THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver Senate Secretariat
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To: Vancouver Senate

From: Brian Silzer
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Subject: Business Arising: 2008 Enrolment Report (information)

Please accept my apologies for my inability to attend the November 12 Senate meeting. Following the meeting, several Senators sent us their questions about the 2008 Enrolment Services Annual Report on Enrolment. I thought it would be helpful to provide a list of all of the questions we have received to date, along with their answers.

1. **Question:** UBC's entrance averages seem very high. How does the University feel about that?

   Answer: Dr. Farrar noted at the meeting that admission to UBC is competitive. Our capacity to admit new students is limited, and we admit as many top students as we can. Certain programs, e.g., the Bachelor of Commerce, employ broader based admission strategies to look at criteria other than grades in order to build the best possible classes in those disciplines. While UBC entrance averages are undoubtedly the highest in the province, students with lower averages have many other post-secondary options within BC.

2. **Question:** Page 21 of the Report indicates that admission GPAs will be recalibrated to anticipate changes in grades presented by BC applicants now that provincial examinations are no longer required for admission. What does this mean?

   Answer: Every year, undergraduate admission GPAs are determined by analyzing the size and composition of the applicant pool. Because BC secondary school students represent the largest proportion of our applicant pool, any changes in the grades presented by this group has an impact on admission GPAs. We know that historically, BC provincial examinations tend to lower students' grades. As a result, now that UBC no longer requires provincial examination results, we can expect to see BC secondary students presenting higher admission averages than in previous years. Therefore, in order to prevent over-enrolment,

UBC's admission GPAs must be adjusted accordingly.

3. **Question:** Are competitive entrance averages comparable for the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses?

   Answer: Entrance averages are not identical. Admission averages are a function of "supply and demand". Demand, as measured by volume of applications, has remained strong on both campuses. But at UBC Vancouver, the supply of undergraduate seats has stayed the same, resulting in higher admission GPAs. At UBC Okanagan, the year-over-year increase in seats has increased capacity and put downward pressure on GPAs.

4. **Question:** How might the recent establishment of five special purpose teaching universities in British Columbia affect UBC's enrolment of college transfer students?

   Answer: As Dr. Farrar noted at the meeting, these five new universities definitely changes the post-secondary environment in the province and increases choices for students. While these institutions formerly focused on supporting university transfer, we expect that they will promote student retention in various degrees. The Strategic Enrolment Management Committee is well aware of this issue and will continue to monitor.

5. **Question:** How many first year students entered the Faculty of Science for the 2008/2009 Winter Session?

   Answer: 1,329 domestic and 98 ISI students entered into the first year of the BSc program in 2008.

6. **Question:** Could you explain what appears to be a discrepancy between Figure 4 (approximately 28,000 applicants and 14,000 admitted) and the statement on page 7 that "70% of all applicants who complete their admission file were made an offer of admission to their first or second choice of program"?

   Answer: In 2008, approximately 70% of all applicants who completed their admission file (i.e. provided all the information requested by UBC) were made an offer of admission to their first or second choice of program.

   While it is true that 28,000 applied, not all completed their file. Some students never submitted the documents requested by UBC to render an admission decision. In some cases, students submitted the wrong documents, and when they found out what was actually required, they abandoned their application. Technically, we cannot say that these students were denied admission; these students never received an admission decision because they could not be

evaluated. Therefore, once you subtract the number of incomplete applications, the total application volume drops. Once we only look at the applicants who actually completed their file and received a decision, approximately 70% were made an offer of admission to their first or second choice of program.

Also skewing the numbers is the choice of campus. In the graph on page 6 of the Annual report, we see that 28,000 students applied to (1st choice) UBC Vancouver and 14,000 students got in. However, some students had a first choice of UBC Vancouver and a second choice of UBC Okanagan. If the students were admitted to a second choice at UBC O, they would not be included in the 14,000 who were admitted to UBC Vancouver. They would, however, be included in the "70% of all applicants who … were made an offer of admission to their first or second choice of program."