

TO: Ken Barish, Chair Academic Senate
FROM: Liz Watkins, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
DATE: October 27, 2025
RE: Proposed initiative for UCR 2030: Increase the enrollment of California resident undergraduates

Dear Ken,

Thank you for your memo of July 7, 2025, detailing the feedback from Senate committees on the proposed addition of an initiative to increase the enrollment of California resident undergraduates to UCR 2030. In this memo, I address the questions and concerns raised by the Executive Council and the 13 committees that returned feedback (two of which had no comments). For the sake of clarity, I have grouped the feedback into six categories, listed here in order of the frequency of comments from committees on the topic, which I take as a measure of importance to the faculty:

1. Resources: human and physical
2. Recruitment strategies
3. Finances: sufficiency and allocation of funds
4. Student preparedness and student success
5. Effect on other aspects of mission
6. Online instruction

[Please see Appendix 1 for the complete categorization of comments.]

1. Resources: human and physical

Committees expressed concerns about the implications of higher numbers of undergraduate students for:

- Faculty and instructors
- Staff, especially those that support students
- Classroom space
- Other facilities, such as labs, housing, parking
- Technology

Two specific concerns can be addressed straight away. First, although the system announced a hiring freeze in March, we have proceeded with hiring of faculty and staff at all levels and in all capacities based on the [exceptional approval process](#). Our lean staffing levels have made continuous hiring imperative at our campus. Second, the SOM FEC can be reassured that the MD program will continue to have scheduling priority in the SOM EDII classrooms, per the existing MOU.

We modestly increased the number of faculty (by 5.7%) and staff (by 9.6%) since the pandemic (2022-24), as undergraduate enrollment declined slightly (-1.3%). If we look at fall 2025 as compared to fall 2022, we see an overall increase in faculty of 9.9%, an increase in staff of 12.0%, and an increase in undergraduates of 5.3%. Notably, the number of academic advisers in the colleges and schools increased by 24%. So, we are more than keeping pace, although our ambition is to step up faculty and staff hiring once we have the permanent dollars to do so.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Undergrads	22,903	22,646	22,599	24,112*
Senate faculty	839	848	887	922
Staff	2997	3176	3286	3358

*projected

While we have been able to handle the space crunch for staff, thanks to hybrid work schedules, reconfiguration of existing admin spaces, and the purchase of the Iowa Ave building, we still face challenges in classrooms, teaching labs, and faculty offices and research labs. The new education spaces in SOM EDII and the new School of Business building have helped, as will the opening of UTLF in fall 2026. UTLF will add 1700 new seats (1300 classroom and 400 lab/studio) in 32 new teaching spaces (21 classrooms/lecture halls, 10 labs, 1 dance studio). The next building being planned is for classroom, class laboratory, and research space in the proposed Computer and Data Science Instructional building.

Since 2019, UCR has increased the number of beds in on-campus housing by 68.5% (the number of beds available for fall 2025 is 10,379). Nonetheless, the increased size of the 2025 entering first year cohort has proved to be challenging. With some densification (making triples out of doubles) where possible and use of beds in the newly opened North District 2, we have been able to meet the first-year housing guarantee. Planning is about to begin for the next phase of housing development, North District 3. Housing is an auxiliary business (which means it is effectively self-supporting), so new construction can be debt-financed because there is a revenue source to pay back the loan (rents). The same is true for parking, and a new lot is planned for the North District area. Debt-financing classroom or research buildings (such as MRB, for example), on the other hand, adds to the annual expenditures of the core campus budget, which reduces the amount of money available to hire faculty and staff.

2. Recruitment strategies

Several committees expressed interest in understanding specific undergraduate recruitment strategies that are being implemented to support enrollment growth given that we are operating in a landscape transformed by changing demographics, heightened scrutiny on return on investment, and the lingering impacts of COVID-19 on student and family decision-making. Undergraduate Admissions has aligned its recruitment strategy with these realities to position the campus to reflect student needs, market dynamics, and the expectations of the communities we serve, while endeavoring to meet our enrollment goals. I asked Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services Emily Engelschall and Director of Admissions Veronica Zendajas to describe their strategies for recruiting potential applicants, getting accepted to students to enroll at UCR (what is known as “yield”), and addressing the very real concerns that families have about the colts of college. marketing our academic programs. Their comprehensive, nuanced, and data-driven response is appended as Appendix II.

