

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID
Annual Report 2008-2009

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) had a successful year, working with the Offices of Admissions and of Financial Aid, and achieving significant accomplishments in campus connections, committee configuration, and admissions policy.

I. Data on Admissions and Financial Aid

A. Admissions

For Fall 2009, we admitted 65 percent of our 32,874 applicants, a significant rise in selectivity from last year's 72 percent admit rate. Of these, 19 percent accepted our offer of admission with the result that the class will have about 3200 new frosh and 800 new transfer students. Compared with the previous two years, the number of applicants remained about the same, and the admission rate and the yield rate (acceptance of admission/admission) declined slightly. Combined with a lower target enrollment, the class is 16 percent smaller than last year.

Among frosh Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs), there were only modest shifts in planned majors and fields. For Fall 2009, the percents of frosh SIRs for majors in the Arts was 6.6 percent; in Engineering 8.5 percent; in Humanities 8.2 percent; in Physical and Biological Sciences 24 percent; and in Social Sciences 25 percent.

B. Financial Aid

In 2008-09 the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office administered \$160 million in financial assistance for graduate students, undergraduate students and their parents. Undergraduate students received \$80 million in grant and scholarship assistance from university, state, federal and private sources. In addition the office administered \$80 million in federal student, federal parent and private education loans.

About 65 percent of undergraduates (9,300) received financial support, 52 percent received grant or scholarship support, and 28 percent of received Federal Pell Grants—a needs-based grant program for low income students.

UC Santa Cruz scholarship programs provide \$3 million for undergraduate students. In 2008-09 154 Regents Scholars received \$965,000; 28 Karl S. Pister Leadership Opportunity Award Scholars received \$250,000, and \$1.8 million was awarded to 1,100 undergraduates based on academic achievement combined with financial need.

Nonetheless, there is a significant and growing gap between family need and available funds. Scholarship support for UC Santa Cruz undergraduates, \$210 per undergraduate, lags behind support at other UC campuses. UCB averages \$1075 and UCLA averages \$650 in aid per undergraduate student.

The need for aid has increased for 2009-2010, both among new applicants and among continuing students requesting a re-evaluation of their eligibility for financial aid.

C. Appeals

There were 431 on-time frosh appeals, with 110 offered fall admission, 165 offered the Shared Experience with UC Merced, and 156 denied. Among the 110, more than half met our selection criteria, but this could not be determined from the self-reported academic record. A bit less than half of the appeals were compelling and within 100 to 200 points of the point cutoff. About a dozen had a single bad grade but looked good overall. 5 cases were treated as Admission by Exception.

II. Work of CAFA in 2008-2009

A. Campus Connections

The Committee interfaced with several campus and Senate processes, with mixed results.

1. Web Presence.

CAFA discussed the project several times this year with University Relations, Information Technology Services project leadership, and the new Web Council. Overall progress appeared to be slow but not intangible.

CAFA was unable to gain the full support of Student Affairs in its attempt to create a single web page for students on “how to get involved.”

2. High Level Indicators

During the fall quarter, the campus worked to evaluate a set of “high level indicators” that might be used to judge the success of the campus in achieving its aspirations. The outcome of this process of developing campus-level indicators, and potential inclusion of measures related to admissions and financial aid, surprisingly absent from the original is unclear.

3. Student Affairs

CAFA took part in this year’s ultimately cancelled search for a Director of Admissions. We expressed our deep concern about the current situation to the Chancellor and to the Senate Executive Committee. CAFA is also worried by the elimination of the EOP Director position and the Executive Director of Student Academic Support Services. Both of these positions are intended to increase student retention, especially for low income and minority students. Senate consultation was absent in these decisions that directly affect our academic mission.

B. Committee Configuration

New this year, CAFA established five working subcommittees: Appeals, Data, Honors, Publications, and Web Presence. The new configuration helped CAFA achieve many goals and is expected to continue in future years.

1. The Appeals subcommittee

The Appeals subcommittee agreed on the following principles for considering appeals for frosh status.

