SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Undergraduate Recruitment Plan

2023–24

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Executive Summary

The following report details the recruitment efforts that SF State has put in place for the 2023-2024 academic year. It reflects our commitment to strategically use data, hold staff accountable, and improve our efforts to recruit and yield a diverse student body that mirrors the region in which we serve.

By creating an environment that values data integrity, transparency, and intentional connections to our core mission, we seek to create opportunities that will improve incoming undergraduate enrollment in 2023-2024.

Overview

San Francisco State University is committed to finding opportunities to maximize our undergraduate student recruitment efforts. Our recruiters and front-line staff are often students' first connection in their pursuit of a post-secondary education. UGAR acknowledges its great fortune in being part of a community that supports the notion that recruitment and enrollment is a university-wide responsibility.

Forthcoming recruitment cycles promise challenges that we must prepare for departmentally and institutionally. Declining high school and community college enrollment is reason alone to commit to work collectively to deliver targeted services, as well as services with high standards to our community at large. We aim to achieve this by investing in the right tools and resources and developing our teams so they can execute the prescribed actions.

This plan positions us to grow undergraduate enrollment over the next couple years. Our forthcoming Strategic Enrollment Management Plan will detail anticipated growth over the next 5 years. Furthermore, the plan will also address international and graduate growth opportunities.

In this plan we present information and strategies that will seek to engage wide and diverse groups of prospects from a variety of vantage points. The plan establishes a robust set of practices that may be instituted on a small and large scale.

The plan ultimately intends to increase new and continuing undergraduate student enrollment by:

- Instituting student-focused practices and engagement opportunities;
- Making data-driven decisions supported by agile responses to unexpected changes;
- Implementing tools and practices that meet high quality service and data compliance standards;
- Establishing an accountability framework to measure progress toward goals;
- Cultivating strategic partnerships to grow a pipeline of diverse, academically prepared students;
- Strengthening campus-based collaborations; and,
- Developing a more diverse student body regionally and statewide.

In the first year of enacting this plan the goal will be to establish a revised baseline that will take into consideration the new challenges (and coming challenges) that higher education is faced with. Thus setting a foundation to support UGAR's efforts towards achieving the established growth targets year over year.

Our 2023-24 goals

To create a culture that is collaborative, innovative, responsive, and strategic that will foster a proactive enrollment management environment across the university.

1

ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

UGAR will serve as an example for setting, communicating, and monitoring standards for meeting job expectations and delivering quality service to students and community members.

2

CHAMPION DIVERSITY

Recognized as one of the country's most ethnically diverse campuses and a social-justice leader, SF State will direct resources and practices to recruit and enroll students from significantly underrepresented communities.

3

DATA AS THE DRIVER

Use high-quality, credible data to identify and grow the pipeline of high potential and eligible prospects. Review data frequently and adapt as necessary to strengthen all stages of the enrollment funnel.

4

ENGAGE AND MOTIVATE STAFF

As the University experiences turnover and enrollment challenges, UGAR is committed to providing new and continuing team members with the resources, support, and motivation required for them to support SF State's goals and priorities.

5

PARTNER AND INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT

Partnerships will be vital in successfully reaching a critical mass of students. Early and frequent engagement opportunities among partners to align efforts and messaging will ultimatley increase a cohesive and consistent SF State message thus fostering familiarity and engagement.

Our 2023-24 strategy

Meeting the targets cannot rest solely on the recruitment team. There are a variety of factors and strategies that impact students' interest in SF State.

The following objectives are the building blocks toward achieving the goals of this plan and developing the SF State team.

