



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

March 27, 2019

ROBERT MAY
Chair, Academic Council

Subject: UC Transfer Guarantee Proposal

Dear Robert,

On March 18, 2019, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division considered the proposal cited in the subject line, informed by commentary of our divisional committees on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE), and Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate (DECC).

It is our understanding that the Berkeley campus, along with UCLA and UC San Diego, is not obliged to participate in the program. Given this, DIVCO neither endorsed nor opposed the proposal, though we find the approach recommended by BOARS to be sensible.

Nevertheless, we recognize the importance of this matter to the University as a whole. AEPE discussed the proposal in detail and identified a number of issues related to its implementation. Accordingly, I am forwarding AEPE's commentary for Council's consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Spackman'.

Barbara Spackman
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Cecchetti Professor of Italian Studies and Professor of Comparative Literature

Encl.

cc: Ignacio Navarrete, Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
David Ahn, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Sumali Tuchrello, Senate Analyst, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
Linda Corley, Senate Analyst, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate



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February 27, 2019

PROFESSOR BARBARA SPACKMAN
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: AEPE's Comments on Proposed Systemwide TAG Proposal

Dear Barbara,

At the February 8th meeting of the Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) there was a discussion of the systemwide UC Transfer Guarantee (TAG) proposal outlined in the Academic Council's January 18th letter to the Senate divisions. While the AEPE members have no particular comment on the specifics of the proposal, seeing that Berkeley will be exempt from participating in the guarantee, members do foresee issues with the idea of implementing a systemwide TAG as an admissions procedure to convey to broader Senate leadership.

Background The importance of facilitating transfer student admission to the University is not new. The 1960 *Master Plan for Higher Education in California* envisioned a system that includes the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC) that exist throughout the state. Mobility across these institutions is a key feature of the Master Plan, which foresaw the possibility of students completing lower-division requirements at the community colleges and then qualifying for transfer to the UC or the CSU. The 1987 document *The Master Plan Renewed* reaffirmed these goals and envisioned an undergraduate population at the UC that consisted of 40% lower division students, and 60% upper-division. More recently, in a 2015 agreement with Governor Brown, the UC committed itself to a goal of a 2:1 ratio of undergraduates admitted as freshmen, and those admitted as transfer students. This ratio was to be achieved both throughout the system, and at each individual campus except Merced.

By drawing from community colleges a more diverse student body, in many ways including ethnicity, income level, and life experience, have access to UC. On the other hand, the adequate academic preparation of potential graduate students has been recognized as a potential obstacle since at least the original 1960 Master Plan.

A number of techniques have been developed to facilitate the preparation of community college students for eventual transfer to the UC and the CSU. For example, the *Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)* agreements describe a series of courses that CCC students can complete to satisfy freshman/sophomore level general education requirements before transferring to most colleges and majors at the UC campuses. Similarly, the *Transfer Pathways* have been developed for the 21 most popular undergraduate majors, describing the lower division coursework that should be taken by prospective majors in each of these disciplines. The details in these pathways can vary considerably. For example, in History, a prospective transfer is counseled to take a yearlong sequence in world history or European history/western civilization; a course in U.S. history; and a UC-transferable history course from a region other than U.S. or Europe. On the other hand, a student in physics is counseled to take calculus-based physics for scientists and engineers (three semesters/five quarters, with labs); single variable calculus (full sequence); multivariable calculus (one semester course); linear algebra (one course); differential equations (one course); and general chemistry (full sequence with labs). The *ASSIST* database (currently under reconstruction) will allow a student at any specific community college determine which local offering will fulfill a UC or CSU requirement.

Another technique for facilitating transfers are the *Transfer Admissions Guarantees*, or TAGs. IGETC and the Pathways direct a student's preparation, but that student must still gain admission to a UC campus through that campus's holistic admission process. Students who complete a TAG curriculum with a specified GPA, can apply for a TAG to a single UC campus; having fulfilled the curricular and grade-point requirements of the TAG, they are guaranteed admission and thus bypass holistic review. Participation in the TAG program is optional for each UC campus, and each campus can delineate the major programs and other criteria. Currently, six of the nine UC undergraduate campuses of the UC offer TAGs; Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Diego do not.

