Summary of Second ECAS Audit

The University of California is continuing to proactively strengthen its admissions practices and procedures with the completion of a second self-initiated systemwide audit. Ethics, Compliance and Audit Services (ECAS), the independent audit and investigative arm of the University that reports directly to the Board of Regents, has been helping guide UC's efforts to bolster admissions processes and controls at its nine undergraduate campuses.

The objective of the first audit was to review existing processes and quickly address potential issues and vulnerabilities, with campuses now implementing those initial recommendations. The summary for that audit can found here and the report here.

In its second audit, ECAS identified opportunities for improvement in the following areas: the adequacy of controls and documentation supporting admissions decisions, admissions appeals, student athlete participation, admissions IT system access and the application verification process; and the tracking of Admissions by Exception and Special Talent Admissions.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

UC is implementing the following changes to its admissions process based on the recommendations of the second audit:

- **Documentation of Admissions Decisions**
    - Formalize authority and responsibilities of campus committees charged with making admissions decisions. These committees must have a documented charter that includes key objectives, authority, responsibilities, membership, review criteria, and approval process and requirements.
    - Enhance recordkeeping by ensuring admissions documentation is retained in accordance with the UC Records Retention Schedule (five years for enrolled students and one year for those who do not enroll).

- **Application Verification Process**
    - Strengthen the internal verification process by sample testing application verification procedures performed by a third party.
    - Improve verification guidelines and application instructions by including additional requirements to strengthen the verification and permanent excusal processes.

- **Special Talent Admissions**
    - Ensure that Special Talent Admissions are properly identified and tracked.

- **Admissions By Exception (A by E)**

- Improve systemwide guidance and local controls to ensure accurate classification of Admissions by Exception, including those identified as "disadvantaged students" vs. "other students."
- Issue guidance to ensure campuses have consistent policies and procedures to comply with AB 1383 (which regulates A by E at UC and CSU).

- **Admissions IT System Access**
  - Update admissions IT system access to ensure it aligns with users' job responsibilities.
  - Document admissions IT system access requirements.

- **Monitoring Student Athletes' Participation in Athletic Programs**
  - Implement controls to ensure that any changes to student athletes' participation in athletic programs is clearly documented.

- **Admissions Appeal Process**
  - Update admissions appeals policies and procedures to ensure that appeals decisions are fully documented and that at least two individuals or a committee are involved in appeals reviews.

Next Steps

Campus internal audit departments will initiate separate audit reports with a list of corrective actions by March 2020. ECAS will work closely with campuses and their respective admissions processes, per local Academic Senate policies and priorities, to ensure appropriate implementation of systemwide and local recommendations.

As the audit notes, many of the issues identified in the second audit are already being addressed by the first audit's recommendations, which campuses are currently implementing. Furthermore, augmenting existing controls will help further reduce the risk of fraud, including tightening application verification procedures, enhancing recordkeeping and establishing proper tracking of Special Talent Admissions and Admissions by Exception.

The University will continue to bolster and protect the integrity of its admissions practices and procedures, while remaining steadfast in its commitment to a fair and transparent admissions process.