- a. Appeals will be granted for students who meet UCSC's selection criteria but had been denied in error.
- b. Appeals will be granted for students whose Comprehensive Review Score is within approximately 200 points, provided no other issues (see below) exist and who have compelling explanations.
- c. Appeals will generally be denied for students whose grades in the senior year have gone down, especially if the schedule is not extremely demanding or the overall grade point average has slipped a lot from previous years.
- d. A single D or F grade in an 'a-g' course in the senior year does not preclude the consideration of the appeal.
- e. If the student presents information about a disability, the Disability Resource Center will be consulted to gain insight on the affects of the disability on their academic performance.
- f. If students are UC eligible, and they present no senior year grade issues, but their appeal is not very compelling and/or they are not close to UCSC's selection cutoff (this year 5,425), the student will be offered the UCSC – UCM Shared Experience option, which guarantees admission to UCSC at the junior level provided that standards are met at Merced.
- g. If the student has submitted recommendations, those that speak to the student's potential for academic success will be given slightly more weight than other recommendations. Recommendations may not be the sole reason for a positive admissions decision.

The subcommittee made no policy decisions about transfer student appeals. Due to a complex transfer appeals case during the summer, the 2008-9 and 2009-10 CAFA chairs determined that all transfer appeals and variations on the conditions of enrollment should be subject to CAFA chair review pending the creation of similarly-specific policies.

2. The Data subcommittee.

The Data subcommittee, assisted by Analyst Mary Masters, Analyst Sue Grimes, and Associate Director Michael McCawley, sought to discover which factors, among an array of variables, most influenced first year GPA at UCSC. A preliminary set of regression analyses revealed that High School GPA, SAT total, and SAT SUBJ scores all had large and statistically significant positive effects on first year GPA. Subsequent analyses were conducted to gauge the effects on first year GPA and related factors of some modifications to the present system of admissions. Currently, applicants are given a score that is mechanically generated by a formula and is called

the Computed Index (CI). They are then awarded additional points based on individualized readings by Admissions staff to obtain a total score. According to analyses of Fall 2007 and Fall 2008 data sets, contrary to what one might expect, the inclusion of reader scores had an adverse effect on the diversity of the admitted students as well as the number of first generation students among the admitted group of students as contrasted with the outcome if selection had been based solely on the computed index. On the other hand, first year GPA would not have been significantly higher nor lower had we relied only on the CI. Thus, it appears that the use of readers seems to put students of color and first generation students at a disadvantage.

Using the same two data sets, the subcommittee also found strong evidence in favor of additional modifications to the present system. Specifically, the best formula for predicting first year GPA turned out to be: (high school GPA times 1000) plus (SAT total) plus (0.5 SAT subject). The subcommittee considered that using this as a starting point and adding additional criteria and points, such as 500 points for a being a first generation applicant, might best realize the tripartite goals of excellence, access, and diversity.

3. The Honors subcommittee.

The Honors subcommittee primarily worked on the awarding of merit scholarships (Regents' and Campus Merit Scholarships). Regents' Scholarships are the most prestigious and valuable scholarships the campus offers. They are worth a total of \$20,000 for an incoming student. Campus Merit Scholarships carry a minimum award of \$2,000 over four years.

The process for determining candidates for the Regents' has been to identify the very top cohort of applicants to UCSC primarily on the basis of grades and test scores and then invite these students to submit essays. This year we instituted some modifications to the procedure, having each essay be rated on an A to F scale by two readers. The goal was to make about 75 Regents' Scholarship offers, hoping to yield 15 new Regents' Scholars.

This year, 982 students were invited to apply, an increase from last year's 905. Of these, 237 submitted essays, down significantly from 409 (45 percent) in Fall 2008. Of the 237 applicants, 44 received double As and were offered Regents scholarships. The remaining 31 offers were selected from the AB lists by taking SAT and high school GPA into account, and the remaining students received campus merit award offers. Ten frosh and three transfer students accepted the Regents' offers, down from 12 and 4 last year.

4. The Publications subcommittee.

The Publications subcommittee evaluated outreach material for the coming year and provided extensive feedback on content and improvements. One member walked the self-guided tours, finding many ways to increase clarity and the route of the tours. With the close cooperation of the Office of Admissions, the subcommittee established a procedure so that CAFA can continue the detailed reading and evaluation of publications throughout the calendar year.

5. The Web Presence subcommittee.

The Web Presence subcommittee continued the work of the prior year that helped push the establishment of the campus web initiative. Browsing the campus websites, the subcommittee found much variation and many causes for concern including confusing and dead links, inadequate content, and contradictory information. As has been clear for several years, the UCSC web presence needs significant overhaul. Our wide array of administrative units still often operate and interact in a pre-web, paper-based manner, unlikely to appeal to today's techno-savvy youth.