3. Finances: sufficiency and allocation of funds

The Executive Council, Planning & Budget, and CHASS FEC all question our current budget model's ability to provide significant money to support the necessary investments in human and physical resources. Both academic and non-academic units will need increased revenues, and so we need to make sure that we are not starving one set of needs to feed another. One way we will do this is by continuing regular, planned examinations of the effectiveness of our budget model. This academic year, the Campus Finance Committee, in consultation with Planning & Budget, will evaluate the success of the tuition weighting initiative implemented in AY22-23. Tuition weights are an important factor in determining how much money flows to the schools and colleges to support teaching workload and major headcount.

The Business FEC and Planning & Budget raised concerns that are two sides of the same coin: will departments taking on more enrollment growth in majors bear the financial burden or will departments teaching services courses (to majors outside their college) bear the financial burden? Both sides of the instructional workload are factored into the way we allocate tuition out to the colleges/schools. Deans are keenly aware of the costs of funding instruction and the funds flow from tuition revenue to support those costs. This issue is regularly addressed at CFC; if we see that instruction is being disproportionately funded, we can and will make adjustments.

The more pressing issue we face is not how our financial plumbing system allocates money, but the amount of money flowing through it relative to our needs. It is relatively easier to change allocations than it is to increase net revenues. P&B asked, essentially, will enrollment growth pay for itself?

What our budget operating model shows is that if we hold enrollment constant (no growth) and hold our faculty and staff numbers constant (using FY25 as the base), we create an operating deficit that becomes almost \$30M by FY28. If we grow enrollment, according to the model developed by Institutional Research and shared in the initial proposal, and hold our faculty and staff numbers constant (using FY25 as the base), we create an operating surplus that increases to \$66M by FY28.

These figures do not include annual repayments to service the debt on capital projects (i.e., buildings). Our annual debt service over the next several years is about \$65M. Most of that debt is for campus housing; \$11M per year is for MRB. As you can see from the information above, the only scenario that avoids a structural deficit is with enrollment growth and flat faculty/staff numbers.

Of course, larger enrollment and constant faculty/staff numbers would mean that our student to faculty ratio and our student to staff ratio would increase. If we were to hire faculty and staff to maintain our FY25 ratios, then regardless of whether we grow enrollment or not, our operating model predicts structural deficits.

Two variables might allow us to continue with robust faculty and staff hiring. The first would be increases in other revenue sources (primarily nonresident tuition, master's tuition, and philanthropy). The second would be additional funding from the state. Enrollment growth puts us in a strong position to receive additional state support (via UCOP) if, in a budget surplus year, the state decides to invest in UC. This has happened in the past – the last time was in 2016. In order to be in line for those funds, we need to demonstrate increased enrollment both over time and relative to our sibling campuses.

4. Student preparedness and student success

The concern about student preparedness is shared across institutions of higher ed in the wake of the pandemic, and several committees implied that larger enrollment would mean going deeper into the applicant pool, yielding students with lower HS GPAs (a proxy for preparedness for college curricula). I want to acknowledge these very real concerns.

At the end of this document, in Appendix III, please see a report put together by the Office of Institutional Research on the HS GPAs of admitted students over the last five years. In most of the colleges/schools, the middle 50% weighted capped GPAs of admitted California residents have remained stable over the past five years, although we do see a slight downward trend in CHASS and Business. Keep in mind that even to maintain static enrollment, we need to admit a very large percentage of a very large applicant pool. Our low admissions yield trends do not enable us to be highly selective in all of our majors.

