The Regents of the University of California

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
November 14, 2002

The Committee on Educational Policy met on the above date at UCSF-Laurel Heights, San Francisco.

Members present: Regents Atkinson, Bustamante, Connerly, Eastin, Johnson, Kozberg, Lansing, Lozano, Marcus, Moores, Sainick, Sayles, and Terrazas; Advisory member Seigler

In attendance: Regents Blum, Davies, Hopkinson, Lee, Ligot-Gordon, and Montoya, Regent-designate Murray, Faculty Representatives Binion and Pitts, Secretary Trivette, General Counsel Holst, Provost King, Senior Vice Presidents Darling and Mullinix, Vice Presidents Broome, Doby, Drake, Gomes, Gurtner, and Hershman, Chancellors Berdahl, Bishop, Carnesale, Cicerone, Córdova, Dynes, Greenwood, Tomlinson-Keasey, Vanderhoef, and Yang, and Recording Secretary Nietfeld

The meeting convened at 9:10 a.m. with Committee Chair Kozberg presiding.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2002 were approved.

2. **COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW IN UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

Provost King recalled that a year ago The Regents had adopted a policy on comprehensive review for those campuses which cannot accommodate all UC-eligible applicants. At that time, The Regents asked that the Board on Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) report on the first year of implementation of comprehensive review; that report is being presented this date for discussion.

[The report was mailed to all Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary.]

Faculty Representative Binion observed that the Academic Senate represents nearly 8,000 active faculty members with diverse backgrounds and a wide range of opinions. What the faculty have in common is a strong commitment to recruiting the best students to the University of California. She noted that faculty members who oversee the University's admissions typically commit three to five years to this activity, which indicates how important this area is to the faculty. Professor Binion stressed that eligibility had not changed as a result of comprehensive review. The admissions process continues to identify the top 12.5 percent of California's high school students, all of whom are guaranteed a place

at a University campus. The faculty believe that students within this 12.5 percent have the ability to succeed at any campus and do not view admissions as a hierarchy within the system. Comprehensive review takes place at those six campuses that are unable to admit every qualified applicant.

Professor Barbara Sawrey, the chair of BOARS, recalled that comprehensive review is defined as the process by which students applying to UC campuses are evaluated for admission using multiple measures of achievement and promise while considering the context in which each student has demonstrated academic accomplishment. Of the 14 selection criteria used in comprehensive review, 13 have been in place since 1996. Previously the supplemental criteria were used to select between 25 and 50 percent of the entering class; they are now used for the entire class. Comprehensive review recognizes that merit is demonstrated in multiple ways and that the UC environment requires students who are talented in multiple ways. It supports UC's message to high school students to take on challenges and do their best, and it facilitates decisions when competition is intense and grades and test scores vary within a narrow range. Comprehensive review provides personal attention, and no eligible applicant is rejected without this thorough review. It also comports with processes used by other highly selective public and private institutions.

Professor Sawrey turned to BOARS' approach to the assessment of comprehensive review. The assumption has been that first-year implementation is not perfect and that the process will be refined each year. There was a focus on ensuring that implementation is consistent with Regental policy and the principles established by BOARS. A priority was placed on exploring areas of concern to Regents and faculty and identifying areas for further study. The steps BOARS took in preparing its report were the following:

- Met with campus faculty and admissions staffs to discuss their processes in detail
- Reviewed campus documents explaining implementation of comprehensive review
- Reviewed admissions outcome data
- Considered input from Regents and faculty
- Compared findings to original intentions.

The first key finding by BOARS was that comprehensive review had been implemented according to Regental policy and BOARS guidelines. Admissions decisions were completed on time in spite of the increase in the number of applications that needed to be read. The process was designed to ensure integrity and consistency, and there was careful selection and thorough training of the readers. There were checks and balances in the scoring process, and there was close monitoring both during and after the process at the campus level and from BOARS. Another key finding was that academic criteria remained predominant and high academic standards were maintained. This follows the mandate of the Academic Senate and BOARS that academic achievement remain the foremost consideration in admissions. At campuses using fixed weights, about 75 percent of the decision was based on traditional academic factors, while at campuses without fixed weights, trends in academic indicators were very similar to those at campuses with fixed weights, indicating that academic factors

played a similarly dominant role. Traditional academic credentials of the entering class, such as grade point average, test scores, and number of (a)-(g) courses taken, generally remained stable or edged upward. Any declines in individual academic measures were small and often were correlated with declines on that measure in the overall applicant pool.

