

Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid 2019-20 Annual Report

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) continued its annual work evaluating the outcomes of the prior (2018-19) admissions cycle and adapting its consistent priorities to changing circumstances in shaping the class entering in fall 2020. As always, we worked closely with Undergraduate Education (UE), Enrollment Management (EM), and Undergraduate Admissions (UA), whose energy and creativity provided us with both information and options for setting policy.

I WORK OF CAFA IN 2019-20

A. Committee Foci

1. Response to COVID-19

Students who perform poorly or drop multiple intended classes during their senior year can be subject to cancellation of their offer of admission. Because of the severe -- and variable -- problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring 2020 high-school semester, CAFA instructed the office of admissions not to cancel students for poor performance or missing courses that were isolated to the spring semester, and not to request an explanation of the reasons for the shortfall.

The decision not to look at standardized test scores during the admission process for fall 2021 enrollment (see below) was also influenced by the lack of access -- and lack of equity in access -- to standardized test offerings this year caused by the pandemic. Holistic review readers, in evaluating individual grades in student transcripts (particularly in math and English) have been instructed to ignore any problems that seem isolated to spring 2020.

CAFA also agreed to encourage Admissions to be more lenient than usual in granting deferrals of enrollment for up to a year for students admitted for fall 2020 -- these deferrals are usually restricted to reasons of health, military service, or religious/cultural reasons. Students deferring would be allowed to take college credits elsewhere and enter as advanced-standing frosh.

2. Holistic Review and selection of frosh applicants

For the 2019-20 cycle, the holistic review instructions were rewritten in the fall to make the evaluation of test scores, GPA, and number of a-g courses completed much more strictly contextual. Readers were not shown the actual values of these metrics for each applicant, rather they were shown only a percentile rank relative to a group of peers. For most students, the peer group was applicants from their own school to all UC campuses. This practice opened up the top holistic review categories (1 and 2) to a much more diverse group of students from a broader sampling of California schools.

For the selection process, members of the Data Subcommittee (Carlos Dobkin and Laura Giuliano) developed new metrics that could be used to improve both predicted student success and expand access to the campus for economically disadvantaged, Black, and Latinx students, using census data and other datasets. They also provided new software to EM that would allow many selection scenarios to be run more easily than in the past. The predicted “success” parameter was changed this year from first year GPA to the probability of return to the second year, in acknowledgement of the expectation that first-generation college students may need a year to adapt to academic culture and therefore two much consideration of predicted first-year GPA could disadvantage them.

For the first time in recent years, the holistic review instructions for the next admissions cycle were approved in advance during spring quarter, allowing Admissions to better prepare for the training of readers. The new instructions were written to be blind to standardized test scores, with English and math grades being given somewhat higher prominence in the criteria beside overall GPA. There were no other major changes. Responding over the summer to the Regents’ approval of President Napolitano’s plan to make UC admissions test-optional for two years and test-blind for two years following, CAFA voted to proceed immediately to a test-blind policy for all admissions decisions for the 2020-21 cycle, in order to provide clarity to applicants, their counsellors, and families, in acknowledgement of uneven access to testing, and in order to get a head start on a successful transition to test-blind procedures.

3. Nonresident Admissions - Compare Favorably

Systemwide policy of the Academic Council, on the recommendation of BOARS, requires campuses to assure that non-resident (including international) students “compare favorably” in their academic preparation to California resident students. By common practice this is taken to mean the comparison of average metrics of preparation among the different residency categories (California resident, out-of-state, and international). CAFA (and EM/UA) believe that the most reliable metric for comparison is standardized test scores, so CAFA asked EM/UA to prioritize making sure that the average standardized test scores for nonresident admits exceeded that for California residents. This was successfully accomplished, although GPA averages (which is harder to compare accurately, particularly for international students) did not meet the compare favorably standard.

4. Early Consideration

With UE/EM/UA, CAFA closely reviewed our procedures for early consideration of students brought forward by Athletics (with the same rules applying to any students who might be brought forward by academic deans and other authorized principal officers). In addition to the normal annual discussion of this process, there was particular scrutiny this year in the context of the audit following the “Varsity Blues” scandal. We considered the audit’s recommendations in the unusual context of being the only Division III campus in the UC system. CAFA voted to continue our current policy of extending early offers to students brought forward under the formal process for early consideration whose academic preparation is comparable to that of admitted students from the general applicant pool. For this cycle, that was defined as either having a holistic review score of 1-3 or a 77% or higher predicted probability of return to the second year. Students who aren’t approved for early consideration still have a chance to be admitted through the normal process later on, which is blind to the fact that they had been put forward for early consideration. We also adopted a policy of review and investigation by the Athletics compliance

officer in the event that a recruited student does not participate for a year in the team whose coach put them forward.

