

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**  
**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: March 1, 2004

**REVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the attached policies related to the admission of freshmen, transfer students, and international students be adopted to replace the existing admissions policies, effective immediately for the Summer and Fall 2004 incoming classes.
2. That these policies be forwarded to the President for approval.

**Rationale:**

The undergraduate admissions policies have been in place since the 1970s and early 1980s. A number of changes to the University and the institution have taken place since then: a vastly more competitive environment within which we recruit and attract students, reforms and revisions to high school curricula, broader geographic base from which we draw new students (including out of state students), a larger percentage of transfer students, significant changes to the process for the establishment of enrollment goals and for the resulting funding of institutions within SUNY, and finally, the recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court regulating the use of race as a factor in admissions decisions.

The attached policies, in their totality, respond to all of these changes and attempt to bring the University at Albany's admissions policies into line with the policies of peers and aspirational peers, including the University of Michigan and others.

The policies regarding freshman admission are proposed to replace current policies on Admission as a Freshman, Special Talent Admission Program, and Minority Student Admission Program.

Policies regarding Admission as a Transfer Student are proposed to be an addition to current policies regarding transfer credit.

Policies regarding Admission as an International Student are proposed to replace current policy on Admission as an International Student.

Policies involving the role of governance in these procedures have also been created.

## **Policies on Undergraduate Admissions**

### **I. Overview**

In its Mission Statement of 1992 the University at Albany expresses its commitment to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge; to the intellectual growth of students and their development emotionally, physically and socially; to service to the larger interests of society; and to profit intellectually and imaginatively from differences of opinion and culture. The University has further advanced its aspirations to join the ranks of the nation's top institutions, to support an educational environment that prepares students for our increasingly multicultural, global society, and to fulfill its special obligation as a public institution to serve the diverse citizenry of the State of New York.

To achieve these ends, the University at Albany seeks to enroll students with the academic and personal background to benefit from and contribute to this intellectual environment through the academic and co-curricular programs; and to successfully prepare to become contributing members of the society at large. In addition, recruitment and admissions efforts are undertaken within a framework that includes consideration of resources and requirements that emerge from the University at Albany's status as a public institution within the State University of New York and the State of New York.

In keeping with these goals, aspirations, and conditions, the following policies shall govern the admission of new students into the undergraduate program.

### **II. Admission as a Freshman**

Admission as a freshman to the University at Albany requires evidence of high school graduation or the equivalent. Admissions decisions will be based on consideration of the applicant's overall academic and personal characteristics and his or her potential to enrich the intellectual and social community of the University, and contribute to an educationally beneficial environment for all students.

While academic preparation and achievement is a significant consideration in admissions decisions, the wide range of school settings and personal circumstances that contribute to an applicant's overall ability and potential obliges us also to consider other factors in determining an applicant's potential to be successful as well as to contribute to the University community. Admissions decisions are also dependent upon the applicant's standing within the applicant pool.

The following criteria will be taken into account for all freshman applicants (excluding EOP candidates):

### **A. Academic Preparation and Achievement**

**Coursework:** Candidates for admission to all undergraduate programs must present a minimum of 18 units from high school, acceptable to the University, in a college preparatory program. Within that background, freshman applicants are generally expected to demonstrate the following to be competitive for admission: four units of English or the equivalent; completion of the Course B curriculum in Math (for students graduating from New York State high schools) or the equivalent (for students from high schools in other states or nations); at least two units of laboratory science; three units of social science, including one of U.S. History; at least one year of foreign language; two years or more of foreign language is strongly recommended. In addition, students should show electives that offer enrichment (e.g., fine or performing arts) or advanced study in a particular discipline.

**Academic Achievement:** Successful applicants are expected to demonstrate academic achievement across the core academic subjects of English, mathematics, social studies, science, and foreign language; and a competitive high school grade point average in the context of the rigor of the core coursework undertaken. Academic awards and honors and other evidence of accomplishment will also be considered. The profile of the applicant's high school may also be a factor in considering the applicant's level of preparation and achievement and the competition the candidate has experienced within the school setting. Class rank when available will be used to assess an applicant's performance and success in relation to his/her peers.

An applicant's willingness to pursue intellectually challenging curriculum, as measured by the presence of honors, AP (Advanced Placement), or IB (International Baccalaureate) coursework, as well as courses for college credit and comparable level work, will be a plus factor in admissions decisions.

**Standardized Test Scores:** General educational development and aptitude for further study will be judged by scores of standardized tests. Acceptable tests include the SAT and ACT, including the available national writing component for students graduating from high school in 2006 and thereafter.

### **B. Personal Attributes and Ability to Contribute to the University**

The University at Albany believes that a student body which represents diverse geographic, cultural, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds creates an educational environment that benefits all students. So too does an environment composed of students with a range of skills, interests, talents, and experiences who can enrich the University community through these nonacademic characteristics. Thus, in the evaluation of applicants, the University will give consideration to these characteristics and to all information the applicant wishes to supply presenting how he or she will contribute to the University.

