THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver Senate Admissions Committee
c/o
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March 30, 2009

To: **Vancouver Senate**

From: **Admissions Committee**

Re: **Review of UBC Undergraduate Admission Policies: Status Report & Motion to Extend Reporting Deadline (approval)**

Motion 1: *That the report of the Admissions Committee on "Review of UBC Undergraduate Admission Policies: Status Report" be received.*

Motion 2: *That the Senate Admissions Committee be permitted to report back at the December 2009 meeting of Senate in lieu of the April 2009 meeting specified by Senate.*

At the May 2008 meeting of the Vancouver Senate, the Admissions Committee was directed to undertake a review of UBC's undergraduate admission policies with a view to determining their efficacy in meeting goals of Trek 2010 and the UBC Academic Plan and report back to the Senate no later than December 2008 with recommendations for any necessary changes. The membership of the Admissions Committee for the 2008-2011 Senate electoral term was approved in September 2008. Given the new membership of the Committee and the scope of the review referred to it by Senate, an extension was granted at the December 2008 meeting of Senate with a revised report back deadline of April 2009. The Committee's review of admission policies is ongoing and the progress report presented herein outlines the Committee's activities to date in meeting its mandate. A final report will be presented to Senate in December 2009.

Prior to undertaking a detailed review of undergraduate admission policies, the Committee first identified relevant policies for examination in light of Senate approved Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission to UBC (appendix 1). The policies were then prioritized and assigned to several working groups that were constituted to meet the Committee's mandate with representation from the Committee, Enrolment Services, the International Student Initiative, the Office of Planning and Institutional Research, and with consultation with representatives of UBC Okanagan where appropriate. The working groups were directed to undertake a detailed analysis of assigned policies and make any necessary recommendations for change. Five broad issues were identified by the Committee and assigned for review by working groups as follows:

1. Working Group 1 – Review of the English Language Admission Standard
2. Working Group 2 – Level and Subject Matter of Secondary School Courses Used for Admission to UBC Vancouver

3. Working Group 3 – Implications of Optional Provincial Examinations and Comparative Standards
4. Working Group 4 – Review of Broad Based Admission Practices
5. Working Group 5 – Assessment and Monitoring of Changes in Admission Policies

1. Working Group 1 – Review of the English Language Admission Standard

Membership:

- Dr. Janet Giltrow, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, UBC-V (Chair)
- Mr. Andrew Arida, Associate Director, Enrolment, Enrolment Services
- Dr. Paul Harrison, Joint Faculties Senator, Faculty of Science, UBC-V
- Dr. Linda Hatt, Associate Dean, Barber School of Arts and Sciences, UBC-O
- Dr. Rita Irwin, Senator, Faculty of Education, UBC-V
- Ms. Karen McKellin, Acting Director, International Student Initiative
- Ms. Rosalie Vlaar, Senior Policy Analyst, Enrolment Services

The purpose of the English Language Admission Standard (ELAS) is to ensure that admitted undergraduate students are prepared to perform well in a rigorous English language academic environment. In general, the ELAS policy has achieved this goal. It has been recognized, however, that some aspects of the policy require review to better serve the interests of the University. As such, analysis and review is ongoing to ensure that best practices are in place.

This working group conducted a data-driven analysis of the relationship between first-year student performance at UBC and the method by which the ELAS requirement was satisfied. The analysis suggested that some methods of meeting the ELAS requirement are more likely to lead to student success at UBC than others.

First, the analysis offered an evaluation of UBC's current TOEFL criteria to meet the ELAS; raising the overall minimum TOEFL criteria by a small amount is likely to prevent students who tend to have lower first-year sessional averages from gaining admission to UBC. Detailed examination resulted in the following recommendations for change:

- Requirement to meet minimum component requirements of English Language Proficiency Tests in one sitting (approved by the Vancouver Senate in February 2009)
- Raising the minimum internet-based TOEFL standard for each of the four exam components (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) by one point and raising the required minimum composite TOEFL score from 86 to 90 (approved by the Vancouver Senate in March 2009)

Second, analysis of students admitted in 2007 reveals that those who satisfied ELAS on the basis of years of study in English may still be deficient in English language proficiency. Specifically, students can be admitted with English grades as low as 50%. A review of students who satisfy ELAS through years of study indicates that a minimum English grade above 50% may be justified. The implications of requiring a higher minimum Grade 12 English mark will be further examined by the ELAS working group.

