

University of Illinois Springfield Admissions Reform Recommendations

*September 22, 2009
Revised October 20, 2009*

Recommendation 1 Eliminate Category I

UIS has not in the past and does not now use a special tracking system to identify applicants about whom third party inquiries have been made.

Recommendation 2 Establish written criteria for Admissions that are publicly known

For UIS these standards appear at the links below. This information is taken directly from the UIS 2009 – 2010 catalog, in which policies established by the faculty are communicated to students, and from feedback provided by the academic departments. They include – undergraduate, graduate, transfer and on-line students.

- [Undergraduate Admissions Requirements](#)
- [Graduate Admissions Requirements](#)

These standards are linked to the UIS Admissions website at:
< <http://www.uis.edu/admissions/admreq.html> >

Recommendation 3 Address the Viability of an Appeals System

Appeals Policy for Freshman Applicants

Policy

Freshman students whose admission has been denied may, in certain circumstances, appeal the decision. The grounds on which an appeal will be considered include:

1. Updated test scores, transcripts, or other application materials as specified in the admissions criteria for the First-Time Freshman Applicants
2. The student's assertion that an error was made in the evaluation of credentials

Process

Students wishing to appeal their admission decision must submit a letter of appeal to the attention of the Director of Admissions, chair of the Appeals Committee, detailing the reason they believe the decision should be overturned and providing any supporting documents. The

Appeals Committee will determine by vote whether or not to overturn the admissions decision. Students whose previous denial decision is overturned upon appeal may be subject to conditions placed upon their admission to UIS.

Appeals Policy for Transfer Applicants

Transfer students whose admission has been denied may, in certain circumstances, appeal the decision. The grounds for which an appeal will be considered include:

1. The student's assertion that an error was made in the evaluation of credentials

Process

Students wishing to appeal their admission decision must submit a letter of appeal to the attention of the Director of Admissions, detailing the reason they believe the decision should be overturned and providing any supporting documents. The Director will review the file to determine whether or not an error was made during the evaluation of credentials.

Appeals Policy for Graduate Applicants

Graduate departments vary in terms of whether they have appeals processes, and, if so, the specific process the department uses. See Admissions Criteria: Graduate Level at <<http://www.uis.edu/academicaffairs>>

All appeals processes are posted to the UIS Admissions website
<<http://www.uis.edu/admissions/admreq.html>>

Recommendation 4

Create a University-wide code of conduct regarding University Admissions

UIS will use the code of conduct ultimately recommended by the university administration.

The current draft code of conduct is as follows:

"In order to ensure the integrity of the admissions process, only those whose jobs involve direct responsibility for admissions will be involved in admissions decisions. Faculty and more senior administrators will provide policy guidance and are available for consultation at the request of admissions officers. Violators will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge."

UIS had the following concerns with the original wording.

1. It should be clear that this policy pertains to admissions *decisions*, not to admissions *policies*. The *Statutes* stipulate that faculty have responsibility for determining admissions policies.

2. It should be clear that faculty not only determine admissions policies but at the graduate level and in certain undergraduate admissions situations, such as admissions to online degree completion programs, make the admissions decisions

Based on feedback received from the three University of Illinois campuses, including the above UIS feedback, the Code of Conduct was revised by the President in consultation with the Chancellors. The final, approved Code of Conduct is as follows:

All University of Illinois admission policies are set with the approval of the campus Senates. Only faculty, college representatives designated by the dean, or admissions officers whose jobs involve direct responsibility for admissions will be involved in admissions decisions. Other faculty and more senior administrators will provide policy guidance and are available for consultation at the request of those involved in admissions decisions. In addition, admission processes will continue to follow the general University Code of Conduct <http://www.ethics.uillinois.edu/policies/code.cfm> and the codes of conduct established by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP). Violators will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

This final, approved Code of Conduct is posted to the Admissions website at <www.uis.edu/admissions>

Recommendation 5

Create a process for handling third party inquiries.

Sometimes, persons other than applicants or their parents/guardians, coaches, or appropriate academic personnel will inquire about the status of someone's application for admission, or they will provide unsolicited letters of recommendation, or they will encourage the university to admit these students.

