Committee on Undergraduate Recruitment, Admissions, and Financial Aid
(CURAFA) Annual Report for 2020-2021

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I. Committee function and charge approved by the Faculty Senate November 7, 2016:
The Committee on Undergraduate Recruitment, Admissions, and Financial Aid (CURAFA) is a
shared governance committee whose mission is to build a scholarly and diverse undergraduate
student population by initiating, monitoring, and advising on policies related to student recruitment,
admissions, and financial aid.

Faculty Policies and Procedures 6.51.
A. MEMBERSHIP.
   1. Six faculty members appointed for 4-year terms.
   2. Two academic staff members appointed for 4-year terms.
   3. Two university staff members appointed for 4-year terms.
   4. Four students appointed for 1-year terms.
   5. The Vice Provost for Enrollment Management or designee, ex officio nonvoting.
   6. The Director of Admissions and Recruitment, ex officio nonvoting.
   7. The Director of Student Financial Aid, ex officio nonvoting.
   8. The Vice Provost for Diversity and Climate or designee, ex officio nonvoting.

The chair shall be elected from among the faculty members appointed pursuant to section A.1.
Academic staff appointed pursuant to section A.2. may be elected to serve as co-chair. Chair and
co-chair elections will be conducted in accordance with the Committee’s Statement of Policies and
Procedures. Note: Titles for members in seats 6 and 7 have changed and are reflected above; Faculty Policies and Procedures will be updated.

B. FUNCTIONS
   1. Advises and makes recommendations to the Division of Enrollment Management, and other
      administrative offices as appropriate, on all policies, procedures, and operations related to
      undergraduate recruitment, admissions and financial aid.
   2. Monitors, reviews, and evaluates new policies and procedures, as well as formulation,
      substantive modification, implementation, and outcomes of university policies and procedures
      related to undergraduaterecruitment, admissions, and financial aid.
   3. Reports annually to the official governance bodies representing the faculty, academic staff,
      university staff, and students.

II. CURAFA 2020-21 Focus Areas: Test-optional admissions, COVID-19 impacts

The committee sets priorities at the first fall meeting. During academic year 2020-2021,
CURAFA identified five topics directly impacting Admissions, Recruitment, and Financial
Aid. These topics were:
1. Test-optional admissions review process (SAT or ACT not required)

The University of Wisconsin–Madison received authorization from the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents to waive the requirement for applicants to submit an ACT or SAT test score as a part of their application to the university through the spring 2023 term. Including scores from either the ACT or the SAT is currently optional, and applicants are not disadvantaged in the evaluation process for choosing to not include these scores for consideration in their application. Preliminary review of data indicates that about 53% of applicants wanted their test scores used, while 47% did not submit or asked for their scores to not be used. Analysis continues to determine impacts of the test-optional process.

CURAFA discussed the merits of test-optional admissions as a permanent policy, rather than a temporary one made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CURAFA co-chair J.J. Andrews presented research about how public perceptions on standardized testing and grade point averages influence secondary school classrooms and students (Appendix C). Content analysis of mass media about grades and testing reveals that more than 74% of messaging focuses on external classroom issues, such as accountability, governance, and politics, and only 24% of messaging focuses on student development and growth. Presentation discussed the ways in which academic measurements become disempowering for students when used as value-based measurements (fixed mindset) much more than as tools for improved pedagogy and student development (growth mindset). Such a significant mass media messaging gap promotes disengagement by precollege students and teachers who are tasked to satisfy needs external to the classroom rather than needs inside the classroom. Additionally, research suggests that a combination of equity issues with standardized testing and improved Year One college programming have diminished the importance of ACT/SAT scores for the admissions process.

CURAFA believes more analysis is needed before reaching a definitive recommendation regarding the future of test-optional admissions at UW-Madison. However, preliminary findings suggest it is a step in the right direction toward guaranteeing an equitable and holistic admissions review process for students. Additional research on the impact of test-optional admissions for both UW-Madison and UW System is being conducted by the Student Success Through Applied Research Lab (SSTAR Lab), through a research-practice partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Division of Enrollment Management.