Third, the ELAS working group is also examining the efficacy of International Baccalaureate (IB0 English as a way to satisfy the ELAS requirement. Data indicate that students who meet ELAS by completing IB Standard Level English typically perform lower than average in

their initial year at UBC, with a sessional average of 57%. Students who meet ELAS by completing IB Higher Level English typically have a sessional average of 70%. Based on these findings, the ELAS working group is currently examining the implications of raising the minimum standard of IB Standard Level English.

2. Working Group 2 – Level and Subject Matter of Secondary School Courses for Admission to UBC-Vancouver

Membership:

- Dr. Peter Marshall, Senator, Faculty of Forestry, UBC-V (Chair)
- Ms. Christine Chen, Student, Faculty of Science, UBC-V
- Dr. Janet Giltrow, Associate Dean (Students), Faculty of Arts, UBC-V
- Ms. Cheryl Dumaresq, Director, Arts Academic Advising Services, UBC-V
- Dr. Paul Harrison, Joint Faculties Senator, Faculty of Science, UBC-V
- Dr. John LeBlanc, Associate Professor, Faculty of Creative & Critical Studies, UBC-O
- Ms. Deborah Robinson, Executive Coordinator, Enrolment Management Strategy
- Ms. Rosalie Vlaar, Senior Policy Analyst, Enrolment Services
- Mr. Azim Wazeer, Student Senator at-large, UBC-V

Working Group 2 was tasked with addressing the level and subject matter of secondary school courses used for admission to UBC Vancouver. The Group has examined the myriad ways in which an "admission average" is calculated for secondary school applicants. The initial review found that a number of current admission policies and practices may be working contrary to the Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission to UBC. In particular, the three following principles are not being met:

<u>Alignment with UBC's Goals</u>

Current policies and practices lead to very different outcomes with respect to an admission average for students from various applicants groups. This results in variation of rates of admission from different groups thereby potentially limiting the identification and enrolment of top students.

<u>Fairness</u>

This principle requires that applicants not be disadvantaged by the structure (timing, sequencing, grading schemes) of the educational system followed that provides the basis of admission. Current policies and practices lead to inconsistent inclusion or exclusion of courses from the calculation of an admission average. Jurisdictional variation in the number of courses required for the calculation of an admission average results in significantly different outcomes for applicants and impacts their relative competitiveness.

Excellence of Fit:

The exclusion of some secondary school courses from admission consideration may prevent some programs from selecting applicants who are most likely to thrive in the academic environment they provide. For example, it may be appropriate to allow for the inclusion of a Fine Arts course in the selection of applicant to the Faculty of Arts or an academically oriented Physical Education and/or Health course for the calculation of an admission average for applicants to the School of Human Kinetics.

To date, the working group has undertaken a detailed analysis of current policies and practices as they relate to the calculation of an admission average. The group found there to be divergent criteria for secondary school course selection (i.e., eligibility for inclusion in the admission average) and inconsistencies in the number of courses included in an admission average.

The working group has also found there to be significant jurisdictional variation between the number and types of courses that may be considered in the calculation of an admission average. Within British Columbia, only "approved examinable" subjects are considered for admission and applicants are required to present four courses for admission.[1] Ontario students are required to present six courses while five courses are required from students from most other provinces.

A significantly larger number of academic subjects, most of which are not examined, are eligible for inclusion in an admission average for applicants from other provinces and countries, as indicated in the table below.

