



MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Tomas A. Salerno
Chair, Faculty Senate

Date: April 30, 2015

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2014-35(D) – Faculty Senate Academic Standards
Committee Undergraduate Admissions Report and Recommendations

The Faculty Senate, at its April 22, 2015 meeting, voted unanimously to accept the Academic Standards Committee Undergraduate Admissions report and recommendations.

The report and recommendations are enclosed for your information.

TAS/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
William Green, Vice Provost and Dean Undergraduate Education
Don Stacks, Chair, Academic Standards Committee

APRIL 2015 UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS REPORT, FALL 2014 – SPRING 2015

*Annual Report on Admissions and Undergraduate Student Quality
Prepared by the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Standards¹*

Purpose of this Report: To provide a Faculty Senate sponsored assessment of the quality of new students enrolled in fall 2014 and spring 2015.

Summary: The incoming freshman class of 2014 maintained most of the quality gains shown in 2013. Average SAT scores decreased 5 points to 1312 and ACT scores decreased to 29.9, down from 30.1 in 2013. The percentage of students with SAT scores in the range of 1400 – 1600 increased from 25% to 26% from the fall 2013 to fall 2014. In addition, half of the incoming new freshmen (50%) ranked in the top 5% of their high school class with 65% falling in the top 10%, a decrease of 4%, over 2013. Although UM still lags behind its aspirational *U.S. News and World Report* universities with respect to average SAT scores, freshmen retention, and 6 year graduation rates, UM's overall statistics led to a 1 place drop in rankings (from 47 in 2011 to 48 in 2014). Recommendations are made with respect to improving retention and graduation statistics, which still remain problematic when compared with other top 50 ranked *U.S. News & World Report* institutions.

Academic Quality of Newly Enrolled Students, Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

I. The Fall 2014 Freshman Class

a. Overview

The 2014 freshman class consisted of 2,076 students (a decrease of 3% over last fall) and an additional 592 transfer students (an increase of 1%). Continuing the trend of the past few years, there was an increase in completed applications compared to the two prior years specifically, with 31,608 applications for the entering class of 2014 vs. 28,907 in 2013. The acceptance rate of completed applications was the same as last year (44%), and the yield rate (number of students who enrolled vs. accepted) dropped to 17% from the previous year's 18%.

b. Official SAT and ACT Scores

The mean SAT score again exceeded 1300 and decreased 5 points to 1312. The percentage of students scoring between 1400 – 1600 also increased 1 point from 25% to 26%, while the percentage of students scoring 1200 – 1399 decreased from 62% in 2013 to 59% in 2014. There was an increase in the percentage of students scoring between 1000 – 1199 (from 12% in 2013 to 14% in fall 2014), and an increase in those scoring under 1000 (from 1% in 2013

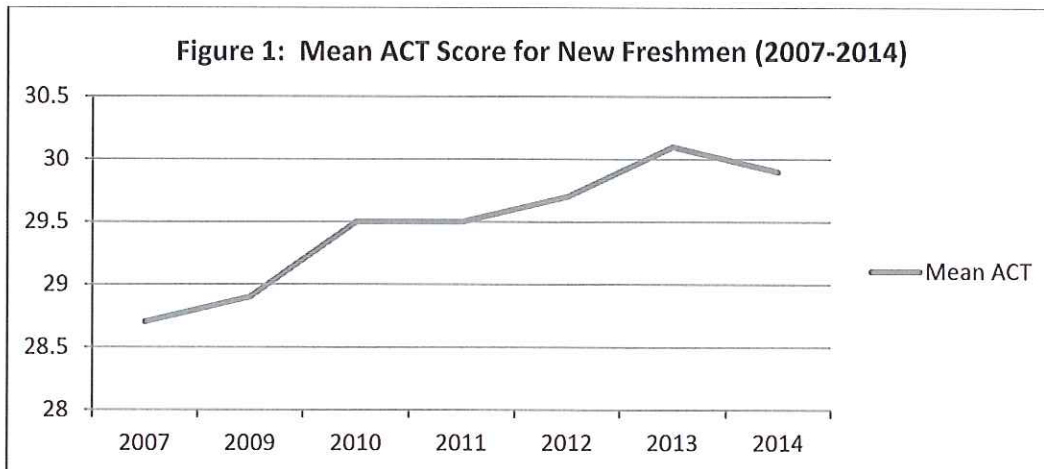
¹ Senate members of the Academic Standards Committee are: Lisa Baker, Hermann Beck, Rosina Cianelli, Kysha Harriell, Dorothy Hindman, Rene Sacasas, Terri Scandura, Don W. Stacks (Chair), and Jorge Willemsen. Data for this report was provided by Mary Sapp, Peter Liu, Greg Roberts, and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research.

