

# **SURVEY OF NON-MATRICULATING SAA STUDENTS**

A Phone Survey of 44 non-matriculating SAA Students 1993

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



Office of the Assistant Vice President  
Student Academic Services

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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**A Declaration of Community: Report of the Universitywide Campus Community Task Force.** Student Affairs and Services, October 1993. (510) 987-9559.

**Undergraduate Enrollment Demand 2005: An Examination of the Factors That Will Shape Undergraduate Demand at the University of California Into the Next Century.** Outreach, Admissions, and Student Affairs, Occasional Paper 3, May 1994

**Information Digest: A Reference Guide for Student Affirmative Action Efforts at the University of California.** Admissions and Outreach Services, Fall 1994. (Prior years also available.) (510) 987-9574.

**University of California Student Expenses and Resources Survey, 1992-93.** Student Financial Support, November 1993. (Prior years also available.) (510) 987-9532.

**Undergraduate Persistence and Graduation at the University of California: 1991-92.** Student Affairs and Services, October 1992. (510) 987-9558.

**Report on Student Financial Support, 1992-92.** Student Financial Support, June 1994 (Prior years available). (510) 987-9534.

**Origin of Student Report: New General Campus Undergraduates Entering From California Community Colleges, CSU, and UC, Fall 1990 Term.** Admissions and Outreach Services, January 1992. (510) 987-9567.

**Origin of Student Report: New General Campus Undergraduates Entering from California High Schools, Fall 1991 Term.** Admissions and Outreach Services, December 1991.

**Early Academic Outreach Program, University of California, 1989-90.** Admissions and Outreach Services, Fall 1991 (Prior years available). (510) 987-9574.

**Report on University of California Transfer Programs and Transfer Plan for Community College Students.** Admissions and Outreach Services, September 1991. (510) 987-9572.

**Freshmen Retention at the University of California.** Student Research and Operations, September 1991. (510) 987-9558.

**Universitywide Survey of Fall 1990 Non-Matriculants.** Student Research and Operations, April 1991. (510) 987-9558.

**Report on University of California Transfer Programs and Transfer Plan for Community College Students.** Admission and Outreach Services, September 1991. (510) 987-9518.

**Time-to-Degree at the University of California.** Student Research and Operations, March 1991.

**Undergraduate Student Affirmative Action Five Year Plan, 1990-1995.** Admissions and Outreach Services, January 1990. (510) 987-9565.

## **Executive Summary**

The following is a summary of the findings from a phone survey of forty-four Student Affirmative Action (SAA) applicants who applied for admission as freshmen to the University of California for Fall 1993. All those interviewed were offered admission to at least one campus of the University of California, but decided not to accept the University's offer of admission. These non-matriculants were asked a series of questions regarding the factors that influenced their decision to enroll at a college or university other than the University of California.

The major findings of the survey are:

- SAA non-matriculants based their enrollment decisions on a number of factors, yet the factors seem to fit into a decision-making model that is primarily economic in nature. The SAA non-matriculants considered the following when making their decisions: 1) the costs of attending a particular institution, discounted by the type and amount of financial aid the non-matriculant was awarded; 2) the quality of the educational experience, including such things as class size, course availability, faculty contact, the academic prestige of the institution, and time to degree; and 3) the return on their investment which included such things as the success of graduates in entering the job market or being accepted into professional and graduate schools.
- A majority (52.3%) of the SAA non-matriculants initially preferred the University of California over the college or university at which they eventually enrolled. Among SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice or who were undecided at the time of application, financial considerations were the most frequently cited reasons for their decision not to enroll. Included among their financial considerations were such things as inadequate financial aid packages, the recession, rising fees, and reductions in state support for the University.
- Many SAA non-matriculants believed they received more lucrative financial aid offers from the institutions where they eventually enrolled. SAA non-matriculants believed they could not afford to attend the university of California, either because the University did not offer what they considered sufficient financial aid or because the University's total financial aid package included a greater proportion of loans than did the financial aid package offered by the college or university at which they enrolled. These same non-matriculants also said that a financial aid package from the University of California offering them a greater amount of grant-based funds would have definitely convinced them to attend the University. Additionally, a number of SAA

non-matriculants expressed frustration with the relative tardiness of the financial aid offers from the University of California.

- Almost half the SAA non-matriculants (45.4%) said the recession affected their decision regarding which colleges or universities to apply to and where to enroll. This was particularly true for non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice or who were undecided. Nearly one-quarter (22.7%) of the non-matriculants reported that at least one family member had been laid off from work during the preceding eighteen months. The recession also affected SAA non-matriculant perceptions regarding the overall academic quality of the University of California. Respondents believed that decreasing levels of state support, due to the recession, forced the University to cut back on course offerings, reduce the number of faculty, and generally diminish the undergraduate experience.
- SAA non-matriculants were particularly concerned that as a result of recent budget cuts, the University had been forced to diminish its academic program, making it extremely difficult for students to graduate in four years. Over half of the respondents (54.5%) felt that it would take them less time to complete a degree at the institution they selected than it would at the University of California. As a result, many SAA non-matriculants felt that attending the University of California would be more expensive in the long run, even for those who would be attending more costly private colleges and universities.
- Nearly two out of three (61.4%) of the SAA non-matriculants will attend private institutions this fall (41.0% will attend in-state and 20.4% will attend out-of-state). Although some SAA non-matriculants will be attending prestigious private institutions such as Harvard, Stanford, and the California Institute of Technology, a far greater number will attend small private four-year liberal arts institutions. Many SAA non-matriculants indicated that these smaller colleges gave them financial aid offers which they described as “too good to pass up.” These institutions also enticed them with guarantees of a graduating with a bachelor's degree in four years.
- SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice, as well as SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was not, frequently cited campus size as one of the more important reasons for selecting the particular institution they planned to enroll in this fall. These non-matriculants expressed interest in attending an institution where they would receive personal attention and where they would have greater opportunity to interact with their professors. Among the other factors described by the non-matriculants as important were

academic prestige and reputation, campus location, and the overall physical and social environment of the campus.