Jurisdiction / Curriculum	**Total number of approved courses**	**# of approved social science, business & humanity courses**	**# of fine arts courses included in list**
British Columbia	18 (Vancouver) 21 (Okanagan)	3	0
Alberta	26	2	4
Saskatchewan	30	7	8
Manitoba	18	4	3
Ontario	48	24	5
Nova Scotia	21	7	2
International Baccalaureate	25+	9	3
US[1]	30+	9+	0-3
Rest of World[1]	28+	7+	0-3

1. Curricula in these jurisdictions are not standardized so the number of approved courses varies; however, the normal minimum number of eligible courses is listed for comparison purposes

The discussions of the working group have been focussed thus far on addressing admissions average and secondary school course requirements from students presenting Canadian secondary school credentials. The group is working towards establishing a set of principles, based on the Canadian context, which can be applied to secondary school credentials from other jurisdictions. The following issues, phrased as questions, will be

[1] The list of Approved Examinable Grade 12 Courses is available at: http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=2,22,63,0

addressed by the working group as it continues its review of the level and subject matter of secondary school courses for admission to UBC Vancouver:

- What criteria ought to be used in determining the acceptability of a secondary school course for admissions consideration by UBC?
- How should the composition of courses that comprise an admission average to various programs be determined? Need it be identical among programs? If not, is there a need for some commonality?
- Should the number of courses used for calculating an admission average be consistent for applicants to a single program from different jurisdictions?
- Should the number of courses used for calculating an admission average be consistent across programs? If not, what is an acceptable range in numbers of courses to use in calculating an admission average for UBC?
- What role should Grade 11 courses play in admission? Should they solely be used as and admissions requirement for certain programs (i.e., as prerequisites for some courses required by UBC programs) or should certain Grade 11 courses also contribute to a student's admission average?
- How should additional components of the admission process (i.e., Broad Based Admission – BBA) be combined with the standard academic average component?

3. Working Group 3 – Implications of Optional Provincial Examinations and Comparative Standards

Membership:

- Dr. Richard Anstee, Joint Faculties Senator, Faculty of Science, UBC-V (Chair)
- Mr. Andrew Arida, Associate Director, Enrolment, Enrolment Services
- Dr. James Brander, Senator, Faculty of Commerce & Business Administration, UBC-V
- Ms. Tarina Fernando, Student, Faculty of Science
- Dr. David Fielding, Senator, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UBC-V
- Mr. William McNulty, Convocation Senator, UBC-V
- Ms. Rosalie Vlaar, Senior Policy Analyst, Enrolment Services

Working Group 3 was tasked with reviewing the implications of optional provincial examinations and comparative standards. The main issues under consideration by the working group are student performance and admission in the absence of standardized tests such as the provincial examinations, the evaluation of applicants in a changing secondary school environment and how the University is and/or should be evaluating grades from different educational jurisdictions in the admissions process.

<u>Implications of Optional Provincial Examinations</u>

Provincial examinations are now optional for BC secondary school students and are not required for admission to UBC, with the exception of English 12, which is required. Under this policy, an applicant's most advantageous grade – school final grade, school interim

grade or 'blended' grade – is used to make admissions decisions. As a starting hypothesis to guide the working group's examination, it was predicted that school to school admission averages will differ more than in the past as fewer students will write provincial exams in most subjects and the normalizing effect of provincial exams will therefore be reduced. The question of what impact this may have on admissions is being examined by the working group.

Currently, UBC (through Student Recruitment, Admissions, Financial Assistance and Awards) provides some general feedback to secondary schools on acceptance rates, scholarships awarded, etc. The working group proposes to give some suitable feedback to schools in BC concerning the difference between their students' success in secondary school (blended grades if available or school grade otherwise) and the students' success at UBC. This may be done subject by subject for Biology, Chemistry, English, Geography, History, Math and Physics where the students' success at UBC would be the success in that subject area with data provided for the group of students who attended UBC in the previous year (or a three-year period).

The working group's primary method of comparison across jurisdictions/schools has been to measure the effect of a student's secondary school when observing the relationship between the course-only grades used in the calculation of an admission average (specific to the student's UBC program of study) and the first-year sessional average.

