

Derivation of the University of California Statewide Eligibility Index

During 1999 and 2000, the Academic Senate's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) evaluated the University's eligibility index using data obtained in the admissions process of Fall 1996. As a result of the BOARS study, a new index was developed that became effective for Fall 2001 admissions. The development of the new index was guided by principles reflecting the University's mission as a public institution and by the empirical findings of the study. The resulting index, in place today, gives the greatest weight to a student's high school GPA and emphasizes the SAT II subject test scores more heavily than the SAT I (or ACT) score.

Guiding Principles

In developing the new eligibility index, the following guiding principles were articulated by BOARS, and later endorsed by the Academic Council:

- The eligible pool of students, as of the time of the study, should not be diminished.
- The diversity of the pool, as of the time of the study, should be maintained.
- Eligibility by test scores alone should continue to be offered as a path to eligibility.
- All students should be subject to minimum test score requirements.
- Test scores and GPA should be viewed jointly, so that a high performance on one may compensate for a lower performance on the other.
- Eligibility requirements should be able to predict first-year performance at UC with a high degree of probability, at least 70 percent.

Establishing the New Index

An analytic study was conducted by BOARS that sought to understand the relationship between, on the one hand, the high school GPA and SAT tests, and on the other, the freshman UC GPA. The fundamental aim of the study was to validate the extent to which grades and test scores predict UC progress in the first year of undergraduate study. Two central findings resulted:

- First, confirming earlier studies, high school GPA is the single best predictor of UC freshman performance as measured by GPA.
- Second, SAT II test scores are better predictors of UC performance than SAT I test scores.

With this information, BOARS configured a sliding scale combination of test scores and high school GPA that predicts first-year academic achievement at UC. The higher the high school GPA, the lower the required minimum test score composite. Similarly, a

student who presents a low high school GPA may be deemed eligible by presenting higher test scores.

With this sliding scale, there is a high probability (at least 70 percent) that a student with a combination of high school GPA and test scores will achieve at least a 2.0 GPA average at UC at the end of the first year of study.

Validating the New Index through Simulations

With the identification of the new sliding scale, a simulation was conducted to see how the new scale compared with the old. The findings presented similar eligibility rates between the new and old versions of the index: 11.3 percent, compared to 11.1 percent, respectively. This modest increase, coupled with increased eligibility under ELC, was intended to move the University toward its goal, as set by the Master Plan, of 12.5 percent.

For example, under the new criteria, 99 percent of the original pool of students remained eligible. In fact, only 0.22 percent of public high schools graduates who were formerly ineligible became eligible. See attached BOARS document for more detail.