

**COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**  
**Annual Report, 2001-02**

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Senate Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) submits the following report for 2001-2002.

**I. ADMISSIONS**

As in past years, the committee devoted most of its attention to admissions, including the creation of an enrollment database, the development of a comprehensive review plan, and the use of the SAT and other standardized tests. The committee also reaffirmed the policy and procedures that we employ for Admission by Exception

**A. Enrollment database**

A considerable amount of data is required to make informed decisions about the relative merit and predictive value of the criteria used in admissions. The UCSC Academic Senate, at the October 24, 2001 Fall Quarter meeting, therefore recommended that CAFA formulate a plan for establishing a campuswide database for creating, tracking and comparing comprehensive admissions guidelines, including grading statistics, scores on admissions tests required by the University, and high school grades.

During Fall Quarter 2001, CAFA worked with the *Enrollment Management Data Base Working Group* to outline the information and models needed to 1) understand the implications and the potential outcome of weighting the various factors and criteria that the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) will be adopting; and 2) monitor the actual results over time, both in terms of how criteria impact who comes and how successful students are at UCSC.

As a result of these discussions, the Admissions Office, Student Affairs, and Institutional Research and Policy Studies (within Planning and Budget) now provide a wide range of reports on the outcomes and assessment of student performance and success. A complete list of these reports can be found at <http://www.senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/Database.report.htm>

**B. Selective admissions and comprehensive review**

Based on enrollment projections developed by the Admissions Office and the Committee on Planning and Budget, CAFA believes that in about two years our campus will no longer be able to accommodate all UC-eligible applicants. We have therefore worked toward formulating a plan for the comprehensive review of applications using the fourteen criteria specified by BOARS (<http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/CompRev.comments100101.pdf>).

CAFA recommends that our comprehensive review plan be modeled on those currently used at UCSB, UCD, UCSD, UCI, and the guidelines previously approved by CAFA to select students for Admission by Exception to UCSC (<http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/cafaat.htm>) because of their relative simplicity and transparency.

CAFA also unanimously recommends that the comprehensive review plan adopted by UCSC:

1. Be cost effective and appropriate to the degree of selectivity at UCSC.
2. Clearly state the relative weighting of admissions criteria in terms that can be easily understood by prospective students and their families.
3. Select students for admission to UCSC without consideration of the area of interest stated on their application.
4. Conform to the BOARS principle that: "Comprehensive review is the process by which students applying to UC campuses are evaluated for admission using multiple measures of achievement and promise, while considering the context in which each student has demonstrated accomplishment."

CAFA will evaluate the potential impact of various weighting strategies on enrollment patterns and the composition of our student body using the admissions database described above. The results of these simulations will be presented to the Academic Senate during the 2002-2003 academic year.

#### C. The use of the SAT and other standardized tests

In February of 2001, President Atkinson recommended that the "the University require only standardized tests that assess mastery of specific subject areas rather than undefined notions of "aptitude" or "intelligence." Specifically, he recommended the elimination of the SAT1 requirement and the expanded use of the SAT II or other achievement tests.

In response to President Atkinson's recommendations, BOARS conducted a major review of the use of standardized tests in UC admissions. CAFA spent much of the past year discussing this topic and providing feedback to the UCSC representative to BOARS, Professor Karen McNally. Additional information on President Atkinson's recommendations and BOARS' response may be found at <http://www.ucop.edu/news/sat/welcome.html>

To educate ourselves about the SAT and other admissions tests, CAFA sent two representatives to the conference "Rethinking the SAT: the future of standardized testing in university admissions" which was held in November of 2001 at UCSB. The local campus community had the opportunity to learn more about this topic and voice their opinions at a forum held at the UCSC Arboretum in January of 2002. Shortly after this forum, BOARS issued a statement of testing principles and recommended that both the SAT1 and SATII be replaced with a series of new tests designed to measure achievement as opposed to aptitude (<http://www.ucop.edu/news/sat/boars.html>). Soon thereafter, the College Board announced its intention to modify the SAT1 (<http://www.collegeboard.com/press/article/0,1443,11147,00.html>). As recommended by President Atkinson and BOARS, this new exam will test a student's mastery of high

school curricula, as opposed to their aptitude. CAFA is generally supportive of the shift toward the use of achievement-based standardized tests in admissions.

## **II. FINANCIAL AID**

CAFA dealt with several issues pertaining to financial aid, including our role in evaluating appeals for extension of financial aid eligibility and resolving conflicts between students and the UCSC Financial Aid Office.

