

# Enrollment Management Primer

**Lori Varlotta, Vice President for Student Affairs**  
**Ed Mills, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Support**

Enrollment Management within the California State University System is unique compared to other public state universities. The overriding principles that shape CSU enrollment practice are governed by Title V, the California Master Plan for Higher Education.

In general, those principles are meant to shape an overall enrollment that:

1. meets, but does not exceed, the university's funded enrollment target;
2. maintains and/or increases the diversity for which the CSU is known; and
3. facilitates graduation

More specifically, the guidelines in Title V direct the CSU to:

1. serve the top 33.3% of California high school graduates (compared to the UC which is to serve the top 12.5% and the community college system serving everyone else);
2. accommodate all qualified upper-division transfers, but not solely by denying access to eligible freshmen; and
3. maintain an approximate ratio between upper- and lower-division undergraduate students of 60/40.

To effectively manage the large incoming numbers of CSU students, admission priorities are outlined in the California Education Code.

Education Code § 66202 enrollment priorities – undergraduate resident students – in order (non-California residents have the lowest priority):

1. continuing undergraduate students in good standing;
2. California community college transfer students who have successfully concluded a course of study in an approved transfer agreement program;
3. other California community college students who have not met all the requirements for transfer;
4. other qualified transfer students (e.g., California residents transferring from UC, independent colleges, other CSU campuses who meet admission standards); and
5. California residents entering at the freshman or sophomore levels.

Priorities (listed in order) within each of the above categories:

- a) veterans who are California residents;
- b) transfers from California public community colleges;

- c) applicants who have been previously enrolled at the campus to which they are applying, provided they left the institution in good standing;
- d) applicants who have a degree or credential objective that is not offered generally at other public postsecondary institutions; and
- e) applicants for whom the distance involved in attending another institution would create financial or other hardships.

At Sacramento State, enrollment management goals are designed to recruit, retain and graduate a *balanced* student body. As a comprehensive master's-degree-granting institution, the overall student body includes academically eligible lower-division, upper-division, post-baccalaureate certification, master's and doctoral-degree-seeking students.

Although students in other categories (e.g., 2<sup>nd</sup> baccalaureate, unclassified graduate, 60 plus, etc.), pursue admission to Sacramento State, such students are considered for admission only during times of enrollment growth. During times of enrollment restriction, students in the aforementioned categories are given very low priority for admission/enrollment.

## **Managing Enrollment at Sacramento State 2011-2021**

Over the next 10 years, the greater Sacramento area will continue to experience population growth and diversity. According to the March 2010 CPEC report, *Ready or Not, Here They Come*, the pent up new student demand fueled by recent enrollment reductions in the CSU will result in nearly 56,000 prospective students being denied access by Fall 2011. Sacramento State is already feeling the impact of pent up new student demand. For Fall 2010, first-time freshmen applications are up 6% and new transfer student applications are up by almost 17% compared to Fall 2009.

### **Impaction Proposal**

With student demand increasing and enrollment target decreasing, Sacramento State will be hard pressed to control enrollment and stay within the acceptable 2% variance from enrollment target. Indeed, current projections estimate that Sacramento State may come in 4% or more over target in 2010-11. To address the anticipated overage and be positioned to teach and serve current students, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are jointly proposing that the campus become impacted starting Fall 2011. In short, CSU "impaction" refers to a situation where documented student demand exceeds funded capacity. In the CSU, there are several types of impaction, including the following:

- System-Wide Impaction – Implemented by the Chancellor's Office in late 2008, system-wide impaction restricts campuses from admitting applicants from the

forbidden 4 categories (lower-division transfer students, upper-division transfers who are not fully eligible, 2<sup>nd</sup> baccalaureate students and unclassified graduate students). Additionally, campuses are directed to give priority admission to applicants from within their local area for admissions. The systemwide impaction currently in place was meant to help campuses curtail the overall CSU enrollment by nearly 40,000 students. Sacramento State's portion of the mandated reduction is 2,488 FTES.

- Campus-Wide Impaction – Recommended for Sacramento State starting fall 2011, campus-wide impaction allows each campus to re-define their local areas for admission and set supplemental eligibility criteria for all new applicants from outside the local areas for admission.
- Class level impaction – Allows institutions to impact for a specific class level (e.g., first time freshmen or junior transfer students).
- Program Impaction – Allows institutions to impact specific programs. At Sacramento State, this currently includes Nursing, Graphic Design and Interior Design.

