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August 11, 2017

TO: Kaustuv Roy
Chair, San Diego Division, Academic Senate

FROM: Barbara Sawrey

SUBJ: Enrollment Management Pilot – Capacity-Based Admissions

The three-year enrollment management pilot program that was approved by the Senate Council on December 9, 2014, has now concluded. This memo is to provide the Senate with feedback on the program, and to recommend that, with some changes, the program be made permanent.

In Year 1 of the pilot (students entering Fall 2015), all six engineering departments were joined by the Economics Department and the Public Health major in setting targets. In Years 2, Biology and Mathematics added their targets. And in the third year, Physics joined, for a total of 11 departments/programs, representing nearly 50 majors, many among the most popular on campus.

Feedback from the Academic Units

Recently the departments/programs were solicited for input about the pilot program. See the appendix for the complete written comments received. In summary, only the Athletics Department had difficulty working with the pilot.¹ The academic departments, on the other hand, were uniform in their appreciation of the flexibility of the program, relative to the standing Senate policy on impacted status. The departments offered many good suggestions about how to improve transparency, consistency, and timing, all of which can be incorporated in the process moving forward.

The feedback also highlights areas where we lag in infrastructure. (e.g. online Change of Major tool for students). But I was pleased to learn of a Capped Major Application tool for continuing students to submit applications to capped majors, developed for the Biological Sciences and the Jacobs School of Engineering. This could be helpful for all the departments with capped majors.

One suggestion made in the Biological Sciences' response that is outside EPC's and UGC's purview is to deny admission to undergraduate students who cannot be accommodated in a capped major. This suggestion could be sent to the Committee on Admissions for their consideration.

Summary of Proposed Changes

¹ They specifically requested that approval and communication of capped status be done early in Fall, before applications to the campus are accepted. This is problematic for departments, but could be addressed by the Admissions website listing those majors that had been capped in the previous admissions cycle.

The original pilot proposal was short on operational details. Many adjustments have been made to the process over the last three years, based both on department feedback and on suggestions from the Committee on Admissions. These and other modifications have been included in the suggested new timeline that is part of this memo.

Changes/Clarifications that have been made over the pilot time span:

- Encouraging target numbers that incorporate the UCOP and Legislative requirement of admitting CA residents students at a 2:1 ratio of freshman:transfer.
- Requiring the approval of targets by the divisional dean, so that a broader view is taken, beyond that of an individual department.
- Reviewing proposed targets with the EVC, so that a campuswide perspective is included.
- Asking departments that share a joint major to establish a single target.
- Asking departments and the Admission Office to maintain updated websites that explain the capped status to prospective students.

Additional changes to be made if the proposal for continuation is approved:

- Establish guidelines for each step, with clearer delineation of duties.
- Make the process a permanent replacement for impacted status.
- Ask COA and Admissions to discuss and recommend options for dealing with an increasing number of departments setting targets, resulting in an increasing number of students who cannot be accommodated in their desired major.

Overall, the academic departments have been grateful for the capacity-based admissions pilot project, and they wish to see it continue. The Dean of Undergraduate Education concurs, and hopes the Senate can favorably review this request early in Fall 2017.

cc: F. Ackerman
A. Brumfield
P. Cowhey
L. Hullings
J. Moore
R. Rodriguez

CAPACITY BASED ADMISSIONS

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE 2017-18

FALL

Dean of Undergraduate Education sends query to

- Academic Department Chairs/Program Directors
- cc: Divisional Deans, Academic Senate

Requests for (and removal from) "Capped" status for Fall 2018

- proposed target numbers for entering
 - freshman
 - transfer students
- proposed parameters for continuing students to change into the major
 - target number of continuing students to be allowed into each major
 - what are the requirements, screening criteria, application cycle
 - effective date (no earlier than Fall 2018)

WINTER

Dean of Undergraduate Education

- Forwards no later than December 15, 2017 to
 - Executive Vice Chancellor- Academic Affairs
 - Divisional Deans
- Convenes to resolve problems/concerns
- Approves "Capped" status, target numbers and parameters
- Convey "Capped" status to deans, departments, colleges, advisors, and Athletics.