Given this reality, I share with the faculty the ambition for all of our students to be successful. The Division of Undergraduate Education, in collaboration with the colleges and schools' advising centers, is actively engaged in ensuring an adequate level of academic support services. The Division also works closely with Student Affairs, Health, Wellbeing, and Safety, and Enrollment Services to ensure that non-academic resources (financial aid, basic needs, mental health counseling, disability services, etc.) are sufficiently staffed.

Some examples of actions already being taken include revising the organization of academic advising within the schools and colleges; deploying a customer relationship management system designed specifically for universities to facilitate more holistic advising; expanding our Highlander Early Start Academy summer program for incoming students, with a special focus on those we are less likely to retain; strengthening partnerships between the campuswide Academic Resource Center and college-based learning communities; supporting faculty learning communities to redesign courses for more equitable, active, and inclusive learning; and redesigning first-year orientation to build community and foster greater student engagement. ITS is also building a data warehouse and analytics platform to make our student data more accessible and useful for course scheduling, seat planning, predicting future academic difficulties, and analyzing the effects of interventions.

This work is guided by our campus [white paper on undergraduate retention](#), an evidence-based plan developed in Spring 2024.

5. Effect on other aspects of mission

a. Effect of increased undergraduate enrollment on graduate education and research

Increasing undergraduate enrollment is not meant to come at the expense of graduate education or research; on the contrary, it is the revenue from undergraduate enrollment that enables us to invest in these other aspects of our mission. Running effective graduate programs and a productive research enterprise requires more than faculty and graduate student financial support. There are many essential central services (not only Graduate Division and RED, but also things like disability services, compliance, ombuds, CAPS, human resources) that are funded on the core budget, which comes primarily from undergraduate tuition and fees and the state allocation (based on CA undergraduate enrollment). It is true that educating more students likely requires more time and effort than educating fewer students, especially if we use the same pedagogy. So our recent discussions about exploring new educational models, originally motivated by the rising cost of graduate education, are relevant for managing undergraduate enrollment growth, too.

b. Concern that focus on enrollment will detract from focus on other revenue sources

The initiative to increase enrollment is in alignment with parallel efforts to increase other sources of revenue. However, in the absence of our ability to rely on nonresident enrollment in the near-term for additional tuition revenue (because of competition from other institutions and the uncertainty about student visas), or on master's programs for additional tuition revenue (because of the paucity of existing programs at UCR and the length of time it will take to get new ones approved and running), or on indirect cost recovery from federal grants (because of the current federal administration), or on philanthropic donations for operational uses (because those gifts tend to have highly specific and highly restricted uses), and during an era of weak public support for investing in higher education, even in California, the more immediate way to bring in more money is to grow CA undergraduate enrollment.

c. Involvement of departments, programs, and faculty in advance planning

Successful recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students cannot happen without the engagement of faculty. I encourage FECs and department chairs to work closely with their deans on college/school planning and Ed Policy and Grad Council to work with VPDUE and VPDGS, respectively, on planning for campus-wide student success initiatives. I think almost every Senate committee has an *ex officio* administrator who can serve as liaison between faculty and administration on collaborative planning. For those that do not, I encourage the appointment of someone to fill that role. I am always happy to attend Senate or department meetings whenever invited. The faculty members of the [Academy of Distinguished Teachers](#) have been excellent partners in planning for student success and implementing curricular innovation, and we will continue to rely on these colleagues as expert resources.

*

Final thoughts

The alternative scenario, in which we do not grow enrollment, is grim. Costs will rise faster than revenues, leading to budget cuts. Staffing will become even leaner, fewer faculty will be hired to replace those who separate, we will not be able to keep up with classroom and lab improvements or technology upgrades, and our academic mission – both in teaching and research – will be negatively impacted. In conclusion, enrollment growth provides the surest path to meeting our mission in these uncertain times.

