

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID
Annual Report, 2003-2004

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

This was a busy year for CAFA, with a number of significant issues to be resolved. In terms of our overall goal of improving the quality of undergraduates the committee is pleased to report that the admitted class for Fall 2004 has substantially stronger academic credentials, for example an increase in GPA of 0.18, to 3.81, and an approximately 10 point increase in each SAT exam score. Our campus was the only one in the UC system this year to have an increase in the number of freshman applicants (7.4%), compared to a decline of 4.1% for the system as a whole.

The committee began the year with an admissions workshop, involving presentations by CAFA members (the Chair and the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) representative) and Admissions Office staff. This helped to bring the committee up to speed on the intricacies of the admissions process, and acquaint them with a variety of relevant statistics. Throughout the year the committee worked closely with the admissions office, and wishes to thank Executive Director Kevin Browne, Associate Director Michael McCawley and Analyst Sue Grimes for their very valuable assistance and insight. We also wish to acknowledge the excellent service of our BOARS representative, Karen McNally, and administrative support by Pamela Edwards. The major issues that the committee considered were the following:

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

This was the first year in which the campus used comprehensive review in the admissions process. Details of the comprehensive review criteria may be found at <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/cafa.scp1370.htm>, and the public guidelines may be found at http://admissions.ucsc.edu/apply/freshman_guide.cfm. We are pleased to report that the system worked very well, even though the process was delayed due to problems with the implementation of the Academic Information System (AIS). The comprehensive review weightings allowed rapid computed scores and rankings to be established for the more than 23,000 applications. Six thousand applicants had scores assessed on the four criteria that necessitate reading of the application; admission decisions for the remaining applicants were determined by computer weightings alone.

Currently UCSC offers admission to all ELC (Eligibility in the Local Context, i. e., the top 4% at each high school). After reviewing the data on these students the committee decided, starting with the entering class of 2005, to admit only those ELC applicants whose SAT scores meet a minimum threshold (400). This decision was based on the clear correlation between success of ELC and EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) BRIDGE (formerly Summer-Bridge Program) students in UCSC classes and SAT scores.

The overall yield was 20.3% this year, similar to previous years. Interestingly, the fraction of students accepting our offers closely paralleled the admit curve, except at the highest end, where fewer students chose UCSC, and at the lower end where a higher fraction chose UCSC. There is no indication that comprehensive review has had adverse effects on the diversity of the student body.

The committee discussed both proposed and potential yield events, which are organized by the Admissions Office. One point of note is that more faculty involvement is needed in yield events, especially at the departmental level.

ADMISSION BY EXCEPTION

The committee discussed admission by exception and established guidelines and principles to be followed for such cases. The fundamental principle is that those students admitted through admission by exception must meet the equivalent minimum academic standards of regularly admitted students.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORS (HSH) PROGRAM

The HSH program at UCSC has existed for more than two decades. It is administered by Cowell College and allows students from local high schools to take classes at UCSC. However, to be accepted into the program the student must also be accepted as a UCSC student, thus taking a slot in the campus's allotment for total students, but effectively not counting as far as funding is concerned (HSH program students usually take just one UCSC course). Two problems have arisen due to the recent large increase in students in the HSH program (currently about 110): increased workload for Cowell (without any financial support) and the loss of most of the 110 slots to other potential applicants (only about 10% of the HSH program students actually enroll at UCSC after graduating from high school). In other words the HSH program is costing the campus about 100 slots for regular freshman, which results in a substantial financial penalty for the campus. Because of this cost, the campus was considering terminating the program starting with the Fall 2004 cohort. Since all constituents feel the program is very valuable, CAFA discussed ways to continue the program. For the immediate year a compromise was established in which the academic requirements for the HSH program were raised, with the expectation that this would decrease the numbers significantly. For the long-term the committee will continue discussions in the Fall with the Admissions Office and University Extension to find a satisfactory solution.

CAMPUS HONORS PROGRAMS

The committee became heavily involved in the issue of a campus honors program, due to the desire of the Admissions Office and the Dean of Undergraduate Education to send out a brochure extolling our honors program. The problem was that the campus did not have a Senate-approved program for the 2004-05 academic year. As a result of our discussions a compromise was reached in which the Admissions Office established a web page summarizing the wide variety of honors and enrichment programs at UCSC. In addition, a joint Senate-Administration committee was established that has recommended a comprehensive and cohesive program for honors at UCSC.

THE ADMISSIONS APPEAL PROCESS

Each year the Admissions office receives appeals from applicants who have been denied admission. With our increasing selectivity this number is growing. Whereas in some cases these are legitimate appeals based on faulty information and mistakes, many other cases have no grounds. In some cases considerable external pressure is brought on the Admissions Office. CAFA discussed the situation, as well as reviewing some cases, and established a set of guidelines and principles to be applied. These are to ensure that admitted students meet our requirements, as manifested through the Comprehensive Review process or Admission by Exception. The committee also requested that cases that could not be satisfactorily resolved by the Admissions Office should be brought before

CAFA. The committee also reiterated that the Regents have affirmed BOARS' policy regarding the admissions process, especially with respect to admissions outside the established criteria, which state that only Chancellors have such authority and if they choose to use it they must consult with the Senate.

DUAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM, GUARANTEED TRANSFER OPTION

Early in the year the committee discussed proposed changes to the Dual Admissions Program (DAP), which was our existing program in which applicants who did not completely meet eligibility requirements could transfer to UCSC after two years at a community college, provided they met certain academic standards. The program was to be disbanded due to introduction of the Guaranteed Transfer Option (GTO) plan. Later in the year the committee was involved with discussions regarding a variety of problems arising from the Governor's budget cut of 10% enrollment, followed by its rescinding, and the problems emanating from the GTO program. The GTO program was established to handle the many eligible UC students who were denied admission due to the mandated 10% cut in enrollment. When this was rescinded at the end of the Spring quarter, it led to chaos: many applicants previously denied admission were then told (often days before they were to start classes at another institution) that they had been admitted to a UC campus, often not of their choice. This was done through UC Office of the President (UCOP), and by-passed BOARS and CAFA.

OTHER ISSUES

CAFA was involved in discussions of a number of other admissions-related issues through the year. These included the effects of cuts to the outreach programs, which also would affect the availability of readers for comprehensive review (the campus receives no additional funds for the costs associated with comprehensive review).

The committee reviewed the BRIDGE program, and was pleased to find that the changes instituted last year were working well.

We considered proposed changes to the systemwide eligibility criteria, the admissions process to SOE, and problems associated with junior transfer students in some programs needing > 15 quarters to complete their requirements.

The committee reviewed admissions materials and recommended and helped generate a survey of admitted students who chose to accept or decline the offers of admission, in order to find out critical information regarding what we can do to increase our yield.

In summary, the committee had a busy year; the admissions process is working well, especially comprehensive review; the campus is on a positive trajectory with respect to increases in the quality of admitted students; and admissions and enrollment issues are likely to continue to receive political attention in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

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