After some initial skepticism, the web subcommittee was gratified to see that the administration has hired consultants to help UCSC solve its web problems. Based in the Bay Area, the consultants have a good track record, having helped Stanford, Santa Clara, Rutgers, and other universities.

One particular project of importance to CAFA is the establishment of a single page where students can learn about activities and opportunities for participation across campus regardless of the sponsoring agency. Student Affairs appeared enthusiastic about the project at first, but then appeared resistant.

Given the enormous importance of a good web presence for prospective students and their families, CAFA will need to maintain constant vigilance and continuous pressure to ensure that some long overdue changes take place.

C. Policy

Under current University policies, high school students who have taken the required "a-g" sequence of approved courses and who have sufficiently high grades and test scores are considered to be UC-eligible and are guaranteed admission on one UC campus although not perhaps their campus of choice (there will be some changes in the UC requirements for Fall 2012, discussed below). UCSC selects its student body from its applicant pool of UC-eligible students using a set of 14 system-wide criteria. As spelled out in our admissions materials, points are awarded for each criterion, up to a total of 10,000. (See: http://admissions.ucsc.edu/apply/freshman_guide.cfm). Nine of the criteria and part of a tenth form the "Computed Index". The computed index represents criteria that can be automatically converted into the scoring system, such as GPA, test scores, participation in an Equal Opportunity Program, coming from a low-performing school, and completion of honors courses. The remaining criteria form the reader score, calculated by hand. Applications with a sufficiently high computed index are admitted without calculating reader scores, though they are of course reviewed for correctness of the computed index.

Campuses may also extend offers to students who have not met the UC eligibility requirements, for example by not completing the full UC course pattern or having a GPA below 3.0. Under this policy, known as "Admission by Exception", no more than 6 percent of matriculated students may fall in this category. Heretofore CAFA has instructed Admissions to review the students who are not UC-eligible ("Admission by Exception") separately, and to predominantly only admit applicants likely to participate in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), with the intent of attaining the 6 percent system-wide limit.

When this system was instituted, UCSC admitted virtually all applicants. However, in 2009, UCSC admitted only 64 percent of frosh applicants. Our evolution into a selective campus has prompted data-supported analysis which, in turn, has resulted in three policy changes.

The first policy change is the application of the same selection criteria for all students, regardless of UC eligibility definitions. That is, for the cohort entering in Fall 2010, all students will be scored according to CAFA's comprehensive selection criteria, and the highest scoring students will be admitted. Students who are not UC eligible will have the additional requirements that, following long-standing CAFA policy, they must have completed UC's four years of English and three years of mathematics, may only be missing up to two semesters of other required coursework, and are subject to a final qualitative review to ensure that, in the words of the system-wide policy, they "demonstrate high potential for academic success and leadership." This change eliminates the anomalous situation in which a student who has succeeded in the face of many challenges and earned reasonable test scores would be admitted (by exception) with a 2.99 GPA but would not be admitted with a 3.00, or even higher, GPA (as part of the eligible pool). To enable programs such as the summer bridge program, CAFA reserves the option of admitting up to one percent of the incoming frosh class with additional or alternative pre-determined review criteria. <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/AbyE%20Policy%20072009.pdf>

The second policy change is a one-year experimental modification in the point weighting for the manually-scored components of the application. CAFA has established a rubric for awarding points in categories such as statewide recognition for special projects or academic accomplishments, improvement in high school GPA from the sophomore to junior year, and academic accomplishment in life experiences. Data analysis for the Fall 2007 and Fall 2008 admissions cycles showed that these "reader scores" were both inversely correlated with first-year student performance and with common measures of access such as percentage of first-generation students and percentage of EOP students. Given these doubly negative results, CAFA reduced the weight of these criteria by approximately 50 percent for the Fall 2010 admissions cycle. <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/Fall%202010%20Reading%20Policy%20072009.pdf>

The final policy change is to regularize the appeals process according to the principles outlined above.

III. Issues for the near future

There are at least two admissions policy issues that CAFA will need to address in the near future.

