

## **COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**

### **Annual Report 2020-21**

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 admissions cycle and adapting to changing circumstances in shaping the class entering in fall 2021 and planning ahead for new modes of application evaluation for the 2022 cohort. 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 2020-21**

##### **A. Committee Foci**

###### ***1. Admissions in the time of COVID-19***

The following changes were approved for systemwide use by the Regents for this cycle:

- Suspending the letter grade requirement for A-G courses completed in winter/spring/summer 2020 for all students, including UC's most recently admitted freshmen.
- Suspending the standardized test requirement for students applying for fall 2021 freshman admission.
- No rescission of student admissions offers that result from students or schools missing official final transcript deadlines, and student retention of admission status through the first day of class until official documents are received by campuses.
- For transfer students, temporarily suspending the cap on the number of transferable units with Pass/No Pass grading applied toward the minimum 60 semester/90 quarter units required for junior standing.

CAFA approved a number of campus-specific policies:

- CAFA's instructions to readers reviewing applications for the 2021 entering frosh class included directions to overlook anomalous low grades in spring 2020 for otherwise strong students in deriving their holistic review score.
- 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, CAFA voted on March 3 on a policy allowing somewhat more failed classes in the senior year (for frosh admits) than in ordinary years before cancellation is triggered. Similar rules were established for transfer students, although applicants in departments with required major preparation classes had to complete them successfully before enrolling at UC unless a specific waiver was approved by their department. The details are contained in correspondence from June 9.
- CAFA also agreed to continue the policy, begun for the 2020 cohort, of allowing students accepted for fall 2021 to defer enrollment for up to a year due to health and financial problems specifically related to the pandemic; these deferrals are usually restricted to

reasons of health, military service, or religious/cultural reasons. For this cycle, students deferring would not be allowed to take college credits elsewhere without losing their status as frosh applicants.

## ***2. Comprehensive Review and selection of frosh applicants***

The instructions to readers for readers for the 2020-21 cycle were approved by the prior CAFA in spring 2020, and are discussed in the prior annual report, the most important change being the absence of standardized test scores in the scoring. In the selection process, most of the improvements from the prior cycle were retained (see the prior annual report), except that the chosen student success indicator, which had been a predicted first-year Grade Point Average (GPA) in the past and had been, instead, a probability of return to the sophomore year for the 2019-20 cycle, reverted to a predicted first-year GPA, but one that this time used detailed information from the transcript and a machine-learning algorithm rather than the simple linear combination of GPA and standardized test scores used in the 2018-19 cycle and earlier.

In the spring, CAFA approved a major change in the way comprehensive review will be done for the 2021-22 cycle. Instead of a single holistic review score, readers will provide 8 scores that can be used during the selection phase. First, on a scale of 1 (best) to 5 (worse), an “achievement within context” (AWC) that considers the GPA, number of A-G courses, number of honors courses, and rigor of the proposed senior year coursework in the context of the opportunities available in the student’s school, and the performance of other applicants to UC from the school. Second, a set of 7 scores on “noncognitive” factors on a scale of 1 (exceptional), 2 (good to excellent), and 3 (no evidence of strength presented).

## ***3. Transfer Admissions***

CAFA voted to discontinue the Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) program for the Computer Science major in the Baskin School of Engineering for the 2021-22 and following cycles. Due to the impaction of this program and the large number of applications, CAFA’s concern was that students with guarantees would dominate the incoming transfer classes, forcing us having to turn away many applicants who are academically stronger, more diverse, or both, in favor of the TAG students.

CAFA worked with UA to set up new, streamlined procedures for assessing major preparation for transfer students in screening majors (those that require specific preparatory courses and certain grades in these courses). This had 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.

## ***4. 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, a policy that is now required to be in place by state law AB-1674 (2017). CAFA (and EM/UA) have always believed that the most reliable metric for comparison is standardized test scores, given the tremendous variation of grading practices and course-taking habits overseas (and even in other states). In the prior cycle

(2020 cohort), we met this requirement for the test scores for both nonresident categories (international and domestic non-resident). For this year's cycle, with the sudden removal of test scores from admissions consideration, BOARS has not provided guidance on how to evaluate Compare Favorably. In the absence of such guidance, we did not insist on meeting the alternate criterion of a higher average GPA for nonresident students, given the relatively arbitrary and uncertain process for converting and comparing in-state and out-of-state/international GPAs, and given that this would have resulted in a steep drop in the number of nonresident students we could admit, despite knowing that these students are likely to be very successful at UCSC and contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of the intellectual and cultural environment. We are hoping that BOARS will provide guidance allowing Compare Favorably to be met by examining the actual performance of students in all three residency categories in their frosh year, and letting these results inform admissions policy for the following cycle, and that the standard can therefore be meaningfully evaluated for this cycle's class retroactively. In the absence of standardized tests, performance at UC is the only sound standard of comparison we have.