2. Recruitment and enrollment of underrepresented student populations

Campus climate issues impacting diversity, equity, and inclusion at UW-Madison were a significant focus for CURAFA during AY 2019-20. The committee concluded that UW-Madison needed to more explicitly advance campus-based diversity and inclusion initiatives to improve the quality of life and student experience for those who identify as a traditionally underrepresented population at predominantly white institutions (PWI). Specifically, CURAFA recommended in its AY 2019-20 annual report that UW-Madison:

1) provide necessary support to broaden diversity-based outreach, recruitment and admissions initiatives;
2) explicitly promote diversity and inclusion in UW-Madison’s mission statement and branding materials as integral aspects of campus culture; and
3) increase necessary support for inclusive and diverse campus communities and climate initiatives. This support must include resources for existing racial/ethnic student organizations and initiatives.

The yield rate for first-year, first-time admitted students enrolling at UW-Madison (excluding transfers) has consistently been lower every year since 2012 for targeted minority students when compared to white, non-Hispanic students (Appendix A). For example, the yield rate in
2020 for targeted minority students was 27.7% and for white, non-Hispanic students was 34.0%. It is difficult to determine why admitted students enroll elsewhere. However, Academic Planning and Institutional Research (APIR) conducted an examination of the fall 2020 students admitted to UW-Madison who chose to enroll elsewhere. APIR’s findings suggest admitted students from underrepresented race/ethnic groups – as well as students from rural high schools, low-income households, and first-generation families – who enroll elsewhere are attending (mostly public) research institutions in the Midwest. The complete report. “Enrollment Patterns of UW—Madison’s Fall 2020 Admitted New Freshman Applicants | February 2021” is provided in Appendix B.

APIR writes: “This (yield rate) suggests that we are competing for enrollments with our peer research institutions rather than other institutions in the UW System or small private institutions and that admitted UW-Madison applicants are mainly seeking institutions with similar characteristics to UW-Madison. This means that factors other than the ‘type’ of institution are at play for the applicants who were admitted to UW-Madison but chose to enroll elsewhere.”

Andre Phillips, Director of Admission and Recruitment, presented a report detailing how improved key partnerships with schools and programs has helped strengthen enrollment of students from traditionally underrepresented categories. Fall 2020 data of first-time, first-year students appears to support these reports (Appendix A). Despite single-year total enrollment decreasing by 244 to 7,306 students, there were enrollment increases in nearly every traditionally underrepresented race and ethnicity category reported using federal reporting methodologies.

Enrolled students who self-identified as Hispanic/Latino(a) increased by 84 students to 520 total; two or more races increased by 25 to 298; Black/African American increased by 63 to 176; American Indian/Alaska Native by 7 to 17; and Asian increased by 30 to 676.

Additionally, enrollment yield rates for underrepresented minority Wisconsin residents exceed that of all admitted Wisconsin residents.

APIR writes: “For the purposes of this analysis and other efforts to evaluate racial/ethnic diversity, these groups include applicants who identify in one of the following groups: African American, Hispanic/Latino(a), American Indian/Alaska Native, Southeast Asian (Hmong, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian). UW-Madison admitted 793 Wisconsin resident applicants from the aforementioned targeted racial/ethnic groups for fall 2020 and 545 (69%) enrolled at UW-Madison. This is higher than the 64% of all admitted Wisconsin resident applicants who enrolled at UW-Madison in fall 2020. … Wisconsin residents from these racial/ethnic groups who were admitted to UW-Madison but did not enroll at UW-Madison were most likely to enroll at private institutions (14%) than they were to enroll at other public institutions in Wisconsin (7%) or public institutions in other states (7%).” (Appendix B)

It is important to note that, for data-reporting purposes, all race and ethnicity categories and reporting methodology represent federal reporting categories and methodology. These guidelines stipulate that all domestic (non-international) students who indicate Hispanic ethnicity should be reported as Hispanic, regardless of other racial information provided. Non-Hispanic domestic students who indicate more than one race are reported in the “2 or more races” category. All other non-Hispanic domestic students who indicated a single race are reported in that category.

Federal race/ethnicity reporting categories are: Hispanic/Latino(a), Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian (Hmong, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian), White, Unknown, or International.

