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The Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) met 12 times during the 2014-2015 academic year.

The Riverside Division of the Undergraduate Admissions Committee was represented on the Systemwide Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) by Katie DeFea, Chair of the Undergraduate Admissions Committee. BOARS held 10 6-hour meetings during the 2014-2015 academic year. Chair DeFea updated the Committee members at each meeting as to the issues discussed at the Systemwide level. In addition, Chair DeFea represented the UAC on Executive Council and served as an ex officio on the Committee on Preparatory Education.

An UAC subcommittee was established to discuss the potential for the implementation of a proposed methodology of a single-score holistic admission review process in anticipation of UCR reaching an admission rate below 50%. Chair Katie DeFea and UAC members Eddie Comeaux and Juliette Levy as well as Committee on Preparatory Education member Akula Venkatram served on this subcommittee. The Subcommittee met 3 times and evaluated the 14 criteria for holistic review provided by BOARS and studied the “best practices” provided by 3 other UC campuses currently using holistic review for admissions. After reviewing a sample set of applications from the 2013 admitted cohorts, the Subcommittee agreed that the information available on the current Systemwide application is insufficient to accurately assess the 14 criteria. Chair DeFea presented to BOARS an argument for modifying the current application to better reveal information about non-cognitive factors. This suggestion is currently being discussed by the UCOP Office of Admissions.

After reviewing the data from past years cohorts, the Subcommittee did conclude that the quality of UCR’s admitted pool of students has steadily increased, as demonstrated by an increase in the average UCR GPA and retention rate, and a decrease in the percentage of students on academic probation all the while maintaining one of the most diverse student body populations in the UC system. Thus, the Subcommittee opined that UCR should opt out of holistic review at this time, and continue with the current system of admissions. The Committee unanimously agreed with the Subcommittee’s conclusion and submitted a letter to BOARS requesting that UCR opt out of holistic review. The subcommittee also discussed the value of and potential methods to measure extracurricular activities and other non-cognitive factors using the current applications.

Professors DeFea, Comeaux and Levy performed a mock holistic review on student applications from the last few academic years’ cohorts. These preliminary reviews suggested that demonstration of dedication to academically oriented extracurricular activities and/or leadership in student government athletics or community service might predict higher GPA at UCR; however, the study did not provide any overwhelming factors to predict academic success. The Committee also concluded that the quality of activities participated in by students influenced student success over the quantity of activities participated in and recommended that a study be conducted on a larger sample of applications to obtain a more decisive result and assist the
Committee with further addressing the issue. The Office of Admissions is currently assisting the Committee with gathering and analyzing data that will be reported to the Committee in the academic year 2015-2016 for review.

Additional actions undertaken by the Committee during the academic year were the following:

- The Committee reviewed whether the bump that is awarded to students’ GPAs for honors/AP/IB courses is justified. The Committee reviewed data to determine if students who were awarded the bump had a higher success rate than those who did not receive the bump. After reviewing the data, the Committee concluded that the completion of honors/AP/IB courses is not a predictor of success at UCR and that the bump could be considered excessive. The Chair reported this sentiment to BOARS.

- The Committee reviewed and discussed a proposed automatic admissions appeals process that was developed by an Office of the President focus group, which would allow for students who were denied admission to a UC campus, but admitted at a comparable university to appeal the UC admissions decision and be admitted to the UC campus they applied to. The Committee opined that the proposal would devalue the UC admissions process as it would give precedence to other universities’ admissions requirements. Through Executive Council the Committee sent a memo to the UCR Chancellor stating their opposition to the proposal.

- The Committee submitted a report to BOARS documenting that UCR had met the compare favorably guidelines and concluded that nonresident students’ performance compared favorably to resident students. This report is submitted annually to BOARS to document that UCR does not admit nonresident students that perform at a lower level than California resident students as a justification to accept nonresidents over residents to the UC System.

- The Committee approved an editorial change to the Admissions by Exception (AxE) guidelines to correct contradictory language. The guidelines included wording for the minimum academic requirements for consideration by AxE for transfer students, which stated that one transferrable math course is required and intermediate algebra is listed as an option. However, intermediate algebra is not a transferable math course at UCR. The Committee unanimously voted to remove the intermediate algebra requirement from the guidelines.

- In response to BOARS efforts to streamline and strengthen transfer pathways in the UC System, the Committee discussed transfer pathways at UCR and how departments on campus could work to streamline their requirements with those at other campuses. Before UAC could send a memo to departments, UCOP tasked UC administration on campuses to examine transfer admissions pathways. The Committee was tasked with vetting lists of faculty submitted by the VPUE for inclusion on the different pathways teams.
• The Committee discussed the new standards for science education, which require students to take 4 years of high school science with the addition of earth science and engineering courses to the already approved physical and life science courses. In response to the new standards there is a push for the A-G requirement D for laboratory sciences to be expanded to include earth science and the C requirement to be expanded to include computer science. The Committee opined in favor of these actions and the Chair reported this sentiment to BOARS.

• The Committee was invited to attend a breakfast with local high school principals and counselors hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions on May 19, 2015 and was given the chance to review the list of invitees and suggest additional participants. The Committee drafted a list of discussion questions and established the following topics for focus groups: student’s perception of UCR, issue of GPA bump for AP courses, and what non cognitive factors are key for students. A UAC member was assigned to each focus group as a moderator to lead discussions on the topics. The event was a success and provided many informative take aways for the Committee’s discussions on admissions policy and issues for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to address.

• The Committee discussed the new AP capstone program that would require high school students to take 4 AP courses in different disciplines and complete a final capstone project. The Committee opined that they were not in favor of awarding credit for the capstone as it had the potential to award too much credit for AP courses that would exceed the CAP. The Chair reported this sentiment to BOARS.

• The Committee reviewed and unanimously approved the proposed changes to the transfer requirements for the Mathematics and Geology Majors.

Kathryn DeFea, Chair
Eddie Comeaux
Juliette Levy
Mindy Marks
Bahram Mobasher
Marko Princevac
Wendy Saltzman
Jim Sandoval, Ex Officio
Delaynie Koenig, ASUCR Representative