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## University Admissions Processes

On March 12, 2019 the United States Department of Justice unveiled a nationwide college admissions scam that the Department alleges involves exam cheating and athletic recruitment. The vast nature and certain high-profile arrests associated with the allegation have kept the allegation alive in the mind of the public and on campuses. To assist our membership in having campus conversations and conducting reviews appropriate to their individual situations, the Association has asked thought leaders within our membership to provide a framework of resources to review and questions to ask. As in all things in audit, the appropriate response will depend upon the specific risks present at each institution. We invite you to continue the conversation with Connect ACUA available to the membership at ACUA.org.

Thank you,  
Justin Noble  
ACUA President

### Potential Audit Objectives

- Determine the adequacy of recruitment activities aimed at enrolling a qualified, diverse student body.
- Determine if the application review and appeal process are prescribed and consistently followed
- Ensure applications and related supplement materials are secured.
- Determine the adequacy of the process to identify residential status of applicants.
- Review the adequacy of controls for athletes and other special admissions applicants.
- Review oversight of special admissions applicants to ensure that multiple administrators are involved in approving the acceptance of those students and assess their process for ongoing monitoring of students after they enroll.

### Potential Sources of Information

- Admissions information in the Institution's most recent accreditation self-study
- Promotional materials used by the recruiting and admissions office.
- Customized or specialized recruiting materials used by sub-groups (Athletics, Diversity, Honors College)
- Communications to organizations involved in rankings that utilized admissions standards or data
- Admissions information provided as part of Athletics self-studies or conference communications.

### Potential Questions and Areas for Review

- What categories of students are there special admission policies?
- Who makes admission decisions regarding these speciality groups? There should be appropriate segregation of duties including multiple layers of review and approval for all speciality groups. The one possible exception might be "automatic admits" (i.e., meeting minimum GPA, class rank, SAT/ACT,

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etc.). These automatic admits should be system handled and not manually entered. Overall there should not be any admissions that are handled by only one person.

- For prospective student athletes, are there special admission processes for walk-ons or preferred walk-ons? If so, multiple offices should be involved verses one coach, administrator, or employee making decisions.
- Other offices (e.g., athletics compliance, academics, etc.) should be notified of prospective student athletes prior to official visits, scholarships decisions, book awards, or other benefits being offered to those students.
- Athletic compliance should have a due diligence policies and processes to validate athletic amateurism and ability. These processes could include discussions with high school, junior college coaches, or other coaches.
- Review processes for removing scholarships from student-athletes. A coach shouldn't be able to do this alone; athletics compliance and financial aid should be involved. If a student-athlete quits the team, the coach and student should meet with athletics compliance and possibly other offices.
- Are there policies to review cases where a prospective student-athlete's SAT/ACT scores jump unreasonably or where the SAT/ACT scores are skewed in relation to GPA? Athletics compliance or academics should review these to look for extra courses, determine whether test review prep was completed, talk to parents, etc. The student may be asked to retake the SAT/ACT in some cases where extenuating factors explaining the increase in scores can't be found.
- Low dollar scholarships, including "book scholarships," are of particular risk of being used falsely and should warrant additional levels of review. Higher dollar scholarships will impact a coach's ability recruit "real" student athletes and may be less likely to be used falsely.
- Scholarship award processes should include more than one person. If a specific competitive scholarship qualifies a student for automatic admission, students receiving that scholarship should have their files reviewed by another party.