While campus impaction is not the panacea, leaders in Student & Academic Affairs alike see it as the best possible option at hand for teaching and serving the students enrolled at Sacramento State. The alternative to not declaring campus impaction forces managers to rely on the only set of tools available to non-impacted campuses. These tools include:

- a) Strict adherence to deadlines and requirements (fee payment, attendance at orientation, etc.)
- b) Enforcement of all minimum admissions criteria
- c) Reduction in the number of special admits
- d) Allowance or prohibition of the “flexible” four applicant categories.  
*Forbidden in times of enrollment reductions*  
*Forgiven in times of enrollment growth*
  - a. Lower division transfers
  - b. Upper division transfers who do not meet minimum admission requirements
  - c. Second baccalaureate students
  - d. Unclassified graduate students
- e) Implementation of unit caps
- f) Implementation of waitlists for applicants who apply outside of the priority filing period or are outside the Sacramento State local areas for admission
- g) Strict adherence to campus policy on reinstatement/readmission for disqualified/dismissed students
- h) The transfer of summer courses to CCE
- i) Full spring admission closure
- j) Open spring admission only to selected program levels, or specific programs

Evaluation/assessment of (i.e. unit caps and spring admission closure) the above tools can be described as:

- a) Crude at best – some more drastic tools were described by one VP as the “meat cleaver” approach
- b) Reactionary – no opportunity to be proactive or strategic in how enrollment is managed or shaped
- c) “Access restrictive” to currently enrolled students – the most effective way to restrict enrollment as a non-impacted campus is to set and enforce unit load caps. Such caps limit students’ access to courses and likely impede time-to-degrees.

Again, while not perfect, impaction offers enrollment managers the use of a more honed, effective set of enrollment tools. The additional tools available for an impacted campus include:

- a) Redefining the local areas for admission
- b) Requiring students outside the local areas for admission to meet supplemental criteria before being considered for admission
- c) Implementing waitlists for applicants outside the local areas for admission who are not initially admitted due to space limitations
- d) Reserving the right to admit a small percentage of applicants based on additional characteristics. For example, applicants who are first generation in their family to attend college, have challenging socioeconomic situations, possess special skills or talents that align with or contribute to special university programs, or provide other evidence of overcoming educational obstacles

### **Re-Defining the Local Areas for Admission**

According to coded memorandum AA-2005-05, Sacramento State has traditionally served the following counties:

Sacramento	Sutter	Sierra
Placer	Nevada	Colusa
Yolo	Amador	
El Dorado	Alpine	

A significant number of applicants and subsequently enrolled students also come from Solano and San Joaquin counties. While the university was in growth mode we recruited heavily from these two counties, considering them to be critical yet informal segments of our admissions recruitment area.

In terms of community colleges, the main feeders include:

- The Los Rios CCD:
  - American River College
  - Sacramento City College

- Folsom Lake Community College
- Cosumnes River College
- San Joaquín Delta CCD
- Sierra Joint CCD
- Solano County CCD
- Woodland CC
- Lake Tahoe CCD

To maximize the distribution of enrollment over our admissions recruitment areas and to minimize the negative effects impactation might have on the greater Sacramento vicinity, we would like to define Sacramento State’s local areas for admission under our campus-wide impactation as:

Sacramento  
Placer

Yolo  
El Dorado

Solano  
San Joaquin

To support the community colleges in these areas, we request that our new local areas for admission include:

- The Los Rios CCD:
  - American River College
  - Sacramento City College
  - Folsom Lake Community College
  - Cosumnes River College
- San Joaquín Delta CCD
- Sierra Joint CCD
- Solano County CCD
- Woodland CC

First-time freshmen who graduate from high schools in the newly defined local areas for admission and upper-division transfer applicants attending community colleges in these areas will be admitted to Sacramento State if they meet the CSU eligibility criteria described next.

### **Identifying and Enforcing Systemwide Admissions Criteria**

To gain “regular” admission at Sacramento State, undergraduate applicants will be required to meet the minimum CSU admission criteria delineated in CSU policy.

For first-time freshmen, these criteria include:

- Graduating from high school (or obtaining the GED or equivalent) by the end of the spring term preceding their fall application
- Meeting the qualifying eligibility index based on their high school GPA and SAT or ACT scores

- Completing all of the courses in the comprehensive pattern of college preparatory subject requirements (A through G) with a grade of C or better. Courses must be completed at the time of high school graduation
- Providing all required documents by stated deadlines

The criteria for upper-division transfer students include having:

- Completed all admission requirements by the end of the spring term preceding their fall application
- Completed at least 60 transferable semester or 90 quarter units
- Completed the following courses with a C- or higher:
  - A1. oral communication,
  - A2. written communication,
  - A3. critical thinking, and
  - B4. math (above intermediate algebra)
- Completed 30 units in CSU General Education requirements or IGETC
- Maintained a transfer 2.0 grade point average
- Been in academic good standing at the most recent college or university they attended
- Provided all required documents by stated deadlines

All fall applicants will be required to file a complete application during the priority filing period (October 1 – November 30). Once admitted, students must formally accept their admission prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> and provide all final transcripts prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Orientation is mandatory for all new freshmen and transfer students. Failure to complete any of these requirements may cause a student's admission to be rescinded.