### **A. Appeals for extension of financial aid eligibility**

The UCSC Financial Aid Office determines how many quarters of financial aid a student is eligible to receive, up to a maximum of fifteen quarters. Students who are unable to graduate within the fifteen-quarter limit may obtain an extension of their financial aid eligibility by submitting an appeal to CAFA. In response to a dramatic increase in the number of such appeals filed during the past year, CAFA spent a considerable amount of time discussing the circumstances that warrant extension of financial aid eligibility.

CAFA believes that extensions of financial aid eligibility beyond fifteen quarters should be based on academic as opposed to financial considerations. The committee reaffirmed its longstanding policy of granting one or two-quarter extensions to most students who attempt an unusually demanding course of study, participate in the Education Abroad Program, or encounter unexpected medical or personal problems that temporarily affect their academic progress.

By contrast, CAFA has serious reservations about granting extensions to students who are unable to graduate within fifteen quarters due to a consistent pattern of poor academic performance. Unfortunately, many students believe they have a right to financial aid as long as they are in good academic standing. Although CAFA does not share this view, the committee feels it would be inappropriate to prevent students from graduating after the University has invested significant financial resources in their education. CAFA therefore routinely grants extensions to students who submit an updated academic plan verifying their ability to graduate within one or two quarters.

CAFA discussed several options to correct these problems and more efficiently utilize limited financial aid resources. Following consultation with Kevin Browne, the Executive Director of Admissions and University Registrar, and Esperanza Nee, the Director of the Financial Aid Office, CAFA recommends that the following policies be implemented during the 2002-2003 academic year:

1. The financial aid eligibility limit should be reduced from fifteen to thirteen quarters.
2. The Financial Aid Office should routinely grant extensions of up to two quarters of financial aid eligibility to any student who submits an updated academic plan verifying their ability to graduate by the end of the period covered by the extension. The student should be advised that failure to adhere to this plan may affect their eligibility for financial aid.

3. CAFA will retain sole authority to extend eligibility for financial aid beyond fifteen quarters. Requests for extensions beyond fifteen quarters should be considered only in truly exceptional cases. Poor academic performance alone will not be considered sufficient justification for such extensions.

#### B. Resolution of conflicts between students and the Financial Aid Office

In response to inquiries from a student and her attorney, CAFA discussed its role in mediating disputes between students and the Financial Aid Office. According to *Your Complete Guide to Financial Aid*, a document given to all financial aid recipients, CAFA is the last appeal option for students with concerns or problems related to financial aid awards. Although we were able to help resolve the disagreement between the student and the Financial Aid Office, we do not feel it would be appropriate for CAFA to become involved in disputes of this nature in the future. The Financial Aid Office therefore agreed to delete this sentence from future versions of this document.

#### C. Regent's Scholars Program.

The Regent's Scholars Program is facing a crisis. The program has been operating with a budget deficit for some time and faced a shortage of almost \$500,000 during the past year alone. CAFA encourages the administration to identify supplemental mechanisms for funding this important program.

### **III. RECRUITING**

CAFA continues to be very concerned about the academic reputation of our campus. At the present time only two UC campuses – Santa Cruz and Riverside – accept all applicants who meet minimum UC-eligibility requirements. This creates the erroneous impression that we have lower academic standards than other UC campuses. As a result, many talented students may decide to go elsewhere.

We anticipate that UCSC's academic reputation will improve significantly once we reach our enrollment cap and join the ranks of the selective UC campuses. Since selectivity is imminent, the Admissions Office does not guarantee admissions to all UC-eligible students. CAFA strongly supports this policy. Although it may discourage some students from applying to our campus, we believe that it is necessary to increase the quality and diversity of our applicant pool and student body.

CAFA discussed other mechanisms for increasing the quality and diversity of our student body and concluded that our web-based recruiting efforts remain woefully inadequate. The Admissions Office and academic departments continue to rely on confusing, out of date, or incomplete divisional and departmental web pages to inform prospective students and their parents about educational opportunities available at UCSC. Few of these web pages were designed to appeal to high school students or their families. As a result, our web-based recruiting material does not provide a compelling reason for students to choose UCSC over other institutions. CAFA strongly encourages the administration to provide the resources necessary to correct this problem.

Respectfully submitted.

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

Joyce Brodsky

Pedro Castillo

Sandy Chung (F, W)

Tony Fink

Lori Kletzer (S)

Karen McNally, BOARS Rep

Dana Takagi

Hongyun Wang

John Wilkes

John Tamkun, Chair

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