Relevant areas of consideration as a plus factor would include, but are not be limited to: extracurricular involvement in school or community; leadership potential; community service; the student's ability to contribute to a diverse educational environment as evidenced by his/her geographic, cultural, racial/ethnic or socioeconomic background, age, gender, or sexual orientation; special talents, commitment to his/her education; work experiences; and personal circumstances that reveal important information about the applicant's ability to overcome obstacles, hardships, disabilities, etc. These attributes can be revealed through the applicant's academic transcript, letters of recommendation supporting the applicant's candidacy or conveyed through personal statements, and other documents supplied by the applicant.

### **C. Evaluations**

The recommendation of the applicant's counselor and teachers are part of the high school report and provide information about the personal qualities and special abilities which define his/her readiness for college study and ability to contribute to the University's community. Applicants may also be assessed through campus interviews or by information from University faculty and staff who have had the opportunity to evaluate the applicant's academic and personal background and commitment to his/her education.

### **Freshman Admissions Decisions**

Admissions decisions will be based on a thorough and holistic review of the application and supporting documents. Following such review, a reviewer will make one of the following decisions:

**Admit as a Scholar:** Reflecting a very strong record of academic achievement, as demonstrated by high school grade point average, standardized test scores, rank in class, rigor of curriculum, profile of high school and evaluations, if available; a solid extracurricular record containing evidence of a broad background; ability to contribute to a rich, diverse educational setting.

**Admit:** Reflecting a strong record of academic achievement, as demonstrated by high school grade point average, standardized test scores, rank in class, rigor of curriculum, profile of high school and evaluations, if available; a solid extracurricular record containing evidence of a broad background, if available; ability to contribute to a rich, diverse educational setting.

**Admit with Consideration:** Reflecting an acceptable record of academic achievement, as demonstrated by high school grade point average, standardized test scores, rank in class, rigor of curriculum, and profile of high school. Students admitted in this category must also present one or more of the following: excellent evaluations; compelling personal circumstances; strong evidence of special talent or accomplishment in an area or academic discipline, or co-curricular activity of interest to the University community (e.g., leadership, athletic accomplishment); and ability to contribute to a rich, diverse educational setting.

(Students admitted in this category will be regarded as “special admits” for purposes of reporting enrollment characteristics to the State University of New York System Administration.)

Consistent with University policy and practice for many years, the enrolled freshman class will include no more than 10 percent of its members who are “Admit with Consideration” candidates. Also consistent with past policy, no more than 2.5 percent of the total class, or 50 students, whichever is larger, will be students admitted on the basis of their ability to contribute in athletics.

**Wait-list:** Reflecting an overall academic and personal record comparable to, though slightly less compelling, than students admitted from the above categories. Students will be admitted from the wait-list if necessary to achieve enrollment goals.

**Deny:** Reflecting an academic and/or personal record suggesting that the student would not be successful at or contribute positively to the University at Albany. Factors considered in a deny decision may also include evidence of other personal attributes judged to be potentially detrimental or harmful to members of the University community.

### **III. Admission as a Transfer**

Admission as a transfer student to the University at Albany requires evidence of high school graduation or the equivalent and a record of acceptable academic accomplishment in college. Transfer admissions decisions will be based on consideration of the applicant’s academic preparation and achievement, quality and potential; personal attributes and evidence of his or her potential to enrich the intellectual and social community of the University, and contribute to an educationally beneficial environment for all students, and testimony provided directly by the applicant as well as in letters of recommendation. While academic preparation is a predominant consideration, the wide range of personal circumstances that characterize transfer applicants obliges us to consider multiple factors in determining the potential to be successful and to contribute to the University community.

The following criteria will be taken into account for all transfer applicants (excluding EOP transfer applicants):

#### **A. Academic Preparation and Achievement**

**Coursework:** Candidates for admission as transfer students are expected to have completed at least 24 credits of college coursework transferable to the University at Albany from an accredited institution following their high school graduation. Applicants with fewer than 24 credits are required to meet the standards for admission as a freshman.

Through their college coursework, transfer applicants must present an academic experience which is comparable to (though not necessarily a course-by-course match for) the background presented by freshman candidates and in its totality demonstrates breadth

and achievement and the potential to compete successfully with other students at the University at Albany, or in the proposed program of study.

**Academic Achievement:** Successful applicants are expected to demonstrate acceptable academic achievement, as signified by grades across all areas of study. The necessary college grade point average will be determined in part by the rigor of coursework undertaken and in part by the University at Albany degree program to which the student is applying.

**Standardized tests:** Such tests are not required for transfer students with at least 24 credits of college coursework taken after high school graduation.