### **Proposing the New Supplemental Admissions Criteria**

Presuming that our campus-wide impaction request is granted, Sacramento State will begin to utilize (for fall 2011) supplemental admission criteria in evaluating first-time freshmen and new transfer applicants outside the local areas for admission. These applicants outside the local areas for admission will be required first to meet the minimum criteria outlined above as well as the supplemental criteria as explained below.

Freshmen applicants outside the local areas for admission who meet minimum CSU eligibility criteria will be "rank ordered" by an eligibility index that may take into account supplemental criteria (such as a higher minimum eligibility index than that which is required by system policy). Admission offers will be made in descending order (first to those having the highest index) until the freshman class is full. For a small percentage of prospective freshmen, their eligibility index may be weighed alongside other criteria such as: first generation college status, socioeconomic factors, indication of overcoming educational hardship, skills or talents that align with or contribute to university programs or enrich the educational experience of the campus community. CSU-eligible transfer applicants who are attending community colleges outside of the local areas for

admission will be "rank ordered" by transfer GPA. Similarly, admission offers to transfer students will be made in descending order until the all new transfer admission slots have been filled. Otherwise, qualified applicants excluded from admission initially may be placed on a "wait list" in late spring and admitted if additional admission slots become available.

## **Maintaining Diversity**

Perhaps the most pressing systemwide concern related to impaction is that it may decrease the diversity of the impacted campus' student body. With this concern in mind, officials at Sacramento State have researched current and projected demographics for the greater Sacramento region. As is the case statewide, the diversity within the Sacramento region is expected to continue to increase throughout the next decade. For the state, CPEC (California Postsecondary Education Commission) projects new Latino student demand to increase by 44% and African American student demand to increase by 18.5%. Given the increase in regional diversity and Sacramento State's ongoing commitment to strategic recruitment, the initial projection by Sacramento State leaders is that impaction will not significantly diminish the rich diversity for which this campus is known.

Cognizant that the demographic trends of the region do not alone predict Sacramento State's diversity, campus leaders have worked directly with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to conduct a preliminary study using campus-specific data from the fall 2009 class. The Investigator examined how impaction would have reshaped the class of first-time freshmen and transfer students. For this study, the local area for admissions was defined as the top five feeder counties in terms of Sacramento State enrollment: Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, Solano and San Joaquin.

As a first step, the investigator looked at the 3,076 first-time freshmen who enrolled in fall 2009. She then determined the supplemental GPA criteria that would reduce this class by approximately 10%. She found that if the campus would have required a high school GPA of 3.0, then 9.6% of first-time freshmen would have been denied. (This theoretical result comes very close to the real/pragmatic objective we now have for reducing the freshman class by 10%.)

Next, using the national definition of underrepresented minorities (URM), the investigator conducted additional analysis to determine the hypothetical impact of this reduction on the diversity. She found the impact to be minimal as URM enrollment dropped by only -0.4% (Table 1). The findings of this preliminary study suggest that impaction criteria can reduce the size of the freshmen class to necessary levels without significantly diminishing URM enrollment.

**Table 1: The Impact of Supplemental Criteria on Fall 2009 First-Time Freshmen**

Selected Freshmen	Below Cutoff Line	Enrollment of New Cutoff		Total Actually Enrolled		% Differ	Total Freshmen Above Cutoff	
		Count	%				Head-count	% Reduction
Underrepresented Minority	109	906	32.6%	1,015	33.0%	-0.4%		
Others	186	1,875	67.4%	2,061	67.0%			
<b>Total Selected Freshmen</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>2,781</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,076</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>2,781</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

A second study was conducted on the 3,825 new transfer students enrolled in the fall 2009 semester. Here, the investigator excluded new lower-division transfer students and upper-division transfers whose GPA was less than 2.0. If all students in both of these groups had been denied, then the new transfer class would have been reduced by 11.5%.

After excluding transfers in the aforementioned categories, URM enrollment dropped by a mere -0.1% (Table 2). The results of this study suggest that impactation criteria could be used to reduce the number of new transfer students without significantly diminishing URM enrollment.

