COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT, AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS
ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

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:

- CAERS consulted with various administrators regarding the need for enrollment strategies that effectively respond to imbalances between student demand and the availability of academic resources.
- CAERS approved a replacement for Academic Performance Index (API) in undergraduate admissions, due to the discontinuance of the measure by the State Board of Education.

CAERS held 16 regularly scheduled 90-minute meetings during the 2016-17 academic year and consulted with relevant campus administrators regarding specific issues within its purview. The Committee met with Chancellor Henry Yang, Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall, co-Interim Dean for Undergraduate Education Jeffrey Stopple, and Divisional Chair Henning Bohn. 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

English Language Proficiency Assessments for International Applicants

CAERS resumed its discussion from the previous year regarding the importance of ensuring that incoming international students have sufficient language skills to be successful at UCSB. The Office of Admissions reported to CAERS on the various features of leading English language assessment tools for international applicants. Of particular interest to the committee were cost, accessibility, security features, and scoring. CAERS recommended that students whose primary language of instruction is not English take the Duolingo English Test, though the exam would be voluntary. The Committee plans to examine the assessment data and hold further discussions in 2017-18 about how the campus might implement an English language assessment tool.

Transfer Student Preparation for Major Coursework

Over a series of meetings, CAERS examined the issue of inadequate academic preparation among transfer students. Departments continue to report difficulties with students who are underprepared to succeed in upper-division coursework for the major. This lack of preparation often results in academic probation or prolonged time-to-degree.

As part of its study, the Committee reviewed data on transfer performance, which indicated variations in major completion rate both by GPA and by division/department. CAERS also discussed the many
benefits and disadvantages of permitting departments to require additional preparatory courses for the major, thereby necessitating additional screening by the Office of Admissions. The Committee met with the Divisional Chair and several administrators regarding how the campus might approach this complex issue.

**Department of Mathematics – Transfer Admissions and Major Preparation**

CAERS considered a 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 some, but not all, of the proposed requirement changes.

**Transfer Admissions Guarantee**

CAERS considered a proposal from the Office of Admissions to accept Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) units as part of the Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG). Applicants to the TAG program must have completed 30 transferable semester units (45 quarter units) prior to application, and complete an additional 30 transferable semester units (45 quarter units) in residence at a California community college. The proposed change included the acceptance of up to 16 quarter units of AP/IB exams as part of the first 45 quarter units. The Committee voted to support the change.

**Women in the Sciences and Engineering**

CAERS discussed ways in which the campus might increase the number of female students entering Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors. The Office of Admissions reported to CAERS on their outreach efforts. No action was taken, though CAERS plans to revisit the issue in future terms.

**Academic Performance Index (API) in Admissions**

In March of 2017, California implemented a new accountability system to replace the Academic Performance Index (API) to better measure school performance. CAERS was therefore asked to choose new indicators for use in undergraduate admissions. The Committee emphasized the need to choose indicators that would closely compare to high school API, and would not adversely affect students from underrepresented groups. CAERS closely examined data simulations provided by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment. The committee unanimously agreed on an API replacement, which will be implemented for the 2017-18 admissions cycle.

**Systemwide Issues**

As UCSB’s representative on the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), CAERS Chair Maribel Bueno Cachadina regularly updated the Committee regarding issues that were being addressed by BOARS, some of which are discussed below.

**Compare Favorably Report**

CAERS reported to BOARS that UCSB continues to be “an overwhelmingly California-centric campus with total campus enrollment at more than 87% residents,” and that first-year, out-of-state domestic and international students who enrolled at UCSB in fall 2016 did “compare favorably” with enrolled
California residents. For fall 2016 the average academic index scores, average GPAs and average test scores for both non-resident groups exceeded that of California admits across all three measures. The rising volume of applications received by UCSB has contributed to an increasing level of selectivity for all categories of applicants.

**UC Augmented Review Admissions Policy**

BOARS asked CAERS to comment on a draft UC Augmented Review Policy for undergraduate admissions. Per the policy, augmented review would “provide additional review for a select pool of applicants who fall in the margins for admission, but whose initial application yields an incomplete picture of their qualifications or presents extraordinary circumstances that invite further comment.” The policy would limit augmented review to no more than 15% of applicants, and would allow campuses to request a supplemental questionnaire, seventh-semester high school grades, or up to two letters of recommendation.

CAERS questioned the Board’s rationale for fixing the cap at 15%, and was curious about what information the campuses could gain from letters of recommendation that could not be simply incorporated into the application. Further, members voiced concern about access to quality letters of recommendation for students who attend under-resourced schools and the impact on workload for high school teachers and counselors. Chair Bueno Cachadina conveyed these concerns to BOARS. The draft policy was approved by BOARS shortly after its May meeting, and subsequently approved by the Academic Council.

**CAERS Members:**

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Consultants:  
Donna Coyne, Associate Director, Office of Admissions  
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