From the Director

The term “unprecedented times” is used with great frequency these days, and for fear of the adjective losing its significance, UCLA Undergraduate Admission also wants to acknowledge that these are anything but normal times. We understand the difficulties that every student has and is experiencing, but we also appreciate that some students or their families have been directly and significantly impacted by COVID-19. Regardless of the level at which you have felt the sting of this pandemic, we want you to know that we have all struggled with its impact on us and the world around us and to remind you that, as others have said before, it’s ok to not be ok. We want students to focus first and foremost on their own mental and physical health and well-being, their family and community, and finally their continued learning in the face of unprecedented (there’s that word again) circumstances. Our goal is to ensure that the college process recognizes and reflects those values.

The University of California application is designed to allow every student to tell their story, in their own words. While this has always been true, this is even more critical in this application cycle. While these tips aren’t all encompassing, we hope the following information will help you as you think of how best to present yourself in your application.

Academics

COVID-19 heavily impacted academic experiences around the world throughout much of the first-half of 2020; and it will likely have significant implications for how classes are taught throughout the 2020-21 academic year. Millions of students and their teachers had to shift to virtual learning overnight. We recognize that this abrupt transition was challenging for all students. Access to technology, a stable internet connection, and/or the ability to find a quiet space and time to study is not uniformly available and we recognize that level of access may affect your academic performance – these are all things UCLA understands and will take into consideration.

Pass/No Pass – If you, or your school, made the decision to shift to P/NP grades for Winter/Spring/Summer 2020, the University of California will accept Pass grades for academic course completion. However, these grades will not get factored into your GPA calculations. Your application will be given full consideration regardless of the format of your grades.

Trajectory – UCLA uses a holistic review process which includes consideration of your overall trajectory, pattern of achievement, academic rigor, and life circumstances. This also includes your fall 2020 curriculum so be sure to include your most up-to-date academic information.

Personal academic information - Please be sure to address any key academic changes and/or challenges in your application, either through the Additional Information sections or Personal Insight Questions.

Gary Clark, Jr.
Director, UCLA Undergraduate Admission
**Activities**

Just as academics were rapidly altered, so were opportunities for extracurricular activities. The ability to participate in activities, and possibly to obtain leadership positions, has changed due to the global pandemic. UCLA Undergraduate Admission recognizes these shifts and will review your out-of-class involvements with the understanding that opportunities for students to engage during this period have been significantly impacted by COVID. Many of these opportunities were altered or canceled for safety reasons. We get it and want you to know that this will not harm your chances of admission.

**Leadership** – While we look for dedication and consistent involvement in activities, we have never had a preconceived notion of what that may look like. Taking care of younger siblings, assisting family members, or a part-time job, are just as important to us as traditional activities like volunteering, sports and participation in clubs. Whatever you commit your time to outside of class, tell us about it.

**Pre-COVID Activities** – We encourage you to make sure all involvement and awards are appropriately described and accounted for within your application. Much like an academic trajectory, seeing your involvement over time will be beneficial when reviewing your application.

**Post-COVID Activities** – We are often asked what we would recommend students do to show their engagement in the current environment, and our answer is always the same - take care of yourself and your family first, and please don’t do anything to jeopardize your health and safety. We would encourage you to include as much information as possible about your current involvement, whatever that may look like, and know that we recognize how different “involvement” or “activities” might look in this COVID environment.

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**Personal Insight Questions (PIQ’s) and Additional Information section**

The University of California has chosen not to include a specific COVID question on the undergraduate application. We recognize that all applicants have been impacted by this pandemic in some way, so we don’t expect students to write about that topic specifically. Whether the impact was felt in your classes or access to activities, we recognize all applicants have had to struggle with the transitions and changes. However, if you would like to share with us how COVID might have impacted you or your family directly, we encourage you to use the “Additional Information” section of the application or possibly a PIQ if you feel the question speaks to your specific situation.

**Standardized Testing**

**Freshman Applicants Only**

The University of California has announced it will be test optional for fall 2021 and 2022 enrollment. Optional means optional – we want to be clear about that. UCLA recognizes SAT/ACT testing availability will likely be very limited this fall and winter, in addition to the safety concerns of gathering in large groups to take a standardized test. No applicant will be disadvantaged in any way for not submitting an SAT or ACT score. Your safety is more important to us than a test score. All applications will be reviewed holistically, and testing has always been only one of many factors in our review. Subject tests and SAT/ACT writing scores are also not required nor recommended.

**General Education and Major-Prep classes**

**Transfer Applicants Only**

Pass grades received in winter/spring/summer 2020 will be accepted to satisfy UC admission requirements and major preparation requirements. P/NP grades will not be factored into your GPA. Applicants will not be penalized in the admission review process for presenting pass grades instead of letter grades in the winter/spring/summer 2020 term(s).

**Demonstrating English language proficiency**

If you have completed all or some high school or secondary school in a country where English was not the language of instruction, you will be required to demonstrate English proficiency if you have had less than 3 years of instruction in English. This can be demonstrated through TOEFL, IELTS or Duolingo English Test (DET).