

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID
Annual Report, 2005-06

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

Once again, this was a busy year for Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA). The committee began the year with an admissions workshop to help 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 and Financial Aid Offices and with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) on policy, initiatives, and outreach. We thank Executive and Associate Directors of Admissions, Kevin Browne and Michael McCawley; Acting Director and Advisers of Financial Aid Ann Draper, Cheryl Perazzo and Kori Calubaquib, Analyst Sue Grimes and Director Julian Fernald for their very valuable assistance and insight. We also wish to acknowledge the excellent service of our Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) representative, Trish Stoddart, who has been appointed the next Vice-Chair of BOARS for 2006-07, and to express our gratitude to Pamela Edwards for her administrative support.

ADMISSIONS UNDER COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

This was the third year that admissions operated under comprehensive review, a process crafted by the previous CAFA for the campus in response to fourteen general criteria adopted by the UC Regents in 2001 and in anticipation of admissions selectivity. For details of UCSC criteria see <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/cafa.scp1370.htm>, http://admissions.ucsc.edu/apply/freshman_guide.cfm. The point assignments for the various criteria were the same for all three years, but for the 2007 admissions cycle CAFA has enacted two small changes described below. UCSC missed its enrollment target for Fall 2005, as did most UC campuses, creating a priority for meeting the targets in 2006, especially for new frosh. It appears that we will meet our enrollment target for frosh and come in a little low for transfer students. Official figures for this year, which are based on enrollments after the third week of classes, will be available later in the fall.

For the class of 2005 we received 23,015 frosh applications (down 1.5% from the previous year), admitted 17,352 (up 6.7%), and enrolled 3,001 (down 1.1%). The target was 3,100-3,150. For transfer students the corresponding numbers were 5,112 (down 2.1%), 3,559 (up 6.7%), and 894 (0.1% decrease), with a target of 1,000-1,050 (unreasonably high, in retrospect). For the class of 2006, as of September, we received 24,535 frosh applications (up 6.6% from 2005), admitted 19,693 (up 13.5%), and received 3,770 positive statements of intent to register (up 13.4%), with a target of 3,350-3400 enrolled (up 8.0%). For transfer students the numbers are 5,023 (down 1.8%), 3,476 (down 2.3%), and 991 positive Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs) (down 7%), with a target of 900-950 enrolled transfers (down 10%).

Because of the large increase in enrollment target for 2006, UCSC increased its frosh acceptance rate from 75.4 to 80.3%. Despite this decrease in selectivity, the GPA of admitted frosh and transfer students remained statistically unchanged: 3.69 and 3.27, respectively, this year compared to 3.67 and 3.26 last year. Test scores were also indistinguishable. Moreover, the incoming class appears to be more diverse, with increases in underrepresented and Asian students.

More work was done by the admissions staff this year than the previous year to determine the eligibility of applicants near the cut-off computer index score of Comprehensive Review. In addition, CAFA increased the Admission by Exception Program target and approved doubling enrollment in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) Bridge Program, which has been very successful in terms of academic performance and student retention, from 60 to 120 students. Thus the number of offers to low-income, first-generation students was significantly increased. The changes to Comprehensive Review for 2007 alluded to above are intended to help in that regard as well, decreasing the number of points awarded for eligibility in the local context (ELC) from 400 to 200 and increasing the number of points for low API schools (lower two quintiles) from 200 to 400.

Other CAFA admissions business this year included reaffirmation of the senior-status admission policy, of the Guaranteed Admission for Transfer Entry (GATE) Program criteria, of the existing conditions for admission and the consequences for not meeting them, and of the Admissions appeal policies. CAFA recommended that the campus continue to judiciously increase Admissions by Exception of both frosh and transfer students so as to move closer to the 6% limit set by the Regents, but to keep the other policies and procedures currently employed by Admissions. CAFA also adopted a minimum score on the new internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) proficiency exam.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN OUTREACH AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT

CAFA believes that broader involvement of faculty in student recruitment can be very effective in increasing the number of applicants and the yield of students to our campus. Moreover, such efforts can build students' early commitment to UCSC, and thus also improve retention. Although we were successful in meeting the increased enrollment target this year with no decrease in academic qualifications of admitted students, we did so more by increasing the percentage of applicants that we accepted than by attracting more students to apply or a larger percentage of them to choose UCSC. Clearly, continued decreasing selectivity would not be a healthy long-term trend for UCSC.

A wide variety of modes of faculty involvement can be productive, from meeting high school students in outreach activities organized by the Offices of Admissions and Financial Aid, both on and off campus, to contacting and answering applicants' questions by email. For instance, CAFA members joined with other faculty and staff meeting students from low-API schools flown in to Santa Cruz. As another example, there is a program in place whereby individual departments can devise letters for the Admissions Office to target different subsets of the applicant pool, advertising their strengths, inviting students to contact them, offering mentorship, or whatever they choose. Last year less than half of the departments actually participated. In these and similar activities faculty can do a great deal with only a modest commitment of their time.

REVERSING THE DECLINE IN REGENTS SCHOLARS AT UCSC

The incoming class for Fall 2006 includes a 350% increase in the number of Regents Scholars. As reported in last year's Annual Report, CAFA documented a serious decline in percentage of Regents Scholars at UCSC over the past five years, from 1.7 to 0.7% of the undergraduate student body. Funding for the program was flat during this period while enrollment and costs to attend UC grew significantly. Last March in a meeting with CAFA, Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor (CP/EVC) Kliger offered an augmentation of up to \$250,000 for these scholarships in one-time temporary funds as an experiment to see if the downward trend could be reversed.

