The University of California, Santa Cruz, Comprehensive Review system for frosh admissions scores applications across fourteen criteria. The criteria include nine that are derived formulaically from application data (high school GPA, test scores, quantity of UC courses, number of senior year honors courses, being in top 4% of high school, senior year load, being from a lower-performing high school, taking part in one of several educational partnership programs, and geographic area), four that are determined according to a careful reading of the application following a rubric set by the faculty (performance in a single subject area, special projects, improved academic performance, and special talents), and one that has both a computed component and a reading component (academic accomplishments in life experience). The nine and part of the tenth criteria that are determined automatically are called the Computed Index (CI) score, and in this document the combination of the CI scores and reading scores will be referred to as CI+R.

Data study during the 2008-9 academic year by the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) and Analyst Mary Masters determined that read scores show an inverse correlation with first-year GPA among the Fall 2007 cohort, when adjusted for CI score. Read scores similarly showed an inverse correlation with GPA in the first two quarters among Fall 2008 cohort when adjusted for CI score. That is, higher read scores mean lower performance for students with the same CI score. (Because of the time frame, a study based on graduation rates would be meaningless because of the rapid evolution of the applicant pool. Therefore, the first-year GPA is, with reservation, used.) CAFA sees both academic success and access to the University as being important components of the admissions process. Thus, the negative correlation could be judged as appropriate if the read scores resulted in a higher level of access by qualified students to the Santa Cruz campus. Considering students who applied for Fall 2009, an additional study found that completely removing the reader component and admitting all students (both eligible and ineligible, a change of process with respect to admission by exception) would result in an admissions change of 821 students. That is, 11388 students would be admitted in either scenario, 821 would be admitted only under the CI-Only scenario, and that same number (821) admitted with existing the current CI+R system with separate

1 http://admissions.ucsc.edu/apply/freshman_guide.cfm
admission by exception would not be admitted with CI-only. The change to a CI-only system would have net effects among the 12209 admitted students as follows: 44 more Asian admits, 23 more Hispanic, 1 fewer American Indian, 3 fewer African-American, 16 fewer unknown, and 47 fewer white admits, changes ranging from 0.38% to 0.0%. Also, we would have extended offers to 12 more EOP students and 52 more first-generation students. Among the 821-student difference, there would be a 15% drop in family income and a significant increase in predicted first-year GPA, 2.88 to 2.98.

CAFA found this outcome interesting and surprising, as well as an opportunity. While the analytics could be argued to support removal of the entire reading component, which appears to be biased both against access to UC and against achievement in first-year GPA, CAFA has instead determined that the best plan for Fall 2009-10 is a one-year experiment with an approximately 50% reduction in the impact of reading scores on the comprehensive review process that would be expected to affect 300-400 students had it been applied to Fall 2009. The impact on this change to the Fall 2010 admissions process and admitted class will need to be closely monitored.

The Fall 2009 reader pool, components, point values, and award rates are as follows, based on data and text from Michael McCawley, with minor editing.

- 16,551 frosh applications were reviewed by readers. The process is used to determine eligibility (eligibility cannot always be determined automatically) and to read and score applications.
- 12,703 from the above were read and scored, meaning the others were determined to be ineligible and did not fit the Fall 2009 Admission by Exception reading guidelines, and so were not read. 4,967 of the frosh that were read scored some reader points (39% of the 12,703). The 4,967 represents individual students, while the different criteria can contain overlap. Our stated goal has always been to award points to no greater than 10% of the applications read for any criteria, although previous CAFA’s have acknowledged that criterion 13 would exceed that number. These reader scores numbers and percentages are for all frosh applicants, regardless of the final admission decision.
  - Criterion 8, single academic subject area, 767 students (6%)
  - Criterion 9, special projects, 491 students (3.9%)
  - Criterion 10, improved performance, 636 students (5%)
  - Criterion 11, special talents, 1,723 students (13.6%)
  - Criterion 13, academic accomplishments in life experience, 2,176 students (17.1%).
For students that we admitted, the points awarded were as follows among 3,377 unique students. The reader points played no role in 2,144 of these students’ admission (63.5%) as they would have been admitted regardless of their reader scores. The average reader point total among admitted students was 260.

- Criterion 8, 706 students received 250 points.
- Criterion 9, 319 students received 125 points, 52 received 250 points for a total of 371 students
- Criterion 10, 371 students received 100 points
- Criterion 11, 884 students received 250 points, 459 received 500 points for a total of 1,343 students
- Criterion 13, 990 students received 100 points, 242 students received 200 points, 43 students received 300 points, and 5 students received 400 points, for a total of 1,280 students.

On a one-year trial basis, the reader criterion will be capped lower than CAFA’s policy maximums as follows, with no changes in the rubric related to the different tiers of award. The approximate percentage of students awarded each tier, including the zero point tier, is expected to remain the same. As this is a one-year trial and does not exceed the published maximums, outreach material can remain unchanged pending evaluation of the new levels, if Admissions so desires.

- Criterion 8. Single academic subject area (4 As with capstone 250). Change to 100 points (60% reduction).
- Criterion 9. Special projects (not HS, regional 125, state/national 250). Change to 50/100 points (60% reduction).
- Criterion 10. Improved academic performance (sophomore to junior, 1 grade point, 100). Keep at 100 points (0% reduction).
- Criterion 11. Special talents (not HS, regional 250, state/natl 250-500). Change to 100/200 points (60% reduction)
- Criterion 13, Academic accomplishments in life experience (reader component 100/200/300/400). Change to 50/100/150/200 (50% reduction).

The current maximum number of points is 1500. The Fall 2010 system will have a maximum of 900. The average reader score for the group of read students who were admitted in Fall 2009 would drop from 260 to 116 (56% drop), producing a modest change in the individuals in the entering cohort (some of these students would not be admitted, others with or without read points, would be admitted), a modest increase in first-generation students, and a modest increase in first-year GPA.