

[Admissions and Financial Aid Committee \(AFAC\)](#)

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, November 18, 2022**  
**9:00am – 10:15am**

**I. Consent Calendar – Chair Eaton - 9:00am – 9:05am**

- A. The Agenda
- B. [October 28 meeting minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

**II. Enrollment Targets and UC Debt Free – Chair Eaton - 9:05am – 9:40am**

The administration recently shared their concerns about meeting enrollment targets.

Today, the following members and guests will discuss enrollment targets and admissions, as well as financial aid policy's implications for enrollments at UC Merced.

- Jill Orcutt, Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) for Enrollment Management
- Dustin Noji, Director of Admissions
- Ruben Lubers, Associate Director of Admissions
- Juan Villegas De Santiago, Associate Director-Recruitment and Relations With Schools And Colleges
- Sheila Xiong, Assistant Director of Transfer Initiatives
- Dalié Jiménez, UC Irvine Director of Student Loan Law Initiative
- Shawn Brick, UCOP Director of Student Financial Support

Director Brick will also provide members with an update on UC Debt Free.

**Requested Action:** Members engage in discussion, and Chair Eaton will share a summary of the discussion at the December 6 DivCo meeting.

Chair Eaton proposed the following questions to help guide discussions with UCM Admissions and Financial Aid Leadership:

1. What was UC Merced's enrollment target this year? What is actual enrollment?
2. What is UC Merced's enrollment target for next year? Are we changing anything to try to meet the target?
3. How do your offices expect implementation of President Drake's UC Debt Free program will influence enrollment in coming years? How has this been studied

thus far?

4. Chancellor Muñoz has stated that we used financial aid offers to meet enrollment targets this year. Can you explain how that works?
5. What majors has UC Merced added recently and what increase in university-wide enrollment did we project to occur from those added majors (net of cannibalized enrollments from other majors)? What enrollment change actually occurred?
6. You report that the UC system increased its GPA requirement from 2.8 to 3.0 in Fall 2007 because 14.4 percent of public high school graduates achieved UC eligibility in 2003. What percent are UC eligible now under the current GPA requirement? Can your office offer any insights on the Campaign for College Opportunity's proposal to increase the Master Plan eligibility guarantee to the top 15% and how it might influence UC Merced enrollment? <https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Shut-Out-Report-final.pdf>

AVC Orcutt reported that UC Merced's enrollment target for Fall 2023 is a minimum of 9,400 students - 8,625 undergraduate and 775 graduate. For the incoming class, a minimum target of 2,450 first-year students, 240 transfer students, 25 Master students, and 130 PhD students.

Other than aggressive enrollment recruitment, the following are ways in which the Office of Admissions is aiming to increase enrollment numbers:

- Working with the Educational Advisory Board to assist with communication campaigns.
- Using the WISER Tool (media platform).
- Admitting all qualified UC eligible students and hiring enrollment coaches to assist students with the enrollment process.
- Partnering with nine UC School districts through the Merced Automatic Admissions Program (MAAP).
- Working closely with Institutional Research & Decision Support to review data.
- Implemented the chance for scholarship.
- Digital marketing to promote majors that fall below the top five incoming majors.
- Improving financial aid offerings.

Director Noji clarified that MAAP is a program in which UC Merced works with other school districts to establish minimum requirements for UC eligibility - a minimum GPA of 3.5, must have no D or F grades, and must complete a minimum number of A - G classes. If a student meets these requirements, they are notified prior to submitting their UC application that they are guaranteed admissions to UC Merced.

A member inquired about the enrollment projections for Fall 2023 transfer students

and whether Admissions has considered the recent decrease in enrollments at Community Colleges. Director Noji stated that the Office of Admission uses Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) submission as an indicator for transfer student enrollment projections. This year, TAG submission was low across all 10 UC campuses and will likely be equivalent or lower next academic year.

Chair Eaton shared a graph revealing the percentage of students who have been debt free at UC Berkeley compared to UC Merced over the last two decades. Chair Eaton posed the following questions to guest Shawn Brick, UCOP Director and lead for President Drake's UC Debt Free program:

How do we close the large gap in student loan borrowing that persisted prior to the pandemic, and how might that assist with meeting enrollment targets and growing enrollment numbers at UC Merced?

Director Brick reported on UC Debt Free noting that the goal is to offer students an incentive to work part-time to cover the remaining cost of their education (also known as self-help) rather than borrowing funds after grants, scholarships, parent contributions, etc. have been applied. The State introduced their Middle-class Scholarship (MCS) Program, which was initially a tuition-focused program, and now assists in making CSUs and UCs debt-free by focusing on the self-help portion of students' cost of attendance. The State's definition of a debt-free self-help is \$7,890, which is believed to result from the following equation:

$\$15/\text{hr} \times 15 \text{ hrs/week} \times \text{the number of weeks in the academic year}$ , while also considering income taxes.

Director Brick also reported that in January, the Governor released his budget and entered a compact with the UC System with the goal to create a debt free education. A small group of students from under resourced high schools and Community Colleges who received zero contribution from their families were identified and awarded the self-help of \$7,900 for AY 22-23.