In its review of 14,120 BC secondary school students entering UBC between 2003 and 2007, the working group found that the mean course-only grade for the course used in the admission average was 88.2% while the mean first-year sessional average at UBC was 70.3% (excluding students with a first year sessional average of 10% or less). This indicates that a typical student would obtain a first-year sessional average approximately 18 percentage points lower than the high school grade average for the courses used for admission.

Data collected by the working group indicates that there are dramatic differences across secondary schools in this effect. An admission average of 88% from some jurisdictions translates into much better performance at UBC than from others. The difference between secondary schools at each extreme is on the order of 16 percentage points. This is large in view of the fact that even a 3-4 percentage point difference would have a significant effect on who is admitted.

The data thus indicates a statistically significant relationship between the secondary school attended and first-year sessional averages (controlling for the student's admission average and UBC admission). Approximately half of the secondary schools reviewed presented a statistically significant effect on the student's first-year average relative to the norm or average. A significant systematic effect was also noted across school districts, although it is modest in size compared to the effect across specific schools.

The working group has had some preliminary discussion of explanations for this 'high school effect'. The analysis does not necessary imply that the high school effect is entirely or even largely due to differences in grading standards across schools and other possible explanations have been advanced. However, if differences in grading standards explain even part of the effect described above, this raises issues of fairness. Also, regardless of

the cause of the high school effect, the results raise serious questions about whether UBC will be selecting the students most able to succeed at UBC in the absence of provincial examinations.

Historically, large school to school differences have been documented over a number of years, particularly in Mathematics and Physics, which is consistent with the data examined by the working group. Although most admission decisions have (historically) been made prior to the completion of provincial examinations, if grading patterns at secondary schools remain unchanged, the effect of eliminating the provincial examinations would be to increase the high school effect in determining admission to UBC.

In general, provincial examinations tended to have the effect of lowering admission averages slightly. If grading practices remain unchanged, BC applicants will experience an increase in admission averages, relative to other jurisdictions thereby increasing the number of BC applicants admitted and reducing admissions from other jurisdictions. It remains to be seen whether grading standards will change in BC secondary schools in the absence of mandatory provincial examinations and whether variations across secondary schools will become even larger than they already are.

With respect to examining the implications of optional provincial examinations, the working group's on-going discussions will address the following questions:

- To what extent do we wish to respond to what may be 'grading standard' issues?
- Will our feedback change school grading standards?
- What about year to year variations in schools?
- To what extent are we measuring socio-economic factors of success at UBC rather than the impact of high school grades on performance?
- What are the implications for scholarships?
- Would a differential grade boost based on schools be palatable?

Comparative Standards

In its analysis of data comparing Alberta to BC students, the working group has found a significant difference in first-year performance between Alberta and BC secondary school students. These findings are consistent with known differences in provincial grading schemes; where a letter grade of "A" is assigned in BC at 86% compared to 80% in Alberta. Based on first year performance at UBC, the difference in grading schemes could be addressed by giving Alberta secondary school applicants a 2% "boost" in their admission average. It should be noted that if an international jurisdiction has significant system-wide differences, admissions practices are adjusted for that jurisdiction.

4. Working Group 4 – Review of Broad Based Admission Practices

Membership:

- Ms. Katriona MacDonald, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Commerce & Business Administration, UBC-V (Chair)
- Dr. M. Clifford Fabian, Associate Dean, Faculty of Medicine, UBC-V
- Dr. David Fielding, Senator, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UBC-V
- Dr. Janet Giltrow, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, UBC-V
- Ms. Karen McKellin, Acting Director, International Student Initiative
- Dr. Robert Sparks, Joint Faculties Senator, Faculty of Education, UBC-V
- Ms. Rosalie Vlaar, Senior Policy Analyst, Student Recruitment, Admissions & Awards, Enrolment Services
- Mr. Azim Wazeer, Student Senator at-large, UBC-V

At UBC, broad based admissions decisions are based on a combination of a student's academic performance and an assessment of a Supplemental Application. The process allows faculties employing a broad based admission process to make fine distinctions among large numbers of highly qualified applicants and employ a holistic review process that allows UBC to identify applicants that will best meet its mission objectives. In this context, academic merit is assessed on the basis of each applicant's achievements and potential in a broad range of academic disciplines, as influenced by the opportunities and challenges faced by the applicant.