APPENDIX 1

July 7, 2025, Senate Review of Proposed Initiative for UCR 2030: Increase the enrollment of California resident undergraduate students

COMMENTS BY CATEGORY

1. Resources: human and physical
 - a. Detailed plans for resource expansion (EC)
 - b. Resources: classrooms, facilities, staff, faculty (Ed Policy)
 - c. Resources: staff, faculty, classrooms, technology, parking (CHASS FEC)
 - d. Resources: staff, faculty, classrooms (CODEI)
 - e. Resources: staff, faculty, classrooms, facilities, and impact of hiring freeze (CFW)
 - f. Resources: teaching staff, student support staff, classrooms, labs, facilities, housing (P&B)
 - g. Resources: infrastructure, personnel (Physical Resources)
 - h. Resources: staffing, classrooms (Undergrad Admissions)
 - i. Resources: classrooms, technology, faculty (GC)
 - j. Specific concern about impact on SOM EDII (SOM FEC)
2. Recruitment strategies
 - a. Clear recruitment strategies (EC)
 - b. Admissions should better market departmental offerings (EC)
 - c. How recruitment plans reflect current climate and effect on financial aid (Ed Policy)
 - d. Recruitment: where will students come from (CHASS FEC)
 - e. Recruitment: competition with other UC campuses and changing demographics (CODEI)
 - f. Quantitative enrollment growth plan and historical actuals; continued impact of covid on enrollment (CFW)
 - g. Recruitment: how to get prospective students to come to UCR (CFW)
 - h. Recruitment strategy (GC)
3. Finances: sufficiency and allocation of funds
 - a. Assessment of the current financial model's ability to support enrollment growth (EC)
 - b. Concern that the departments taking on most of enrollment growth will bear the financial burden (BUSINESS FEC)
 - c. Logic of funding mechanism (CHASS FEC)
 - d. Concern that the departments teaching service courses will bear the financial burden (P&B)
 - e. Will budget model result in sufficient allocation of funding (P&B)
4. Student preparedness and student success
 - a. Concern about student preparedness (CHASS FEC)

- b. Concern about student preparedness (CODEI)
 - c. Concerns about preparedness and resources for successful retention (CFW)
 - d. Need increased space for more students in writing, math, HESA, learning communities, ARC (Prep Ed)
 - e. Need for evidence-based retention plan (CODEI)
- 5. Effect on other aspects of mission
 - a. How will increased UG enrollment affect graduate education and research (Ed Policy)
 - b. Concern that focus on enrollment will detract from focus on other revenue sources (P&B)
 - c. Critical to involve departments, programs, and faculty in advance planning (CODEI)
- 6. Online instruction
 - a. Concern about pressure to increase hybrid/online instruction; infrastructure support of hybrid/online instruction (EC)

Appendix II
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES
Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services Emily Engelschall
Director of Admissions Veronica Zendajas

Recruitment/Application Generation Strategy

Statewide Presence: UC Riverside maintains a strong statewide presence by assigning each of California's 58 counties a dedicated Admissions Representative who manages the full prospective student journey from recruitment and application review to yield and enrollment. This model ensures every student, family, counselor, and community partner has a consistent, knowledgeable point of contact from first inquiry through enrollment. By maintaining that relationship throughout the process, UCR builds trust, strengthens connections, and delivers a highly personalized, seamless experience.

Representatives develop deep expertise in the unique characteristics of their territory. They track demographic shifts, identify emerging high school and community college programs, and stay engaged with initiatives such as AVID, MESA, PUENTE, and EAOP. In doing so, they become trusted extensions of school and college advising networks, providing guidance on UC requirements, financial aid, and success resources at UCR.

This county-by-county approach ensures equitable access across both high-yield metropolitan regions and historically underserved rural communities. It enables intentional, data-driven deployment of resources, with frequent touchpoints at top feeder schools, targeted interventions in growth markets, and tailored programming for underrepresented populations. The result is a comprehensive, relationship-centered presence that underscores UCR's commitment to access, equity, and student success statewide.

Inland Empire Relationship Building: UCR is strengthening its presence in our local service regions (San Bernardino County, Riverside County, and the Coachella Valley) by ensuring year-round visibility and access. Undergraduate Admissions representatives assigned to these areas are building stronger connections with district leadership, school staff, and community partners to expand outreach and support for local students.