OBJECTIVE	DETAILS
Accountability	- Establish statewide enrollment targets for each UGAR team member so that each team member understands their role in our overall goals. - Institute regular service-level assessments to identify deterrents to enrollment and institute actions that attract.
Diversity	- Use data to identify and prioritize recruitment at schools with concentrations of student groups not enrolled at significant rates on our campus. - Design communications and alignment with Division of Equity and Community Inclusion programs and student groups - Strengthen partnerships with new programs and agencies.
Data Driven Decisions	- Prioritize data availability, process efficiency, and student access to information to streamline and shorten the admissions and enrollment process. - Institute data collection and entry processes to support automated student communications and engagement.
Staff Success	- Adapt the delivery of services to remove bottle necks and advance practices to support students' enrollment transition. - Establish standard training and professional development program and supply public facing staff with SF State messaging and talking points.
Strategic Parnerships	- Rebuild long-standing relationships lost during COVID, and cultivate new partnerships that align with our goals and mission. - Establish mutually beneficial agreements that increase student engagement with our campus and community. - Capitalize on long-standing partnerships to access student databases for targeted recruitment.

Enrollment trends and insights

Background

COVID-19 and the social uprisings of 2020 changed how people engage, learn, and work. They created challenges as well as opportunities. Staffing became a significant challenge for SF State shared by countless institutions regionally, nationally, and abroad. The impact of "The Great Resignation" is reflected in institutional admissions data. Loss of staff meant fewer, or no, partners visits. This left more students less informed and engaged with SF State opportunities and programs.

Current enrollment data show that first-time-freshmen (FTF) enrollment counts rebounding to near pre-COVID numbers. Transfer still remains an area where considerable focus will be centered.
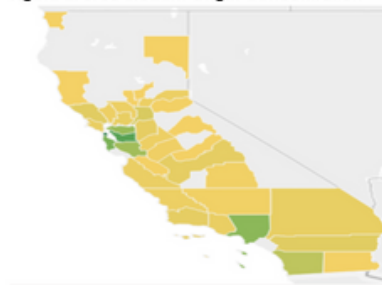
Our Student Body

SF State enrolls a student body made up of nearly 95% California residents. Many of our students remain within 100 miles of their previous institution, whether that be a high school, community college, or other university.

Figures 1-2 display the regional proportions of our enrolled students for Fall 2021. Among our First-Time Freshmen, 57% were from the Bay Area, Southern California (this includes San Diego County) is home for 26% of FTF. A larger proportion of our Transfer student population are Bay Area residents (62.2%). Southern California is home for the 20.8% of enrolled transfer students.
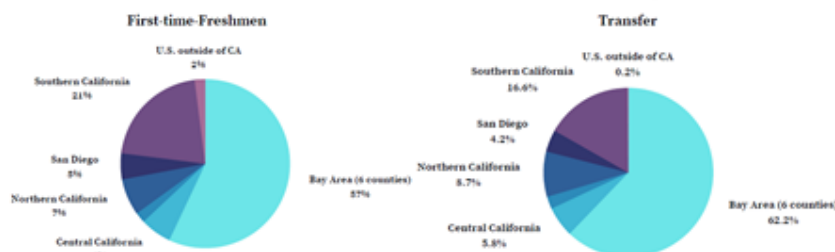

Figure 1: SFSU General Distance from Students' Origin

Institutions Where Students Are From

Median and average distances from student's institution of origin to San Francisco.

	Median	Mean
Applied	66.1 mi	163.5 mi
Admitted	66.1 mi	164.9 mi
Enrolled	24.6 mi	103.0 mi

Figure 2: SFSU Student Origin Concentration

Charts 1-2: Fall 2021 FTF and Transfer Enrollment Rate by Region

First-time-Freshmen

- U.S. outside of CA 2%
- Southern California 21%
- San Diego 5%
- Northern California 7%
- Central California 6%
- Bay Area (6 counties) 57%

Transfer

- Southern California 16.6%
- U.S. outside of CA 0.2%
- San Diego 4.2%
- Northern California 5.7%
- Central California 5.8%
- Bay Area (6 counties) 62.2%

Enrollment Declines

Currently, Southern California students make up nearly a quarter of enrolled students. This proportion has declined in recent years among FTF, as shown in Chart 3, in 2017 37% of FTF came from Southern California. The proportion among Transfer students remained consistent between 20-22%, even with the decline in applications and enrollment.