CURAFA commends the Division of Enrollment Management and other stakeholders on campus for actively working to strengthen partnerships to improve campus climate issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion—especially within the context of responding to the global pandemic. As was stated and a significant focus of the AY 2019-20 CURAFA annual report, we continue to believe the ability to recruit and enroll traditionally underrepresented students at UW-Madison is directly linked to perceptions about campus climate related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. CURAFA urges all partners to continue building relationships and infrastructures that support a positive campus experience for all students.
3. International/Out-of-State student recruitment/admissions during and after COVID-19

Factors potentially impacting the ability of admitted international students to enroll include embassies reopening and global management of COVID-19. According to Fall 2020 data, enrollment of first-year, first-time international students decreased by 92 for 543 total after steadily increasing each of the previous five years (Appendix A). The last time UW-Madison enrolled fewer international students was Fall 2015 when it admitted 498. CURAFA members and representatives from the Division of Enrollment Management discussed factors outside of UW-Madison’s control impacting international enrollment. How the world handles the ongoing pandemic and its financial impact is the top concern. There has been a financial impact on many families, including those of our international students.

The pandemic may have impacted out-of-state enrollment, as well. Both applications and admission offers increased for domestic non-residents, but enrollment decreased by 184 to 2,260 students (Appendix A). Enrollment of domestic, non-resident students had increased every year over the past decade, with the exception of a minor decrease in 2014. The percent of enrolled non-resident admitted applicants was 15.5% for domestic students and 13.9% for international students, which were the lowest yield rates over the past decade. The previous low yield rates both occurred in 2018, with domestic, non-resident at 16.8% and international students at 17.8%. The previous highs for yield rates were 24.5% for domestic students in 2014 and 30.6% for international in 2012.

CURAFA recommends investigating ways that external complications could be preventing out-of-state and international students from enrolling enrollment. These external complications could include issues such as travel restrictions and family care that may not be resolved via financial aid, alone. CURAFA suggests continued investigation into long-term hybrid models of instruction that would allow students who cannot physically attend campus to still participate in campus and classroom life.

4. Recruitment and enrollment of American Indian/Alaska Native students

Recruitment and enrollment of Native American student populations are connected to challenges requiring long-term, relationship-building with populations both in urban and rural areas. There is a need to identify cultural components that are impacting recruitment and enrollment. UW-Madison received 62 first-year, first-time (excluding transfers) admission applications from students identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native. Of those, 33 were offered admission, and 17 enrolled Fall 2020. Over the past decade, applications have been as few as 34 in 2013 and as many as 60 in 2017 and 62 in 2020. During that same time, admission rate offers have been as low as 38% in 2016 and as high as 59% in 2011. Yield rate (enrollment) of admission offers for Native American students has been as low as 31% (8 students) in 2012 and as high as 67% (18 students) in 2017 (Appendix A).

Representatives from APIR and the Division of Enrollment Management believe the number of American Indian/Alaska Native students attending UW-Madison is being underreported due to federal reporting requirements for race/ethnicity. Guidelines require the data to only reflect students who only identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. Students who self-identify as American Indian/Alaska Native in the race category, but also identify as Hispanic/Latino(a) in the ethnicity category, can only be reported in the Hispanic/Latino(a), according to federal guidelines.

CURAFA recommends developing, expanding, and providing long-term support for precollege outreach and recruitment programs designed for Native American populations. Programs should do more than develop academic college readiness. These programs should develop trust and relationships with students, parents, and local community leaders as part of their mission statements. For example, the Information Technology Academy (ITA) precollege program in its work with the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewas and Oneida Nation has had success developing academic college readiness and builds trust with students, parents, and local community leaders. CURAFA recommends the development of precollege recruitment programs with a holistic approach that also emphasize the reciprocal relationship between UW-Madison campus and local communities.
5. Financial aid adjustments in the COVID era

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF II) requires institutions “to provide at least the same amount of funding in financial aid grants to students” as was provided to students under CARES/HEERF I (Appendix D). Student grant allocation of $9.8 million. Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) began distributing emergency funds on Feb. 15. HEERF II enables OSFA to distribute emergency aid to students financially impacted and prioritizes exceptional need. No application is needed for undergraduate, Pell-eligible students to receive $1,000 grants. Students that are ineligible for HEERF II funding will be receiving non-HEERF II funding.

OSFA stated that an information and awareness campaign may be needed to educate staff and students about all the ways OSFA can assist students once they are on campus. Many times, students are going to their schools and colleges asking questions about financial assistance rather than OSFA. Additional donations to the general funds and emergency funds could assist studentsexperiencing need who do not meet all the requirements for federal relief funding.

CURAFA recommends developing an information and marketing campaign to better educate campus staff and students about the ways in which the Office of Student Financial Aid can assist students experiencing need.

