

Executive Summary

Work Team on Graduate and Professional School Student Diversity Study Group on University Diversity

This executive summary represents the findings and recommendations of the Work Team on Graduate and Professional School Diversity, a subcommittee of the UC Regents Study Group on University Diversity. The Work Team has also been charged with considering postdoctoral scholar diversity.

What do we mean by diversity?

The Work Team endorses the definition of diversity outlined in the UC Academic Senate Statement on Diversity. This statement underscores the responsibility of the University of California to serve the interests of the State, and highlights the relationship between diversity and excellence. By enrolling a diverse student body, UC will renew its commitment to equal opportunity while further enhancing the quality and excellence of the University of California.

Key Findings

- The proportion of underrepresented minorities (URMs) at UC decreases steadily with successive levels of the **academic community** (e.g., from high school graduates to undergraduate students to graduate/professional students, to postdocs, to faculty).
- Despite overall enrollment growth, proportions of URMs enrolled in UC's **graduate academic** degree programs have changed little over the course of the decade.
- In particular, **African American/Black** graduate students at UC are represented at proportions lower than those at our comparable competitor institutions.
- Within UC's graduate academic disciplines **proportions of URMs vary**. For example, low proportions of URMs are found in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines. However, aggregated numbers mask disparities in representation.
- URMs are more **financially needy** than non-URM students. In order to meet educational expenses, URM students in both graduate and professional programs tend to borrow more, have a higher frequency of borrowing, and borrow slightly higher amounts, on average, than do non-URM students.
- Enrollments of URMs in UC **professional school programs** substantially declined following SP-1 and Proposition 209. While in UC's medical schools the downward trend has been reversed, URMs have still not attained pre-209 levels. UC's business and law programs have shown little progress in URM enrollment rates since the mid-1990's.
- In UC's professional schools, **cumulative debt** for all students has risen substantially in recent years. Cumulative debt is particularly high in UC's medical schools.
- **Women**, although represented at virtually equal proportions to men in new graduate academic enrollments, are represented in decreasing proportions at higher academic levels. Enrollments of women vary by discipline, with particularly low proportions of

women found in the STEM fields (both graduate and postdoctoral levels), and in UC's MBA programs. Particularly high proportions of women are found in some of UC's health science programs (i.e., nursing, veterinary medicine and pharmacy).

- At the **postdoctoral level**, trends in underrepresentation are similar to that in graduate programs, but underrepresentation is more acute.
- One-half of UC's postdoctoral scholars are **international scholars**.

To what participation rate should UC aspire for graduate academic, professional school and postdoctoral programs?

Absent discrimination, we believe the demographic profile of UC students generally will reflect the gender, racial and ethnic profile of the pools from which UC recruits and selects students. UC participation rates should reflect the demography of these pools. This aspiration stems from our belief in the necessity of educational opportunity and achievement for all.

Recommendations of the Work Team

A. LEADERSHIP - Strong UC leadership is critical to increasing diversity at the post-baccalaureate levels.

- UC's senior administrators must take proactive steps to maintain **academic excellence** and equal opportunity by ensuring the enrollment of a diverse graduate and professional student body. Implicit in this role is supporting the faculty and administrators who work toward achieving these goals.
- UC leaders should leverage UC's influence with organizations that **rank** or assess university academic programs (e.g. NRC, US News, AAU) to include metrics on diversity/climate.
- UC's Diversity Statement underscores the university's commitment to underrepresented students. Federal and state laws require that UC not discriminate in educational practices. Both the statement and the laws support UC's commitment to identifying and eliminating the barriers preventing the full participation of URM students and scholars in higher education. UC's leaders must play an active role in **conveying this message** to the UC community, including faculty, staff and students.

B. ACADEMIC PLANNING - Diversity will not thrive unless it is incorporated into academic planning at the graduate, professional and postdoctoral levels.

- All plans for **enrollment growth** must incorporate diversity objectives.
- **Academic planning** should encourage programs that will attract diverse scholars. Particular attention should be given to disciplines in which groups have been historically excluded and/or who are currently underrepresented such as business and STEM fields.

C. RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENTS AND SCHOOLS – Resource allocation is essential to influence departmental behavior and demonstrate the University’s commitment to diversity.

- **Adequate funding must be ensured** for diversity programs, leadership success and for accountability. Since diversity is often regarded as ancillary to the University’s mission, programs and initiatives designed to improve diversity remain under-funded, or suffer when resources intended to foster diversity are diverted to fund other competing priorities.
- The Regents, Chancellors, and Deans should require **action plans** from departments/ schools/units still needing to improve diversity. The extent to which action plans are successful should be one factor in the overall evaluation of the unit and its appropriate level of support. For schools and departments which fail to attract and enroll diverse students, working groups (including faculty, students and alums) should formulate a way to correct rapidly **this failure**. Departmental plans should not include strict numerical quotas.

D. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - Campuses and departments can do more to promote a competitive, diverse pool of applicants to and retain matriculated students.

- The Regents must consider the **financial barriers** that impact students’ graduate and professional school aspirations, and consider strategies to reduce these barriers. Based on the correlation between URM’s and financial need, the “sticker shock” of high fees particularly in the professional schools is one notable barrier. Therefore any proposed increases in fees should be paired with a credible plan for addressing diversity in that program.
- At each level of academia (i.e., undergraduate, graduate/professional, postdoctoral, faculty), UC must establish or reinforce **academic preparation programs** that will attract, build upon the skills/competitiveness of diverse students, and encourage/facilitate URM’s to continue on to the next academic level. UC should expand or replicate successful academic preparation programs (with a focus on attracting URM students) at the pre-graduate and pre-professional school level.
- UC’s graduate academic programs and professional schools must maximize **“in-reach” efforts** to UC and CSU undergraduates to provide a diverse pool from which UC can draw. These efforts should include the pool of diverse Master’s students at CSU.

E. ACCOUNTABILITY - Increased accountability at the campus, division and departmental levels is a key component to increasing graduate and professional student diversity.

- The Regents should receive an **annual report from the President** assessing the diversity within all segments of our educational system, from undergraduates through faculty. Each level of administration should be involved: departments

should annually report to Deans, Deans to Chancellors, Chancellors to the Provost, the Provost to the President, and President to the Regents. For graduate and professional students, each department include diversity **metrics as a way of measuring progress** and as a way to be compared to similar units. While these metrics should not be used to establish quotas, they are nonetheless useful as part of the overall evaluation of the department. The collection of metrics over time can help departments identify areas of success as well as areas needing improvement.

- Academic administrators responsible for diversity progress should be evaluated on this as part of the normal performance evaluation compensation processes. **Evaluation of diversity outcomes** should be considered in the same manner as other performance measures such as academic rankings or fund-raising, with corresponding benefits or consequences.