- **San Bernardino County:** UCR is collaborating with the County Superintendent of Schools to align with district college-going initiatives and lead large-scale outreach events. Efforts include participating in regional counselor convenings, hosting targeted application workshops, exploring districtwide communications to highlight UCR, and planning tailored campus visit days for San Bernardino students.
- **Riverside County:** In partnership with the Riverside County Office of Education, UCR is co-hosting college and career fairs, offering joint counselor training sessions, and targeting both urban and rural schools for expanded in-person visits. Deeper engagement with AVID and PUENTE programs is also driving stronger application

outcomes.

- **Coachella Valley:** UCR is establishing new relationships with districts that have not historically sent large numbers of students. Early efforts include virtual presentations, counselor briefings, partnerships with community-based organizations serving first-generation and low-income students, and plans to expand access to UCR college nights and campus visits with targeted transportation support.

As we enter the Fall 2026 recruitment cycle, Undergraduate Admissions will expand this work through more frequent in-person visits, co-developed regional events with district leaders, and closer alignment of outreach calendars with local college readiness initiatives to maximize impact.

Feeder School Optimization: Undergraduate Admissions has expanded year-round engagement with local and statewide feeder schools that are critical to sustaining UCR's enrollment pipeline and strengthening community relationships.

We have broadened counselor outreach to ensure a strong UCR presence at college fairs, senior nights, application workshops, and classroom presentations. Each feeder school now receives a tailored communication plan reflecting its enrollment size, demographics, program offerings, and historical yield, ensuring interactions are relevant and responsive.

For schools with strong growth potential but lower yield, we are deploying targeted strategies such as increased counselor visits, small-group presentations, and personalized invitations to campus events like Highlander Day and academic immersion programs timed to support key decision-making moments.

We have also deepened collaboration with AVID programs, recognizing the strong preparation and high yield these students bring, including active participation in AVID senior celebrations. While these initiatives are still developing, early outcomes show rising student interest and stronger counselor partnerships. In the next admissions cycle, we will expand faculty participation in feeder school outreach and provide customized data reports to partner schools, offering insights into their students' engagement and success at UCR.

UC System Collaboration: UC Riverside actively participates in UC-wide outreach programs, leveraging system resources to strengthen the collective brand while highlighting UCR's distinctive strengths. Through cornerstone initiatives such as MESA, EAOP, and PUENTE, we extend our reach into historically underserved communities, raise awareness of UC opportunities, and connect students directly to UCR's academic offerings, support services, and campus culture.

Collaboration with other campuses is intentional and strategic. We coordinate travel schedules to avoid duplication, particularly in rural and underserved regions, ensuring visits are well-timed, maximize counselor and student participation, and balance a unified UC presence with opportunities to showcase UCR's unique story.

Joint programs such as UC Nights and counselor conferences provide UCR with valuable exposure beyond California. By appearing alongside highly selective UC campuses, we benefit from the system's recognition and credibility, gaining visibility with audiences who might not otherwise encounter UCR. These events create opportunities to spark new interest, highlight our distinct strengths, and position UCR as an equally compelling UC choice.

Systemwide collaboration also expands our reach and efficiency. By sharing leads, participating in co-branded outreach, and leveraging the UC presence at national fairs, we extend our impact without bearing the full financial and logistical costs of solo travel. This allows us to redirect resources toward high-touch, UCR-specific activities that drive applications and enrollment.

Looking ahead, we are exploring deeper partnerships with UC peers, including joint virtual programming, shared recruitment data, and co-hosted counselor professional development. These efforts broaden our audience, create efficiencies, and deliver a more consistent student experience across the UC system while reinforcing UCR's distinct identity within the UC family.

Virtual Engagement: Virtual outreach extends UCR's reach to students unable to attend in person. Running September through November, programming is tailored for both first-year and transfer students, with dedicated sessions for out-of-state audiences. Formats include live interactive sessions, prerecorded presentations with Q&A, and "Ask Me Anything" forums with Admissions staff.

