UC SANTA BARBARA
Audit & Advisory Services

Audit Memorandum

Admissions Data Analytics Review

February 28, 2022

Performed by:
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Approved by:
Ashley Andersen, Audit Director

Report No. 08-22-0004

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February 28, 2022

To: Distribution

From: Ashley Andersen, Audit Director
       Antonio Mañas Meléndez, Associate Director

Re: **Admissions Data Analytics Review**
       Audit No. 08-22-0004

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As part of the 2021-2022 audit plan, Audit and Advisory Services completed a retrospective review of donations to UCSB 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.
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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 UCSB or the applicant's relationship to an SMG member.

The scope of the review included the following:

- Donations received by UCSB during the period January 1, 2018 through August 31, 2021.

- UCSB 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, Audit and Advisory Services 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 and/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
  - 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 further investigate any of the matches.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Audit and Advisory Service's analysis identified 20 admissions of applicants who may be related to donors who gave a cumulative amount in excess of $10,000 during the audit period. Further, Audit and Advisory Services identified no admissions of applicants who may be related to SMG personnel active during that time. Based on the risk assessment performed on those matches,

Audit and Advisory Services did not flag any admissions for the Locally Designated Official to prioritize for further analysis and/or investigation[1].

We noted that due to the impact of the COVID remote work environment, Office of Admissions was unable to obtain the signatures of the Athletic-Admission Review Committee (AARC) members on the final decisions on student athlete evaluations for the Fall 2020 admissions, as required under the Admissions Phase 2 Management Corrective Action. During the review, the committee's comments, discussions, and decisions were done via email. As the pandemic continues to loom, the committee has implemented an excel tracking sheet to track their comments and a DocuSign process to obtain members' signatures on final decisions on student athletes for future reviews.

The cooperation and assistance provided during the review was greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Andersen
Audit Director
Audit and Advisory Services

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        UCSB Audit Committee
        Alexander Bustamante, Senior Vice President and Chief Compliance and Audit Officer

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[1] Referral to the Locally Designated Official for further analysis is not necessarily indicative of improper influence or inappropriate activities associated with the admissions decision.