### **B. Personal Attributes and Ability to Contribute to the University**

The University at Albany believes that a student body which represents diverse geographic, cultural, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds creates an educational environment that benefits all students. So too does an environment composed of students with a range of skills, interests, talents, and experiences who can enrich the University community through these nonacademic characteristics. Thus, in the evaluation of applicants, the University will give consideration to these characteristics and to all information the applicant wishes to supply presenting how he or she will contribute to the University.

Relevant areas of consideration as a plus factor would include, but are not be limited to: commitment to his/her education; extracurricular involvement in school or community; leadership potential; community service; ability to contribute to a diverse educational environment as evidenced by his/her geographic, cultural, racial/ethnic or socioeconomic background; age, gender, or sexual orientation; special talents, work experiences; and personal circumstances that reveal important information about the applicant's ability to overcome obstacles, hardships, disabilities, etc. These attributes can be revealed through the applicant's academic transcripts, letters of recommendation supporting the applicant's candidacy or conveyed through personal statements, and other documents supplied by the applicant.

### **C. Evaluations**

The recommendations of the applicant's college teachers provide information about the personal qualities and special abilities which define his/her readiness for University study and ability to contribute to the University's community. An applicant may also be assessed through campus interviews or by information from University faculty and staff who have had the opportunity to evaluate the applicant's academic and personal background and commitment to his/her education.

### **Transfer Admissions Decisions**

Admissions decisions will be based on a thorough and holistic review of the application and supporting documents. Following such review, a reviewer will make one of the following decisions:

**Admit:** Reflecting a strong record of academic achievement, as demonstrated by college grade point average, rigor of curriculum; evaluations, if available; a solid extracurricular record containing evidence of a broad background; ability to contribute to a rich, diverse educational setting.

**Admit with Consideration:** Reflecting an acceptable record of academic achievement, as demonstrated by college grade point average, rigor of curriculum; evaluations. Students in this category must also present one or more of the following compelling personal circumstances; strong evidence of special talent or accomplishment in an academic discipline or co-curricular activity of interest to the University community (e.g., leadership, athletic accomplishment); ability to contribute to a rich, diverse educational setting.

**Deny:** Reflecting an academic and/or personal record suggesting that the student would not be successful at or contribute positively to the University at Albany. Factors considered in a deny decision may also include evidence of other personal attributes judged to be potentially detrimental or harmful to members of the University community.

#### **IV. Admission of International Students**

To support an educational environment that prepares students for our increasingly multicultural, global society, the University at Albany seeks to enroll international students with the academic and personal background to benefit from and contribute to its academic and co-curricular programs, and to prepare successfully to become contributing members of the society at large.

Admission of undergraduate international students is available for all academic terms. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of academic preparation at a level comparable to domestic applicants, and proof of English language competency (for students whose native language is other than English.)

Admission as a Freshman: Candidates must demonstrate successful completion of high school in the United States or the equivalent in the native country of the applicant. SAT or ACT exams will be required of graduates of U.S. high schools. Academic preparation must include the core academic subjects and academic achievement that includes a competitive high school grade point average in the context of the rigor of the core coursework undertaken. Freshman applicants are also required to provide proof of English language competency as noted below.

Admission as a Transfer Student: International applicants transferring from US institutions of higher education must meet the same academic requirements as domestic transfer students. Students transferring from a foreign institution of higher education will be assessed based on the level and rigor of the coursework undertaken as well as the student's achievement in that program. Applicants may also be required to provide

official translation of foreign transcripts; an evaluation must be completed on a course-by-course basis from an accredited foreign credential evaluation service.

English language competency: All international applicants whose native language is other than English must present one of the following to qualify for admission:

- TOEFL - score of 550 (paper based) or 213 (computer based).
- IELTS (Cambridge University ESOL Examination) - band score of 6.0
- SAT - verbal score of 400 or better.
- Successful completion of two semesters of English Composition at a U.S. college (for transfer students only)

Conditional Admission of International Students: A conditional admission for students meeting all academic requirements may be possible for applicants who do not meet the language proficiency requirement. These students can be admitted conditional upon completion of one or two semesters with the Intensive English Language Program at the University, a qualifying TOEFL or IELTS score at the conclusion of that instruction, and the recommendation of the director of IELP for matriculation as an undergraduate student.

All undergraduate international applicants must provide documentation demonstrating the ability to support themselves financially. Required amounts of support will be determined by the University each year, and students must provide original financial documents from a financial institution. Satisfaction of the financial requirement will allow for an I-20 to be issued to the student.

## **V. Report to the Committee on Admissions**

Each fall, the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing will receive a report from the University's designated enrollment officer reporting on the academic profile of the freshman class, the admissions criteria utilized, progress in achieving specific enrollment goals and any other matters of relevance.

In addition, the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing will review the proposed academic criteria for the next admissions cycle. This discussion is intended to shape the general parameters of admissions while recognizing that the admissions cycle is a dynamic and fast-paced and is affected by many factors including the changing size and characteristics of the applicant pool as well as changing institutional circumstances.