BOARS found that access was preserved for students of all demographic backgrounds. Most indicators of socioeconomic and demographic diversity were stable or edged upward. Underrepresented minorities increased as a proportion of total admits to the UC system, reflecting a similar trend in the overall UC eligibility pool that preceded comprehensive review. This trend is due to factors such as outreach and the Eligibility in the Local Context program. The proportion of underrepresented minorities increased at some selective campuses and decreased at others.

Professor Sawrey discussed the issues that BOARS still needs to address in its evaluation of comprehensive review. One is the relationship between admission and UC success, which is the real measure of the policy's effectiveness. These data will not be available until students have persisted at the University. BOARS plans to keep close track of this issue and to report back to The Regents. A second consideration is ensuring that students provide accurate information on the application. The high school academic record is verified. The penalty for falsifying information, which is revocation of the admission offer, is well known and is imposed. Of the 681 offers to entering freshman that were rescinded, only 17 were related to falsification. The majority of the rescinded offers were to students who failed to complete their senior year in good standing. Two pilot projects have demonstrated ways of verifying other information on the application. The San Diego campus looked at the applications submitted by 450 admitted students, all of whom could verify the information they had provided. There was a smaller pilot project at the Office of the President; all students could verify the information they had provided in the personal essay. A new systemwide verification process will be used in the fall 2003 admissions cycle in order to maintain the highest public confidence.

BOARS finds no evidence that hardship plays an inappropriate role in UC admissions. Academic achievement continues to be the dominant factor. The focus is not on evaluating hardship alone but on evaluating academic achievement in the context of any challenges the student has overcome. This is not a compensatory or charitable consideration. The use of hardship as a consideration is driven by the belief that strong academic performance in the face of obstacles is one of many indicators of likely college success. BOARS does see a need for campuses without fixed weights to conduct further analyses to demonstrate more clearly their emphasis on academic criteria and the limited role that hardship plays.

With respect to the clarity of the comprehensive review process, BOARS found that the campuses have done a generally good job of explaining their admissions policies. The University provides extensive information and data about the process. A booklet that receives wide distribution, **Introducing the University**, reveals that a student with a 4.0 plus GPA has a 45.5 percent chance of being admitted to the Berkeley campus. BOARS believes

that the University's comprehensive review is at least as transparent as that at comparable public and private institutions. Because BOARS also believes that more can be done to communicate clearly about what campuses are looking for in their students, it will undertake a review of UC admissions communications in an effort to enhance the public understanding of the process.

Professor Sawrey summarized her presentation by making the following points:

- All UC-eligible students are guaranteed access to a top-quality education.
- Comprehensive review has been implemented in conformance with UC policy and guidelines.
- Academic achievement remains predominant.
- Access has been preserved for students of all demographic backgrounds.
- Comprehensive review represents a better – though not perfect – admissions process. Further study and clear communication with the public will improve it.

Regent Connerly recalled that at the September meeting he had raised three primary areas of concern with respect to comprehensive review, one of which dealt with the veracity of the information that students provide in their applications. He believed that the proposed systemwide verification process would provide reassurance with respect to this issue, but he wondered how the University would verify personal hardship. Professor Sawrey explained that no attempt would be made to verify sensitive personal information. Such information is taken into account but does not become a factor for students who are not academically qualified for admission.

The second issue which concerned Regent Connerly was whether all applicants were being treated equally, as required by the State Constitution. He reported receiving numerous communications from Asian students and parents raising questions as to whether race is being applied in the admissions process. He recalled that he had raised with Faculty Representative Binion the possibility of asking the faculty to take a representative sample of students who had been denied admission and compare them with those who were admitted to see whether or not race had been used. Faculty Representative Binion stated her confidence that the faculty would be willing to perform such a study. Regent Connerly believed that such a survey would provide the independence that is required.