The Proposal With the aim of increasing transfer admissions, in April 2018 UC President Napolitano and CCC Chancellor (and UC Regent) Ortiz Oakley signed an agreement to facilitate the use of TAGs. As admissions is in the exclusive purview of the Academic Senate, it was left for the Board of Admissions and Relations with the Schools (BOARS) to develop a proposal for implementation of this agreement. BOARS reaffirmed the current system of Pathways curricula and TAGs, while recognizing the need for some coordination between the two. A student who achieves a 3.5 GPA overall and in a Pathways curriculum may apply for a TAG to a single participating UC campus in that major. The 3.5 GPA would ensure a preparation that would make the student a competitive applicant to other UC campuses as well, including those that do not participate in the TAG program, and nothing precludes the student from choosing to attend any campus to which s/he is admitted through a regular holistic review process. The 3.5 threshold also allows TAG-participating campuses to continue to do the bulk of their transfer admissions through that holistic review process.

AEPE assessment of the proposal Above all, AEPE is concerned that any new agreement neither obliges Berkeley to participate, nor foreclose any future use of TAGs

or some other form of transfer admission guarantee, should these be determined to be in the campus's best interest. Reasons why AEPE is adamant on this point will become self-evident below.

AEPE feels that the BOARS proposal meets these criteria. As non-participant but friendly observers, we also offer the following observations:

Members are in agreement that the TAG process is an application driver that fills a need that many of our sister campuses have to meet mandated 2:1 transfer admission requirements. Berkeley, along with LA and San Diego, is fortunate to receive such an extraordinary number of transfer applicants each year that we have an enrollment capacity, not recruitment, issue. Even though Berkeley will not be participating in the TAG program, the AEPE members see a certain value in transfer students having such a clear pathway to set themselves up to be academically qualified for UC. The members are interested to see the successes and challenges of implementing the policy as a baseline for any future discussions the campus may have about a more targeted approach to a TAG procedure that may meet Berkeley needs.

Assuming the UC moves forward with implementing this proposal, seeing that the basic framework is in place under the April 2018 UC-CCC agreement, it would be useful to gather long-term data analysis of differences in application and completion rates between transfer student populations. For example, are students applying with a TAG Pathway in majors with extensive preparatory course plans (such as physics) at relatively the same rate as those applying to majors with less intensive plans (such as history)? Similar studies should be conducted to compare graduation and completion rates among transfer students, both who were admitted based on completing a TAG Pathway and those who were admitted without. Members did raise questions about how the TAG Pathways would be beneficial to students who are in regions where they are not able to complete a TAG Pathway. It would also be useful to gather granular data about which community colleges are producing TAG applicants and if there are inequities that arise based on the course availability at those community college campuses. The relative diversity of the TAG and non-TAG application pools will need to be carefully monitored (see below).

Members did question the need for these TAG Pathways in light of the fact that there are already established articulation agreements in place between UC and the California Community Colleges system. It is not clear how, if at all, these Pathways would complement or augment those articulation agreements.

Lastly, a short list of concerns was raised that fall under the common theme of "practical problems". The first is, that setting aside a certain number of enrollment spots for TAG applicants means that a campus takes away spots for the broader and more diverse transfer population that is admitted through holistic review. This thus constrains a campus in its ability to shape the incoming transfer class in relation to campus community needs and goals. Related, the second practical problem is the possibility that transfer admission readers, who will necessarily read and make recommendations for TAG applicants before reading other transfer admission applications, will be skewed in

their non-TAG application recommendations. After reading an entire cohort of highly qualified transfer applications, any other applications that do not follow a TAG Pathway will comparatively pale. Qualified, if not stellar, transfer applicants may be bypassed because they do not have the same robust academic record of a TAG applicant. Another campus-specific concern was raised in relation to highly impacted majors. Taking computer science as an example of one extremely popular major, what happens when multiple campuses have no enrollment room for transfer computer science majors? If five of the six campuses participating in TAG close their computer science pathway, that will leave the one remaining campus forced to take all computer science transfer majors, potentially forcing them to consume all enrollment spots for the major with TAG applicants. This would, in essence, create the same problem the UC currently experiences by using a referral pool process.

We thank DIVCO for the opportunity to weigh in on this highly important matter. The results of implementing the TAG proposal will most certainly have ripple effects on California for generations to come and AEPE will be interested to see the outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ignacio Navarrete". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "I".

Ignacio Navarrete

Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education

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