5. Standardized Testing

CAFA provided extensive feedback to the systemwide Standardized Testing task force and to BOARS on the topic of standardized testing. Our principal recommendation was that if standardized tests were maintained, UC should use the average composite score rather than the highest score for all applicants, removing some of the advantage enjoyed by students from wealthier families who are more likely to take the tests many times. We were disappointed that this wasn't adopted in the task force's final recommendation, which favored maintaining standardized testing for several years without this measure to reduce inequity; however, events overtook both our recommendations and the task force's, and now UCSC will be test-blind for all admissions decisions beginning in the next cycle.

6. Admission by Exception

Systemwide policy requires that no more than 6% of *enrolled* students be admitted by exception ("AbyE", usually related to missing coursework from the a-g pattern). Because the policy refers to enrolled rather than admitted students, it is not as easy to be confident in hitting the target. At the start of the academic year, it was understood that this 6% must include international students, and UCSC had been much stricter than most campuses in coding international students, whose high-school curricula are often significantly different from California standards, as AbyE. For this reason, we had exceeded the 6% number in prior cycles and instructed EM/UA to make significant progress this year toward the 6% mark both by admitting fewer international students marked AbyE and having senior readers review the AbyE classifications to see if any were not appropriate to begin with. Later in the cycle, BOARS issued guidance that the AbyE classification should only apply to California students, allowing us to concentrate on the purposes for which the AbyE classification was really intended, notably for California students who had been given fewer opportunities in high school to take academically-oriented (a-g) coursework.

B. Sub-Committee Efforts

1. Appeals Subcommittee

The Appeals Subcommittee continued to meet occasionally throughout the year to consider cases of cancellations of admission offers from the prior cycle, although there were fewer than in former years due to more flexible cancellation policies adopted by the prior CAFA.

2. Data Subcommittee

The Data Subcommittee successfully performed a great deal of data analytic work in generating a new measure of predicted persistence to the second year, and new measures of the economic and racial/ethnic makeup of students' neighborhoods (see above). As usual, this subcommittee also worked closely with EM during the winter quarter to create and optimize multiple alternate scenarios for final selection, choosing several to bring to the full CAFA for the final choice.

II ISSUES FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

A. Transfer and 2:1

CAFA will work with UA and department chairs to streamline the process of assessing major preparation for transfer students in screening majors (those that require specific preparatory courses and certain grades in these courses). This has caused difficulty in situations where departments require major preparation courses that are offered by other departments, complicating the process of assessing the students' coursework when those prior courses are not articulated in ASSIST, which only articulates courses from California community colleges.

B. Major Impaction

This year EM underestimated the yield of Computer Science transfer students, resulting in an excess of students compared to the impaction agreement. CAFA will work with EM to approve a more conservative method for the coming cycle to avoid this outcome. If impaction status is approved for any other program this year, CAFA will work with the sponsoring department to design an effective and equitable admissions strategy.

C. Compare Favorably

In the absence of near-universal standardized test scores, there will have to be a different metric used to define academic preparation in comparing California resident students with nonresident domestic and international students. High-school GPA is the other metric usually used, but it is difficult to calibrate across different grading systems (internationally) and average statewide levels of grade inflation (domestically). CAFA will consult with UA/EM in order to bring recommendations to BOARS for how to make this comparison this year.

D. Selection Process For Frosh In Winter/Spring

CAFA (in particular the Data Subcommittee) will work with EM/UA to devise selection criteria -- centering, as always, Holistic Review scores -- that accomplish all of our goals for student preparation, social mobility, and diversity without consideration of standardized test scores. 2019-20 Data Subcommittee members Dobkin and Giuliano -- the latter returning to CAFA for 2020-21 -- are making a data request of UCOP that will help them design improved predictors of student success.

If California voters approve Prop. 16 to repeal Prop. 209 in the fall, CAFA will work with our partners in the administration to determine whether and how to use students' self-reported race and ethnicity to reach our goals in shaping the entering class.

III **Admissions and Financial Aid for Fall 2020**

A. Admissions

A brief summary of UC Santa Cruz admissions outcome data provided by the Division of Undergraduate Education's Office of Enrollment Management is outlined below. Admissions is dynamic, and data, such as residency or enrollment estimates, may change.