**Table 2: The Impact of Supplemental Criteria on Fall 2009 New Transfer Students**

New Transfer Undergraduates	Below Cutoff Line		Enrollment after Cutoff		Total Actually Enrolled		% Differ	Total Transfers Above Cutoff	
	Any Units	GPA < 2.0	Count	%				Head-count	% Reduction
Underrepresented Minority	74	10	712	21.0%	796	20.8%	0.2%		
Others	294	61	2,674	79.0%	3,029	79.2%			
<b>Total Transfer</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>3,386</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,825</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>3,386</b>	<b>11.5%</b>

It should be noted that the significant increase in fall 2010 new transfer applications already excludes students who have not attained 60 units or who do not have a minimum GPA of 2.0. The diversity of the pool, however, is consistent with the fall 2009 applicant pool. As such, Sacramento State officials believe that we should be able to maintain (or increase) diversity even if a slightly higher GPA is required to reduce the number of new, transfer students outside the local areas for admission.

It should also be noted that for the past two admissions cycles, the outreach office has been very strategic in its recruitment of new students. These efforts are paying off as the quality and diversity of the applicant pool has been increasing. The Admissions and Outreach Director will continue these strategies for the fall 2011 cycle (and beyond) to ensure that Sacramento State will maintain its rich diversity.

# Enrollment Management Terminology

As with any profession, enrollment management has developed a unique set of concepts and terms over the past 30 years. To help explain how these concepts are used at Sacramento State, we provide the following list of terms and definitions.

## **Campus Enrollment Target:**

The exact number of annualized resident “FTES” set by the Chancellor’s Office for the college year based on anticipated state funding for that year.

## **FTES:**

Full-time equivalent students as calculated by dividing the total number of registration units for a specific program level by a corresponding unit load expectation for students in that level. FTES is not a count of actual students enrolled, or “head count.”

## **Total FTES:**

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Total number of undergraduate registration units per semester} / 15 \\ & \quad + \\ & \text{Total number of second baccalaureate registration units per semester} / 15 \\ & \quad + \\ & \text{Total number of graduate registration units divided by 12} \end{aligned}$$

## **FTES Calculations**

There are three general calculations relating to FTES:

### **1. *College Year FTES***

For a semester campus, the College Year is made up of the summer, fall, and spring semesters (always using summer as the first semester)

### **2. *Academic Year FTES***

For semester campuses, the Academic Year is made up of the fall and spring semesters

### **3. *Annualized FTES:***

Annualizing FTES is a method of averaging FTES across the College or Academic Year. For the College Year, FTES are annualized by: dividing the total number of summer FTES by two; adding fall and spring FTES together and dividing by two; adding the results of these calculations together.

**Special Sessions:**

According to Executive Order 802 (as amended in January 2002): “Special sessions are a means whereby the instructional programs of the CSU can be provided to matriculated students on a self-support basis at times and in locations not supported by State General Fund appropriations.”

**State Side:**

The term State Side refers to registration units that are supported by State General Fund appropriations

**Fee Waivers:**

There are specific programs (covered by executive orders) that allow different types of fee waivers to be provided for groups of students (e.g. faculty/staff, veterans, international student athletes, etc.)

**Resident Student:**

CA “resident” as defined by CSU residency requirements

**Census:**

20<sup>th</sup> day of instruction for semester campuses

**College Year (CY) Census**

Total enrollment for the CY Census is derived by adding total, college year annualized resident state-side FTES for summer, fall and spring terms each year (starting with summer)

**Recruitment**

Recruitment is an intentional marketing and pre-admissions advising strategy that is used to build a qualified applicant pool representative of the desired incoming student body

**Retention**

Retention is a set of student engagement and academic support activities designed to help students persist in a timely (and uninterrupted) manner toward graduation. Retention is usually tracked annually by monitoring the progress of a particular cohort of students; say 2009 first-time freshmen or 2009 new transfer students, through a specific period (first to second year, second to third year, etc.).

## **Continuation**

Continuation is a measure of persistence for groups of students, typically measured by the number of students enrolled by level (e.g., freshmen, sophomores, juniors, etc.). Continuation rates are not typically measured by cohort.

## **Attrition**

There are many types of student attrition. Basically, students attrite when they cease to be enrolled at the institution. The most typical forms of attrition are:

Graduation – students successfully complete their program of study and are awarded their diploma or certificate.

Withdrawal – students take formal action to withdraw from all their courses at the University (withdrawals completed after a specific date in the semester are noted by a “w” on the student’s academic transcript.

Drop Out – students informally stop attending the University (during or after the end of the term) and leave the university. Students who abandon courses during the term may end up with an F, WU, or other grade designation on their academic transcript.

Stop Out – students who decide to stop attending the University for one semester. These students are allowed to return to the University without taking any formal action.

Transfer Out – students who transfer to another college or university.

Fail Out – students who become academically disqualified and may be ineligible to return for the next (or future) semesters.

Dismissed – students who, for a variety of reasons usually related to student conduct, are deemed ineligible to return for the next (or future) semesters.