to 2% in 2014). As noted last year, many prospective students now take both the SAT and ACT since universities generally accept the higher of the two scores. In the fall of 2014, 49% of students reported SAT scores (944 freshmen compared with 1049 freshmen in 2013) and 42% of freshmen chose to submit ACT scores (862 students compared with 884 in 2013). With respect to mean ACT scores, this year's freshman class decreased 0.2 point from 30.1 to 29.9, which showed a very slight drop over last year but continued the improvement displayed over the past several year period.

Table 1 displays the average SAT scores over the past three years for each of UM's schools. As can be seen, 4 of the 9 schools evidenced increases in SAT scores. The slight decline in the positive trend in mean ACT scores for new freshmen over the past six years is illustrated in Figure 1.

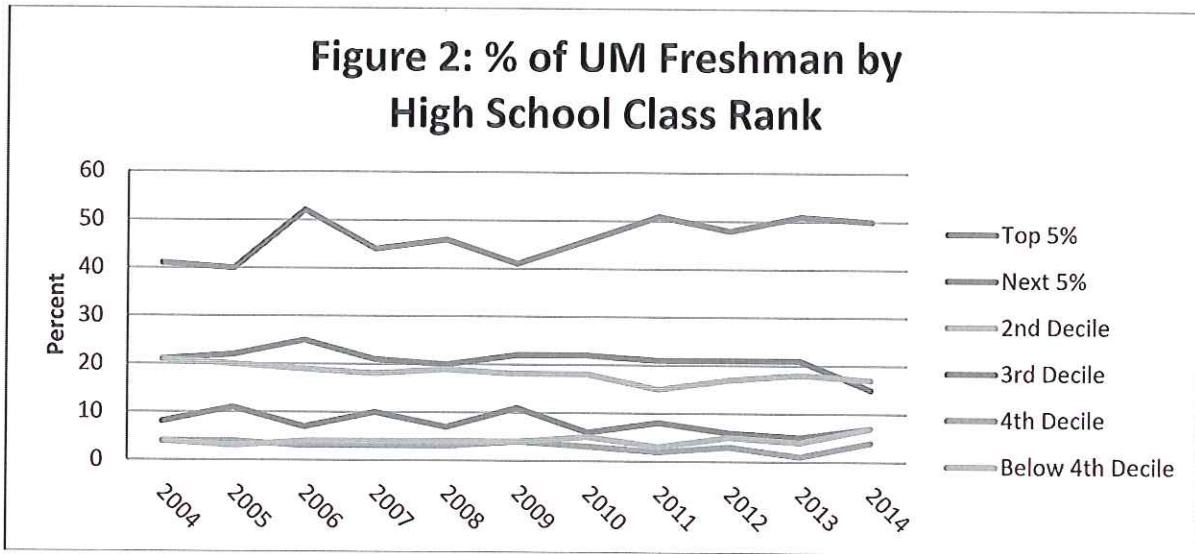
School/College	2011	2012	2013	2014	Δ 2013-2014	4-Year Average*
Architecture	1293	1286	1291	1285	-6	1288.75
Arts & Sciences	1328	1336	1342	1340	-2	1336.50
Business Administration	1297	1284	1294	1285	-9	1290.00
Communication	1310	1281	1272	1213	-59	1269.00
Education	1315	1190	1177	1188	+11	1217.50
Engineering	1327	1334	1333	1356	+23	1337.50
Music, Frost School	1328	1338	1274	1263	-11	1300.75
Nursing & Health Sciences	1265	1253	1275	1287	+11	1270.00
Rosenstiel School	1356	1342	1336	1369	+33	1350.75
Overall UM	2011	1319				
	2012	1316				
	2013	1317				
	2014	1312				
	4 YR \bar{x}	1316				

*Mean of aggregated four year average. Without access to each year's data no standard deviation can be calculated.