UC Santa Cruz received 67,639 applications for fall 2020. Frosh applications totaled 55,073 (CA = 43,895, out of state = 4,004, and international = 7,174) and transfer applications totaled 12,566 (CA = 11,032, out of state = 351, and international = 1,183). As with last year, the campus was open for winter transfer applications in selected majors. As of the writing of this report, we have received 632 applications for winter 2021 transfer admission; we will need to rely heavily on this pool to again achieve the state mandate to enroll one new California transfer student for every two new California frosh, commonly referred to as 2:1. We have more applications due to several majors being open for the first time this winter in the Baskin School of Engineering and in the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences.

UC Santa Cruz admitted 35,935 frosh for fall 2020, including 27,212 California, 3,300 out of state and 5,423 international. The frosh admission rate was 65.2%. The average high school GPA of admitted frosh was 3.91 (on a 4.4 weighted scale), slightly lower than fall 2019 (3.94). The average SAT score taken under the new test system is 1295, slightly lower than fall 2019 (1316). The campus made a decision in May to increase the CA frosh enrollment target given the anticipated total CA undergraduates for 2020-2021 and the expected impacts of COVID-19. We used waitlist and referral pool strategies to manage enrollment outcomes within an ever-changing environment. We were able to effectively predict the behavior of the computer science students and will not exceed the capacity constraint.

UC Santa Cruz admitted 7,964 sophomore and junior transfer students, including 7,133 California, 132 out of state and 699 international. The admission rate for all transfers was 63.3%. The total number of admits increased from last year and California admits increased by 12% from last year. Admitted sophomore transfer applicants met the same course requirements and (where applicable) major preparation requirements as junior transfer students, but had fewer than 90 units for transfer. We will not reach 2:1 this year given the significantly increased CA frosh enrollment target, though we do expect to reach the CA transfer enrollment target. We anticipate being closer to 2.4:1. Our enrollment modeling for computer science transfer students significantly underpredicted the number of students who would accept our offer of admission. The yield increased by 5% over last year and the melt was 6% lower than last year, likely due to changes across the UC system. Adjustments will be made in the future to allow for such significant changes from year to year.

Frosh Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs) total 5,772, including 5,198 California, 227 out of state and 347 international students. California SIRs from students identifying as African American reached 5.3%, increasing from 4.2% in fall 2019; Hispanic/ Latino reached 28.4%, steadily increasing over the three two years (27.1% in fall 2019 and 26.5% in fall 2018).

Transfer SIRs total 2056, including 1,949 California, 29 out of state and 78 international students. California SIRs from students identifying as African American reached 5.6%, similar as the past two years (5.7% in fall 2019 and 5.5% in fall 2018); Hispanic/ Latino reached 32.2%, increasing from 31.9% in fall 2019 and decreasing from 33.0% in fall 2018. Continued close collaboration among Admissions, EM, UE, CAFA, CEP, programs and the disciplinary divisions helped to maximize transfer admission offers to qualified transfer applicants. Our 2:1 ratio is expected to be 2.34 based on current enrollment projection for the fall and enrollment target of 100 in the winter. (Data from UCSC Data Warehouse as of June 30, 2020)

B. Financial Aid and Scholarships

In 2019-20, the Division of Undergraduate Education's Financial Aid and Scholarships Office provided support to 12,530 undergraduate students (72% of undergraduate population) and 1,890 graduate students (96% of graduate population). A total of \$318M was disbursed in grants, scholarships, fellowships, loans and/or work-study assistance.

1. Award Program Updates

2019-20 is the second year of a two-year program, the Transfer Transition Scholarship. With funding from a one-time UCOP Housing initiative, entering transfer students were eligible to apply for \$1,200 in scholarship aid, all disbursed in the Fall term, supporting the start-up housing costs associated with the transition to UC Santa Cruz. There were 395 students who received the award in Fall 2018, for a total disbursement of \$471K. In the Fall of 2019, an additional 431 transfer students were awarded \$540K.

2019-20 was the third year for the re-established University Loan Program, which had been dormant since 1999. This program is intended to be a replacement of the Federal Perkins Loan program, which was discontinued in June 2018. In Fall 2019, eligible entering Frosh were offered \$1,500 each to cover the gap created by the absence of Perkins. There were 606 students who accepted University Loans during the 2019-20 year, with \$873K loans disbursed.

The legislature continues to work on a number of proposals impacting the state Cal Grant program in the current legislative session, although the current economy may put this process on hold. Perhaps the most momentum is behind a proposal to add two additional quarters/semesters of grant eligibility, specifically to cover tuition for eligible students in summer terms. The Governor's budget advanced a small portion of this anticipated legislation, with \$4M for UC Campuses to disburse to eligible Cal Grant recipients. UCSC is disbursing our share of the funds (\$308K) to approximately 1,400 students in Summer 2020.