1. UC Admissions Changes

Beginning with the class of 2012, the UC system will no longer require subject tests, will expand the percentage of students guaranteed UC admission due to class rank within their high school, and also will expand the percentage of students who may be admitted to a UC without falling into what is currently defined as "Admission by Exception". The removal of the subject test and the availability of additional class rank and other data will require either significant adjustment to the current point system or a new system of evaluation.

2. Transfer Student Admissions

Over the past three to five years, UCSC has moved from being unselective to being truly selective. This year's frosh selection policy changes take advantage of data and our new-found selectivity to better shape the incoming class for excellence, diversity, and access. The current transfer student selection practice is to admit all UC-eligible transfer students as well as additional "admission by exception" students who appear likely to succeed. With selectivity, CAFA will need to establish a transfer student policy as well.

As part of this review, CAFA and programs will also need to consider implementing the existing "major preparation" criterion, currently not used in campus transfer student review, and whether or not major choice should impact campus admission or only major declaration.

IV. Committee Process

The admission of students profoundly affects the character of the campus and our execution of UCSC's public mission. CAFA this year was fortunate to have a wide range of views on whether or not there should be any changes to the admissions process and, if so, how they should be evaluated. Thus, the process of analyzing for the first time our comprehensive review system, which takes into account a broad range of academic, access, and diversity measures, produced lively discussion.

The process began with committee members selecting which subcommittees they would be most interested in joining, with the data subcommittee taking the lead on developing, with Enrollment Management, the information and reports necessary to evaluate comprehensive review. As this was the first such review, a methodology was not yet available, and so the first analysis did not move from subcommittee to committee until Winter quarter, later than the Fall target.

The results, discussed above, indicated that through tuning the specific weightings in the comprehensive review system, different goals could be achieved. For some, the prime goal of selection appeared to be enhancing social mobility; for others the specific effects of this approach seemed to present elements of class discrimination. For some, the prime goal of selection appeared to be enhancing first-year GPA performance; for others this discounted our strong commitment to diversity and access. For the committee as a whole, the goal lay somewhere in between all the extremes, a middle simplified by the data's conclusion that it was possible to both increase measures of academic success, such as projected first-year GPA, and simultaneously increase measures of access such as percentage of first-generation students, (lower) median family income, and ethnic diversity, through the two proposals the committee has adopted. Our guiding principle has been to find meeting points between the quest for excellence and our strong commitment to access and diversity, rather than see these matters in opposition.

The conversation leading to these decisions was complex, as there were at times approaches taken that many in the committee came to regard as obstructionist or filibustering, rather than collaborative and considerate. Belatedly, the Chair determined that rules of order would need to be strictly followed for remaining meetings. This new approach led, in a compressed time frame, to more effective meetings and use of committee members' time. At its May 29th meeting, the

committee with one 'no' vote determined to keep working on the issues and to develop modified policies for Fall 2010. At its long June 9 meeting, the committee unanimously voted twice (9-0, and then 7-0 following discussion and two members' need to depart) to complete the process it had worked on all year. The committee determined that a subcommittee should work out the final details, for email discussion and vote, resulting in the two adopted policies.

Because of the heavy workload, desire to accomplish committee goals, and substantial time allocated to opposing views, the committee was unable to include as many guests as might be desired. However, continuity of membership – half of the faculty – meant that many took part in the prior year's interactions with various guests.

Overall, the committee enjoyed “the chance to listen to and consider viewpoints and ways of thinking very different from [their] own” as well as the chair's “calm and centered reactions” to the spirited discussion.

The minutes of all 2008-09 CAFA meetings are available on the committee web site, <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/>.

V. Thanks

This has been a particularly interesting and productive year for the committee, and we would like to conclude the report with some formal appreciations. The committee was fortunate to start the year with a full complement of members and three exceptional student representatives with a breadth of experiences. The Committee would particularly like to congratulate Michelle Romero on her appointment to the 2009-10 Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), the system-wide admissions committee. CAFA enjoys a close working relationship with the Enrollment Management unit, in particular the Offices of Admission and of Financial Aid. Without the advice and extensive collaboration of the Associate Vice Chancellor Michelle Whittingham, Director Ann Draper, Associate Director Michael McCawley and Advisor Cheryl Perazzo, the work of the committee would be impossible to complete. The committee is also grateful for the logistics support that the Enrollment Management unit offered for many of the subcommittee meetings and for the fall kickoff meeting. CAFA could also not function without the help of the Senate Office and the detailed work of Pamela Edwards.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

