

Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC)

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 22, 2025
1:45pm – 2:45pm

I. Consent Calendar – Chair Cleary – 1:45pm – 1:50pm

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [November 22 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Chair's Report – Chair Cleary – 1:50pm – 2:05pm**A. December 2 and 16 Divisional Council Meeting**

- A discussion was held with EVC/Provost Dumont regarding the 5% budget cut exercises, which are being conducted at all institutions.
- Senate representatives and members of the Extended Cabinet met to discuss potential administrative process that could be submitted for PROC review: post-award administration, advising (specifically the switch from first year advising to the advising that is conducted within the Schools), transfer course articulation, and lab renovations for faculty. Only one of these areas will be selected as a pilot for PROC review.
- Divisional Council members endorsed the SSHA Reorganization Proposal and proposed Bylaws.
- Divisional Council members briefly discussed UC's policy on expressive activities, with different campuses taking varied approaches.
- Divisional Council members discussed UGC and FWAF's feedback on EDI's proposal on addressing bias and hate speech in student evaluations

B. December 6 and January 3 BOARS Meetings

- BOARS members discussed the possible reinstatement of the Standardized Test (SAT) as a requirement for UC admissions. Data was presented that revealed the impact on admissions and retention following the removal of the SAT; however, the data faced complications due to the overlap with the COVID pandemic. Early findings suggest that removing the SAT did not significantly affect retention or diversity. The UC system may consider whether to make the SAT optional or reintroduce it completely.

Chair Cleary shared data regarding admissions and retention prior to and following the omission of the SAT, available [here](#), as well as data regarding UC eligibility requirements in comparison to Cal-GETC, available [here](#).

C. December 16 Meeting of the Division

- The Standing Committee Chairs' reports were approved.
- The proposed amendments to Senate Regulation II.3.A. (Academic Probation) were approved, changing “probation” to “academic notice” as the designation given to undergraduate students not meeting the minimum standards for academic progress as defined in the Regulations.
- Undergraduate Council (UGC) Chair Sharping gave a presentation on faculty participation in enhancing student engagement and retention, such as the UC Merced Program, BobCat Day, etc.

III. Report from Office of Admissions Director Noji and Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management Hagg – 2:05pm – 2:25pm

A. Transfer Students

- i. The general UC model for transfer students (the target number per incoming class and the available transfer pathways (TAGs, etc.))
- ii. UC Merced-specific challenges and efforts to increase transfer numbers.

Director Noji shared his PowerPoint presentation, available [here](#), and highlighted the following points:

Minimum Requirements for UC Transfer Admission

A transfer student is defined by UC as any student who enrolls in a fall, winter, or spring term at a college or university after graduating from high school. A transfer student must complete 60 semester or 90 quarter units of UC-transferable coursework and meet a minimum GPA of 2.4 for California residents, and 2.8 for non-residents. However, this is just the minimum, and a higher GPA is typically needed for competitive programs. Director Noji discussed the UC 7-course pattern, which includes 2 English composition courses, 1 quantitative reasoning course, and 4 additional courses across at least 2 different areas: biological/physical sciences, arts/humanities, and social sciences. UC is considering changes to the UC 7-course pattern to align it better with the California State Universities (CSU) and community colleges as part of broader systemwide efforts.

Major Preparation Requirements

Campuses also emphasize that transfer students should be prepared for their major before entering UC. While not all campuses and not all majors require major preparation before transfer, some programs expect students to complete this to ensure they can graduate in two years.

California's Master Plan for Higher Education

The UC system is part of California's Master Plan for Higher Education, which mandates that for every two freshmen admitted, one transfer student should be admitted. UC campuses have made significant progress in meeting this goal, with a focus on increasing transfer admissions and ensuring a seamless transition from California Community Colleges to UC. Transfer success rates are high, with about

76% of transfer students graduating within 2.5 to 3 years. Additionally, retention rates for transfer students at most UC campuses are around 80-85%. UC Merced's current target for transfer students is 300 new transfer students. However, in order to meet the 2:1 target, 982 new transfer students would need to be admitted. Due to UC Merced's relatively young status as a campus, the university has been granted flexibility and is not currently held to the 2:1 ratio.