III. Division of Enrollment Management report: Undergraduate enrollment planning for 2020-21

The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s undergraduate enrollment planning for 2020-21 was and continues to be characterized by:

- **Modest, planned growth in the first-year class.** In 2017, the Chancellor announced plans to pursue, overtime, a 1,000-student enrollment in our first-year class. The Division of Enrollment Management aims to achieve this through 250-student increments. The Fall 2019 class was over-subscribed by 440 first-year students. In Fall 2020, we enrolled 7,306 students which was within 1% of the target class of 7,360. The goal for Fall 2021 is 7,610. With this growth, the university aims to continually improve recruitment and enrollment of under-represented students (e.g. geographically, socioeconomically and racially/ethnically under-represented). For Fall 2020, there was a 19% increase in under-represented minority student enrollment (i.e. who identify as African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian, or Southeast Asian-American). The university also aims to improve and expand enrollment of transfer students from Wisconsin and other states.

- **Commitment to Wisconsin.** The Fall 2020 incoming class of first-year students included 3,802 Wisconsin residents; over the last two years, students came from 71 of the state’s 72 counties. This enrollment is above the university’s 3,600 Wisconsin resident enrollment minimum. Due to the move test-optional, the Wisconsin Prime campaign is no longer applicable in its previous format, but UW-Madison continues to attract and enroll many of the state’s highest achieving students (by any measure).

- **Access to a UW-Madison education.** The university is actively pursuing strategies to attract and retain students who have financial barriers to enrolling. These efforts include expanding Bucky’s Tuition Promise to include family incomes at or below $60,000 (previously set at $56,000). For the Fall 2020 entering class, one in four Wisconsin residents were the recipient of either Bucky’s Tuition Promise or Badger Promise. The Division of Enrollment Management’s goal is to expand this program through eligibility or coverage. The Division has also streamlined the admission and financial aid package release timing so that admitted students know their financial aid offer very shortly after being admitted. There continues to be a ‘Go Forward Pell Plan’ to work with students in low-income households who may benefit from additional assistance in navigating the enrollment and financial aid process. Resources have been dedicated to outreach that has significantly increased high school counselor, community-based organization, and alumni engagement. UW-Madison is a partner in the American Talent Initiative, a network of 327 public and private colleges with the goal of educating 50,000 more low/moderate income students and are currently engaged in the initiative’s transfer community of practice. We have gained an increase
in the percentage of first-year Pell students from 13.9% in 2018-19 to 14.4% in 2019-20 (and of Wisconsin residents, a 21% Pell rate). Our current figures for 2020-2021 show the percentage of first-year Pell students increasing to 17.1% and the overall undergraduate rate to 15.0%, which is 220 more Pell recipients than the previous year.

IV. CURAFA monthly activities

The committee sets priorities at the first fall meeting. COVID-19 pandemic required virtual meetings be conducted. Fall semester business may include status and demographics of the incoming class; future year enrollment goals and recruitment plans; major changes in unit operations; and/or current enrollment financial aid data and metrics. Spring semester business may include issues such as review of the admissions application and recruitment materials, and review of the enrollment management plan. The following provides a summary of meeting discussions:

- **September 2020:** Review and discuss EOY Report for CURAFA 2019-20 and reviewed the role and function of CURAFA. Reconfirmed selections of Dante Fratta, Faculty, Civil & Environmental Engineering [2021], and J.J. Andrews, Academic Staff, PEOPLE Program [2021], as CURAFA Co-Chairs for AY 2020-21. The committee discussed potential topics for 2020-21 year.

- **October 2020:** Continued discussion on selection of CURAFA topics. Agreed to conduct a digital poll to narrow down the list of topics. Brief overview of research highlights about standardized testing and grade point average by CURAFA co-chair J.J. Andrews (please see appendix for presentation, “Empowerment Approaches to GPAs, Testing and Academic Measurements”).

- **November 2020:** Results of topics poll discussed. Members approved focus on five topics. Admissions and Financial Aid agreed to provide updates concerning Topics 1-3 at the December meeting, followed by CURAFA discussion, and topics 4-5 at the February meeting. Topics are:
  1. Test-Optional Admissions review process
  2. Pathways for enrollment of students of color/African American students
  3. International/Out-of-State student recruitment/admissions. Recruitment of these students during and after COVID-19
  4. Recruitment and enrollment of Native American students.
  5. Admission and financial aid adjustments in the COVID era: Students working remotely and internationally.