### ***5. Early Review and Notification Policy***

The audits, reviews, and recommendations of admissions practices and policies coming from our own auditor's office, University of California Office of the President (UCOP), and the office of the State Auditor in response to the Varsity Blues scandal have consumed much of the time and attention of EM and UA this year, despite the lack of any problematic admissions cases here and despite UC Santa Cruz's unique status within UC as a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III athletics school, where student athletes are students first and foremost and admitted, like all our students, on primarily academic considerations. CAFA was secondary to the audit process but offered what support we could in terms of clarifying policy throughout the year. Amid all the generation of documents and safeguards, we continued our practice for the fall 2021 cohort of offering early review and notification for students put forward by the Athletics program and academic deans. Students were selected for this early notification by meeting the criteria that would have earned them an offer of admission at the normal time in the prior cycle (2020 cohort).

By the end of the academic year, however, CAFA voted to terminate the early review and notification for the coming cycle (2022 cohort) for several reasons: first, while all the new procedures and safeguards coming out of the audit process were considered feasible, they would take considerable resources from an admissions office already overburdened due to the rapidly evolving admissions environment, and for the sake of a small number of students; second, we had already begun offering the same early admissions date to a large number of our most academically excellent applicants, which already includes some of the population of nominated athletes and other students with special skills; and, finally, the athletics program felt that receiving notice about three weeks earlier than the rest of the admitted class, while much better than nothing, was not really enough lead time anyway to compete effectively for top athletes with other schools.

### ***6. Standardized Testing***

CAFA chose for UCSC to be one of the first campuses to declare that the admissions decisions would include no consideration of standardized test scores ("test-free admissions"), at a time when the option of a test-optional system was still available; of course, not long afterwards, the UC system as a whole was obliged to take the same position. The 2021 frosh cohort was admitted by a process that placed greater emphasis on performance in high-school classes, given the lack of

the extra information from test scores, with grades in English and mathematics singled out for particular attention, given the broad importance of those skills in most college coursework.

### ***7. Admission by Exception***

Systemwide policy requires that no more than 6% of *enrolled* students be admitted by exception (“A by E”, usually related to missing coursework from the a-g pattern). Of this 6%, up to 4% may be admitted due to identifiable disadvantages in the students’ backgrounds that made it difficult to meet UC eligibility; the remaining 2% could be admitted for other reasons, but in all cases, A by E is used at UC Santa Cruz only for students who would normally be admitted according to the criteria of our comprehensive review; the admissions process does not consider the A by E status of any student as long as they meet a second set of criteria (allowing only small deviations from the a-g course pattern). Students who deviate further from the a-g pattern than specifically allowed by CAFA policy are denied admission. Because of recent BOARS guidance stating that A by E status is only to be calculated for California resident students, our procedure results in numbers significantly less than the 6%/4% allowed; if we ever find that our chosen selection scenario is likely to cause us to exceed these numbers, at that time a future CAFA can decide how to choose categories of A by E students to deny.

### ***8. Online degree programs***

CAFA devoted a significant amount of attention this year to providing feedback to the Senate on the systemwide task force report on online degree programs and on the nascent plans of the UC Santa Cruz administration and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) to entertain proposals for such programs here. CAFA laid out a number of reservations on the feasibility of such programs based on the extensive study presented by the systemwide task force, with particular emphasis on concerns about the population such degree programs would be marketed to -- students whose personal or financial situations don’t allow them to attend classes on campus -- and whether this population, on the whole, would be likely to succeed without the pervasive academic and social support available as part of the physical campus community.

### ***9. CAFA Charter***

In September 2020, CAFA approved a new document (Charter of the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid) in response to the audits taking place this year. The Charter incorporates CAFA’s charge (which cannot be changed without approval of the full divisional Senate) as well as certain procedural matters that can be altered by a vote of CAFA alone and applicable systemwide regulations.

## **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.

### ***2. Data Subcommittee***

As in the prior quarter, the Data Subcommittee successfully performed a great deal of data analytic work, including generating a new measure of predicted student success. 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. Approval of final language for fall 2021 comprehensive review**

Due to the major changes involved in the transition from a single holistic review score to an Achievement Within Context score plus 7 noncognitive variables, and the resulting changes required to the readers' scoring tool provided to us by UC Davis, final approval of the reader's instruction document will be approved by the end of summer.