Regent Connerly urged the Regents to be concerned about the loss of high-achieving students who choose to enroll at another university when denied admission to their campus of first choice. He observed that so many new factors had been introduced into the equation that the University uses to measure academic quality that it becomes difficult to understand what each campus is seeking in a candidate. The report points to the need for more

consistency in the process across the campuses. Regent Connerly asked what the result would be if all of the students who were admitted to Berkeley were enrolled at the Santa Barbara campus, while all of the students who were admitted to UCSB were sent to Davis.

Professor Sawrey believed that many students would perform well at any campus. On the other hand, each campus has a certain culture which appeals to some students but not to others. President Atkinson added that many faculty would welcome an admissions policy that randomly assigns eligible students to a particular campus.

In response to a further question from Regent Connerly, Professor Sawrey reported that the largest overlap of applications is between UC San Diego and UCLA, with 26,000 applications in common. BOARS has created an admissions processing task force to look at ways to streamline the admissions process in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Regent Lozano recalled that at the Committee's September meeting, Regent Connerly had urged the President to consider an outside audit of comprehensive review. She expressed her confidence that the work being performed by BOARS was the appropriate approach.

Regent Davies stated his opposition to a uniform system of admissions across the campuses. He supported the concept that each campus should have its own unique culture. Regent Davies recalled that when the comprehensive review policy was adopted in November 2001, he had commented on his experience with the training sessions for readers. He had been worried that the readers would share the same biases, because at the session that he had attended all of the readers were outreach officers. He asked whether BOARS had taken this issue into account in its review.

Professor Sawrey noted that on each campus there are a variety of readers, some of whom are internal staff and others who come from local high schools. In all cases the campuses are careful to monitor how the readers perform, and readers are not permitted to read the files of students they know. The faculty admissions committee members often participate in the reader training sessions.

Regent Terrazas pointed out that there are several popular myths associated with the University's admissions process. The first is that ineligible students somehow become eligible through comprehensive review. He believed that the University should do more to inform the public that this is not the case. A second myth is that academic standards will be lessened as a result of the new policy. He believed that the report presented by BOARS would go a long way toward dispelling that myth. A final issue is whether race is being considered under the comprehensive review policy. Regent Terrazas offered a series of slides which presented data on California high school students and students admitted to the Berkeley campus between 1997 and 2002. His conclusion was that the data do not suggest that well-qualified applicants were being displaced by underrepresented minority students as a result of comprehensive review.

Regent Sayles asked how the faculty intended to measure the success of comprehensive review. Professor Sawrey outlined the ways in which students are monitored, including first-year retention rates and GPA and persistence and time to graduation. The faculty will also look at what majors are chosen and the distribution of majors. The campuses have information about what percentage of students pursue a graduate or professional degree. Regent Sayles believed that more attention should be paid to these matters and that less emphasis should be placed on which students are admitted and why.

Regent Eastin recalled that in earlier times special consideration had been given to certain categories of students, including athletes and returning veterans. Over the decades since she entered the University in 1965, no new campuses have been built. Some of the increasing pressure on enrollment should be met when the new campus opens in Merced. Ms. Eastin regretted the fact that her generation had failed to support higher education as well as the previous generation had. The Regents must ensure that each eligible student has a place in the system because the fate of the nation's economy rests with education. She described low-performing schools that do not offer the courses that are required to obtain UC eligibility and suggested that the (a)-(g) courses should be required for graduation from high school within the next decade. The Superintendent expressed her confidence in the faculty to implement and monitor comprehensive review.

In response to a question from Regent Lee, Professor Sawrey explained that BOARS had not found any significant difference between campuses that use fixed weights as compared with those that do not. She noted that some selective campuses have a much higher admissions rate than do others. She continued that enrollment data would be available once the admissions process for 2003-04 has been completed. Regent Lee requested information on the graduation rate of students who transfer as juniors from a community college in order to see how they compare with those students who are admitted as freshmen.