The working group is reviewing broad based admission policies and practices currently in use across UBC faculties in light of the "Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission to UBC" and in response to issues raised in a discussion document distributed at the Strategic Enrolment Management Steering Committee The examination will include careful attention to the following principles:

<u>Fairness</u>

The principle of fairness requires that applicants not be disadvantaged by the structure of the educational system that provides the basis of admission. In further examining broad based admission policies in light of this principle, the working group will consider the following issues:

- Whether faculties have clearly identified the requisite broad based admission criteria and scoring guidelines to ensure different adjudicators are likely to reach similar scores and decisions on admissibility.
- Whether issues of reader bias have been considered and addressed in scoring/evaluation practices.
- How students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and/or from regions of the world with typically less access to (or culturally less inclined) extra curricular activities and experiences are typically considered in broad based admission assessment.

Integrity

The working group will also examine whether broad based admission practices conform to policies. In its consideration of practices in light of the principle of integrity, the working group will examine the following issues:

- Whether faculties employing broad based admission practices ensure that policies have been approved by the Vancouver Senate, are clearly articulated in the UBC Calendar and faculty website.
- Whether current practices conform to articulated policies.
- How assessors/evaluators are trained to ensure consistent application of broad based admission review practices?

Transparency

- Whether applicants are provided with a clear understanding of how broad based admission criteria will be used to determine their admissibility to the program.
- Whether applicants denied admission on the basis of broad based admission are advised of how they can improve a future application.

In its ongoing review, the Review of Broad Based Admissions Policies will also consider the following issues:

- How broad based admission policy aligns with UBC strategic goals:
    - What is the intent of broad-based admission policies – enrolment management, selecting students most likely to succeed at UBC, changing the qualitative experience in the classroom, etc?
    - Have programs that are employing broad based admission as an admission tool articulated the type(s) of students they are seeking and implemented the appropriate measures to effectively identify and admit those students?

The Working Group has tasked itself with:

1) Producing a summary review document outlining current Broad Based Admissions Practices used across campus and how those practices align with the "Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission at UBC;"

2) Producing a set of Broad Based Admission Principles and Best Practices Guidelines for Faculties currently employing or planning to adopt a Broad Based Admission policy.

5. Working Group 5 – Assessment and Monitoring of Changes in Admission Policies

Membership:

- Dr. Bruce Dunwoody, Associate Dean, Faculty of Applied Science, UBC-V (Chair)
- Mr. Andrew Arida, Associate Director, Enrolment, Enrolment Services
- Dr. Robert Sparks, Joint Faculties Senator, Faculty of Education, UBC-V

- Dr. Thomas Ross, Senator, Faculty of Commerce & Business Administration, UBC-V
- Ms. Rosalie Vlaar, Senior Policy Analyst, Enrolment Services
- A representative from the Office of Planning and Institutional Research

Policies and procedures related to admissions and enrolment benefit from an ongoing review to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the University and remain current and valid in light of changes in the educational environment and circumstances. The main issues under consideration by working group 5 are:

- Changing patterns in the applicant market;
- Changes in the patterns of availability of and demand for different modes of study;
- Changes in the nature of the qualifications offered by applicants.

The Admissions Committee, in consultation with students, faculty and staff, will continue its review of admission policies to ensure that it is guided by the Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission to UBC and meets the academic needs of the University.
As mentioned previously, the Committee will present its final report at the December 2009 meeting of Senate.