- *First-Year Programs:* "Making the Most of College Fairs," "First-Year Application 101," "Discover UCR," and "Ask Me Anything." Out-of-state sessions include "UCR & The Merit Scholarship," "Discover UCR – Out-of-State," and "California Living," offered in multiple time zones.
- *Transfer Programs:* "Find Your Fit: Majors, Minors & Careers," "Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)," "Navigating the UC Application," "Selective Majors for Transfers," and interactive Q&As.
- *Signature Event:* "Virtual Discover UCR" in mid-November—a week of immersive online sessions highlighting academics, student success services, and campus culture.

Digital Infrastructure: Recent updates to the admissions website improve navigation and accessibility, recognizing that most applicants first interact with UCR online. A 24/7 chatbot supports continuous engagement, answers FAQs, captures leads, and tracks user interactions. Combined with analytics on attendance, chat activity, and web engagement, this technology ensures virtual programming is responsive and continuously refined.

Impact: By aligning in-person and virtual strategies, and supporting both with technology and data insights, UCR maximizes reach, builds meaningful connections with diverse audiences, and converts student interest into enrollment.

Data-Driven Insights: UCR employs a comprehensive, data-driven approach to recruitment and yield management to ensure efforts are targeted and effective. Each year, Undergraduate Admissions conducts segmented analyses of the applicant pool to identify trends in academic preparation, geography, intended majors, and engagement. These insights reveal which regions, schools, and student profiles are most responsive to UCR and where strategic growth opportunities exist.

Predictive Modeling: Historical data on applications, admit rates, yield, and prior engagement inform predictive models that highlight high-conversion prospects for personalized follow-up. Models are refreshed annually to reflect shifts in the applicant pool and integrate new variables such as high school performance, financial aid interest, and responsiveness to past communications.

Tailored Segmentation: Communications are segmented for distinct student types—STEM-focused, honors, out-of-state, and transfer—and strategically timed to align with key decision points from early interest through summer melt. CRM-based early intervention triggers flag students at risk of not enrolling due to low portal activity, incomplete aid files, or missed yield events, prompting timely outreach from counselors, ambassadors, or faculty.

Competitive Intelligence: Each cycle, UCR analyzes students who decline admission, mapping their enrollment choices within California and nationwide. This intelligence identifies competitor strengths and informs adjustments to positioning, program promotion, and financial aid messaging in the next cycle.

Channel Performance: Recruitment channels—including school visits, virtual programming, alumni outreach, and UC systemwide collaborations—are continuously evaluated. Attendance rates, portal activity, digital ad performance, and MyUCR engagement are tracked to ensure resources flow to the most effective tactics.

Real-Time Analytics: An enhanced recruitment dashboard now integrates real-time analytics to monitor application flow, yield trends, competitor losses, and event ROI across the cycle. This enables faster data-driven adjustments, optimizes staff deployment, and strengthens conversion from first contact to enrollment.

Academic Program Marketing

UC Riverside's admissions team partners closely with each academic college and school to deliver consistent, compelling, and program-specific information throughout the recruitment cycle. This collaboration begins well before application and extends through yield to reinforce the distinct strengths of each program.

Program-Specific Marketing: Together, Admissions and academic units co-develop marketing collateral and talking points that highlight distinctive offerings—such as sustainability initiatives, research opportunities, experiential learning, and community engagement pathways. Materials are student-focused, linking academic experiences to clear career outcomes and graduate pathways.

Storytelling & Communications: Colleges and schools contribute student, faculty, and alumni success stories for use in newsletters, social media, and events, helping prospective students envision themselves at UCR and see program impact. They also send targeted applicant newsletters featuring program updates, faculty spotlights, internship opportunities, and event reminders—timed to align with key decision milestones.

Recruitment Events & Outreach: Academic units play a central role in major recruitment events such as Discover Day, alongside partners like the University Honors Program, Highlander Family Network, and Alumni Association. These coordinated efforts create immersive experiences that showcase academic rigor, student life, and career support. Colleges and schools also join admissions staff at high school college nights and community events, bringing ambassadors and program materials directly to students and families.

