COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID
1999-2000 Annual Report

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Senate Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) submits the following report for 1999-2000.

I. ADMISSIONS

As in most years past, the most important decisions taken by the Committee were in the area of admissions. Two decisions -- one regarding how much credit to give for AP and honors courses, the other having to do with standardized tests -- were aimed at fine-tuning the University's admissions policies in response to the Regents' order SP-1, passed July 20, 1995, which bars the use of race, gender and ethnicity in the admission of students to the University of California. SP-1 took effect for students applying for admission in spring quarter, 1998.

For those senators who do not remember the specifics of SP-1, the Regents prescribed that each general campus of the University must choose 50% to 75% of students solely on the basis of academic criteria. The remainder must be chosen on the basis of academic criteria and supplemental factors, which might take into account special talents, student performance relative to her or his educational opportunity, etc. The Regents left to the individual campuses the setting of their own percentages within the 50% to 75% range, as well as their own guidelines within a framework developed by a task force composed of faculty and administrators from all the campuses in the UC system (the task force were members of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools [BOARS]). The UCSC Senate Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid temporarily set the percentage of students to be admitted solely on the basis of academic criteria at 50%, as did most of the other UC campuses.

So far the 50% figure has been moot, as UCSC has admitted essentially all qualified applicants since the mid-1970s. The fall 1999 class was a slight exception, however; one hundred or more qualified applicants were redirected to other UC campuses. In fall 2000 the campus returned to admitting all qualified students who applied, following a sharp rise in the number of places available for frosh. Nevertheless, UCSC managed to achieve a certain sort of selectivity at the end of the fall 2000 admissions process. Owing to the unusually high fall 2000 "take" rate -- the percentage of students who accepted UCSC's offer of a place in the frosh class -- students who delayed returning their Statement of Intention to Register form until after the deadline were redirected to other campuses. The high growth rate projected for UCSC through 2005-2006 will continue to make achieving selectivity a challenge.

The deliberations and actions of the Committee were as follows:

Advanced Placement and Honors courses and GPA. Some members of CAFA (and of BOARS) contend that students in high schools offering a large number of AP and honors courses, which inflate some students' GPAs to well above a 4.0, are unfairly advantaged. Other CAFA members acknowledge the grade inflation problem but say high school students need a strong incentive to take challenging courses. While the controversy continues, the Regents sided with the latter
group and decided to award a full extra point of credit (i.e., 5 credits rather than 4) for successfully completed AP and honors courses.

The Regents took this decision despite growing evidence that AP and honors courses are, in general, less rigorous than they once were, and grade inflation is more pronounced than ever. In reporting the national SAT results for 2000, for example, the Wall Street Journal noted that 40% of the test-takers said they had an A+, A or A- average, compared with 28% in 1990. Closer to home, the grade inflation accounts for the fact that 196 of the 3005 UCSC frosh matriculating in 2000 have combined SAT scores of under 900 (that includes 44 under 800 and 10 under 700). Senators who wonder how students with such low SAT scores can be admitted to UC should know that high school seniors with a 3.3 GPA or better in the UC-designated college preparatory courses need not achieve any minimum score on the SAT I (verbal and quantitative) test. Approximately 20% of California high school students achieve this GPA and are thus potentially eligible for admission to UC.

In any event, the availability of on-line AP and honors courses may eventually erase much of the advantage held by high schools offering large numbers of such courses. So far, however, the record of low-income, rural high school students taking on-line courses has been mixed.

Standardized tests in admissions. The SAT has come under increasingly vigorous attack in recent years. In particular, the section of the SAT devoted to analogies has received criticism, for underrepresented students seem, as a group, to perform less well in that category than they do in the other categories. Consequently, students applying for fall 2001 may choose to substitute the ACT, which is held to be fairer to underrepresented groups. Overall, with the advent of the SAT II, UC admissions policies are tending toward a greater reliance on standardized test scores than in the past.

CAFA also considered the following questions:

(1) After extensive discussion, CAFA decided to reaffirm a long-standing campus policy that students applying to transfer to UCSC as seniors should be subject to the same academic standards to which regularly enrolled UCSC seniors are held. That is, students with extensive records of substandard work at other campuses, if they have accrued more than a certain number of units, can not be given special consideration in admissions despite evidence that they recently have improved their academic performance.

(2) CAFA responded to a faculty member who noted some ambiguous wording in a system-wide admissions publication. CAFA agreed with the professor that the ambiguity could discourage some community college students considering transferring to a UC campus. The wording will be clarified in future printings of the pamphlet.

(3) A faculty member raised the question of whether athletes could be given special consideration in admissions. CAFA reaffirmed campus policy of giving special consideration to athletes who are eligible for admission but apply after the deadline. Otherwise, the Committee decided that athletes must meet the same eligibility requirements, as do other students.

(4) CAFA considered the possible impact of a satellite campus of UCSC located at Moffett Field (NASA-Ames Research Center), in Mountain View. The total enrollment projected for the satellite campus would be about 1900 students in 2010. CAFA concluded that it had too little data to predict the possible effect of such a campus on undergraduate enrollments at UCSC.
II. **FINANCIAL AID**

(1) The Committee undertook its annual reconsideration of the questions that serve as prompts for the essay that UCSC requires candidates for Regents Scholarships to write. New questions were proposed and refined, then used in the Regents Scholar selection process. Forty-four frosh accepted Regents Scholarships for 2000, slightly below last year's yield of 46.

(2) The Committee responded to a mid-year call from the Office of Financial Aid to urge UCSC faculty to propose undergraduate minority students as candidates for William Gates Millennium Scholarships. The administrators of the Gates Scholarships have not been systematic in communicating information about their awards; so far we have learned of eight UCSC recipients of these generous scholarships. The Committee wishes to thank the faculty who responded to the call.

Respectfully submitted,

**COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**

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