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April 28, 2008

To: **Vancouver Senate**

From: **Admissions Committee**

Re: **Review of UBC Undergraduate Admission Policies: Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission to UBC (approval)**

Motion: *That the report of the Admissions Committee on "Review of UBC Undergraduate Admission Policies: Principles of Effective Undergraduate Admission to UBC" be received and that the principles for effective undergraduate admission to UBC recommended therein be approved.*

At the December 2007 meeting of the Vancouver Senate, the Admissions Committee was directed to "undertake a review of UBC's undergraduate admission policies with a view to determining their efficacy in meeting the goals of Trek 2010 and the UBC Academic Plan and report back to the Senate no later than December 2008 with recommendations on any necessary changes". The report presented herein completes the reporting responsibility delegated to the Admissions Committee. If approved by Senate, the principles presented in the report would guide any subsequent review of admission policies and practices, and also guide policy-makers as they prepare new admission policies in the future.

The composition and terms of reference of the Admissions Subcommittee on the Review of UBC Undergraduate Admission Policies were as follows:

Composition:

- Dr. Bruce Dunwoody, Associate Dean, Faculty of Applied Science
- Dr. Paul Harrison, Joint Faculties Senator, Faculty of Science (Chair)
- Dr. Michael MacEntee, Senator, Faculty of Dentistry
- Mr. William McNulty, Convocation Senator
- Mr. Raymond Pan, Student Senator at-large, Faculty of Science
- Ms. Deborah Robinson, Associate Registrar & Director, Student Recruitment, Admissions & Awards, Enrolment Services
- Ms. Rosalie Vlaar, Senior Policy Analyst, Student Recruitment, Admissions & Awards, Enrolment Services
- Ms. Amandeep Mann (non-voting, Secretary)

Terms of Reference:

1) *To undertake a review of UBC's undergraduate admission policies with a view to determining their efficacy in meeting the goals of Trek 2010 and the UBC Academic Plan.*
2) *To deliver to the Admissions Committee an oral status report on the activities of the Sub-committee at the March 2008 meeting of the Committee.*
3) *To submit to the Admissions Committee, via the Senate Secretariat, a final report with recommendations not later than April 23, 2008.*

The subcommittee fulfilled its mandate and its work forms the basis of this report to Senate, which summarizes the disjunction between UBC's goals for recruiting excellent students and some of its current policies and practices and then suggests principles that should underpin an effective set of admission policies. Corollaries to those principles are provided as a guide to the review of policies and practices to follow. Although the individual senates of the UBC V and UBC O campuses determine their own admission policies, it will be important for further discussions to include both campuses, if only to establish which policies will be in common and which will reflect the different mandates of the two campuses.

ANALYSIS: POLICY VS. TREK GOALS

The Subcommittee reviewed documents and received oral input from the Undergraduate Admissions Office that helped to foster a discussion of the challenges and barriers to effective recruitment that are present in UBC's current practices. An earlier report on the BC provincial exam issue that formed the basis of a recommendation from the Admissions Committee to Senate in December 2007 also identified aspects of current practices that require review. Those practices have evolved from some that worked well when UBC recruited undergraduates almost entirely from BC high schools at a time when the school system was more uniformly structured and sequenced, and there was an excess of qualified applicants for most programs, the majority of whom saw UBC as their first (or only) choice for post-secondary education. Now BC schools are more variable in the way they structure the school year, with many more schools operating on a semester system than in the past, and the provincial exam system is more complex, with some exams mandatory in years prior to grade twelve and only one now mandatory in the final year. Further, UBC now aspires not only to serve BC but also to be a leading national and global university and so has to learn how to adapt its admission policies not only within BC but also to other educational jurisdictions. Finally, competition for the kind of students that UBC wants to attract has become more intense, within BC, across Canada, and over the globe. Reaction within the Undergraduate Admissions Office to that evolving landscape has resulted in new practices without a concomitant review of policy, and has led to periodic jurisdictional disagreements among the staff in the Admissions Office, representatives of faculties and Senate, and senior administration.

