

The logo for UCI Irvine, featuring the text "UCI IRVINE" in a large, black, serif font. The "UCI" is significantly larger than "IRVINE".

UCI IRVINE

The logo for Internal Audit Services, featuring the text "INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES" in a black, serif font, stacked in two lines.

INTERNAL  
AUDIT SERVICES

# Systemwide Admissions Data Analytics Review

*Internal Audit Report No. I2022-104*

June 23, 2022

***Prepared By***

Bhavna Nakum, Senior Auditor

***Reviewed By***

Niran Joshi, Associate Director

***Approved By***

Mike Bathke, Director

June 23, 2022

**BRIAN HERVEY  
VICE CHANCELLOR  
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS**

**DALE LEAMAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUTE ADMISSIONS**

**RE: Systemwide Admissions Data Analytics Review  
Report No. I2022-104**

Internal Audit Services has completed the review of the Systemwide Admissions Data Analytics and the final report is attached.

We extend our gratitude and appreciation to all personnel with whom we had contact while conducting our review. If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Mike Bathke  
Director

Attachment

C: Audit Committee  
Patricia Morales, Associate Vice Chancellor – Enrollment Management  
Hal Stern, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor – Office of the Provost

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As part of the annual fiscal year (FY) 2021-2022 audit plan, Internal Audit Services (IAS) completed a retrospective review of donations to UC Irvine (UCI) and local Senior Management Group (SMG) personnel data to identify undergraduate admissions decisions that could have been influenced by these donations or personnel. This review was initiated in response to a recommendation from the June 2019 systemwide internal audit of undergraduate admissions.

## OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objective of this review was to perform data analytics to identify undergraduate admissions decisions that could have been influenced by donations to UCI or the applicant's relationship to an SMG member.

The scope of the review included the following:

- Donations received by UCI during the period January 1, 2018 through August 31, 2021.
- SMG personnel active from January 1, 2018 through August 31, 2021.
- Applications for undergraduate admission submitted from November 1, 2018 through March 31, 2021 for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years (date range includes both the regular and late application periods).

## APPROACH

To conduct this review, Internal Audit performed the following procedures:

- Obtained a dataset of donations received during the audit period.
- Obtained a dataset of local SMG personnel active during the audit period.
- Obtained a dataset of applications for undergraduate admission submitted during the audit period.
- Performed data analysis to identify admissions of applicants who may be related to donors who made cumulative donations of \$10,000 or more and/or SMG personnel active during the audit period. Data fields compared across datasets to identify "matches" included all or a subset of the following:
  - Names of donors and donors' spouses
  - SMG employees and/or SMG employees' spouses
  - Names of admitted students and parents
  - Addresses
  - Email addresses
  - Phone numbers
  - Foundations or businesses with the same name as the admitted student
  - Campus ID number

The donations portion of the analysis was limited to cumulative matching donations of \$10,000 or more received during the audit period.

- Reviewed data trends and other available information to assess the risk of questionable admissions decisions (i.e., those at risk of being influenced by donations or applicant’s relationship to an SMG member) for the “matches” identified. Criteria/factors considered as part of this assessment included all or a subset of the following:
  - Dollar amount of the donation
  - Pattern or timing of giving
  - Communication with donor or SMG employee
  - Timing of personnel actions under SMG employee’s authority
  - Applicants admitted by exception
  - Applicants admitted to a school with impacted majors
  - Applicants who were recommended for admission on basis of special talent
  - Lack of participation in special talent for which the application was recommended
  - Low application review scores/ratings
  - Department or program to which donations have been directed as well as their specified purpose
- Provided the results of the risk assessment to the Locally Designated Official to determine whether to investigate further any of the matches.

## **OVERALL CONCLUSION**

Internal Audit’s analysis identified 12 admissions of applicants who may be related to donors who gave a cumulative amount in excess of \$10,000 during the audit period.

Additionally, Internal Audit did not identify any admissions of applicants who may be related to SMG personnel active during that time.

Based on the risk assessment performed on those matches, Internal Audit did not flag any admissions for the Locally Designated Official to prioritize for further analysis and/or investigation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Referral to the Locally Designated Official for further analysis is not necessarily indicative of improper influence or actions associated with the admissions decision.