Impact: This ongoing partnership ensures UCR’s academic strengths are front and center across all recruitment channels, helping prospective students connect programs with their goals while reinforcing the value and distinctiveness of a UC Riverside education.

Reflecting the Current Climate around Higher Education Cost

Affordability as a Core Message: With college costs rising nationally, affordability has become one of the dominant themes in higher education recruitment. Institutions are reframing the conversation to focus not just on price but on long-term value and return on investment. UC Riverside is aligning with this trend while maintaining a data-driven commitment to transparency in both cost and outcomes.

California Context: For California students, affordability is anchored in systemwide programs such as the UC Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan and the Middle Class Scholarship, which significantly reduce tuition for eligible families. These programs are central to UCR’s value proposition, ensuring broad access to a UC education without prohibitive debt. Messaging also highlights the benefits of proximity, access to state resources, and strong pipelines into California’s workforce.

National Context: As UCR expands its national recruitment, affordability messaging shifts. For out-of-state families—often with different cost perceptions—the emphasis moves from tuition reduction to overall return on investment. This includes competitive merit scholarships, strong graduate earning potential, a nationally connected alumni network, and robust career development through research, internships, and global programs.

Tailored Messaging: Our approach is regionally responsive. In markets dominated by expensive private institutions, UCR is positioned as a competitively priced alternative offering the prestige

and research opportunities of a top public university. In areas with strong public flagships, we emphasize the UC brand's global reputation, California's innovation economy, and UCR's distinctive programs and campus culture.

Integrated Financial Aid Communication: Financial aid messaging is embedded throughout the recruitment cycle—from counselor presentations to admitted-student communications. Specialized webinars and workshops, including sessions for out-of-state families, provide cost breakdowns, peer comparisons, and debt outcome data to help families make informed choices.

Impact: By aligning affordability messaging with local and national contexts, UCR demonstrates that affordability is more than a number—it is a credible, compelling part of our story. For California residents, the focus is on need-based aid and cost reduction; for out-of-state audiences, on long-term value and outcomes. This nuanced approach ensures UCR meets students and families where they are.

Yield Initiatives Strategic Overview/ Getting Students to Choose UCR

Yield Initiatives (Admit Decision to SIR): UC Riverside's yield strategy centers on creating multiple, personalized touchpoints that connect admitted students and families to the campus in authentic ways. Efforts begin immediately after admission offers and continue through summer to ensure students feel supported, informed, and excited about enrolling.

Admitted Student Events: On-campus programming is anchored by *Highlander Day*, where admits and families experience UCR through tours, resource fairs, academic presentations, student panels, and direct interaction with faculty, staff, and peers. To reach those unable to travel, *Highlander Day on the Road* brings regional receptions to key feeder and high-yield markets, while virtual Q&As and departmental sessions ensure access for all admits.

Specialized Visits: Collaborations with academic colleges have expanded admitted student tours, highlighting program-specific facilities, faculty engagement, and career pathways. These tailored visits allow students to connect more deeply with their intended field of study.

MyUCR Portal: The enhanced *MyUCR* portal provides a centralized hub for admitted students to track enrollment steps, review financial aid, apply for housing, and register for orientation. Personalized communications and event updates make the portal both a resource and a community-building tool.

Personalized Outreach: One-on-one engagement remains critical. Current students lead peer-to-peer calling campaigns, sharing personal stories and answering questions, while admissions counselors provide individualized follow-up. Moderated Discord spaces allow admits to connect with each other and with current UCR students before arriving on campus.

Parent & Family Engagement: Recognizing their influence on enrollment decisions, the Highlander Family Network provides families with newsletters, webinars, and guides covering

financial aid, enrollment, and student life. Alumni networks also reinforce UCR's long-term value by engaging at regional events and sharing their success stories.

Summer Melt Strategies (SIR to Matriculation): The period between acceptance of offer and the first day of class is one of the most critical in a student's enrollment journey often referred to as "summer melt". To prevent summer melt, UCR maintains consistent, clear communication that guides students step by step through the process.

