

Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Minutes
April 10, 2009

Present: Richard Hughey, Faye Crosby, Raoul Birnbaum, Amy Weaver (NSTF), Juan Poblete, Michael Morrissey (SUA), Gabe Elkaim, Donald Wittman, Michelle Romero (SUA), Scott Oliver, Pamela Edwards (ASO)

Absent: Rob Coe, Bruce Cooperstein, Maritoni Medrano (SUA)

Guests: Associate Director Michael McCawley, Director Ann Draper, AVC Michelle Whittingham, AVC Felicia McGinty

Announcements

Chair Hughey provided a brief summary of the April 7 Senate Executive (SEC) meeting. SEC discussed the policies and procedures for disestablishing a major and will send a letter to Dean Kamieniecki regarding the potential cutting of the Community Studies major. CAFA expressed concern that eliminating this 40-year major would have an impact on how the campus is viewed.

The minutes for the February 20 and 28 meetings were amended and approved.

BOARS

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) started a comparative conversation about comprehensive review on each campus. A main issue is how Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) will work within the new Entitled to Review (ETR) admissions program, effective 2012.

The Office of the President is considering furloughs or pay decreases for everyone, including faculty. For each day faculty members take off \$25-30M would be saved. Unlike salary cuts, furloughs are not permanent.

Frosh Appeals

A thorough outline of the process for frosh admission appeals is on the student portal. Instructions require the student to write a letter of appeal with new and compelling information. A letter of recommendation, from someone who can speak to their academic accomplishments, can be included, but is not required (so as not to advantage students from private schools). Instructions say to provide documentation if dealing with a disability. If the student is within 200 points of the cutoff and has a strong recommendation on their potential for academic success, the appeal could be granted.

Last year there were 363 appeals, 70 were based on errors. Another 28 were exceptions within the confines of what CAFA wanted and 98 appeals were granted. This year Admissions received just over 400 appeals and will complete them by next week. Admissions will handle routine appeals and the Subcommittee will review special cases before AVC Whittingham and Associate Director McCawley bring to CAFA Char Hughey.

Cancellations

Last year CAFA gave Admissions implicit instructions on Conditions of Admission. Eighty students who received bad grades (lower than a C) in the senior year were eliminated from the pool before offers were sent.

The Appeals Subcommittee reviewed last year's precepts and recommended a slight modification to past practice regarding a bad grade in the senior year. Admissions will investigate all situations when a student presents a bad grade to determine why they got it. Last year there 14 students who had dealt with a medical issue, either their own or a parent's (stress is not considered as an issue for poor performance). Academic success of the appeals cohort is not followed at this time.

CAFA unanimously agreed to continue with the same cancellation process as last year and will send confirmation of this to Chancellor Blumenthal.

Comprehensive Review

The Comprehensive Review (CR) Data Subcommittee is generating data on the 2008 admit class and running simulations for discussion later this month. The discussion today will focus on UCSC's long-term projection and what to do with our admissions process. In the past the focus was on excellence in diversity, do we want to add excellence in access? How would CAFA assign points to selection criteria to reach that goal?

If data on the Computed Index Score (CIS) provides measures for predicting academic success and graduation, a cutoff point could be used for admission. Another approach would be to lower the threshold and let those who perform well continue. The GI Bill provided access to a lot of people, but only a third graduated. It was an expensive process that drained limited resources. With limited predictors for academic success, a simulation could be done on random selection by lottery. Increase admission through Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) when the systemwide ETR construct is in place would be another option. We could continue with the standard that is numerically calculated, with consideration for the type of hurdles the student had to overcome, since past experience is the best predictor of success at this time. The issue of retention is based on support provided to students while they are here.

How do we define excellence to take into account diversity? Once we have a standard, threshold and numerical data we can consider internal methods for defining diversity within that group. This year's average GPA is 3.76. We could use the UC Berkeley model of CR review, which provides a score on everyone. What are the tradeoffs from excellence in terms of how well a student will do here (overcoming a harsh background does not mean that they will perform well)?

This discussion will continue at the April 24 meeting.

Consultation with Vice Chancellor Felicia McGinty

The annual 4/20 Event on campus occurs during the undergraduate admissions season. CAFA is concerned with the negative publicity and impact on UCSC's reputation created by it. Following last year's 4/20 Event, the Senate requested that the administration make decisions in a timely manner and communicate them to campus constituents as soon as possible.

VC McGinty reported on the proactive approach the administration is taking this year to discourage participation at the event and to keep it safe. CP/EVC David Kliger sent a message to faculty and staff regarding the event and will restrict bus and shuttle service on the west side of campus that afternoon. VC McGinty sent an email message to the parents of frosh expressing the campus' concerns with the unauthorized event, sharing plans to maintain the safety and ensure continuity of instruction and services and encouraging parents to talk with their students about their plans for 4/20. Responses to her email have been very positive.

VC McGinty also met with superintendent of Santa Cruz schools and offered a letter for distribution in English and Spanish to middle and high school students. The Waldorf schools were also notified and the Santa Cruz Interfaith Council was briefed, especially for churches on the west side of town near the campus.

This year University Librarian Jenny Steel is providing an alternate event with food and raffle prizes for groups of three or more who register as study groups in McHenry Library on April 20. CAFA suggested ideas for alternate events with an academic dialogue, but it would be difficult to host them the same day.