

**State Audit of UC Admissions Policies and Practices
Summary of Audit Findings and Recommendations**

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Campus Staff Took Advantage of Weaknesses in Admissions Processes to Inappropriately Admit 64 Students as Favors to Donors, Family, and Friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our review found that campuses admitted 64 applicants—in addition to the two identified in the federal investigation—for academic years 2013–14 through 2018–19 on the basis of their families’ donations to campuses or their connections to campus staff, leadership, and donors. These inappropriate admissions decisions subverted the university’s high standards for admissions and denied more qualified applicants educational opportunities. • Campus staff falsely designated 22 of these applicants as student-athlete recruits because of donations from or as favors to well-connected families. Each campus we reviewed lacked sufficient processes for verifying that the applicants whom coaches identified as student-athlete recruits actually possessed experience or athletic talent in the sport that they purportedly played. • UC Berkeley inappropriately admitted 42 other applicants who were -connected to campus staff and donors. These applicants were less qualified than many others for whom the campuses denied admission. In fact, some of these applicants received the lowest possible scores on their applications. The involvement of multiple members of management at UC Berkeley in these inappropriate admissions demonstrates that campus leadership failed to foster a culture omitted<u>culture committed</u> to the university’s principles of fairness in admissions decisions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To protect the fairness and integrity of its admissions processes, the Office of the President should establish systemwide protocols for admissions processes by the fall 2021 admissions cycle that prohibit the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving authority to any one person to make a final admissions decision. • Consideration of an applicant’s familial or other personal relationships to university staff or faculty in an admissions decision. • Communication between a campus’s development office and its admissions office about applicants and prospective applicants. 2. To protect the campuses' athletics admissions process from abuse, the Office of the President should require each campus to do the following by the fall 2021 admissions cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have at least two reviewers verify the athletic talent of all prospective student athletes before their admittance. At least one of these reviewers should be from a department other than the athletics department. Each campus should develop standards for the level of talent that prospective student athletes for each of its teams must possess and then use those standards to verify the talent. • Track student athletes' participation in the sport for which they were recruited. If a student does not participate in the sport for longer than one year, the campus should determine the reason why the athlete stopped participating and, if necessary, conduct a review of the circumstances that led to the student's admission to identify signs of inappropriate admissions activity. • Review donations to athletic programs to determine whether those donations made before or after an athlete's admission may have influenced the athletic department's decision to request the athlete's admission. 3. The Office of the President should immediately require staff involved in making or informing admissions decisions to report all attempts to influence admissions decisions, regardless of source, to their supervisors or to the director of undergraduate admissions. 4. Beginning with the fall 2021 admissions cycle, the Office of the President should oversee UC Berkeley's admissions process for at least three years. The Office of the President should ensure that all admissions decisions are merit-based and conform to the university's policies on admissions. Further, the Office of the President should facilitate the establishment of a culture of ethical conduct in admissions by providing regular training to admissions and development staff, conducting reviews of admissions decisions, and monitoring the admissions office's communications about applicants to ensure no inappropriate factors influence admissions activities.