In response:

- For purposes of this policy, UIS defines a "third party" as anyone, internal or external to the university, who does not have a direct role in the academic programs or the admissions of students to the university.
- The standard response to inquiries received by units outside of Admissions is:

"The Admissions staff handles undergraduate admissions issues at UIS. Regarding your inquiry, please contact the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, who oversees all Enrollment Management units at UIS. His phone number is 217.206.6581, and his email address is tbarn4@uis.edu. That's where all inquiries would stop because undergraduate decisions are made in Admissions. I want to make you aware that your inquiry will be logged"

- The standard response to third party inquiries received by Admissions staff is:
 - “Thank you for your inquiry. Our policy does not allow us to release information to a third-party. If you wish to discuss this further, contact the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. His phone number is 217.206.6581, and his email address is tbarn4@uis.edu. I want to make you aware that your inquiry will be logged.
- If there is any question about whether an inquiry regarding an applicant is a “third-party inquiry” or a legitimate, appropriate communication, the inquiry first should be directed to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (VCSA), who will determine who should respond. If an immediate response is warranted, the Vice Chancellor may request that the Associate Chancellor for Constituent Relations speak directly with the third party if the VCSA is unavailable.
- The Vice Chancellor’s role after receiving such inquiries is to maintain the integrity of the admissions process. The Vice Chancellor will inform all third parties that UIS has clear admissions standards and policies and that the admissions staff will follow the processes in place to admit students. The Vice Chancellor will not notify the admissions staff about any third-party inquiries.
- Unsolicited letters of recommendation or other similar communications (e.g., phone calls or emails) that are not part of the Admissions process will not be considered by those responsible for making admissions decisions. Nor will they become part of a prospective student’s application for admission.
- Third parties will be informed by the Vice Chancellor that any such inquiry will be documented in a log that would be a “public document” under FOIA. Third party inquiries that are logged by staff outside of the Vice Chancellor’s office will be forwarded to his office for compilation. At the conclusion of each academic year, the log will be reviewed by the Chancellor and the Chair of the Campus Senate.

Recommendation 6

Ensure Diversity among Admissions Officers

UIS believes and practices the hiring of diverse faculty and staff, including the Admissions Officers. That being said, the university will follow all EEO policies and practices to ensure that every applicant will be given full consideration. UIS will make every effort to advertise open professional positions in a variety of publications in hopes of reaching a wide range of potential applicants.

Resolution 9a, approved at the October 10, 2009, Board of Trustees meeting reframes this recommendation as follows:

“Ensure that admissions processes address diversity and inclusiveness”

Steps being undertaken by UIS to meet this recommendation will be reported in conjunction with the intensive review of admissions processes specified in Recommendation 7

Recommendation 7 **Prepare an intensive review at the end of one year**

In addition to an overall review of the issues addressed in this report at the end of the year, during AY 2009-10, UIS will continue to implement processes specified in this report and review the following aspects of admissions processes for undergraduate, transfer, and graduate students to ensure they meet both the spirit and intent of the commission's recommendations.

Third Party Inquiry Process

Training on the UIS Third Party Inquiry Process for Admissions and Academic Affairs Staff (deans, department chairs, department admissions committees, department secretaries) will be conducted by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the UIS Admissions Office during the Fall 2009 semester.

- October 30: E-mail all employees the third party inquiry policy, including directions on what to say to third party inquirers and how to log the inquiry.
- October 30: Director of Admissions meets with Admissions staff to discuss policy, how to handle third party inquiries and how to log inquiries.
- November 18: VCSA will meet with Dean's to discuss third-party inquiry policy, how their staff and faculty should handle these inquiries and how to log inquiries.

Transparency of processes

Departments are requested to evaluate admissions processes and based on this evaluation submit any needed changes for inclusion in the 2010-2011 catalog. Particular attention will be given to the consistency of departmental practices with the catalog description of those practices

December 2009: Departments complete evaluation of admissions practices.

May 2010: Submission of revised catalog copy.

Consistency of terminology

Transparency of processes is enhanced by consistent use of terminology. Staff in the Provost's Office, the Admissions Office, the Registrar, and Campus Relations will review the catalog copy

and marketing materials to ensure consistency of terminology. Use of terms such as “application requirements,” “entrance requirements,” “admissions standards,” “admissions criteria” will be aligned.

October 2009: Initial discussion of terminology involving the Provost’s Office staff, the Admissions Office, the Registrar, and Campus Relations.

February 2010: Recommendations on standardization of terminology.

May 2010: Recommendation from Undergraduate Council.