Transfer Pathways and Programs

Community college enrollments have decreased since Covid-19. UC Merced has seen lower applications, particularly from areas like Southern California and the Bay Area, though it has seen an increase in applications from local community colleges within the San Joaquin Valley. The Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG) is a program that guarantees admissions to specific UC campuses based on completing required coursework at a California community college; however, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and UCLA are not part of this program. UC has created common roadmaps for certain majors to help guide students in their academic journey, particularly for those preparing to transfer or apply to multiple UC campuses. These roadmaps are essentially clear pathways that outline the required courses and the best course sequences to follow in order to meet UC's transfer admission requirements.

Addressing Transfer Challenges

UC Merced has implemented lower division transfer criteria for students with fewer than 60 units, offering more flexibility. UC Merced is piloting non-selective majors for transfers starting in Fall 2025 to increase accessibility. The campus is also reaching out to students who did not apply to UC Merced, inviting them to apply as transfer students for free in an effort to increase applications. UC Merced is focused on building partnerships with community colleges through programs like the Merced Promise, which includes advisors embedded at community colleges to improve guidance and increase transfer opportunities. UC Merced also hosts community college counselors to familiarize them with the campus and its programs, ensuring they can provide accurate information to potential students. UC Merced is actively exploring ways to increase transfer student enrollment and ensure the success of those students once they arrive.

IV. Report from Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management Hagg – 2:25pm – 2:40pm

A. Yield efforts (including BobCat Day as a component)

VCEM Hagg shared his PowerPoint presentation, available [here](#), and reported on enrollment data for Fall 2022 through Fall 2025. He noted that once a new referral population was included in Fall 2024, the number of applications drastically increased. However, following the FAFSA debacle in Fall 2024, a lower deposit number and a smaller first-year enrollment (2,093 students) was reported.

For the Fall 2025 cycle, the Office of Admissions is focusing on improving the admit-to-enroll yield by 2% and are confident in the number of applications, projecting

around 42,000. The admit target for Fall 2025 is around 30,000 students, and enrollment targets will likely be met without the need for as many referral students.

VCEM Hagg added that 19,000 first-year admission decisions were released on December 18, 2024, which was a first for the university. This generated positive feedback and raised visibility during the holiday season. The goal is to release financial aid awards by February 3, 2025, possibly extending to February 10, 2025, depending on testing. Last year, these were delayed until April 17, 2024, which created challenges. UC Merced's scholarship grant programs have been enhanced this year, offering more refined support for students. This year, there's a clearer plan compared to last year when decisions were being made last minute over the summer. Increasing financial aid packages over the summer have a limited impact because by then, students have already made decisions about where they will enroll. Adding more money later in the process does not usually influence their choice significantly.

VCEM Hagg also reported on the "Count Me In" Campaign. While not directly tied to admit-to-enroll efforts, the "Count Me In" campaign was successful in increasing the applicant pool and providing more time to engage with potential students. In December 2024, 97,000 students who applied to UC campuses, but not to UC Merced, were contacted, and approximately 19,000 students accepted admittance to UC Merced.

VCEM Hagg highlighted several exciting enhancements to BobCat Day, including the introduction of mock lectures. Faculty will have the opportunity to invite families into their classroom for lectures, providing them with firsthand experience of university life and direct interaction with faculty. The Office of Admissions believes this will be a key selling point. Additionally, they plan on improving faculty tours, offering more chances for prospective students to explore UC Merced's top-tier facilities. Some departments are also interested in offering receptions to engage more directly with prospective students. UC Merced has contracted with the vendor 3E, which will handle communication with students via social media, email, and other channels. 3E will also manage a calling campaign, dedicating 1,000 hours per month to reach out to students and encourage them to complete their FAFSA, visit the campus, and ultimately submit their deposits.

V. Any Other Business – 2:40pm – 2:45pm

No other business was discussed.

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