

Interim policy for enrollment management of impacted programs

I. Purpose of this item

As the University of California Merced grows we have seen many academic programs and administrative processes mature and establish themselves. According to the University of California Web page as of July 2019, UC Merced offers 24 undergraduate majors and 25 minors (<https://www.ucmerced.edu/academics-undergraduate-majors-minors>). Many of these programs have healthy enrollment, some struggle to enroll as many students as they would like, and some have far too many eligible applicants to accommodate. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for managing admissions/enrollment into “impacted programs” which are those recognized as having more enrolled students than it is possible to accommodate. Throughout the 18/19 academic year, Computer Science and Engineering, Biology, and Psychology were mentioned as “potentially impacted programs”.

The Board of Regents of the University of California sets forth orders and policies relating to admissions. Regents policy 2102

<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/2102.html> enumerates the “top one-eighth” general eligibility criteria and identifies achievement, talent, diversity and inclusion as goals of the enrollment process. The standing order of the regents 105.2.a

<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/standing-orders/so1052.html> sets forth the duties and responsibilities of the academic senate as “...subject to the approval of the Board, shall determine the conditions for admission, for certificates, and for degrees other than honorary degrees.”

At UC Merced the Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee (AFAS), which is a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Council (UGC), is the chief interface between faculty and administrators on matters of admission. Separating AFAS into a stand-alone committee is recommended, but not formally under consideration at this time. The newly-formed Enrollment Strategy committee is a joint faculty and administrative committee whose final charge has not been circulated as of 7/9/2019, but who will be involved in matters pertaining to this policy.

II. Definitions

Admissions and enrollment are complicated. The definitions provided below will help in holding clear discussions on the topic.

Impacted program – an academic program recognized as having more enrolled students than it is possible to accommodate.

Potentially impacted program – an academic program identified by faculty and/or administration as potentially having more enrolled students than it is possible to accommodate, but whose designation as impacted has not been formally approved by program faculty, the school dean and UGC.

Non-impacted program – an academic program which presently has extra capacity to enroll students.

Program selection criteria - These criteria identify students who are adequately prepared for University-level work in general as well as prepared for a particular academic program. Academic program selection criteria are set by faculty in the program with student success as the objective. No

changes to program selection criteria can be made without approval of the faculty within that program and the academic senate. For the purposes of this policy, “program selection criteria” is synonymous with the expression “conditions for admission” as used in the standing order of the regents.

Eligibility – Eligibility criteria are the “top one-eighth” criteria set forth by the board of regents in their policies.

Enrollment – students who arrive and stay for classes on campus during a particular academic year.

Campus enrollment targets – There are campus-wide enrollment targets which are set by the UC Office of the President in consultation with the board of regents and the administration at each campus. This is the target number of students to enroll in a particular academic year. Enrolling at least as many students as the enrollment targets is a critical task because it is tied directly to the campus budget. Roughly, 100 students below target means \$1 million less in the budget from the state.

Academic program enrollment targets – estimates of the desired number of students to recruit into a particular program. This policy indicates that only impacted programs formally establish program enrollment targets which are recognized by AFAS.

Admission – students are offered admission, or admitted, to a particular campus. This means that they are invited to enroll, but may not actually do so. The campus needs to offer admission to more students than the enrollment targets because many students who are admitted will not enroll.

Admissions criteria – These criteria are set and adjusted by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions which is supervised by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions will review all applicants and obtain a pool of eligible applicants. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions will then decide where to draw the line within this pool and make offers for admission. In any given academic year, the admissions criteria are adjusted based on acceptance rates, actions of admissions officers at the other UC campuses and many other socio-economic factors.

Proposition 209 – All admissions criteria must be acceptable under this California amendment to the constitution which prohibits state governmental institutions from considering race, sex, or ethnicity, specifically in the areas of public employment, public contracting, and public education.

Statement of intent to register (SIR) – is an agreement made by a student in order to secure their admission, and failure to submit an SIR may result in a student’s admission being withdrawn. SIRs are normally due by May 1.

Acceptance rate – The ratio of students who submit SIRs to those offered admission.

Melt rate – The ratio of the number of students who provided SIRs to those who enrolled the following term.

III. Objective if this policy

The objective of this policy is to streamline the communication cycle throughout the year as it pertains to *selection* criteria for all programs and *admissions* decisions for impacted programs. In this manner, all programs can focus on student success with reference to their program *selection* discussions. Additional attention during the admissions process is prescribed for impacted programs.

IV. Establishment and annual review of selection criteria for all programs

Most programs adopt the University of California eligibility criteria as their selection criteria for new first year students. All programs identify selection criteria for transfer students which includes a GPA threshold and coursework required to have been completed prior to transfer. Program selection criteria are included in the catalog, and reviewed by UGC at the same time each year as the catalog review.

Any program wishing to adjust its selection criteria should do so during the catalog review cycle. Changes to selection criteria should be accompanied by a memo stating the following: current selection criteria, new selection criteria, timeline for implementation of the new selection criteria and the reason for the change.

V. Becoming approved as an impacted program

UGC/AFAS as well as CAPRA are the lead committees in reviewing impacted status requests. The following process must be followed in order for a program to be approved as an impacted program:

- 1) Representatives from the program should contact DivCo with their intent to seek impacted status.
- 2) The program faculty must document the rationale for their request which should include:
 - a. A summary of the problem which addresses both student and faculty perspectives, and also discusses infrastructure limitations if they exist.
 - b. Current and anticipated unit-18 lecturer participation in the program.
 - c. Anticipated faculty recruitment which may address the problem over the coming years.
 - d. The current enrollment including contributions from freshman and transfer students.
 - e. An estimate of the ideal enrollment target as well as the maximum capacity of the program.
 - f. Recommendation of members of a liaison team comprised of the program chair (or designate), a faculty representative from the school curriculum committee and the school dean (or designate).
- 3) The program faculty must vote on the document.
- 4) The school executive committee must vote on the document.
- 5) The dean of the school must provide a memo discussing the request.
- 6) The Enrollment Strategy committee must provide a memo discussing the request.
- 7) DivCo will forward the request to UGC and CAPRA.
- 8) UGC and CAPRA will review the request, seek feedback from the program in the event of questions and approve or deny the designation.

VI. Additional responsibilities of the faculty in impacted programs

Once a program is approved as being impacted a group of liaisons is identified. The liaisons are comprised of the program chair (or designate), a faculty representative from the school curriculum committee and the school dean (or designate).

The charge of the liaisons is to:

- 1) Provide capacity estimates and rationale for use in determining program admissions targets.
- 2) Receive enrollment updates from the Undergraduate Admissions Office at regularly-scheduled AFAS meetings in the fall and spring. Impacted program updates will be on the agenda of some AFAS meetings, but not all of them. Liaison members will only attend when impacted programs are on the agenda.
- 3) Provide rapid feedback to the Undergraduate Admissions Office throughout the academic year as decision points arise:
 - a. Initial enrollment targets for CSE (transfer and first year students)
 - b. As enrollment predictions vary throughout the spring term
 - c. As melt occurs during the summer
 - d. As actual enrollment is realized in the fall