Myths and Misconceptions

I heard it through the grapevine that UC ...

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... uses demonstrated interest, uses legacy in admissions. If I call over and over again I will get off the waitlist. If I applied in a previous year I cannot apply again. Taking a gap year is frowned upon by UC admissions. My course work needs to show high school courses in the major I wish to study. The more activities and awards that I have the more they will like me. Well-rounded is required for admission. I need to fill out every line, every space in the application or it will count against me.
True or False?

“UC uses legacy in the admissions process.”
The University of California completes a comprehensive review of each freshman applicant. Evaluation staff look beyond test scores and grades to evaluate a student's record but cannot use legacy in selection.

Comprehensive Review Factors for Freshman Admission:
http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/index.html

The University of California completes a comprehensive review of each freshman applicant. Evaluation staff look beyond test scores and grades to evaluate a student's record. While factors like the quality of a student's senior year course work, ACT/SAT scores, and special talents are approved factors for admission, legacy is not.
True or False?

“Sharing my undocumented status/a disability/health struggle will hurt my chances of being admitted.”
Disabilities (physical, emotional or mental) vary from student to student. In the review process, admissions officers cannot look up a condition to see how it 'could' impact a student. Instead, it's upon the student to describe how their disability has impacted their ability to complete A-G requirements, created barriers in non-academic achievements, or allowed for success in both.

Students with disabilities:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/campuses-majors/campus-programs-and-support-services/students-with-disabilities.html
FALSE

Admission is an additive process. What is reviewed can only be used to help a student in admissions, never to hurt their evaluation.

Immigration status will not be used outside the application process other than for legitimate educational interest. Being undocumented is not a criteria for or against admissions.

UC Undocumented Student Resources:
http://undoc.universityofcalifornia.edu/index.html
True or False?

"Race and/or gender is used in admission selection."
• The University of California has clear guidelines around how gender and ethnicity can and cannot be used.
• California state constitution, Proposition 209 prohibits the use of gender and/or ethnicity in admission to a UC campus. UC may choose to advance goals like diversity and equal opportunity using a broad range of admissions that are not based on an individual’s race or gender. For example, holistic review in admissions considers income level, first-generation status, neighborhood circumstances, disadvantages overcome, low-performing secondary school attended, and the impact of an applicant’s background on academic achievement.
True or False?

"Demonstrated interest will give you an advantage in the admission process."
FALSE

Demonstrated interest will NOT give an applicant an advantage in the admission process.

UC admission offices complete a 14-point comprehensive review of each freshman applicant. *Demonstrated Interest* is NOT included among the comprehensive review criteria. Furthermore, it has nothing to do with an applicant's qualifications for admission.
While it is encouraged to talk with the admissions office and ask questions about admission selection, major selection, student life and more, that interaction is not a factor in the selection process.
True or False?

“You have to have AP/IB coursework to be admitted.”
Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate coursework is NOT a UC admissions requirement.

Although applicants can be admitted without AP/IB coursework, applicants should be reminded that admission to the university is competitive, and most applicants present more than the minimum requirements when applying. If an applicant has taken AP/IB exams (regardless of the coursework) and reports their scores, we will consider them in our review of their application.
One of the 14 factors UC considers in the comprehensive review process is:

"Number of and performance in approved honors courses, Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses and transferable college courses."

Exam Credits for AP, IB and A-levels are posted for you to review:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/exam-credit/
True or False?

“There is a quota of students that can be admitted from my school.”
The UC system does not use quotas

Each campus sets goals that specify the number of new students expected to enroll for the fall term. The selection process and enrollment goals may vary from year to year; therefore, the results may differ significantly. The high school a student attends can play a factor into the selection process but setting quotas from a school is not a practice any UC has in admission.

Comprehensive Review factors and how to showcase yourself in the UC application guide:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/
True or False?

“Including income in the 'About you' tab on the application will hurt you if your family has a higher income.”
Including family income in the "About You" section is NOT used to determine residency status or eligibility for financial aid.

Information about a student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s)' education, income, and family size is used to provide contextual information about the home environment and to determine eligibility for the application fee waiver and/or for EOP consideration.

Income in the FAFSA or CA Dream Act and income in the About You section are not compared to one another. The Admissions staff does not have access to nor will they request a copy of the FAFSA (or CA Dream Act).

High income in a students application is either a neutral or it can set context for their accomplishments inside and outside of the classroom. A student will not be penalized for a high income just like a student will not be penalized for a low-income.
True or False?

“The average SAT/ACT scores found on the website/brochures are minimum scores required for admission.”
FALSE

Test averages are posted on our websites and brochures. On occasion we also post the middle 50% range.

The University of California has published minimum requirements for GPA calculation. There are no minimum exam score totals for general admission. The only minimum test scores exist when a student wishes to apply for admission by exam alone. As freshman admission is comprehensive (or holistic), no one part of the application is the reason a student is admitted (or denied).

Note: to qualify in the top 9% statewide, students in participating CA high schools must meet the eligibility index which is a combination of GPA and test scores.
Reminder: Students are required to share all scores with the UC system. Scores that are complete and those that are not, can be used to help a student through the enrollment process. An incomplete SAT score (one without an essay) may still be used to validate AWPE after admission. While the complete score is required to admit a student the admissions officer won’t compare exams nor will be average them. The UC system does not super score.
True or False?

