SAN DIEGO -- Starting in Fall 2012, the University of California San Diego will raise the bar for transfer students coming from community colleges.

UCSD participates in a Transfer Agreement Guarantee (TAG) program, which ensures acceptance of incoming California community college students with a high grade point averages and lets them transfer their community college credits. Participation in TAG has skyrocketed from 500 students in 2006 to more than 8,000 in 2011.

Currently, a student needs a minimum GPA of 3.0 to qualify for TAG, but UCSD is raising the minimum to 3.5 for TAG students applying to transfer in Fall 2012. The move is meant to cut enrollment and lower costs, according to UCSD Director of Admission Mae Brown. University officials decided to make the change in advance of severe budget cuts at the state level,

"Given that increase in interest and certainly not an increase in available space, you have to make a decision," she said.

The university has been discussing the higher GPA requirement for more than two years, Bown said.

Students and administrators at local community colleges were disappointed but not surprised by the move.

"We're going to have to work a lot harder at the college and our transfer center to have them explore other options," said San Diego City College Vice President of Student Services Peter White.

Southwestern College presented a plan to UC officials, hoping to convince them to adopt a more gradual GPA increase. That proposal was rejected.

City College student Beto Vasquez expects to attend UCSD in Fall 2011. He's worried about his fellow students that
plan to move there the following Fall.

"It's extremely detrimental. People say no pressure, no pressure. Here's an added pressure," Vasquez said.