A search for principles on which to base a set of admission policies and practices should start with the University's overall goals. President Toope has argued that UBC should be recognized as the preeminent research-intensive university in the province and be supported financially so that it can become one of the world's great universities. To support that goal, our admission policies should ensure that the institution "…*attracts and retains the best undergraduate and graduate students from across BC, Canada and the world*" (Trek 2010, http://www.trek2000.ubc.ca/principles/index.html). Currently there are enough spaces in the BC post-secondary system to satisfy the needs of high school graduates but not enough spaces at UBC V for all who might apply. We may presume that students predisposed to take advantage of the kinds of opportunities that UBC hopes to offer them - in terms of academic challenge, involvement in research, service activities, and international exposure - will also be the most successful undergraduates and the most engaged alumni. Thinking along that line may provide some guidance on the development of principles for how the admission process should work to our advantage, for example by fitting admission criteria to both student accomplishments and the requirements for success in UBC programs.

Many current admission policies and practices may be keeping us from achieving our goals and a few are presented here. First, a desire to attract more students from other provinces may be hindered by the practice of equating school grades to a BC-derived standard without reference to the actual performance of students from different provinces at UBC. There are some data available, e.g., of performance in mathematics, that could inform the development of differentiated scales. Second, attracting good students from colleges outside BC and from other universities is difficult when UBC cannot inform applicants about the UBC equivalencies of the courses they have taken. We need a comprehensive, centrally maintained database. Third, with students being recruited from around the world there are opportunities for UBC faculties and schools to tailor their admission requirements to take advantage of the strengths and peculiarities

of local education systems but many UBC programs have not found ways to support the extensive use of broader-based admission. Fourth, it is imperative that UBC be able to present to prospective students a unified recruitment message and a common set of application processes, lest we confuse and discourage applicants at a time when they do not yet know much about UBC and can easily be influenced by clearer offers of admission from our competitors. Currently UBC does not integrate well enough the admission, housing, and scholarship components of a comprehensive offer. Last, although most students are, in effect, admitted to UBC on interim grades, it has been our tradition to wait for final grades to confirm offers. Increasingly, final grades do not become available until well after most applicants have been given firm and attractive offers of admission from other institutions.

It is still true that the majority of undergraduates admitted to UBC were schooled in the BC system and it is important to remember that UBC's admission requirements directly influence both the BC education system and individual student behaviour. For example, the continued presence of foreign language instruction in BC high schools is partly due to UBC's requirement of a second language for BC high school applicants. Any change in UBC's admission policy and practice should consider the effect on the BC education system and on individual student behaviour but change that could enhance recruitment of excellent students from any jurisdiction should not be avoided just because of its potential effects locally.

The examples above were sufficient evidence that UBC's admission practices needed a review but first it is necessary to define a set of principles. Principles can be used to test policies and practices to ensure that they are helping to meet the university's goals. The principles are presented below together with corollary statements that could guide any subsequent review of admission policies and practices, and we recommend them to Senate for approval.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION TO UBC

ALIGNMENT WITH UBC'S GOALS:

- Admission policies shall ensure that the institution "…*attracts and retains the best undergraduate and graduate students from across BC, Canada and the world*" (Trek 2010). Such students should be predisposed to take advantage of the opportunities to seek academic challenge, to do research, to develop leadership skills, to do community service, to foster global awareness, and to participate in sports and the fine and performing arts.

  Corollary: Policies or practices that encourage the enrolment of top-quality students will be identified and reviewed.

  Corollary: Where two or more principles are in conflict, the resolution will always aim to achieve the overall goals of the University.

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY REVIEW**:**

- Admission criteria will be based on knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of educational systems world-wide and of student performance at UBC.

  Corollary: Student achievement at UBC will be used regularly to review and modify admission policies and practices, and to identify areas of potential improvement in UBC curricula and pedagogy.

  Corollary: The University needs the ability to forecast changes in demand for programs so that policies can be adapted within this framework of principles.

EXCELLENCE OF FIT:

- Evaluation criteria will aim to identify those applicants who are most likely to prosper at the University of British Columbia.

  Corollary: General university admission criteria shall identify where possible common core academic requirements for admission to all undergraduate programs.