Dean of Undergraduate Education conveys approved target numbers and parameters to

- Office of Admissions and Relations with Schools (Admissions)
- Academic Senate

Admissions initiates contact if there are implementation problems/concerns

- Divisional Dean
- cc: Dean of Undergraduate Education, Academic Senate
- populate website with list of capped majors

Divisional Dean contacts Academic Department Chair/Program Director to

- Discuss implementation problems/concerns
- Determine with Admissions a plan for moving forward
 - Method for Admissions to rank freshman and transfer applicants
 - Revised target numbers for freshman and transfer students
 - Revised target numbers or requirements for continuing students
- Convey final plan to Dean of Undergraduate Education, Academic Senate

SPRING/SUMMER

Dean of Undergraduate Education conveys "Capped" status to the Office of the Registrar

- Added to "Capped" status
- Removed from "Capped" status
- Apply hold to Major/Minor tool

Academic Departments/Programs to

- Post the requirements, screening criteria, application cycle
- Process Capped Major Applications

Appendix: Written responses from units

Biological Sciences

Mathematics

The Six Colleges

Physical Sciences

Athletics

Biological Sciences: Capacity-Based Admissions Pilot – Three-Year Review

The Division of Biological Sciences (DoBS) has participated in the three-year pilot program for capacity-based admissions as the number of interested students far outweighs our enrollment capacity. Without the ability to proactively and nimbly limit the number of Biology majors from one year to the next, Biology resources (teaching, staffing, student access to courses, etc.) would be exceeded and our program planning (especially classroom scheduling and instructor appointments) would become far more challenging.

The DoBS proposed and was approved years ago for “impacted” status, prior to the pilot program for capacity-based admissions. The process of proposing Impacted Status was very time and data intensive. The process, while very thorough, was not efficient or flexible. Once Impacted Status was approved and implemented, no changes could be made unless further documentation and review was completed, which took months. We had trouble aligning enrollment targets, capacity, and actual numbers of incoming students.

The DoBS appreciates the flexibility Capacity-Based Admissions provides, to allow target admission numbers and requirements for continuing students to change in accordance, and in alignment, with enrollments. It has served us well and, the DoBS recommends continuation this program.

Any program that limits admission and/or requires that particular criteria be met for continuing students to switch into a restricted major will take staff time to administer. Whether Capacity-Based Admission remains in place, or we return to the prior Impacted Status process, or a hybrid program develops, the following should be considered:

- There have been great strides made this past year in the development of the Capped Major Application through efforts led by Academic Technology Services in partnership with JSOE and campus department staff. This system allows continuing students to apply to a Capped Major, while the system “checks” to ensure that established requirements/criteria have been met. Automated messaging, via the VAC, has been built into the system, so as to eliminate manual work by department/program staff.
- The current Change of Major (COM) tool is outdated and in severe need of an upgrade. This tool does not distinguish, nor allow, for differentiation in the type of Change of Major. The system is either open for students to change freely without staff approval, or it is closed and all changes must be manually reviewed by staff. The current version of the COM tool also allows any student to submit a COM request. In essence, the current tool offers no features to support implementation of either Impacted or Capped major status. This creates a great deal of confusion for students and adds exponentially to staff workload. Ideally, in an updated version, the COM tool would recognize a student’s current major, map to the requested major, and use embedded logic to provide automated approval and/or denial of requests.
- We suggest that the Admissions committee strongly consider denying admission to students who could not be accommodated in capped majors they applied for but met UCSD admission standards, rather than admitting them as “undeclared”. Students admitted in this way typically focus on getting into the major they originally requested. This is often an inefficient use of time for the student (and department staff) and likely has negative impact on “Finish in Four” goals and timely graduation rates.

For Reference:

Fall 2016:

Target admission limit for freshman- 1,200

Target admission limit for transfers- 400

Target admission limit for continuing students- 700 with no course or grade requirements; first come first served.

Fall 2017:

Target admission limit for freshman- 1,200

Target admission limit for transfers- 400

Target admission limit for continuing students- The number accepted each quarter (review and admission will occur at the end of each academic quarter) will be equal to the number who have left a Biological Sciences major since the previous round of acceptance, and applicants must complete certain courses to be eligible to apply.

Friday, June 23, 2017

Dear Barbara,

The Mathematics Department has taken advantage of the capacity-based admissions pilot program for the last two of the three years

of the program. The setting of caps was painless to implement, and although the caps we implemented was not at all drastic, I expect that

in the next year or two we will see some impact on the sizes of our upper-division courses, where our precipitous growth in the last five years

has been quite challenging. We certainly hope that the program will continue.

By way of "fine tuning", I wonder if some mechanism should be put in place to coordinate limits set by departments drawing from related pools of applicants. I am (of course) thinking of, for example, the CSE major and the Math-CS major: students capped out of one major naturally move to the cognate major.

