

March 4, 2020

To: Dylan Rodriquez, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

From: Declan McCole, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

Subject: SOM FEC Comments on STTF Report and Recommendations

Dear Dylan,

Please find below the comments from the members of the SOM FEC regarding the Standardized Testing Task Force Report & Recommendations:

- The School of Medicine Faculty Executive Committee commends the extremely thorough report produced at great effort by the STTF Committee. We applaud the emphasis on identifying: “those points in the process and the factors at work at each point that contribute to disproportionate declines in representation of students who belong to populations that have historically been excluded from higher education opportunity”. This is of high importance to a campus such as UCR which is located in an economically deprived part of California with high numbers of underrepresented minorities (URM) in its catchment area. This goal also aligns closely with the mission of UCR School of Medicine to improve access to healthcare for the underserved. A major focus of achieving that goal is to increase the proportion of practicing physicians who represent those communities and who come from the Inland Empire. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of the factors that restrict access of URM and socioeconomically deprived populations to third level education – and identification of solutions to these barriers – is enthusiastically welcomed by UCR School of Medicine.
- Comment regarding Executive Summary point 4:
The SOM FEC also strongly endorses the recommendation to “Study and expand student academic support services”. This is absolutely essential in order to equip disadvantaged students with the emotional and academic skills to be able to navigate the rigors of higher education. One of the biggest challenges to URM success is “imposter syndrome”. Developing resources to help combat this reaction in students and enhance their sense of self-worth is likely to have a transformative impact on graduation rates and future career outcomes.
- Comment regarding Executive Summary point 5:
“Obtain the necessary item-level data to perform an updated analysis of potential bias in current standardized tests.” The SAT is a differentiator and we need to understand how this will affect our medical students. Committee discusses that exams are a benchmark to determine if a

student is retaining the information taught or read, tests also measure the level of competence reached by each individual learner.

- There was also some strong discussion on the merits of the SAT. Several members of the committee echoed Chancellor Wilcox's recent Op-Ed in the LA Times regarding SAT scores and emphasized the concern that eliminating the SAT/ ACT will harm students in the middle of the scoring range as some students are in positions to have their grades inflated (a practice in many prestigious schools) while there are also students of challenged economic backgrounds who are given a break in their scores due to their circumstances. However, there is a middle range of students that depends on the score tests to demonstrate their potential. These are students who are not economically challenged enough to be afforded a scoring benefit, and are not wealthy enough to get into high-end schools. The final comments on this topic were that there is research showing a strong correlation to a strong test score to the longevity and completion of their study.
- Several members of the committee expressed a need for some clarity on how the test scores are weighed, diversity is weighted, and that a fair opportunity for all socio-economic levels is provided.
- Concern was expressed that the UC model has been instituted to be one college with multiple campuses, however not all campuses have focused on serving the taxpayers. Concerns were raised in regards to campuses, most specifically UCLA, accepting out of country (in addition to out of state) students when taxpayers expect their children to be able to attend UC schools.

Yours sincerely,



Declan F. McCole, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
School of Medicine