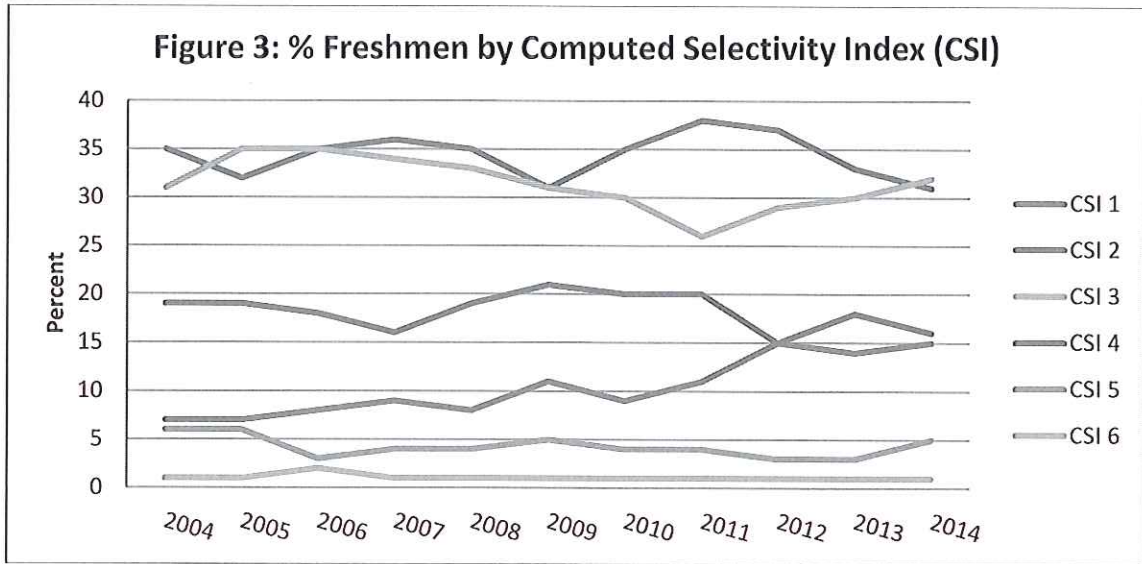
c. Class Rank

Sixty-five percent of the incoming freshmen ranked in the top 10% of their high school graduating class (down 7% from 2013), and the number of students ranking in the top 5% of their high school class decreased 1% from 51% from 2013. The 2nd decile enrollments also decreased slightly from 2013 percentages (18% to 17%); the percentage of students in the lowest decile increased from 4% in 2013 to 7% in 2014). There was a slight increase in the percentage of student in the third decile, from 5% in 2013 to 7%. Figure 2 displays the longitudinal analysis of these trends over the past ten years and illustrates the increase in quality for higher class ranks.



d. Computed Selectivity Index

The freshman class is also evaluated using a measure developed by Admissions called the *Computed Selectivity Index (CSI)* which essentially combines standardized test scores and academic performance in high school. For the fall 2014 class, students falling into the highest quality sector, CSI 1, increased from 14% in 2013 to 15%, and the percentage of students in the second highest selectivity category, CSI 2, decreased by 2% to 31%. Although the percentage of students in the third category, CSI 3, rose slightly (from 30% to 32%), those in CSI 4 dropped from 18% in 2013 to 16% in 2014), the percentage of students in the lowest two selectivity levels increased by 2% in CSI 5 but remained flat at 1% in CSI 6. Figure 3 illustrates the eleven year trend in CSI and again shows an improvement in the percentage of students falling into the top selectivity areas.