Our *Next Steps Countdown Campaign* delivers weekly emails and texts, each focused on a single enrollment action such as submitting a housing deposit, registering for orientation, completing immunization requirements, or finalizing financial aid. This approach breaks down a complex process into manageable tasks, reducing missed deadlines and incomplete steps.

Current UCR students extend this support through ongoing caller outreach, offering last-minute guidance, reassurance, and personal stories about campus life. These peer-to-peer connections help admitted students feel welcomed and confident in their decision to enroll.

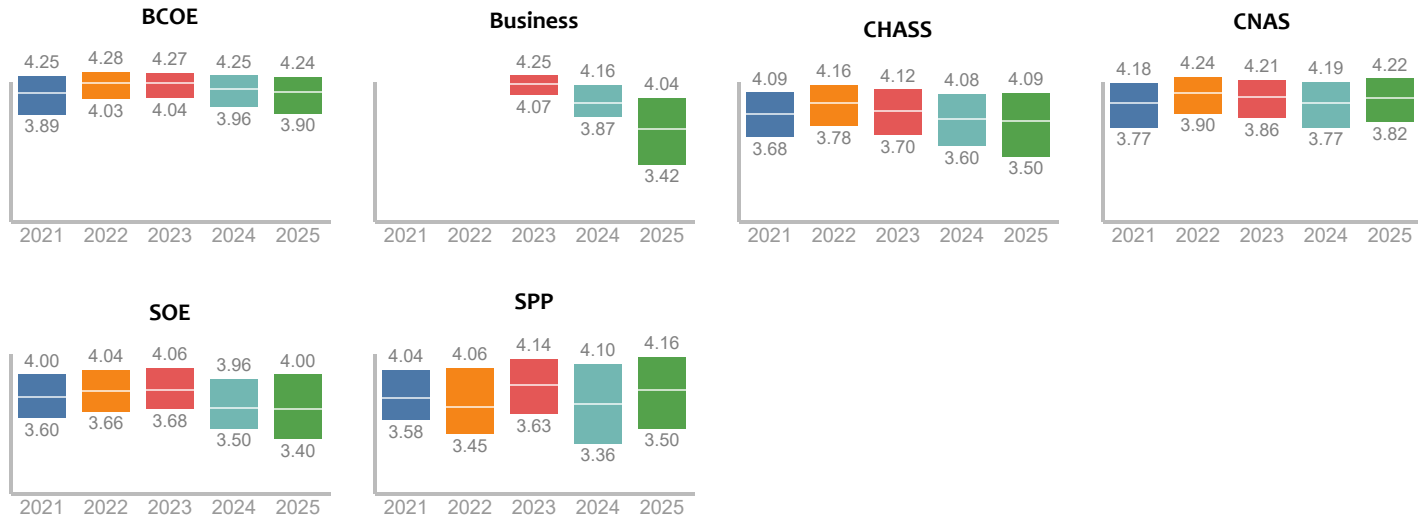
Parents and families are also engaged as active partners through reminders, tip sheets, and resource links, they receive the tools to keep their students on track.

Together with regional and on-campus events, specialized tours, personalized outreach, and the enhanced *MyUCR* portal, these efforts create a seamless transition from admission to arrival, ensuring students and families feel informed, supported, and connected as they begin their UCR experience.

Academic Engagement: Academic colleges and schools also play a direct role in melt prevention by connecting students with faculty, advisors, and current students. Program-specific newsletters, virtual meet-and-greets, and invitations to research and career panels give students an early sense of belonging in their chosen field. These touchpoints help students envision their academic journey at UCR and reinforce their decision to enroll.

Appendix III

Middle 50% High School GPA Admitted by College



Distributions show the final verified **weighted capped high school GPA** by major for **admitted California resident applicants** as of the end of the admission cycle. Values are shown when at least 5 students were admitted for the fall term.

Fall 2025 values are preliminary estimates.

Prepared by UCR Institutional Research

Chart key

Each chart illustrates the middle 50% of entering students by high school GPA as follows:

