

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Offers Admission for Fall 2013 -- Its Most Selective Year Ever

For UC Santa Barbara's incoming freshman and transfer students, the admission process started long before the November application deadline. It began years earlier, with a dream -- and the belief that great opportunities await on the other side of a UCSB bachelor's degree.

Cinthia Chicas, who visited the campus for Spring Insight on Saturday, April 13, said her heart skipped a beat when she logged onto the UCSB admissions Web site and realized she is among the 24,248 high school seniors offered a place in the fall 2013 entering class. She and the other admitted freshmen were selected from a total of 62,416 applicants -- the largest pool in UCSB history. The campus expects its fall entering freshman class to number about 4,550.

Applications from the 13,842 students seeking to transfer to UCSB are still under review, with decisions to be announced by the end of April. Admission will be offered to approximately 6,000 transfer students, and roughly 1,550 will be enrolled in the fall. Freshman applicants who have been accepted to any UC campus have until May 1 to submit a Statement of Intent to Register. Transfer students will have until June 1 to return the form.

"Applications have been going up pretty dramatically, and this year continues that trend," said Christine Van Gieson, director of admissions at UCSB. "How many are actually offered admission varies from year to year, depending on how many

enrollment spaces we have and how many admitted applicants our campus predicts will actually enroll.

"These students are the best of the best, and they have many options," Van Gieson continued. "We've been working hard over the last few months to let them know about the great opportunities available to them at UCSB."

The UC application allows students to apply to one or all nine undergraduate campuses, and admissions offices don't know which campus a student has identified as his or her top choice. "Each applicant is evaluated independent of any input from the other campuses, or any knowledge of what the other campuses are doing [in terms of admission]," Van Gieson continued. "We look at our applicant pool and treat each one as if UCSB is their first choice, and we take them very seriously in making our decisions."

Processing 62,416 freshman applications is a daunting task, especially given that each receives a thorough reading. Most are read twice, according to Van Gieson, and some are read as many as five times. "Those applicants might have special circumstances, and we want to make sure they're getting every consideration."

"In our process, there are two steps that have a human element," explained UCSB admissions counselor Roberto Rocha. "The first is the 'academic preparation review,' which is done by a smaller, more specialized staff that looks at the academic portion of the application. They confirm the G.P.A., coursework, and test scores." The second step is the "academic promise" review, which identifies an applicant's potential for success at UCSB.

For that, the admissions office brings in a cohort of experienced readers -- 120, or so -- most of whom are retired teachers, counselors, and other academic professionals. As they review applications, the readers make their assessments based on criteria established by the faculty admission committee. Among the five distinct areas are challenges, special circumstances, hardships, and persistence; leadership, initiative, service, and motivation; diversity of cultural and social experience; intellectual and creative engagement and vitality; and honors, awards, special projects, and talents.

"Each reader assigns a numeric value to the application, and if the first two reads aren't within two points of each other, the application goes to a third, more experienced reviewer," said Rocha.

Throughout the review period -- December through mid-March -- the readers gather either in person or online for norming sessions to make sure their assessments are consistent and continue to follow admission standards. "We use samples of current or previous applicants that might be a challenge," said Rocha. "We look at scores that are outside the norm and bring them back in line. The goal with all the applications is to be consistent and fair."

Kollamala Mathew, a former dean at UCSB, has been an enthusiastic reader for 16 years. "When I read, I get the feeling I'm reading a little biography of each person," he said. "In two pages, the kid says, this is who I am, here are some of the things I've done, and these are some of the hardships I've overcome. You really develop a respect for these kids."

Led by Chancellor Henry T. Yang, UCSB officials, faculty, and staff members have been working diligently to ensure the class enrolled this fall is the campus's most talented and diverse ever. In March, Yang served as the host of two well-attended California receptions, one in Los Angeles and one in San Jose. At these events, volunteers from the UCSB campus -- faculty and staff members, as well as alumni, and students -- met with applicants and their family members to answer questions about UCSB academic programs, student life, financial aid, and other topics. Receptions were also hosted at several locations outside of California.

Admission to UCSB continues to be competitive. This year, 39 percent were offered a place in next fall's entering class -- the most selective year in campus history. Both the academic qualifications and the diversity of the applicants accepted by UCSB continue to be very high. The average high school grade point average of applicants admitted is 4.13, and the average total score achieved by applicants on the required SATR Test is 1948 out of a possible 2400.

Of all applicants admitted, 80 percent, or 19,451, are California residents. Among those California students, members of underrepresented minority groups (African-American, American Indian, and Chicano and Latino students) totaled 5,197 or 26.7 percent.

The UC system received a record 174,767 applications for fall 2013 -- 139,915 from freshman applicants and 34,852 from transfer applicants. This represents an increase of 8.6 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively. All nine UC undergraduate campuses experienced increases in freshman applicants.

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† Top image: Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Michael Young meets with a prospective student and his family at the Chancellor's Regional Reception in Los Angeles.

Credit: George Foulsham

†† Middle image: Student-led campus tours are offered year round, but peak from mid-March through the end of April when approximately 15,000 prospective students and their families visit UCSB.

Credit: George Foulsham

††† Bottom image: The professionals who collectively read every one of the 76,000 UCSB admissions applications meet regularly to make sure the review process

remains fair and consistent.

Credit: George Foulsham

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.