Office of the President
November 7, 2001

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY:

ITEM FOR ACTION

For Meeting of November 14, 2001

PROPOSAL FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW IN UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

The President recommends that the Committee on Educational Policy recommend to The Regents that a change in admissions policy, developed by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and adopted by the Assembly of the Academic Senate on October 31, 2001, be approved as follows:

> Effective for students entering UC for Fall 2002, the Regents' policy expressed in the 1995 SP-1 resolution and referenced in the 2001 RE-28 resolution, will be modified to: (1) eliminate the provision that no less than 50 percent and no more than 75 percent of the regularly admitted class be admitted solely on the basis of academic achievement, and (2) institute a comprehensive review 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.

BACKGROUND

Section 5 of Regents Resolution SP-1, adopted by the Board in 1995, stated that "not less than fifty (50) percent and not more than seventy-five (75) percent of any entering class on any campus shall be admitted solely on the basis of academic achievement." Section 5 outlined a new policy direction on the way in which campuses that cannot admit all UC-eligible applicants would select their entering classes. Previously the percentage of students to be selected solely on academic criteria was 40 to 60 percent of the admitted class. To accommodate the new policy provision, the President and the Academic Senate modified the existing *Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admissions*. In May 2001, The Regents adopted RE-28 to replace SP-1, which states in part: "Pending any changes that The Regents might approve, the provisions for admission shall be those outlined in the *Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admissions*, which were adopted in July 1996 and revised in May 2000."

BOARS, the committee charged by the Academic Senate to recommend changes in admissions policy, after extensive consultation with UC campuses, has proposed modifications to the Regents' policy providing for 50 to 75 percent of the entering class to be admitted solely on the basis of academic achievement. BOARS' proposed changes were endorsed by the Academic Council and received final, unanimous approval by the Assembly of the Academic Senate at its meeting on October 31, 2001. The proposed changes were also presented to and discussed by

The Regents at the October 17, 2001 meeting. A copy of the Question and Answer document which was sent to you by fax on November 2 is attached as background information. At today's meeting, The Regents are asked to approve the policy changes proposed by the Academic Senate.

The Academic Senate's Proposal

The Academic Senate proposes that the Regental policy regarding selection of students at campuses that cannot admit all UC-eligible applicants be revised to remove the provision that a set percentage of the entering class be admitted solely on academic criteria and to replace it with a comprehensive review process for all applicants. In addition, the Academic Senate has developed a new set of principles that would guide campuses in implementing comprehensive review and in designing specific procedures for selecting their entering classes. A list of these principles is attached. Foremost among these principles are the prominence given to high academic achievement in assessing students' accomplishments and backgrounds and the recognition that campuses should have sufficient flexibility in establishing their comprehensive review processes to address local values, priorities, and conditions.

The University's eligibility criteria define in strict numeric values, as reflected in required high school grade point average, tests scores, and number of required college-preparatory courses to be completed, the academic preparation required of all students who seek admission to UC. This proposal focuses on those campuses that cannot accommodate all eligible students who apply. It provides for a selection process that calls upon the University to evaluate applicants' records of performance more thoroughly than ever before, looking beyond simple quantitative indicators to gain a more complete understanding of the extent to which students have exhibited the qualities—tenacity, discipline, intellectual curiosity, and the like—that indicate the likelihood of high future achievement. The proposed process places greater emphasis on a more rigorous review of the academic coursework completed over a student's four years of high school. However, in doing so it also acknowledges the diversity of educational settings in California and rewards those who have achieved the most with what was available to them.

Rationale for the Academic Senate's Proposal

The Academic Senate has proposed these changes to strengthen both the academic preparation and future performance of students at the University, and to send a clear message that students at any comprehensive high school in California have a real opportunity to be admitted to the UC campus of their choice if they challenge themselves and excel. In the words of the Academic Senate:

> "Comprehensive review provides for trained admissions staff and faculty to employ a more inclusive definition of merit that is based on…existing guidelines, and still geared strongly toward measures of academic achievement. This broadened definition would continue to recognize and reward high academic achievement as measured by GPA and test scores, but would permit the evaluation of obstacles overcome by students in their educational advancement."

The proposal reinforces underlying tenets of related UC eligibility criteria, including the Eligibility in the Local Context and the Dual Admissions Programs, and the twin goals described in the Regents' policy on undergraduate admissions. That policy states in part: "The University shall seek out and enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of backgrounds characteristic of California."

Accountability and Faculty Involvement

During the course of the Academic Senate's discussion of the BOARS' proposal, several important considerations emerged. Chief among these was the identification of a strict system of accountability that would permit "the comprehensive review policies to be used fairly and not distorted to look like racial preferences of any kind." This system would ensure that, in addition to the existing campus evaluation and audit processes, the basic principles of the new system will be interpreted and implemented correctly at the campus level. The role of the faculty in developing appropriate local policy and in monitoring staff training and compliance is pivotal to the success of the proposed changes. The Academic Senate anticipates that campuses will act with flexibility in designing campus-specific policies and processes that are nonetheless consistent with Universitywide policies and guidelines. As in the past, BOARS will be charged with monitoring campus policies on a yearly basis and with working with appropriate faculty to improve processes and outcomes and institute appropriate modifications if warranted.

Planned Evaluation

In endorsing the proposed revisions recommended by BOARS, the Academic Senate has called for an annual evaluation of the new admissions process with a comprehensive report due at the end of five years. The evaluation, conducted under the auspices of BOARS, would include studies of trends in applications, admissions, and enrollments, student academic and socio-economic profiles, and their UC performance, persistence, and graduation rates. Changes would be recommended if necessary based on the outcome of this evaluation process. The Assembly of the Academic Senate and the Academic Council would receive annual reports from BOARS on the implementation and impact of the new proposed policy. The Academic Senate would make available these reports to The Regents for information.

(Attachments - Questions and Answers and Guidelines)