



BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)

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ROBERT POWELL, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: Proposal to Adopt an Earlier Application Opening Date

Dear Bob,

The Systemwide Strategic Admissions Taskforce (SSAT) is recommending that UC move up the opening of the Undergraduate Application from October 1 to August 1, beginning in fall 2014 for the fall 2015 application cycle. The SSAT believes the earlier opening will enhance UC's ability to compete with other highly selective competitors that use The Common Application, which is available on August 1. The earlier opening will also give prospective UC students more time to complete their application.

The Office of Admissions is considering the implications of the change, particularly as it relates to earlier deadlines for submitting materials to UCOP for inclusion in the application. BOARS has been asked to consider how an earlier opening might impact the timeline for faculty decisions about changes or updates to programs and majors, which are currently required by September 1, but would be required by July 15 under the new schedule.

It is BOARS' belief that an earlier deadline is unlikely to affect faculty or divisions, who will have made decisions about major and program changes before the beginning of summer. As such, BOARS supports the proposal to open the Undergraduate Application to students on August 1, beginning in 2014. However, we feel the proposal warrants notice to Senate divisions as an information item and perhaps closer consideration by campus committees that might be affected by the earlier deadline for submitting material to UCOP. A UCOP discussion paper on the proposal is attached for reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Johnson".

George Johnson
BOARS Chair

cc: BOARS
Senate Director Winnacker

Discussion Paper: August 1 Opening of the Undergraduate Application

Since 2003, the University of California has maintained the same schedule for its systemwide online application for undergraduate admission. The application is made available for students to begin filling out on October 1, while their ability to submit the application has been restricted to November 1 through 30.

Over the past few years, the University’s academic preparation partners – including high school counselors – have asked us to open the application for undergraduate admission earlier to accommodate summer outreach programs and the rising seniors these programs serve. In addition, UC campuses have launched ambitious local campaigns to increase the application, admission, and enrollment of international and out-of-state students. Many of these high-achieving students are applying to other selective institutions that use The Common Application, which is available in August.

In 2012, the Systemwide Strategic Admissions Taskforce (SSAT) – a committee comprised of Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs, Assistant/Associate Vice Chancellors for Enrollment Management and Admissions Directors from across the UC campuses– recommended to Vice President of Student Affairs Judy Sakaki that UC open the application for undergraduate admissions in late summer rather than at the beginning of October. This discussion paper explores the benefits and challenges that this change presents as well as the necessary steps to implement.

Early Opening

Conversations between UCOP Admissions, SSAT, and the UC campus Admissions Directors have focused on moving the October 1 opening of the application to August 1. Students would still be able to submit their application during the November timeframe only, although they could begin completing the demographic, academic history, and personal statement sections. Table 1 below summarizes.

Table 1: UC Admissions Application, Current Timeframe and Early Opening Option

	Open for Students to Begin	Filing Period
Current	October 1	November 1-30
Early Opening Option	August 1	November 1-30

Benefits and Challenges of Early Opening Option

The earlier opening of the application would have two primary benefits.

First, this change has the potential to benefit campuses. The new date conforms to the opening date of applications for admission at other highly selective universities using the Common Application and will provide students with more time to complete their applications before submitting. By starting an application with the University, these students may become more emotionally invested in UC as an

option. Campuses will be able to use the live application during their summer and fall outreach activities and Counselor Conferences in the fall to remind students of deadlines and share marketing information.

Second, an earlier opening benefits students by affording applicants more time to work with counselors to properly prepare to fill out the application. It takes some of the stress out of the October/November period when counselors and students are busy with a myriad of tasks.

Challenges

While it is presumed that UC academic outreach staff will take advantage of earlier access to the application, this may need to be verified. Earlier access will most certainly be perceived as an advantage to the already advantaged, and a boon to the independent counseling community. The extent to which all of this additional time improves the completeness and accuracy of the application itself is an open question. Certainly UC will be positioned more favorably against The Common Application. And we know that increasingly, many more high schools are opening in August. It is unclear whether having the application open earlier will impact applicant behavior (i.e., over 60% submitting on the last 3 days in November).

Furthermore, the early application opening will have an internal impact for UC campuses and UCOP Admissions.

- **DEVELOPMENT & TESTING:** A primary consideration for UC is the impact such a change would have on the development and testing schedule. Normally, initial development begins in April after all requests for changes to the application have been received in March. But the IT team is also focused on processing fall application decisions, referral, waitlists, and other processes during the spring. Real development and testing occurs in the summer months after fall processing is near completion. Under the new schedule, finalization of changes to the application would be required in February, before campuses have had a chance to complete the review of the current records and development would occur shortly thereafter.
- **CAMPUS TESTING:** Campus participation in testing is critical and this generally occurs in August and September. Under the new schedule, campuses will need to test in June and July, when staff availability is questionable.
- **MAJORS/PROGRAMS:** **Campuses (faculty) will need to make decisions on majors, new offerings and setting the openings/closures in the fall earlier. The annual list of changes to majors and programs offered on the application will be needed no later than July 15. The previous deadline was September 1.**
- **ARTICULATION:** Doorways course lists and ASSIST data used in the application will be less complete in the earlier months of the opening.
- **COSTS:** Staffing for the Help Desk ramps up when the application opens. Opening earlier will add approximately \$50,000 to the Application Processing budget.
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** Opening in August changes the annual update cycle for Admissions and Communications for all public facing URLs and the production of the *Apply Online* guide.