To the Faculty Legislature, Santa Barbara Division:

Executive Summary

Purpose (per Bylaw 87): To set standards and criteria for undergraduate admissions and monitor campus efforts to recruit and enroll an excellent and diverse undergraduate student body.

Issues of General Concern to Faculty:

- UC Transfer Guarantee program
- General Standards for Proposals from Departments on Admissions Changes
- Review of Athletic Admissions Policies and Procedures in Light of the Recent Admissions Scandal

CAERS held 13 regularly scheduled 90-minute meetings during the 2018-19 academic year and consulted with relevant campus administrators regarding specific issues within its purview. The Committee met with Chancellor Henry T. Yang, Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall, Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education Jeffrey Stopple, Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science, Pierre Wiltzius, Dean of the College of Engineering (COE) Rod Alferness, and the chairs of the departments within the COE. The committee benefits from the expertise of several regular consultants who assist CAERS in monitoring and guiding UCSB’s admission and enrollment efforts. All of the committee’s deliberations were informed by relevant UCSB and/or systemwide student data.

Campus Issues

Admissions Decision Model (ADM) Changes

Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) reported to the Committee regarding the components of the Admissions Decision Model (ADM) and how they are weighted. High school GPA and SAT scores are used as a predictor of student success. A regression model is applied to UCSB first-year GPAs to obtain the percentage weighting for the academic components. They also presented the first-year GPA data for the cohort of freshmen who took the redesigned SAT (RSAT). IRPA proposed new weights for test scores and high school GPA, based on the results of their most recent study. CAERS approved the adoption of the new weights for the College of Letters and Science.

Proposal for Transfer Screening Changes in Mathematics
CAERS considered a revised proposal from the Department of Mathematics to require additional preparatory coursework for transfer applicants. Based on the compelling rationale and data provided by the Department, the Committee accepted the proposed requirement changes.

General Standards for Proposals from Departments on Admissions Changes

CAERS approved a set of guidelines for departments who express interest in proposing changes to the screening of preparatory coursework for transfer applicants. Important features of the guidelines include a two-year advance notification period for the California Community Colleges, analysis of the most recent transfer cohorts, and academic support currently provided to transfer students by the department.

Meeting with the College of Engineering - Undergraduate Enrollment

Representatives from CAERS held a meeting with the administrators in the College of Engineering (COE) to discuss the balance between enrollment in the (COE) and the College of Letters and Science (L&S). Overall, the University has experienced a period of growth that has resulted in student enrollment disparities and impacted departments, particularly in the Division of Mathematical, Life, and Physical Sciences. Given the demand for COE majors, CAERS inquired about the possibility of the College increasing its undergraduate enrollment. Though additional resources would be required to expand the respective degree programs, the College agreed to begin implementing measured increases in enrollment.

Upcoming Discussion on the Bell Curve and Scoring Guide for Application Reviews

The Office of Admissions initiated a long-term discussion about the possibility of recalibrating the scoring guide for application reviews. Historical data indicated that readers are not using the full range of application read scores, and as such, there is the potential to revisit the scoring guide. The Office of Admissions asked CAERS members to review the reader training materials and consider potential changes that might be recommended. Members emphasized the need to ensure that any changes would not negatively affect first-generation students or those from underrepresented minority groups. CAERS agreed to revisit the issue at a later date.

Standardized Testing

CAERS discussed a number of concerns related to the use of standardized tests in admissions, including their validity, security, and the criteria for accommodations. Members referenced recent news articles in which it was mentioned that students who receive accommodations, such as extra test-taking time, are disproportionately from affluent families. The Committee was informed that a systemwide taskforce was charged with reviewing related issues. CAERS agreed to follow the systemwide discussion and revisit the issue in 2019-20.

CollegeBoard’s Environmental Dashboard
CollegeBoard piloted an Environmental Dashboard designed to provide universities with data on prospective students’ socioeconomic environment. The Dashboard assigned each student an “adversity score” to give context to their academic performance. According to IRPA’s analysis, the Environmental Dashboard indicators were highly correlated with the existing campus formula, which was designed to replace California’s Academic Performance Index (API) following its discontinuation in 2013. Members raised concern about the wisdom of using a private product, the potential for misuse of the product, security, and cost. Following the committee’s discussion, CollegeBoard decided to abandon the adversity score in response to significant public criticism. The company will continue to provide contextual information on students’ schools and neighborhoods. The Committee planned to discuss the issue in more detail in 2019-20.

Review of Athletic Admissions Policies and Procedures in Light of the Recent Admissions Scandal

Following reports of the nationwide admissions scandal in higher education, CAERS and the Office of Admissions began to examine ways in which admissions policies and procedures might be improved to minimize the risk of fraud. President Napolitano ordered an internal audit of UC admissions practices, and UCSB Audit and Advisory Services met with the relevant offices to examine existing practices and recommended improvements.

As part of this effort, CAERS approved a new Athletic-Admissions Slot Review Policy, which is designed to tighten procedures and incorporate greater faculty involvement in the review of application materials for student athletes. The policy will be adjusted as needed following the pilot year of its use. The Committee also met with Intercollegiate Athletics to discuss its practices for recruiting and recommending prospective student athletes, and inquired about the historical participation records for each athletic team.

CAERS will continue these activities throughout the 2019-20 academic year.

Systemwide Issues

As UCSB’s representative on the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), Madeleine Sorapure regularly updated the Committee regarding issues that were being addressed by BOARS. One of the major issues discussed at BOARS, which included consultation with the divisional committees, included the proposed UC Transfer Guarantee proposals. CAERS members strongly opposed the guarantee as designed, and felt that it would not create additional access to UC. Further, CAERS found the details of the proposed plan to be disordered, and anticipated that it would cause significant confusion for students and counselors. Members felt that the proposed plan had little utility beyond the benefit of political relationships.

Members voiced their opposition to basing the UCTG on the existing Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) programs, as Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Diego do not offer TAGs.
remaining six campuses will be unduly burdened and predicting yield will be volatile. The committee reiterated their earlier inquiry about majors beyond the 21 currently included in the Transfer Pathways.

Along with other Senate councils and committees, members of CAERS were invited to review materials pertaining to the following systemwide issues:

1. Proposed Revision of Presidential Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
2. TAG Changes and Notice to the California Community Colleges

CAERS Members

Paul Spickard, Chair
Mahdi Abu-Omar
Juan Campo
Michael Gordon
Skirmantas Janusonis
Lorraine Lisiecki
Miriam Metzger
John S.W. Park
Philip Pincus
Lisa Przekop, Director of Admissions (Ex-Officio)
Madeleine Sorapure, BOARS Representative
Guofang Wei
Tao Yang

Consultants:
Donna Coyne, Associate Director, Office of Admissions
Michael Miller, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services
Steven Velasco, Director, Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment
Laurel Wilder, Associate Director, Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment

CAERS Analyst – Shasta Delp