Thanks,

Pat

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June 21, 2017

BARBARA SAWREY

Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs/Dean of Undergraduate Education

Dear AVC/Dean Sawrey,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Capacity-Based Admissions Pilot Program. The Council of Deans of Advising and the Council of Provosts have discussed this and have come up with a number of observations/recommendations. We understand the necessity of a program that allows departments to manage enrollments in a flexible manner and we are supportive of such a program. We do have comments on how the process can be refined. Our suggestions are primarily based on advising issues that have arisen as a consequence of 'capped' majors. Our input falls into four general areas:

Timing and Communication

It would be helpful if there were more communication about capped major requests. In particular, college advising would like to be aware of who is applying for capped status when the request is made. In some cases, notifications on capped status have come at the last minute, leaving the advising staff ill-prepared to explain options at Triton Day and Transfer Triton Day. Similarly, decisions to exclude transfer students from particular majors have come late and have caused confusion among students and staff. Some have suggested that the term 'capped' is cryptic; 'impacted' is a more common term (but has another technical definition on our campus).

Transparency

We feel that the program would benefit from greater and more consistent transparency, particularly surrounding the criteria for continuing students. There is some variability in the accessibility of information on departmental websites. We feel that some standardization would help students navigate the process and provide clearer information regarding the likelihood of changing into a capped major. For example, CSE and Math websites do a good job in spelling out the criteria and providing historical data on the number of students admitted, although the pages are text-heavy. On the other hand, the Economics website has a broken link and the information provided could be more complete. We recommend developing a standard template that specifies screening courses, GPA requirements, selection criteria (e.g. GPA or lottery), and historical acceptance rates. We also suggest considering a more standardized admissions process across the capped majors. In our experience, we find that students who are not initially admitted to a capped major maintain the impression that later admission is still an option, rather than (in many cases) a competitive process that does not admit all students. The clearer the communication, the easier it will be to advise these students. Finally, it is important that we ensure the availability of screening classes.

Secondary Impacts

There has been a steady increase in the number of capped majors, particularly in STEM fields. This has been the result of a domino effect – e.g. the capping of engineering majors has led to increased enrollments in Mathematics and Physics, leading to their capped status. Now that the pilot has revealed these secondary impacts, it should be possible to take a broad view of the program, anticipating such ripple effects.

Undeclared Majors

We feel that, as a campus, we should discuss the impacts of capped majors on retention and student pathways. The decreasing number of un-capped STEM majors means that students may not have the option of studying their desired field or related fields. Again, clear communication at the outset will help students make their SIR decisions, but hope springs eternal and we will always have students who either need to shift away from a STEM major (potentially affecting time to degree), continue with frustrating unsuccessful attempts to change into a capped major, or leave the university. In fact, the introduction of capped majors has, effectively, redefined the meaning of 'undeclared'; while it once suggested exploration, it is now, increasingly, applied to students who are blocked from pursuing their course of study. We suggest discussions on how best to serve this new demographic, including, perhaps, the introduction of pre-major courses of study.

Sincerely,

John C. Moore

Provost, John Muir College

Chair, Council of Provosts

May 24, 2017

From: Physical Sciences Dean

Hi Barbara,

There is great benefit to having a flexible process like this rather than having to rely on the formal approvals and stringent rules of "impacted status". This program is more dynamic and responsive to changing situations in the departments and in admissions and therefore will benefit students to a greater extent.

The one major criticism I have is that there absolutely needs to be Divisional review and approval of Departmental enrollment plans - which has not been a requirement of this program. If the Dean's office is responsible for understanding/monitoring faculty/student ratios, faculty and instructional allocations, etc. - it seems essential for Dean to be part of this conversation and to approve what Departments are proposing. (For example, I learned about the recent Physics cap request from a student *after* it had been implemented.)

Best, Steve

June 23, 2017

Barbara:

Thank you very much for seeking feedback on capped admissions. I hate to be negative but overall our experience with the capped policy has been pretty terrible. We understand the need for departments to be nibble and able to address capacity in a more flexible way, however, its resulted in a process that lacks transparency and is not in the best interest of students both potential applicants as well as those already enrolled. Some of our issues are likely unique because of the way athletics recruiting works, but it also gives us a unique perspective on how this policy impacts the perception of the university.

I do understand that this issue is complex and is in the context of things such as time-to-degree, spacing/resources/faculty, etc, so a simple solution likely isn't readily available. However, here is some feedback:

Messaging & Communication:

Lack of clear, consistent information coming from the departments and admissions. The departments don't always have their information easily accessible; I often have to really dig to find the application criteria and deadlines for these capped programs. What capped means is a mystery to students applying. On the admissions side, the application process is somewhat misleading. Almost every year I complete an application for UCSD so I know what our applicants are seeing. I didn't apply this year so perhaps it improved. But last year, the messaging for capped programs was lacking. If a student selects a "capped" major on the application it said something along the lines of "it is recommended that you select an alternate major" but doesn't clearly express why or link to information on the capped programs. This should be improved both on the application, and on the capped majors page on the admissions website by including information about what good alternatives are. Our capped majors page looks like this: https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/advising/majors-minors/capped-majors.html?_ga=2.53140128.947376453.1498232324-1685888032.1450830035

It could be improved by providing further information about what good alternative majors are. For instance here is Cal's page:

<https://ls.berkeley.edu/advising/planning/schedule-planning/choosing-major/high-demand-majors>

My experience of things has been that there seems to be a lack of, or at least poor communication between (and sometimes even within) the academic departments and admissions. The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing which makes it near impossible to get a clear answer from either side. I don't know where this is stemming from, but it shouldn't happen. Admissions should always be in the know if a department is thinking of capping and be in the loop on everything. And the department chairs should ensure that advisors know what's going on as they are the primary contact with students, both prospective and current. This may be more of a result of timing...

