	4,449	524	80	24,820	4,529	2.1%	1.8%
San Diego	97,894	29,368	6,693	60	14	29,428	6,707	0.2%	0.2%
Santa Barbara	92,306	29,606	5,044	119	49	29,725	5,093	0.4%	1.0%
Santa Cruz	56,586	25,247	3,410	1,556	285	26,803	3,695	5.8%	7.7%

SOURCE: University of California Office of the President, GUEA, Undergraduate Admissions, Cognos CSSR011 Reports