ACSEM Recommendations – Spring 2023
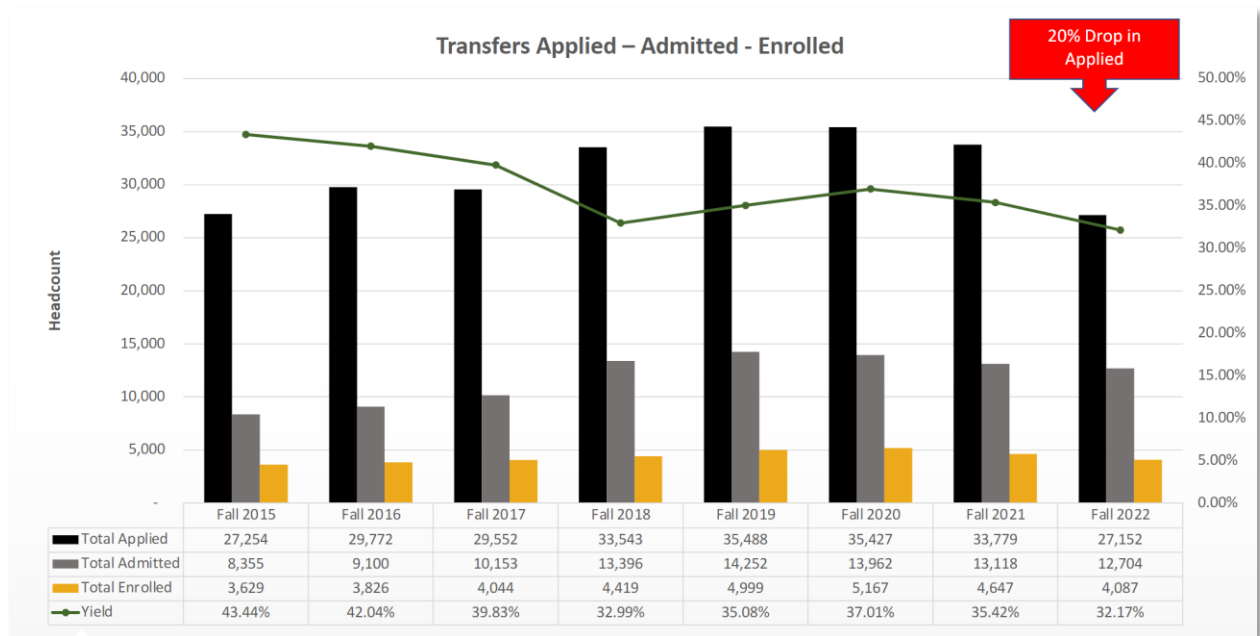
Introduction

Higher education is facing significant enrollment challenges. The decline in high school to college or community college enrollment and the uptick in students stopping or delaying their degree progress has accelerated since the pandemic. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, undergraduate enrollment declined 6.6 percent from Fall 2019 to Fall 2021, representing a loss of just over a million students, and more than one in four students enrolled in college in 2019 did not return the following fall, the highest rate since 2012.

CSULB is not immune to these enrollment challenges. In Fall 2022, we saw a decrease in the admission yield for both transfer and first-year students. The transfer admit yield was 32.2%, which is the lowest rate in eight years (see chart below). The first-year student admit to enrollment yield was 18.0% in Fall 2022, which is higher than Fall 2021 (15.5%) and Fall 2020 (17.3%), but lower than previous years going back to 2015.

Transfers Applied – Admitted - Enrolled

	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Total Applied	27,254	29,772	29,552	33,543	35,488	35,427	33,779	27,152
Total Admitted	8,355	9,100	10,153	13,396	14,252	13,962	13,118	12,704
Total Enrolled	3,629	3,826	4,044	4,419	4,999	5,167	4,647	4,087
Yield	43.44%	42.04%	39.83%	32.99%	35.08%	37.01%	35.42%	32.17%

This year, ACSEM explored the role of outreach on yield rates. Given the changing landscape in the post-pandemic era (see Shifting Tides: Preparing for Tomorrow's Students), the university will need to re-evaluate its approach to prospective student outreach.

The council recommends the following strategies to improve the impact of outreach on increasing admission yield at CSU Long Beach:

1. **Branding**

   The council recommends that Strategic Communications facilitates the creation of a task force/committee, in consultation with all entities that work with prospective students (e.g., University Outreach and School Relations, Center for International Education, college advising units, etc.) to organize efforts related to marketing and communications to prospective students that is consistent with campus branding and messaging. This committee may address the following:

   - Ensuring that branding that is consistent across all units;
   - Promoting institutional designations, such as Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (ANAPISI),Minority Serving Institution (MSI);
   - Going on a road show to promote the common identity among all academic units;
   - Creating short promotional videos of students on what they like about CSULB and campus resources, such as: interviews with students about a day in the life, classes, majors, internships, resources that are available on campus. These videos could be included upload videos to social media (e.g., Youtube, Tiktok, Instagram, Discord, Reddit) to help increase our online presence.
   - Continuing development of campus virtual tours.

2. **Assess Campus Online Presence**

   The council requests that ATS and ITS in consultation with the University Center for Usability Design and Accessibility to consider:

   - Designing a common template for website for consistency and ease of navigation;
   - Creating a consistent layout and design of website with one campus unit with representatives from URD and other campus stakeholders to lead in our campus online presence and provide management and support;
   - Conducting a usability study of the university website that addresses:
     - User-friendly design practices
     - Consistency across the campus
     - Use of one common Chatbot across the campus (currently OCELOT).

3. **Assess/Evaluate Admissions Process (steps) to increase yield**

   The council requests Enrollment Services to consider:

   - Conducting focus groups on student experience in the admissions process to solicit feedback from students who did not matriculate about their experience with the application and admissions process. These efforts would be led by the Office of Admission and University Outreach and School Relations.
   - Monitoring social media posts to understand student experiences.
   - Ensuring students are aware of financial aid options, such as sending individualized notices about awarded waivers to each student.

- Working with colleges in reassessing Major Specific Degree Requirements for transfers to ensure that there are no barriers to our transfer applicants.

4. **More staff resources for outreach**

The Council recommends that the university increase resources for the University Outreach and School Relations to allow them to engage in the following activities:

- Recruiting student assistants to support with graphic design and social media;
- Training departments and academic units on outreach techniques and best practices;
- Increasing outreach at K-12 level including:
    - Early Exposure (e.g., for middle school students) to less-popular majors that are similar to well-known majors and exposure to other career options;
    - Engaging with families of K-12 students in career fairs (e.g., LBUSD College and Career Night, GEAR UP Days)
    - Utilizing major exploration tools such as mymajors.com in our K-12 outreach efforts.

5. **Implement CRM**

The council once again recommends that the university adopts a Client Relationship Management (CRM) system for use in communications with prospective students. We request that ITS report back to the Academic Senate with a timeline for implementation.

CRMs are powerful tools for managing and tracking communication. They can compile data on communication with potential students via multiple channels, including email, websites, telephone, live events, and social media. For example, we could know when a prospective student last received a CSULB e-mail, whether they opened it, which pages they visited or videos they watched, etc. The CRM can also be linked to databases that store other information, such as application completion status and demographic data. A CRM system has already been proven as effective in International admissions.

A CRM would allow us to:

- Target communications with more granularity, to specific demographics or interest groups among prospective students;
- Avoid overwhelming prospective students with uncoordinated communications from different campus units;
- Assess the effectiveness of different communications in creating engagement;
- Better predict which admitted students are likely to come, based on level of engagement.