With the \$762 increase to non-resident tuition in May 2019, the Board of Regents directed that 10% of the increase (\$76.20) be set aside for nonresident undergraduate need-based financial aid. As requested by the Office of the President, UCSC will be prioritizing these funds to support continuing non-resident students whose financial circumstances are such that their ability to make progress towards their UC degree would be jeopardized without this additional assistance. In practice, this will take the form of grants provided to non-resident students in emergency situations. The total funding in 2019-20 was

\$148K. With the fund established in January 2020, we were able to disburse \$25K to 5 non-resident students during the latter half of the academic year.

In April 2020, UC Santa Cruz was allocated \$9,663,601 through the Federal CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care). As of 8/18/2020, for the 2019-20 academic period, UCSC has awarded 93.5% of the funds (\$9,037,150) to 12,721 Undergraduate and Graduate students. The balance of the funds will be awarded to eligible students on an appeals basis.

2. Current Financial Aid Funding Model and Data

The UC Education Finance Model (EFM), which utilizes a 33% return-to-aid (RTA) from tuition and fees to support low income students, continues to be closely reviewed by the system-wide EFM committee. This UCOP committee meets quarterly regarding issues that affect the determination of the Cost-of-Attendance and the cross-campus allocation of aid funds.

When tuition and campus fees are combined with other elements of the student budget, such as housing/dining and health care, the average cost for a UC Santa Cruz CA resident student living on campus in 2020-21 will be \$39,243. Non-residents will have an additional \$29,754 tuition charges, bringing the non-resident on-campus budget to \$68,997. Under EFM, 2020-21 UC Santa Cruz undergraduates who qualify for need-based assistance must pay approximately the first \$9,900 of their need from loan and/or work resources. After subtracting the loan/work expectation and the family contribution (from FAFSA/DREAM App data), grant aid is offered to help pay the remainder of the estimated total cost.

The Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan guarantees that students from families with incomes under \$80,000 will receive enough gift aid (from all sources) to pay UC tuition and fees. Virtually all students in this category already receive enough gift aid to meet this commitment. However, under the Plan some students who would not normally receive gift aid (due to high asset equity) receive gift aid.

In 2019-20 the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office administered \$269 million in financial assistance to about 72% of our undergraduates, as compared to \$277 million / 72% in 2018-19.

2018-19 Source of Aid	Percent of Undergraduates	Amount Received	Average Award
Gift Aid (all sources)	70.2%	\$197,533,658	\$16,068
UCSC Scholarships*	19.6%	\$11,201,237	\$3,270
Federal Pell Grants*	34.0%	\$29,270,828	\$4,918
Student/Parent Loans	38.8%	\$69,068,174	\$10,157

Federal Work-Study	6.6%	\$2,240,570	\$1,947
* Included in gift aid			

Of the UC Santa Cruz students receiving bachelor's degrees in 2018-19, 56% of those who originally enrolled as first-time frosh borrowed student loans while attending. Those students have an average debt of \$21,375. However, the debt can be as high as \$57,500 on an individual basis, which is the federal cumulative maximum amount an undergraduate student may borrow. Nationally, 65% of seniors graduated in 2018 had student loan debt, with an average of \$29,200 per borrower (<https://ticas.org/our-work/student-debt/>). National Data for students graduating in 2019 is not yet available.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Education calculates cohort default rates for loans by campus. The national 3-Year average was 10.1% for 2016 (per Dept. of Ed.). The rate for the campus has been exceptionally low in recent years.

UCSC Year	3-Year Draft Default Rate	3-Year Official Default Rate
2013	3.1%	3.1%
2014	3.1%	3.1%
2015	3.6%	3.6%
2016	3.7%	3.7%
2017	2.9%	Not Yet Available

Campus undergraduate scholarship programs are administered by various campus departments as well as by the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office. Listed below are data for major scholarship programs administered by the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office:

2017-18 Scholarship Program	Recipients	Amount Received	Average Award
Regents Scholarships	164	\$769,254	\$4,691
Campus Merit Scholarships	312	\$597,611	\$1,915
Pister Leadership Opportunity Awards	26	\$199,272	\$7,664

The Office of the President maintains numerous reports regarding student financial support on the following website: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/financial-support>

Acknowledgements

CAFA collaborated closely on key issues with the Undergraduate Education Division, and the committee's work was enhanced by data provided by Enrollment Management and the Office of Admissions.

Respectfully submitted,

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