e. UM Rankings by U.S. News & World Report

It is important to note that comparative information available in *U.S. News and World Report* is published during the late summer or early fall for the *previous* academic year. Thus, **the 2014 edition of *U.S. News and World Report*** is based on the characteristics and quality of **freshmen classes entering in the fall of 2013**. Additionally, due to availability of data, the UM rankings are reported only. UM's overall rank fell 1 position, to 48 out of the 280 national universities ranked (see Table 2). This rank is earned in seven areas, of which four are of concern to Academic Standards: Undergraduate Academic Reputation, Graduation and Retention, Student Selectivity, and Graduate Rate Performance (the other three being Faculty Resources, Financial Resources, and Alumni Giving). The Undergraduate Academic Reputation Index combines a peer assessment score and high school counselor assessment score. UM's ranking dropped 3 places from 69th to 72nd. Graduation and Retention has been previously reported as two separate categories, but combined last year. UM's ranking in this category also dropped 3 places from 59th to 62nd. Student Selectivity put UM's ranking as the same in the 2013 report at 36th. And Graduation Rate Performance, which is the difference between the actual 6-year graduation rate for the 2007 cohort and a predicted graduation rate based on statistical analysis on high school class standing, standardized test scores, financial expenditures, percent receiving Pell Grants, and institutional control; in this category UM was ranked 179th, but this ranking was 14 ranks higher than 2013. Table 3 provides additional data that help explain the rankings. The increase in high school counselor ranking (improved 12 ranks), freshman retention (up 1 rank), and percent freshmen in top 10% of their high school class (up 3 ranks) indicate that reputation among high school counselors has improved and moved the other rankings up. The drop in ranking categories should be looked at more closely, or as closely as they can be given that access to the data may not be possible.

Table 6 Mean Transfer GPA and Acceptances by School Fall 2012										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Cont. Stds.
Mean Transfer GPA	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.5	2.5
Acceptances %	61	71	18	70	73	58	34	40	52	43
Mean Transfer GPA and Acceptances by School Fall 2013										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Cont. Stds.
Mean Transfer GPA	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.4	2.7
Acceptances %	50	73	14	63	59	60	42	39	67	77
Mean Transfer GPA and Acceptances by School Fall 2014										
	ARCH	A & S	BUS	COMM	EDU	ENG	MUSIC	NUR	ROSEN	Cont. Stds.
Mean Transfer GPA	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.4	2.9
Acceptances %	53	92	33	91	88	74	70	58	71	75

As can be seen from Table 5, the mean GPA for entering transfer students increased by 0.1%, from 3.3 to 3.4. There is, however, some variability in mean scores across schools, with the School of Continuing Studies generally accepting lower mean GPA transfers compared with other schools. The percentage of transfer students accepted also varies between schools, with the largest percentages typically accepted into the College of Arts and Sciences. As a result, this may create additional resource constraints particularly with respect to staffing needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on all admission criteria, the admission profile of the fall 2014 (new) freshman class is strong and consistent with the profile admitted in the fall of 2013. Overall, however, the changes continue to be minimal and most likely reflect the economic environment in which all universities find themselves. An examination of UM's U.S. News & World Report rankings yields a mixed bag of gains and losses from 2013 to 2014. A particular improvement is seen high school counselor rating, which increased this ranking to 57th.

Given a change in the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Admissions, the results of this year's admissions set a benchmark against which new directions in recruitment and admission management can be assessed. However, we must point out that the work done by Ed Gillis resulted in continued high quality admissions.

In terms of recommendations, the committee suggests the following:

1. Overall, there has not been great change. What differences we see in frequencies and means are not statistically significant. However, we believe that the gains made in

2010 have *not* eroded as some might have expected; indeed the changes are minor and reflect a fairly stable admissions picture.

2. When *U.S. News and World Report* rankings are examined we find that the University has dropped from 49th to 48th out of 280 national universities. While we are still ranked in the top 50, we have some work to do in terms of graduation and retention (ranking 62nd in 2014 in this category). However, our rankings have increased in some areas (e.g., graduation rate performance, a +14 change) and decreased in others (e.g., undergraduate academic reputation index, a -3 change). Our freshman retention rate continues to be above 90%, it dropped from 91.3% to 91.0%, a change of only 0.3 points.
3. The new transfer retention rate slipped from 90.1% in 2013 to 86.9%, a change of 3.2%. This number, however, is still above the 2012 rate of 82.5% but continued diligence is required to determine if 2013 was a “bump” or part of a trend (the average 4 year change was a +5.4%).