Many factors contribute to the decline of enrollment over the last few years. We gain insight as we look specifically at yield rates at our top 20 feeder high schools and community colleges, as well as the top 50 applicant producing schools and colleges (those that maintained high applicant and admit numbers, but our yield rate declined). In some instances yield rates declined as much as 20 percent in a year. Overall, managing resource constraints and site restrictions made engaging with students and staff difficult. Furthermore, increased competition from the UCs and other CSUs proved to be a challenge.

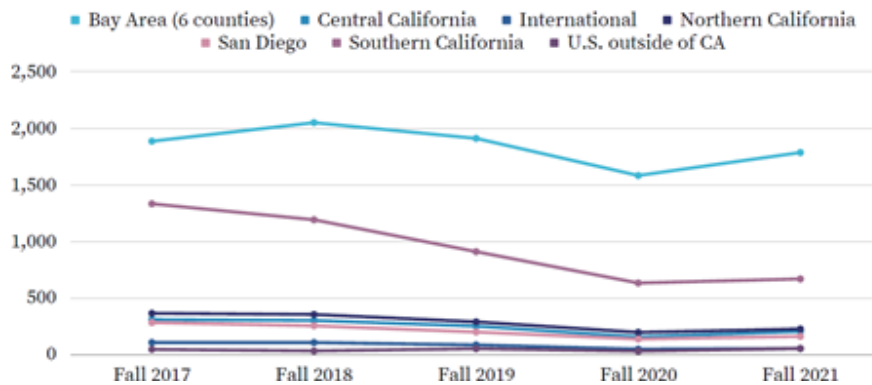**Chart 3 - 5-year FTF Enrollment Trend by Region**

Legend: ■ Bay Area (6 counties) ■ Central California ■ International ■ Northern California ■ San Diego ■ Southern California ■ U.S. outside of CA

Chart 4 - 5-year Transfer Enrollment Trend by Region

Legend: ■ Bay Area (6 counties) ■ Central California ■ International ■ Northern California ■ San Diego ■ Southern California ■ U.S. outside of CA
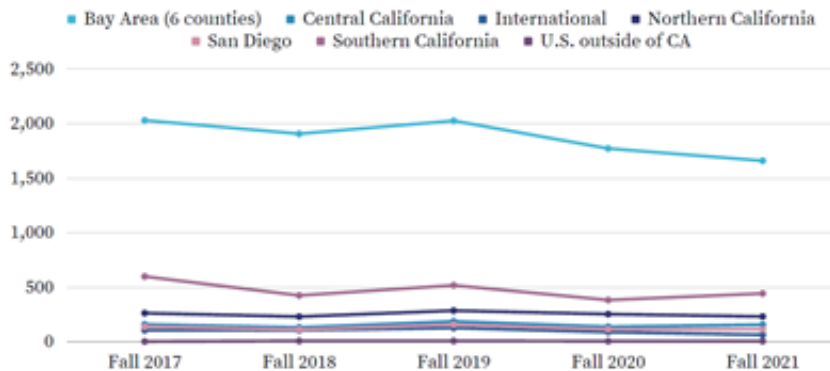
Chart 5. 2019 and 2021 Southern California County Apps and Enroll Counts

Legend: ■ 2019 Apps ■ 2021 Apps ■ 2019 Enroll ■ 2021 Enroll
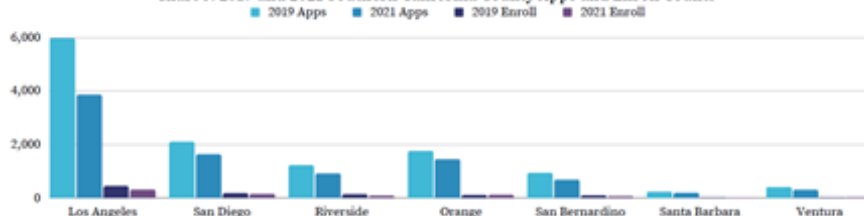
	2019 Apps	2021 Apps	2019 Enroll	2021 Enroll
Los Angeles	5961	3854	443	311
San Diego	2086	1621	178	144
Riverside	1206	901	132	77
Orange	1738	1435	103	112
San Bernardino	918	666	94	55
Santa Barbara	213	175	18	13
Ventura	391	289	17	27