Raoul Birnbaum

Robert Coe (W & S)

Bruce Cooperstein

Faye Crosby

Gabe Elkaim

Scott Oliver

Juan Poblete, BOARS Rep

Richard Hughey, Chair

Amy Weaver, NSFT Rep

Michael Morrissey, SUA Rep

Michelle Romero, SUA Rep

October 9, 2009

Minority Report

We had during the first couple of quarters of our regular CAFA meetings during 08/09 regular and sometimes forceful requests to engage in a substantial conversation about what the goals of a thorough review of Comprehensive Review could be. When I made such request (and I was not the only person to make such interventions but I would rather represent my own views here) I was thinking of considering questions such as: Where, now that we were becoming a selective campus and in the general context of the incoming system-wide new admissions policy did the committee want to lead UCSC's admission process? What educational goals had been attained or not attained with the existing system and which could be revised or added? This in my view required a serious and open conversation about diverse viewpoints on the very crucial issues at stake.

Instead of truly engaging in such a conversation the Chair proceeded to push first and foremost for his ideologically limited understanding of a data-based approach to arrive at what he and another committee member had always already decided was the right answer to UCSC's admissions issue: getting rid of CR first and then, when that proved difficult due to clear resistance from other committee members, limiting the part of CR that considers achievement in life context, limiting or eliminating AbyE, etc. This was based on an ideological, by which I mean never discussed or questioned, presupposition about what constituted a "true metric" of merit (presumably GPA+ SAT scores+AG courses), with consideration of other factors in admissions deemed as necessarily diluting standards.

In this process a number of significant methodological and procedural mistakes were made:

Only one year of data was used to base the original analysis. This was later extended to two years at the insistence of some committee members. The expert analyst who supposedly helped design the analysis was never invited to explain to the committee what the limitations of such a data-set could be, what it allowed us to see and what perhaps it precluded us from seeing (what other variables could be incorporated for consideration, etc)

A number of wrong presuppositions about AbyE and EOP and Bridge students were included in the analysis because of lack of substantial conversation with the key institutional actors in those areas: first year GPA was used as a "universal benchmark" for measuring performance for all students without considering that many of those students in the AbyE, EOP and Bridge cohorts are often required and or advised to take P/NP classes (thus one bad numerical grade during the year can have a disproportionate effect on final annual GPA); the whole of the AbyE cohort was repeatedly reduced to the profile of the 120 or so Bridge students. These serious mistakes were made more consequential by the Chair's disregard for his own calendar of consultations with CAFA related administrators on campus. In the previous year and under the same Chair the committee had unanimously voted in a strict calendar for the annual consideration of CAFA's basic issues. In that calendar the director of EOP was supposed to have been invited for a regular annual conversation with the committee. She was never invited despite my repeated requests for

that to happen. Thus the committee made decisions on AbyE and EOP and Bridge students without ever bothering to talk to the people on campus who truly know those students.

Finally said calendar, "Review Cycle for Issues and Approval of Policies", approved during the previous year and posted on the Committee's public web site (<http://senate.ucsc.edu/cafa/>) clearly stipulated that Review of Comprehensive Review criteria was to take place in the fall with a March 1 deadline for changes. Instead, the Chair kept on adding additional meetings to our regular yearly session during spring quarter despite my (and others') significant resistance, in the hopes to finally pass his proposals. Not surprisingly he also disregarded his own time framework for these added meetings. The final meeting was thus extended beyond four hours when it was originally slated to last two. Because a number of the committee members had previously scheduled appointments the final proposals during that meeting were made in the absence of about half of the committee members. As a model for serious consideration of the very important issues CAFA is charged with, this modus operandi was not only a disgrace and highly irregular but likely illegal. I have decided not to legally challenge these decisions because two former CAFA chairs including the incoming one eventually made significant efforts to temper the Chair's proposed reforms and some caution was finally introduced, in the way of one year trials and partial consideration of factors other than those included in the Chair's "true metrics of merit".

As a returning member of CAFA and under a new Chair I am very committed to participating in serious, careful and informed discussions to make UCSC a better public university.

Juan Poblete
CAFA Member, BOARS Representative

September 25, 2009