

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION POLICY:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of January 20, 2016

FALL 2016 UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Undergraduate applications to the University of California rose for the 12th consecutive year, increasing by over 12,000 applications or 6.4 percent overall for the fall 2016 term. All campuses showed an increase in applications for both freshman and transfer students. California freshman applications from Chicano/Latino and African American students rose 7.5 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively. The systemwide undergraduate application system continued successfully to accommodate an increasingly large application volume, which topped 200,000 for the first time in the University's history.

BACKGROUND

Fall 2016 Undergraduate Applications to the University of California

At the November 2015 meeting, the Board of Regents approved President Napolitano's plan to increase enrollment of California students by 5,000 for the 2016-17 academic year. This represents a sizeable increase over both 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The fall 2016 admissions cycle is pivotal in meeting this target of 5,000 students. Receiving a robust number of freshman and transfer admission applications is the first step in fulfilling the University's plan.

Application Volume for Freshman and Transfer Students

Preliminary fall 2016 application numbers show that demand for a UC education remains very strong. For the 12th consecutive year, the University of California can report an increase in applications. A total of 206,339 students applied for admission to UC for fall 2016 – either as a freshman or transfer student – an overall increase of over 12,000 applications or 6.4 percent over fall 2015 application numbers. This is the first time the total number of applicants has exceeded 200,000.

All nine undergraduate campuses saw increases, both in their freshman and transfer applications. Freshman applications systemwide increased by 5.2 percent, while transfer applications increased by 11.8 percent.

Freshman Applications

Similar to last year, all campuses saw an increase in applications from California high school students, with Merced registering double-digit growth – 11.3 percent. Systemwide, California resident freshman applications to the University grew to 105,341, a 2.3 percent increase over last year.

The demographic changes occurring in California are reflected in this year's applicant pool, with considerable growth among Chicano/Latino applicants. For the last three years, Chicano/Latino students have represented the largest ethnic group within the California freshman applicant pool and this trend continued with a 7.5 percent increase in applications this year. Although growth among African American high school graduates in California is much lower, applications from African American students also saw an increase of 5.1 percent over last year and increased as a proportion of total applicants.

Almost half of this year's California freshman applicants (45.9 percent) come from families in which neither parent has a bachelor's degree. Applicants from low-income families rose slightly to 39.7 percent as did applicants from the state's most academically disadvantaged schools, to 22.5 percent. These numbers represent the University's efforts to expand admissions consideration for a broad range of students statewide.

There were also increases in the number of domestic non-resident applicants (from 30,517 to 33,625) and international applicants (from 24,635 to 27,414) for freshman admission, although the rate of growth of domestic non-resident applications has slowed compared to last year.

Transfer Applications

The University has been working hard to increase applications from and admission offers to transfer students, and those efforts bore fruit this year. For the regular filing period that ended on November 30, California transfer applications increased by 1,333 or 4.5 percent. To provide greater opportunity for students considering transfer, the University extended the filing period until January 4. That extension yielded another 2,183 applications, bringing the total California resident transfer growth over last year to 12.0 percent.

Chicano/Latino students surpassed Asian Americans as the second largest ethnic group in the community college transfer pool, behind white students. As was true for freshmen, African American transfer applicants also increased both in numbers and as a proportion of the California resident transfer pool.

The UC Systemwide Undergraduate Application

Students interested in freshman or transfer admission to any of the nine undergraduate UC campuses complete a single systemwide online application that is built and maintained at the Office of the President in consultation and cooperation with all campuses and with faculty. It is an efficient and cost-effective method for students applying to the University of California and for delivering timely application data to campuses.

The application allows students to use a menu-driven form to record courses completed, grades, and test scores. Applicants are also asked to tell the University about school and community activities and to provide information in the personal statements that campus admission readers consider in comprehensive review. Applying to each campus costs \$70, and low-income students can apply for and receive immediate approval for an application fee waiver that covers the fee for up to four campuses.

UC's centralized and automated application system also allows the Office of the President to merge application information with descriptive data on California high schools supplied by the California Department of Education. These school-level data allow campus admission officers to gauge the resources available in individual high schools and the extent to which applicants have succeeded in overcoming obstacles associated with under-resourced schools.