### **B. Selection procedure for the 2021-2022 cycle**

With the extra information available from the readers, new ways will have to be developed over the fall quarter to combine reader scores with the computer Student Success Indicator and factors that specifically address equity and diversity (geographic data, first-generation status, income data, etc.) in order to shape the admitted frosh class to meet CAFA's priorities.

## **III. ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID FOR FALL 2021**

### **A. Admissions<sup>1</sup>**

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 75,041 fall 2021 applications, another record year. Frosh applications totaled 61,822 (CA = 49,188, out of state = 6,461, and international = 6,173) and transfer applications totaled 13,219 (CA = 11,785, out of state = 440, and international = 994). As with last year, the campus was open for winter transfer applications in selected majors. The campus will be open again for winter 2022, transfer students only. A similar number of applications is expected this winter; last winter was 710. The campus relies heavily on this pool to achieve the state mandate to enroll one new California transfer student for every two new California frosh, commonly referred to as 2:1. The Jack Baskin School of Engineering and in the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences continue to open many majors for winter.

UC Santa Cruz admitted 36,411 frosh for fall 2021, including 26,817 California, 5,231 out of state and 4,363 international. The frosh admission rate was 58.9%. The average high school GPA of admitted frosh was 3.99 (on a 4.4 weighted scale), compared to fall 2020 (3.91). Waitlist and referral pool strategies were utilized to manage enrollment outcomes within an ever-changing environment. The established Computer Science capacity constraints were met.

UC Santa Cruz admitted 7,730 sophomore and junior transfer students, including 6,993 California, 142 out of state and 595 international. The admission rate for all transfers was 58.5%. The total number of admits decreased by 3.82% and California admits decreased by 2.88% from last year.

---

<sup>1</sup> Data from UCSC Data Warehouse (InfoView- AIS-Daily), July 2021

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.

Frosh Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs) total 4,883, including 4,344 California, 329 out of state and 210 international students. California SIRs from students identifying as African American reached 5.87%, increasing from 5.27% in fall 2020 and 4.17% in fall 2019; Hispanic/Latino reached 32.62%, increasing from 28.35% in fall 2020 and 27.11% in fall 2019.

Transfer SIRs total 2,068, including 1,975 California, 23 out of state and 70 international students. California SIRs from students identifying as African American reached 5.42%, slightly decreasing from 5.61% in fall 2020 and 5.65% in fall 2019; Hispanic/Latino reached 31.24%, decreasing from 32.18% in fall 2020 and 31.47% in fall 2019. Continued close collaboration among Admissions, EM, UE, CAFA, CEP, programs and the disciplinary divisions helped to maximize transfer admission offers to qualified transfer applicants. UC Santa Cruz expects to fall short of 2:1 again this year as a result of increasing the California frosh target, currently estimated at 2.1:1. Had the California frosh target not been increased, it would have been 1.8:1.

## **B. Financial Aid and Scholarships**

In 2020-21, the Division of Undergraduate Education's Financial Aid and Scholarships Office provided support to 11,624 undergraduate students (68% of undergraduate population) and 1,891 graduate students (97% of graduate population). The types of aid provided included grants, scholarships, fellowships, loans and/or work-study assistance.

### **Award Program Updates**

At the federal level, the most significant impacts to UC Santa Cruz financial aid have been from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). In March 2021, UC Santa Cruz was allocated \$9.6M for emergency aid to students via the CARES Act (HEERF I). And in April 2021, UC Santa Cruz was allocated an additional \$9.6M via the CRRSAA Act (HEERF II). And most recently, in June 2021, UC Santa Cruz has been allocated an additional \$25.4M via the American Rescue Plan Act (HEERF III). As of August 2021, we have disbursed ~\$19M (99%) from the first 2 rounds of HEERF to more than 13,000 students. Discussions are currently underway to determine priority populations for the most recent round of funding.

The California state legislature has worked over the past 2 years with the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) and the higher education segments (UC, CSU, CCC) to make significant improvements to the state aid programs. AB 1456 is the state bill capturing these efforts. However, by the time the state budget needed to be finalized in 2021, there had not been enough progress to secure passage of the bill. Instead, a large number of financial aid specific items within SB 132 that relate to financial aid were enacted. Given the timing of this bill's introduction and passage, there remains a great deal of policy to be worked out prior to implementation.

