

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS
(Final; Information)

AD.26.07 2025-2026 Annual Report of the Senate Committee on Admissions

This report summarizes the activities of the Senate Committee on Admissions (AD) during the 2025-2026 academic year. AD held one meeting during the fall 2025 semester (October 30) and one meeting during the spring 2026 semester (April 2). More detailed information is provided in the minutes of those meetings.

I. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA

AD.26.01, Fall 2025 Enrollment

Mann reported that enrollment has grown 36.5% over the past decade, with fall 2025 setting new records in applications and enrollment, including the largest first-year class in University history (9,207 students). Most applicants used the Common App, and test-optional admissions continued, with more than 43% applying without scores. The incoming class includes record numbers of international and first-generation students, and transfer enrollment also reached a new high. Admissions policies were updated to meet changing legal requirements, while planning for fall 2026 focuses on a single application platform, continued test-optional admissions, and modernization of the admissions process. AD removed this item from the agenda on October 30, 2025.

AD.26.02, Ninth Senate Review Commission Request for Committee Feedback from the Senate Committee on Admissions

A request from the Ninth Senate Review Commission (SR9) was received to provide feedback on AD's charge, composition, and function. AD responded to the request on April 15, 2026.

AD.26.03, Appeals for Undergraduate Admission through Fall 2025

Sara MacKenzie, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, provided appeal information at the April 2, 2026, meeting. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions revised the first-year appeal process to substantially reduce volume, following years in which thousands of appeals resulted in very few approvals. Changes included making the appeal form less prominent, requiring students to consult with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions before appealing, and shortening the appeal window. Three first-year appeals were approved, all due to internal administrative errors. Due to space limitations, no additional freshman admits are possible. Appeals must include new, compelling information not previously

submitted; letters of recommendation are not considered. Transfer appeals are reviewed separately and have different approval criteria.

Approximately 10,000 applicants were placed on the waitlist, with about 7,000 accepting a spot, including roughly 1,000 Illinois residents. Residency remains a factor in admissions decisions. Although Illinois high school graduate numbers are declining, overall applications continue to increase. While there is no in-state quota, the University maintains a strong Illinois student presence and continues to balance in-state, out-of-state, and international enrollment, particularly given financial aid considerations. Concerns regarding website navigation and appeal visibility were noted. The appeal option remains available through the applicant portal, and a broader website refresh is underway to improve clarity and organization.

AD.26.04, Admissions Firewall Third Party Inquiry Log through March 2026

Sara MacKenzie, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, shared at the April 2, 2026, meeting that a strict admissions firewall prohibits any external influence on admissions decisions. During the reporting period, three potential violations were identified and addressed by the University Ethics and Compliance Office through follow-up and reminders. Staff are instructed to reiterate the firewall policy when receiving admissions-related inquiries, and an annual communication is distributed to reinforce these expectations.

AD.26.05, 2025 Accept/Decline Survey

Sara MacKenzie, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, stated at the April 2, 2026, meeting that due to staff turnover and the use of a new system, a report on the survey will be provided to AD at a later date. MacKenzie noted that not all students who decline admission complete the survey.

AD.26.06, 2026 Admissions Cycle

Sara MacKenzie, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, shared 2026 admissions cycle information at the April 2, 2026, meeting. First-year enrollment targets are set in partnership with the Office of the Provost. 9,207 students enrolled in fall 2025 with an increase in overall yield. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions coordinated closely with University Housing to manage capacity, though projections remain influenced by external factors.

Transfer enrollment continues to increase, driven by earlier deadlines, an earlier review cycle, and the Illinois System Transfer Guarantee for eligible in-state students. Improved coordination with colleges and an online transfer handbook have supported efficiency, though capacity constraints persist as transfer targets rise. Responsibility for new student registration has transitioned to Student Affairs.

Following the June 2023 Supreme Court decision restricting the consideration of race in admissions, the University continues to work with the Office of the Provost and University Counsel to ensure compliance. While recruitment remains open to all students, enrolling underrepresented populations has become more challenging. Application volume continues to grow despite flat budgets and staffing, and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions has been tasked with modernizing processes over the next 12 to 18 months.

ADMISSIONS

Darko Marinov, Chair

Bisola Adeleke

Rabin Bhattarai

Keren Brown

Sara Connolly

Yulanda Curtis

Bryan Dunne

Steve Hall

Caroline Helton

Chu-Young Kim

Frank Liu

Minze Luo

Aaron Munoz

Chris Napolitano

Kaya Owczarek

Andiara Schwingel

Kimberly Alexander-Brown, *ex officio*

Katie Clark, *ex officio*

Daniel Mann, *ex officio*

Elizabeth Spark, *ex officio*