4
Years of declining enrollment among Transfer students from throughout the state.

29%
Decline between 2019 and 2021 among Transfer applicants from the Southern California region

25%
Decline in all regions with the exception of Ventura and Orange counties.

Our priorities

Tier Structure

Recruitment Specialists are assigned to priority counties throughout the state. They are responsible for ensuring that SF State information is distributed in the most effective way to initiate interest, applications, and enrollment of future SF State students.

Prioritizing locations, schools, and events in the identified regions will allow recruiters to allocate their time and resources wisely. This strategy is currently in effect. The tier structure and recommended actions to serve those locations is outlined in the diagram below. This also allows us to prioritize schools as staffing levels fluctuate.

During the on-boarding process, recruiters will receive a detailed list of Tier I and Tier II schools and colleges to begin scheduling visits and outreach efforts so as to acclimate to their respective territories.

1

Definition: Schools that have the highest applications, previously ranked among the highest yield, but are no longer.
Practice: Reconnect through casual yet intentional engagement with counselors and program administrators. Establish a regular presence.
Frequency: Engagement 1-2x per week in person and provide alternate mode of communications.
Action: Priority event participation, more on-campus engagement, identify opportunities for strategic collaboration, listen for needs and find ways to support.

2

Definition: Long term, existing regional partner schools, districts, programs, and organizations.
Practice: Data that shows high yield rates over consecutive years, higher than other schools with similar applicant rates.
Frequency: Maintain regular presence onsite (minimum 1x per week either students or admin.)
Action: Listen and document strategic collaboration opportunities to more efficiently support schools' goals, increase pipeline, and identify eligible prospects.

3

Definition: Remaining high application producing schools where numbers may have seen slight changes but overall have remained steady.
Practice: Percentage increase/decrease under 10% from year to year, often bouncing back.
Frequency: Maintain a semi-regular precence, 2x per month, while prioritizing regional events and school sponsored activities as much as possible.
Action: Higher tier events are prioritized over Tier III; however, every effort should be made to continue to engage to increase application submissions.

Opportunities

SF State will aim to recoup our losses within our service area schools where we have historically received larger numbers of applications and enrolled students. Re-establishing relationships among our educational allies, and where applications were once stable but showed significant declines in recent years, will be our priority. We're confident that mending these relationships can immediately impact numbers in the coming terms. Extending this priority to greater Bay Area partner schools whose application numbers have fallen will also require a thoughtful approach and dedicated attention.

Within the Southern California region there are immense opportunities to achieve our goals to increase enrollment and to diversify our student body. This can be accomplished through the engagement of Southern California applicants from schools that historically send more than 40 applications per year. Prioritizing this region also means establishing policies and practices that demonstrate our interest in welcoming and removing barriers to their attendance, as well as for all students.

Recruiting additional prospects in the Southern California region will require establishing a presence in target communities, as well as adequate resources that may support students wishing to relocate to Northern California and who may have additional barriers as first-generation, low-income students. Understanding that low-income and communities of color develop trust among those they are familiar with reinforces our need to be present and to provide consistent messaging. Instituting activities and coordinating visits that bring Southern California students to participate in on-campus programming will increase student engagement and their likelihood of enrolling.

SF State data shows that in recent years there have been nearly 30 Southern California high schools where 40-60 applicants were admitted; however, we yielded less than 10. Reviewing similar data sets and understanding the factors for this behavior has been critical in identifying possible opportunities within the applicant pool. The opportunities are there for SF State to improve yield.

SF State is committed to a culture of change and improvement in an effort to meet our goals.