A summary of the elements potentially impacting UCSC from SB 132 include:

- Removes age barriers to Cal Grant A and B for students who are enrolled in CCC
- Changes to the Middle Class Scholarship program beginning in the 2022-23 fiscal year, including new funding and possibly new rules regarding the "final payer" policies.

- Sunset extension until June 30, 2023 for the ability to provide scholarships for certain students not qualifying for other financial assistance. This is also known as the SB 77 clause.
- Restores Cal Grant A to students who lost their Cal Grants due to moving from on-campus or off-campus housing to living at home with family for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 award years.
- Increases the Cal Grant access award for foster youth and former foster youth to \$6,000 annually.
- Repeals the sunset for summer financial aid (~300K annually to UCSC)
- Requires all high school students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application at least once before the pupil enters 12<sup>th</sup> grade unless the local educational agency exempts the pupil
- Creates the Learning Aligned Employment program, a State work-study program, administered by the California Student Aid Commission
- Reduces the number of competitive Cal Grants from 41,000 to 13,000
- Golden State Teacher Grant Program definition for priority schools changes and technical amendments are made
- California Child Savings Account Program established for each public school pupil with a \$500 deposit per child

The UC Regents approved a cohort tuition model in June 2021 which will have long term impacts on the student financial aid models currently in use. In the simplest scenario, each cohort will have a different total cost of attendance (which includes tuition), and aid will continue to be awarded to individual students on the basis of their calculated financial need. However, many types of aid are tied to tuition amounts (such as the Cal Grant), and the complex process for determining and awarding differing levels of grants has not yet been determined by CSAC.

### **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 model will be changing with cohort tuition, with subsequent increases to tuition levels having a 45% RTA. The UCOP EFM 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 2021-22 will be \$37,968. Non-residents will have an additional \$29,754 tuition charges, bringing the non-resident on-campus budget to \$67,722. Under EFM, 2021-22 UC Santa Cruz undergraduates who qualify for need-based assistance must pay approximately the first \$9,000 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 can help pay the remainder of the total 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 2020-21 the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office administered \$238 million in financial assistance to about 68% of our undergraduates, as compared to \$269 million / 72% in 2019-20. (See table on next page)

<b>2020-21 Source of Aid</b>	<b>Percent of Undergraduates</b>	<b>Amount Received</b>	<b>Average Award</b>
<b>Gift Aid (all sources)</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>\$ 190,628,187</b>	<b>\$ 17,613</b>
<b>UCSC Scholarships*</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>\$ 8,717,682</b>	<b>\$ 3,392</b>
<b>Federal Pell Grants*</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>\$ 29,123,963</b>	<b>\$ 5,044</b>
<b>Student/Parent Loans</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>\$ 45,980,475</b>	<b>\$ 9,769</b>
<b>Federal Work-Study</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>\$ 794,956</b>	<b>\$ 1,963</b>
<b>* Included in gift aid</b>			

Of the UC Santa Cruz students receiving bachelor’s degrees in 2019-20, 53% of those who originally enrolled as first-time frosh borrowed student loans while attending. Those students have an average debt of \$21,189. 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, 62% of seniors graduated in 2019 had student loan debt, with an average of \$28,950 per borrower (<https://ticas.org/our-work/student-debt/>). National Data for students graduating in 2020-21 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 10.8% for 2015 (per Dept. of Ed.). The rate for the campus has been exceptionally low in recent years.

<b>UCSC Year</b>	<b>3-Year Draft Default Rate</b>	<b>3-Year Official Default Rate</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>Not Yet Available</b>



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:

<b>2020-21 Scholarship Program</b>	<b>Recipients</b>	<b>Amount Received</b>	<b>Average Award</b>
<b>Regents Scholarships</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>\$ 820,425</b>	<b>\$4,742</b>
<b>Campus Merit Scholarships</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>\$ 591,298</b>	<b>\$1,865</b>
<b>Pister Leadership Opportunity Awards</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>\$ 146,107</b>	<b>\$7,305</b>

The Office of the President maintains numerous reports regarding student financial support on the following website:

<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter>

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

Shaowei Chen

Matthew Clapham (F,W)

Pascale Giraud

Laura, Giuliano

Alan Kawamoto

Hamid Sadjadpour

Jennifer Taylor

David Smith, Chair

Tyler Padma Armstrong, SUA Representative

Eva Chen, SUA Representative

Selena Rai, SUA Representative

August 31, 2021