A concerted effort mounted by the Financial Aid and Admissions Offices and CAFA proved very successful: 54 new frosh Regents Scholars chose to enroll at UCSC, compared to 15 last year. The yield rate also increased dramatically from 12 to 19.5%, the third highest in UC behind Berkeley and UCLA. Some of the gain (18 Scholars) can be attributed directly to the increase in number of offers (by a factor of 2.2), and some to the increase in honorarium offered to students with no demonstrated financial aid (\$6,000, still below the average honorarium of the other campuses). A major factor in our success, however, was increased participation by faculty, students and staff. Focused essay-reading sessions over a three-day period by faculty volunteers and intense effort by Financial Aid staff enabled the scholarship offers to go out to candidates weeks earlier than the previous year. We offered to put the candidates in contact with faculty in their fields of interest, and were able to do so for all who requested. The UCSC Regents Scholars Association, with financial and logistical support from the Admissions Office, invited the candidates for an overnight stay on campus, which included a dinner at the Kresge Provosts' House with faculty, staff, and current Regents Scholars. The results and feedback from the new Scholars show that these personal connections made a significant difference: 57% of the candidates who were put in contact with a faculty member and 73% of the students who participated in the overnight visit enrolled at UCSC.

In a follow-up memo of understanding to CP/EVC Klinger, CAFA underscored that UCSC is not only committed to continued funding for the greater number of scholarships for the new cohort of Scholars in subsequent years, but also that increased funding over the \$250,000 augmentation is required to sustain enrollment of this greater number of new Regents Scholars each year. The immediate goal is to increase the augmentation for Regents Scholarships to \$750,000 in the next 3 years, which would bring the total per year funding to \$1.4 million and achieve a steady-state Regents Scholar population of 180 students. In the meeting with CAFA, CP/EVC Klinger suggested that raising funds from donors could meet these increased scholarship needs. This requires making the Undergraduate Regents Scholarship Program an immediate development priority for University Relations in order to raise the money needed in 2007 and succeeding years. Over and above these yearly costs, the long-term intention should be to build an endowment to provide the funds in perpetuity.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

In Spring 2005 the Academic Senate charged CEP, in consultation with CPB and CAFA, to monitor and evaluate student retention and graduate rates at UCSC and recommend actions to improve them. Toward this end, in February CAFA participated in a campus-wide open forum devoted to this topic, organized by CEP and the Dean of Undergraduate Education, and in the writing of CEP's Report on Undergraduate Graduation Rates (AS/SCP/1495-1) in May. Many factors contribute to students' dropping out before graduation. An important finding of particular relevance to CAFA is a strong correlation between selectivity in admissions and retention and graduation rates, which is evident in both national and UC statistics. It provides yet another cogent reason for faculty to participate in outreach and recruitment of students, both within state and beyond. It also underscores the importance of increasing the resources available to provide financial aid for all students with need.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is a complex operation, with aid in the form of scholarships, grants, loans and work study funds from UC, state, federal and other sources, which are allocated according to an intricate set of interlocking regulations and policies. Financial need is calculated according to federally mandated criteria (FAFSA data). The Financial Aid office distributes roughly \$100,000,000 in total aid yearly, a little more than half of which is for grants and scholarships (i.e., not loans), and almost all of which is allocated strictly according to need (merit-based aid is about 1% of the total). UCSC has been fortunate in being able to meet the full financial need of all students, but this will no longer be the case next year. Some cost components have been shifted from UCOP to the campuses, federal work-study allocations and many federal loan limits have not been increased, UC grant allocations no longer can cover student fees, and no allowance is made for differences in funding sources available to each campus. In coming years CAFA needs to examine these problems and seek ways to alleviate them.

THE AP/HONORS ADVANTAGE IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Discussion continued of the 1-grade-point increase currently given by UC for Advanced Placement courses and certain other designated honors courses. CAFA affirmed its judgment of last year that this practice is not warranted because of the lack of correlation between number of such courses taken and academic success in college and because it is not fair to students with less opportunity to take them (see the 2004-05 CAFA Annual Report). BOARS, the systemwide equivalent of CAFA, seemed poised to take action this year to reduce or eliminate the AP/Honors advantage, but at the end of spring retreated from the issue. CAFA asked its representative to urge BOARS to undertake a comprehensive study of other ways to assess the academic rigor of a high school student's educational program for purposes of determining UC eligibility. Such an assessment should attempt to take into consideration what the student has accomplished relative to the educational opportunities offered at his or her high school.

OTHER

CAFA consulted with VPDUE Ladusaw on the creation of a UCSC Honors Program. The committee's opinion is that an honors program will have a positive effect on selectivity, retention and graduation rate, but that the focus and intent should be to enhance the educational experience and promote academic excellence at Santa Cruz.

CAFA consulted with CEP on changes in policy for enrollment beyond 12 quarters. With proper supervision no significant impact on financial aid is expected.

CAFA was consulted with regard to the Memorial to the Regents to eliminate tuition for graduate students. Discussion was generally favorable.

CAFA discussed and affirmed the current configuration of the High School Scholars Program.

CAFA approved changes in computing the academic index for the Regents Scholarship competition. Besides GPA and test scores, three of the seven "other" categories will continue to be counted as before (Senior Year Total Courses, First Generation College Student, and Low API Schools), whereas the remaining four (Eligibility in the Local Context, Geographic Location, Educational Programs and Senior Year Honors) will not be counted.

The Council of Provosts has requested that UCSC discontinue its use of the word “freshman” in its publications, recommending use of alternative wording such as “frosh” or “freshperson.” CAFA agreed with their position but observed that this is a campus-wide issue that should be addressed by the UCSC Strategic Communications Committee. In the meantime, we comply with their recommendation insofar as is possible in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

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