- **December 2020:** Listened to presentations and discussed Topics 1, 2, and 3. 1) Test-Optional Admissions review process (SAT or ACT not required). 53% of applicants wanted their test scores used; 47% asked for score to not be used. The implication of those decisions are still unclear; however, reviewers indicated that they felt more genuinely holistic when scores were excluded. 2) Pathways for enrollment of students of color/African American students. Improved partnerships with schools and programs have helped strengthen enrollment of students of color. Fall 2020 enrollment trends reported enrollment increases in nearly every traditionally underrepresented race and ethnicity category. 3) International/Out-of-State student recruitment/admissions during and after COVID-19. Early increase of 1.2% on international applications for Fall 2021 was a bit of a surprise, within the context of external factors influencing student choices. Optimistic that embassies will continue to open and management of COVID-19 improve – both of which directly impact ability of international students to enroll. However, the applicant pool suggests a robust enrollment and even an increase.

- **February 2021:** Listened to presentations and discussed Topics 4 and 5. 4) Recruitment and enrollment of American Indian/Alaska Native students. Significant challenge is building trust within Native populations. The more UW-Madison can develop and expand precollege outreach programs for Native American populations, the better equipped we will be to foster these relationships. 5) Admission and financial aid adjustments in the COVID era. Helen Faith, Director of Student Financial Aid, presented detailed the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (please see appendix for presentation, “Emergency Aid Update” by Helen Faith, Director of Student Financial Aid). During Q&A and discussion, more donations to the general funds and emergency funds are needed to assist students experiencing need but do not meet all the requirements for federal relief funding. Additional report presented by Clare Huhn, Academic Planning and Institutional Research, analyzes the enrollmentpatterns of Fall 2020 admitted applicants who did not enroll at UW-Madison (please see appendix for report, “Enrollment Patterns of UW-Madison’s Fall 2020 Admitted New Freshman Applicants | February 2021”). Among the findings, APIR analysis found that the highest proportion of
admitted applicants who enrolled elsewhere attend (mostly public) research institutions in the Midwest.

According to the report: “This (yield rate) suggests that we are competing for enrollments with our peer research institutions rather than other institutions in the UW System or small private institutions and that admitted UW-Madison applicants are mainly seeking institutions with similar characteristics to UW-Madison. This means that factors other than the 'type' of institution are at play for the applicants who were admitted to UW-Madison but chose to enroll elsewhere.”

**March 2021:** Reviewed and discussed draft of CURAFA’s annual report. Members submitted revision recommendations for wording and structure of annual report.

**April 2021:** Members approved annual report and prepared for presentation to shared governance bodies. Presentation on “Broadband Internet & the Wisconsin Economy” given by Tessa Conroy from the Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED). Presentation included in Appendix E in which Conroy shared challenges for access to broadband internet in rural communities and lower-income households. Discussion focused on potential impacts for student college readiness, admissions, and undergraduate participation.

**May 2021:** Reflection on past year. Selection of new chairs for AY 2021-22. Selection of topic priorities for AY 2021-22.

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**V. CURAFA Membership 2020-2021**

**Faculty [term ends]**
- Dante Fratta, ENGR/Civil & Environmental Engineering [2025], Chair
- Duncan Carlsmith, L&S/Physics [2021]
- Sara McKinnon, L&S/Commun Arts [2024]
- Alberta Gloria, EDUC/Counseling Psych [2021]
- Stephen Young, L&S/Geography [2024]
- Faculty seat vacant

**Academic Staff [term ends]**
- J.J. Andrews, G SERV/PEOPLE Program [2022], Chair
- Tracy Mores, Administration/CFYEX, [2021]

**University Staff [term ends]**
- Carol Pope, Administration/CFYEX [2023]
- Karla Stoebig, Admin Vmth/Admin-Rcpt [2021]

**Students [terms end 2021]**
- Eryne Jenkins
- Peter Monti
- Anna Thompson
- Cole Wozniak

**Ex officio, Non-voting**
- Andre Phillips, Enrollment Mgmt/Dir of Admission and Recruitment
- Eric Williams, DDEEA/AVP for Student Diversity & Scholarship Programs
- Helen Faith, Enrollment Mgmt/Dir of Student FinAid
- Derek Kindle, Enrollment Mgmt/VP for Enrollment Management
- Jane Richard, Office of the Secretary of Faculty

**Friend**
- Clare Huhn, Academic Planning and Institutional Research

**2019-2020 Faculty [term ends]**
- Rachelle Winkle-Wagner,

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