"Adding more of one subject in your intended major will make you a more competitive applicant."
Recommendations on subject requirements might be made by each UC campus based on a student's intended major. It is wise for a student to talk to the UC campus for posted recommendations. Applicants should be reminded that admission to UC is competitive, most applicants present more than the minimum requirements when applying for admission. Recommendations on subject requirements might be made by each UC campus based on a student's intended major. It is wise for a student to talk to the UC campus for posted recommendations.

Majors by discipline guide:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/files/undergraduate_majors_list.pdf
IT DEPENDS

Taking additional coursework or showing proficiency in a subject might be recommended for STEM fields.

Across the UC system engineering, computer science and some science majors will be impacted at admission. Recommendations are posted for these programs. Proficiency in a subject matter may help with selection. The proficiency may not always be in course work, exams may showcase the talent requested by faculty in the STEM fields.

Majors by discipline guide:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/files/undergraduate_majors_list.pdf
True or False?

"Fluency in a second language will automatically meet LOTE."
Students who have been educated in a language other than English while in middle school have met the requirement. It is recommended to share LOTE proficiency in the “additional comments” box in the Academic History section of the UC application. Once a student accepts an offer of admission, campuses may ask for school transcripts or other official documents. Other acceptable methods are either proficiency demonstrated by an official assessment test at a college or university, or official certification by a high school principal.

True or False?

“I am applying to a specialty program. UC will watch all my videos, links, blogs, and social media.”
Specialty programs will have a pre-set audition or supplemental application. Guidelines for what can be submitted is posted on each UC campuses website. Unsolicited information will not be reviewed, not even for specialty programs. Students need to adhere to requirements posted on the UC application and on each UC campus’ website.

UC campus listing of additional program requirements: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/requirements/freshman/

Majors by UC campus that require additional program requirements: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/requirements/
True or False?

“Grammar and spelling are considered in the personal insight responses. It's about show, not tell!”
What a student shares is reviewed by the admissions officer. How they spell it or the structure of the response is not used at any UC campus to determine admission.
True or False?

“You have to have a 4.0 (or higher) GPA to get admitted to a UC. It's the minimum GPA requirement!”
Campuses will generally list the average GPA of admitted students from the previous year. While many campuses may indicate an “average” that exceeds a 4.0, these are merely averages. The middle 50 percentile range is typically shared in publications. Keep in mind that admission for freshmen is comprehensive (or holistic), so no one part of the application is the reason a student is admitted (or denied) admission.
True or False?

“If one campus admits me, I am less likely to be admitted to another campus!”

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  COUNSELOR CONFERENCE
Students may apply to different majors at different campuses. Keep in mind that campuses may admit students differently (some by major, some by department and/or school, etc). Given the volume of applications at each UC campus, it is unrealistic to collaborate in the evaluation and selection of each applicant.
True or False?

“It's easier for out-of-state and international students to be admitted since they have to pay more.”
Close to 90 percent of UC undergraduates are California residents. They are a vibrant and diverse group, encompassing the cultural, racial, socioeconomic and geographic richness of our state. Nonresident students are required to meet a higher minimum GPA of 3.4. Honors courses for out-of-state schools are not given extra weight in the GPA calculation, only AP, IB and college/university course work. Nonresident students are also not eligible for admission via the local or statewide pathways. The UC Regents have placed a cap on each UC campus in regards to nonresident enrollment. We are all required to show that we place similar academic expectations on both in-state and nonresident applicants.
True or False?

“More extracurricular activities and awards are always better. I have to fill up every line in the application.”
Extracurricular activities and awards are an important part of the Comprehensive Review process. More is not always better.

We like to see consistency, longevity, commitment and that students are opportunistic. We do not have a set list of activities which are required, nor do we look for a minimum set of hours completed in any given activity.

Freshman Comprehensive Review Criteria:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/
True or False?

“I want to travel after my senior year and UCs usually let students defer an admission offer.”
Students who applied in a previous year, and who were admitted, will be reviewed with their current applicant pool. While students may have been admitted in the past, it does not guarantee admission in the future.

In general, UC campuses do not defer admission. We recommend students wait to apply for the term they are able to enroll in.

Deferment may be granted under extenuating circumstances for military deployment or medical reasons. This deferment policy is under the discretion of each individual campus.

FAQ for Counselors, the GAP year:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/q-and-a/miscellaneous/#11
True or False?

“If I don't get in, I can keep calling/emailing until they let me in. I can wear them down.”
Senior year looking good with marked improvement is not a valid cause to appeal.
True or False?

After Admission: “This course is above the minimum A-G requirement, it won't matter if I fail it, right?”
FALSE

All admission offers are provisional.
Upon being admitted a student receives a Freshman contract with conditions that include guidelines for their Senior year. Any D or F grades, even those exceeding the minimum A-G requirement, in a student’s senior year will put their admission at risk and may result in cancellation.

Counselor FAQ, D or F in senior year:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/q-and-a/selection/#5

UC Next Steps for Admission PDF:
Counselor Resources

UC Counselor Resource page: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/

UC Downloadable Resources: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/downloadable-guides/


UC Application: https://apply.universityofcalifornia.edu


UC Comprehensive Review (Freshman): https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/
Questions?

UC Campus Contacts:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/campus-admission-contacts/