Timing:

It is especially troublesome that there is absolutely no advance notice, the programs just automatically become "capped." For instance, we received an email notice in the spring letting people know physics

had become capped. Maybe this was discussed at something I missed in which case that's on me, but it shouldn't ever come as a surprise, especially to campus partners. I understand this is the major difference between being capped and impacted, that departments can react more swiftly. But, this whole process has had more of a we'll figure it out as we go feel, rather than a holistic, systematic approach which in my opinion is not good for anyone. It seems like over-enrollment is being addressed more in isolation at the department level which results in the pendulum often swinging in the opposite direction and causing spill over into other majors which then causes others to explore capping (ie. Engineering → physics). I know your office is coordinating things at a higher level so my perception on things being done without regard to how one department capping impacts the overall academic "ecosystem" likely isn't reality, but it's definitely how the process feels.

The timing of things is especially troublesome for us as we are actively recruiting top student-athletes. It may be presumptuous of me, but we more than most are intimately engaged in recruitment. Students are committing much earlier than November of their senior year (application deadline). The fact that departments can just snap their fingers and become capped, throws a wrench into the entire recruiting process. Our recruiting niche, and one we're proud of is top STUDENT-athletes, who are reflective of the overall student body in terms of academic performance and area of study. The caps make it *incredibly* difficult for us to recruit in good faith, especially when there's always the possibility that department will become capped without notice when we're already well into the recruiting process with a student. Even when we know a department is capped, it's still exceedingly difficult to get top students to commit when they aren't assured they'll be able to pursue their desired major. This has major recruiting ramifications. This specific piece is particularly sensitive (and likely unique) to Athletics, but it's a very real impact and one that we'd like to continue a conversation on towards a *mutually* beneficial solution. I digress on this topic...

The 2015-16 year was especially frustrating as several large departments (bio, econ) became capped with little advance notice. It's my understanding that throughout FA15 (during which time students were applying and beyond) the departments were still figuring out exactly what the cap would look like, and there was little information available to either the public or campus partners. Much of the information I got was because of the great college and department advisors I know who helped me get whatever information they knew, but even they weren't being provided every detail by their departments.

I might be wrong in the timing of things but right around the time of Triton Day advisors and department personnel had to deal with gathering information about how to best address the situation to newly admitted students who didn't get into these programs. When we're admitting students and then basically having to tell them, "if you for sure want to study that, you probably shouldn't come here," that pretty well deflates the excitement of having been admitted. Definitely leaves a negative feeling on Triton Day.

Timing is everything on this issue...along with transparency.

Transparency:

It's a problem on two front. Students are applying by November and things are still changed even after the application opens in August and closes in November. This is like false advertising. Department's shouldn't be permitted to go capped after the application period opens for the current cycle. That

seems like a fair arrangement so that students are not applying under conditions that might change. For us this is incredibly difficult for recruiting purposes.

Then there's the students who apply to the majors once they are here but with no assurance that they're able to actually get into the program and a lack of transparency of things. A better approach might be to set the bar high (both in terms of what the student needs to take and how well they need to do) and if the students meet that bar, let them in. That's at least a transparent process which I think meets the university priority of being student-centered. This would be more like a pre-major approach (like HDP) where you must get a certain GPA (2.5?) within lower division requirements by a certain time (end of 2nd year) in order to be fully accepted into the major. I think this approach dovetails nicely with the push for improved time-to-degree as students would have a predictable, transparent path to apply. If they're not on track, then they know they need to switch tracks to a different major. It also promotes success at the foundational course level which theoretically should improve performance at the more difficult upper division level. This in term should have a positive impact on time-to-degree.

From informal feedback from my department contacts, it seems like part of the problem is that left uncapped, there are students in these majors who ultimately are not successful but nevertheless are taking up room in the major. This pre-major or screening approach takes care of that issue.

Thank you for taking the time to read this feedback. As you can see this is a particularly sensitive topic for us in Athletics. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you further, and am eager to contribute in whatever way I can to a better solution for the campus as a whole.

Best regards,

Katie

Katie McGann

Associate Athletics Director

UC San Diego