Director Brick shared a PowerPoint presentation, available [here](#). Slides 8 and 9 include a graph that shows the total cost of attendance relative to class status and the radical difference once the MCS Program is fully implemented. In one year, the MCS Program will transition from serving 11,000 students at \$39 million to an estimated 85,000 students at \$190 million. Director Brick expressed his concerns about whether the State will continue funding the MCS Program in the future; the UC will be unable to meet these goals if the State does not continue to expand the MCS Program.

A member noticed an average increase in GPA over the past year and found this to be beneficial in terms of retention. AVC Orcutt reported that the increase in GPA was due to the scholarships provided to students with higher GPAs. Additionally, strong programs such as Electrical Engineering and Civil Engineering attracted stronger candidates as well. Applicants for the B.S/M.D. program are also expected to have

higher GPAs than the average incoming GPA.

Director Noji reported on the development of a resource page which includes several opportunities for faculty involvement with admission yield and recruitment, such as personalized admit letters and different webinars, as well as meeting with perspective students and families. The Office of Admissions is also exploring centralized communications to assist in making the faculty better aware of the existing opportunities offered on campus.

Director Noji reported that the referral pool is a group of students that have applied to the University of California, and who have met the UC eligibility requirements, but were not offered admissions at any of the UCs they applied to. The Office of Admissions contacts these students with an offer to apply to UC Merced. The current UC Merced yield from the referral pool has doubled over the past year, yielding nearly 450 students, an increase from an average of 175 – 200 students annually. The Office of Admissions also meets with students to connect them with the best suited major, as well as recently collaborated with UCOP to distribute communications to encourage students to apply to the referral pool.

AVC Orcutt concluded that the creation of new majors has shown to increase enrollment numbers at other institutions. Institutional Research & Reporting Manager Gary Lowe regularly provides data including the potential number of students that a new major would bring to UC Merced based off data for successful majors at the other 9 UC campuses. Chair Eaton recommended gathering data from UC Santa Cruz on the number of majors they offer, as well as the number of departments that must govern and support the majors. He would also like to have further conversations at a future AFAC meeting regarding the GPA requirement for UC eligibility.

### **III. Update on Students' Institutional Debt – 9:40am – 9:55am**

On October 28, 2022, Chair Eaton and member Spencer provided an update on students' institutional debt, and today they will further discuss the issue.

#### **No Required Action.**

#### **Action:**

- This item was tabled for the December 9 AFAC meeting.

### **IV. Chair's Report – Chair Eaton – 9:55am – 10:00am**

#### **A. November 1 and 15 Divisional Council Meetings**

Chair Eaton reported that the Biden Administration has extended the loan repayment plan pause for students, which does not affect the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) applications.

**B. United Auto Workers (UAW) Strike**

Chair Eaton reported that EVC/Provost Camfield is less optimistic that the strike will be resolved quickly because UCOP did not anticipate the strength of graduate student participation across the UC system, as well as the large gap between what the University has proposed and what graduate students have demanded. Members feel that clearer communication should be provided to faculty for guidance on how to conduct their classes for the remainder of the semester if the strike continues.

**V. Vice Chair's Report – Mike Cleary – 10:00am – 10:05am****A. November 4 BOARS Meeting**

Discussions were held regarding the referral pool and how to provide the top twelve and a half percent with more of a guarantee for admission. UC Merced is currently the only institution that provides students in the referral pool with an offer. Discussions included methods for other UC campuses to recruit students from the referral pool, and how that would affect UC Merced's ability to enroll students.

Discussions regarding the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) revealed that, historically, students have been required to complete an Analytical Writing Placement Exam to determine whether they would be required to complete an additional writing course in order to meet the UC writing expectations; however, the Analytical Writing Placement Exam is no longer used due to equality issues. This will have a large impact on UC Merced and UC Riverside because both campuses have the highest proportion of students who have traditionally tested using the exam. Associate Director Lubers confirmed that UC Merced has developed a new method for examining students' writing, with the following being different exam scores that students can take to meet the ELWR:

- Score 30 or better on ACT English Language Arts, or 63 or better on ACT English + Reading.
- Score 680 or higher on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section of the SAT.
- Score 3 or higher on the College Board Advanced Placement Examination in English (Language or Literature).
- Score 5 or higher on an International Baccalaureate Higher Level Examination in English (Language A only) or 6 or higher on a Standard Level Examination in English (Language A only).

**VI. Any Other Business – 10:05am – 10:10am**

A member inquired about advice for strategies or incentives to encourage faculty to develop new programs on campus. Chair Eaton agreed and welcomed members to draft

a memo to DivCo with recommendations. AVC Orcutt mentioned that the new Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Strategy Christiane Spitzmueller and Accreditation Liaison Officer Laura Martin have been working diligently on providing support and resources for those who are interested in creating a new program.

Director Noji announced the Puente Conference scheduled to take place in the CTK quad tomorrow, November 19, 2022 and welcomed members to join.

- VII. Informational Items** will be regularly uploaded on the “Informational Items” AFAC Box Folder [here](#).