Regent Moores expressed his support of comprehensive review, which continues to admit the most qualified students. He believed that the faculty would still need to address the concern that the process is not transparent enough. Professor Sawrey responded that BOARS had asked those campuses that do not use fixed weights to think about ways to increase public understanding of their processes. All campuses use quantified data in some way in admissions. In response to a comment by Regent Moores, she stressed that subjectivity should not be confused with a lack of fairness. Subjectivity is necessary, for example, when reading Advanced Placement essays, and the fairness of the system is not challenged because firm criteria have been established.

Regent Moores recalled that readers are trained to evaluate applicants' test scores in the context of the high school the student attended and asked whether BOARS had focused on that issue. Professor Sawrey explained that the faculty look at the context in which a student has achieved; the local admissions committees set campus policy within BOARS guidelines. The process described by Regent Moores is not in place at each campus.

Regent Bustamante believed that the BOARS report had addressed the concerns raised by several Regents with respect to comprehensive review. Referring to the comments by Regent Sayles, he suggested that there are many different ways in which to measure success. He believed that the achievement of a person's educational goals should not be solely determined by graduation from the institution in which he or she entered as a freshman. He asked whether this was an issue that the faculty intended to monitor. Professor Sawrey felt that it would be difficult to follow students who had left the University to attend a different institution or pursue a different career path.

Regent Hopkinson believed that a student's success could be measured by drive and potential, both of which are difficult to measure. Comprehensive review is designed to take these factors into account in the admissions process.

Regent Ligot-Gordon agreed that the University should measure excellence by the value added to a student's academic profile rather than placing too much attention on who is admitted to which campus. He was concerned about the definition of socioeconomic status, which takes into consideration such factors as household income, number of dependents, and the level of parental education. Regent Ligot-Gordon discussed research that he had conducted in the Filipino community. He believed that the application process should allow consideration of the factors that contribute to a student's socioeconomic status. He supported the ongoing effort to focus on the admissions process for graduate and professional schools.

Regent Kozberg asked that the Regents be offered further opportunities to participate in training sessions for readers. She expressed her support for efforts to institute best practices in admissions at all of the campuses.

(For speakers' comments, see the minutes of the November 14, 2002 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.)

3. **ANNUAL REPORT ON UNIVERSITY PRIVATE SUPPORT PROGRAM, 2001-02**

In accordance with the Schedule of Reports, the **Annual Report on University Private Support Program for 2001-02** was submitted for information.

[The report was mailed to all Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary.]

Senior Vice President Darling presented an overview of the annual report, noting that in 2001-02 the University had received more than $1.1 billion in private support. This represents a decline of only 0.6 percent from last year's total, which is quite impressive given the nation's economy. Over the last ten years, private funding has exceeded $9 billion, which underscores the confidence that the private sector has in the University and its contributions. Mr. Darling touched on a few highlights of the information that was presented

in the annual report. The private sector has responded to the campuses' need for funding for facilities, and contributions have increased by 24 percent. There was a 20 percent increase in funding for research, while endowment support nearly doubled. The campus foundations contributed $461 million, and corporate contributions rose to $186 million. In the past five years, alumni have contributed nearly $900 million to the University. The number of endowed chairs reached a new high of 856. He commented that many private institutions are reporting a decline in private support of 10 to 40 percent and complimented the chancellors and their development staff for the excellent results.

Regent Kozberg asked about gifts from alumni. Mr. Darling observed that 90 percent of the University's alumni had graduated from either UC Berkeley or UCLA and thus these campuses are comparable with other peer institutions. The younger campuses have difficulty achieving the same level of giving that the two older campuses do.

Regent Marcus commented that it is difficult for public universities to succeed at fund raising and asked how the University ranks nationwide. Senior Vice President Darling reported that the University of California ranks first among public universities and second only to the Salvation Army among all non-profit organizations. He added that the comparison was not really a fair one because the University consists of ten campuses. Berkeley and Los Angeles always rank high among public institutions, and the smaller campuses are beginning to show strong results.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Attest:

Secretary