  Corollary: Admission criteria for specific UBC programs shall be based on the framework of the general admission criteria.

  Corollary: In addition to evidence of academic achievement, diverse admission criteria may be used (i.e., broader-based admission*).*

FAIRNESS:

- Applicants will not be disadvantaged by the structure (timing, sequencing, grading schemes) of the educational system followed that provides the basis of admission.

  Corollary: Fair and equitable treatment of applicants does not require the application of identical policies and practices because to do so would be to ignore the different educational backgrounds and needs of prospective students.

  Corollary: What is considered sufficient evidence of readiness to succeed may differ for different academic programs.

  Corollary: Grading schemes will not be equated to the BC high school system unless data on student performance support such a practice.

  Corollary: Applicants who are continuing UBC students wishing to change program will not be disadvantaged as long as they are in good academic standing in their current program.

INTEGRITY:

- Admission practices shall conform to policies.

TRANSPARENCY:

- Admission requirements shall be clear and understandable to prospective students, counsellors, and others who influence student choice.

  Corollary: The University will be openly direct in its communication of admission policies and practices.

TIMELINESS:

- An offer will be made in time for the applicant to plan for the transition to UBC and for UBC to meet its enrolment targets.

  Corollary: Applicants must know the terms of an offer from UBC in time to compare it to offers from other institutions and to make reasonable financial and relocation plans for the eventual transition to UBC.

  Corollary: To attract excellent applicants, UBC needs to make most offers before May 1st, which probably means that final grades cannot be considered from most educational jurisdictions and systems.

  Corollary: Some applicants may be able to present evidence of readiness for success earlier than others so some offers of admission may be made much earlier than others using different sets of data.

COMPREHENSIVENESS:

- The terms of an offer of admission will include space in an academic program, and space in student housing and financial support when applicable.

  Corollary: The application processes and decision timelines for both entry into academic programs and space in student housing must be linked because the allocation of student housing spaces must be part of a larger strategy for effective student recruitment.

  Corollary: Offers of admission to an academic program and of merit-based financial assistance should be made at the same time based on similar sets of data because the allocation of scholarships must be part of a larger strategy for effective student recruitment.

COMMITMENT:

- An offer of admission will not be revoked unless the applicant does not meet a minimum set of conditions that are conveyed with the offer.

  Corollary: An applicant offered admission will in turn be expected to make a firm commitment to the university.

  Corollary: The minimum conditions for retention of an offer of admission will be reviewed and modified regularly to ensure that as many students as possible succeed academically.

  Corollary: All direct-entry programs will adhere to a common minimum set of conditions for retention of offers of admission.

CONCLUSION

The analysis above serves to demonstrate the need to review admission policies as the environment in which the university exists continues to change. Universities are one of the few institutions that have survived since the Middle Ages but, although their role in modern society owes much to the past, they are not the same institutions nor are the social determinants of their viability the same and they must adapt. It is relatively easy to make changes for the sake of competitive advantage, for example, but it is also easy to make changes that may have only a short-term benefit. Policies to be developed must be founded on a set of guiding principles and where two or more principles are in conflict, the resolution should always aim to achieve the overall goals of the University. A set of principles is presented in this report in the hope that it will set in motion a thorough review of policies and practices in the Undergraduate Admissions Office at UBC Vancouver overseen by the Senate Admissions Committee. Unless changes are made, UBC is unlikely to continue to be an institution that "…*attracts and retains the best undergraduate...students from across BC, Canada and the world*" (Trek 2010).

Further review should involve wider consultation with students, faculty, and staff at UBC V, with constituent groups such as school teachers, counsellors and college representatives, and also with colleagues at UBC O, the latter to determine where common policies are appropriate. The review must encompass policy and practice in the areas of student housing and financial assistance and awards as well because of the critical roles played by those resources in attracting and retaining excellent students. The Admissions Committee is prepared to work with Enrolment Services and the Student Awards Committeeto ensure that the review is guided by the principles presented here and meets the academic needs of the institution.