State Audit of UC Admissions Policies and Practices

Summary of Audit Findings and Recommendations

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Campuses Lack Key Criteria and Standards to Support Their Admissions Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UC Berkeley and UCLA have not established criteria for selecting from among the thousands of applicants who apply each year. Because of the campuses' lack of criteria, it is unclear why—in addition to the inappropriate admissions we describe in the previous sections—they have frequently admitted applicants with lower ratings while denying admission to applicants their readers have more highly recommended. All three campuses we reviewed selected applicants for admission who did not meet university eligibility requirements, but could not demonstrate <u>not demonstrate</u> that they had identified those applicants as ineligible, and had not documented a rationale for admitting many of those applicants. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the university maintains a fair and consistent admissions process, the Office of the President should require each campus to take the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By March 2021, document and implement a selection methodology that describes how it will choose applicants for admission, particularly when the applicants have received similar ratings from application readers. Further, the selection strategy should specify the reasons why a campus may choose an applicant with a low or uncompetitive rating instead of an applicant with a higher rating. Develop and implement processes to use when selecting applicants for admission for identifying applicants whom it has selected for admission and who are not eligible for admission to the university, and record their rationale for admitting those applicants despite their ineligibility. To provide assurance that campuses' use of the admission by exception policy is aligned with the policy's purpose, beginning in June 2021, the Office of the President should annually select a random sample of applicants admitted by exception and verify that campuses recorded a rationale for each admission and that each rationale aligns with BOARS's guidance.
<p>Campuses Have Not Adequately Ensured That Reviewers and Faculty Consistently and Fairly Evaluate Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campuses have not adequately trained or supervised the readers who rate applications, creating the risk that their evaluations of thousands of applicants will be unfair or inconsistent. For instance, UC Berkeley's readers correctly assessed only about 60 percent of practice applications during training before the campus allowed them to rate actual applications. Campuses have not taken critical steps to protect applicants from reader bias. They have provided application readers with applicants' demographic information, including their 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the university maintains a fair and unbiased admissions process, the Office of the President should require each campus to take the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By March 2021, establish acceptable levels of application reader proficiency and maintain training and monitoring programs that ensure that its readers attain and sustain those levels. In addition, it should report annually to BOARS on those efforts and on reader consistency levels, including the frequency with which reader ratings align with campus guidelines for rating applications. Beginning with the academic year 2021-22 admissions cycle, require each campus that does not admit all eligible transfer applicants to ensure that two readers review all transfer applications. Beginning with the academic year 2021-22 admissions cycle, ensure that the second readers cannot see the ratings of first readers for both freshman and transfer applications. To better ensure that implicit bias in the evaluation of applications does not affect applicants' chances at admission, the Office of the President should remove potentially biasing information from the application information that campuses can access.

State Audit of UC Admissions Policies and Practices

Summary of Audit Findings and Recommendations

Findings	Recommendations
<p>names, native languages, and birthplaces, which could bias the readers' evaluations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campuses allow academic departments to participate in evaluating applicants for admission to their programs, but they have provided little or no oversight of the processes that those academic departments use when evaluating applications. As a result, these departments' evaluations are at risk of inconsistency or bias. 	<p>9. To ensure that it properly protects all admissions activity against improper influence, the Office of the President should require each campus's undergraduate admissions office to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all other campus departments that participate in or provide information that affects admissions decision making. • Obtain, evaluate, and approve a description of the criteria and processes that these departments use in rating and selecting applicants to recommend for admission. • Annually obtain a roster from each of these departments of the individuals who will participate in admissions decision making and their roles and ensure that no single individual is responsible for such decisions in any given department. • Ensure that each individual whom a department includes on the roster it submits has received training on appropriate and inappropriate factors on which to base admissions decisions and has agreed to abide by the campus's conflict-of-interest policies with respect to admissions.
<p>The Office of the President Has Not Safeguarded the University's Admissions Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the President did not set minimum protocols for the campuses' admissions processes or conduct sufficient oversight of their admissions practices. Weak oversight of its recent internal audit meant that issues at the campuses were undetected by campus auditors. In the absence of common protocols and adequate oversight, the Office of the President can provide only limited assurance to the public that its admissions processes reflect the high standards it publicly affirms. • Although the university guarantees admission to applicants who excel at their California high schools, it has not monitored the program that facilitates this guarantee or expanded participation by California schools. 	<p>10. To better safeguard the integrity of the university's admissions processes, the Office of the President should, by July 2021, begin conducting regular audits of the admissions processes at each of its undergraduate campuses, ensuring that it reviews each campus at least once every three years. These audits should be conducted by systemwide audit staff and include, but not be limited to, verification of special talents, communication between admissions staff and external parties regarding applicants, and other avenues for inappropriate influence on admissions discussed in this report. The audits should also endeavor to identify inappropriate admissions activity and deficiencies in the admissions process. The Office of the President should make the results of the audits public.</p> <p>11. To ensure that campuses adequately address deficiencies identified in its own internal audit, the Office of the President should immediately begin to assess whether the campuses have completed the corrective actions they developed in response to systemwide recommendations and should evaluate whether the campuses' actions adequately address the audit's concerns.</p> <p>12. To increase the number of high school students who have the opportunity to gain admission to the university through its ELC program, the Office of the President should, beginning in April 2021, do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually determine which high schools are eligible to participate in ELC but do not. It should annually report to BOARS the number of these high schools and their demographic characteristics. • Annually contact eligible high schools that are not participating in ELC to determine their reasons for choosing not to do so. It should assess whether the university can address barriers to participation and, to the extent that it can increase participation, it should take the steps to do so.