- Academic ability, as measured by the Academic Index (AI), is one of the more important variables affecting college choice. High ability SAA non-matriculants were more likely than medium or low ability non-matriculants to rank the University of California as their first choice. High ability SAA non-matriculants were also more likely than medium or low ability non-matriculants to apply to and enroll at high prestige private colleges and universities. High ability non-matriculants applied to more colleges and universities than medium and low ability non-matriculants.

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## Introduction

This report contains the findings from an in-depth telephone survey of 44 Student Affirmative Action (SAA) applicants who were admitted by the University of California for the Fall of 1993, but chose not to accept the University's offer of admission. The study was undertaken by the Office of Undergraduate SAA Outreach and Support under the Assistant Vice President, Student Academic Services in the Office of the President at the University of California. The survey was administered during the summer of 1993.

### The Problem

In recent years, two trends have emerged making it more difficult for Admission and Outreach staff at the University of California to fulfill the goals set out for the enrollment of new Student Affirmative Action (SAA) freshmen<sup>1</sup>. First, the number of SAA high school students applying for admission as freshmen to the University of California has not kept pace with increases in the number of SAA students graduating from California high schools. Second, the University has experienced a decline in the proportion of SAA applicants who accept the University's offer of admission. As a result, the number of new SAA freshmen enrolling at the University, despite increasing by 3.8% from Fall 1990 to Fall 1993, has not kept pace with the increase in SAA students graduating from California's high schools.

The number of resident SAA graduates from California's high schools who apply for admission as freshmen to the University of California has been increasing over the last four years, however, the absolute growth in the number of applicants has not kept pace with the growth of SAA students graduating from the state's high schools during this same four-year period (see Table 1). Between Fall 1990 and Fall 1993, the total number of SAA California residents applying for admission as freshmen to the University of California increased by 8.5% (+640), increasing from 7,534 in Fall 1990 to 8,174 in Fall 1993. During this same time period, resident SAA students graduating from California high schools increased by 26.8% (+19,993), increasing from 74,498 in 1989-90 to 94,491 in 1992-93. In Fall 1990, the University's 7,534 resident SAA applicants represented 10.1% of the state's 74,498 SAA high school graduates. By Fall 1993, the University's SAA resident applicants represented only 8.7% of the total number of SAA students graduating from the state's high schools in 1992-93. While the number of African American, Chicano, and Latino applicants increased in absolute terms from Fall 1990 to Fall 1993, only African American applicants increased at a rate equal to or greater than the proportional increase in California's SAA high

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<sup>1</sup>SAA includes the following: American Indian, African American, Chicano, and Latino.

school graduates. American Indian applicants decreased both in absolute and relative terms during this time period<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1: Change in New SAA Freshmen Applications at the University of California and California High School Graduates  
Fall 1990 to Fall 1993**

Ethnic Group	Applicants and High School Graduates	Fall 1990	Fall 1993	Change	
				Number	Percent
American Indian	Number of Applicants	333	280	-53	-15.9%
	High School Graduates	1,886	2,108	222	11.8%
African American	Number of Applicants	1,884	1,990	106	5.6%
	High School Graduates	17,460	18,319	859	4.9%
Chicano	Number of Applicants	3,836	4,335	499	13.0%
	High School Graduates	43,897	58,949	15,052	34.3%
Latino	Number of Applicants	1,481	1,569	88	5.9%
	High School Graduates	11,255	15,115	3,860	34.3%
Total SAA	Number of Applicants	7,534	8,174	640	8.5%
	High School Graduates	74,498	94,491	19,993	26.8%
	UC SAA applicants as percent of California HS Graduates	10.1%	8.7%		

Note 1: California high school graduates based on actual and projected: DOF Series 1992.

Note 2: New freshmen figures include only domestic California residents.

Note 3: Beginning in Fall 1992, the data on American Indians may reflect changes in the application that better instruct which students should self-identify themselves as American Indians.

Compounding the proportional decline in SAA residents who applied for admission as freshmen to the University of California is the overall decline in the proportion of admitted applicants who accept the University's offer to enroll (known as the "enrollment rate"). In Fall 1990, 61.9% of SAA resident freshmen applicants who were admitted by the University accepted the offer and enrolled. By Fall 1993, this proportion declined 3.8 percentage points to 58.1%, after making a slight recovery from the 59.2% recorded in Fall 1992 (see Table 2). The largest decline in the enrollment rate occurred among American Indian, Latino, and African American applicants. The proportion of admitted applicants from these groups accepting the University's offer of admission dropped 8.0, 6.6, and 4.7 percentage points respectively. The effect of this on enrollments should not be understated. The decline in the enrollment rate among African American and Latino applicants from Fall 1990 to Fall 1993 was large enough to potentially off-set the

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that beginning in Fall 1992, the data on American Indians may reflect changes on the application that better instructed which students should self-identify themselves as American Indians.

increase in the number of students who applied to the University during this same time period<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 2: Enrollment Rates for New SAA Freshmen at the University of California  
Fall 1990 to Fall 1993**

<u>Ethnic Group</u>	<u>Fall 1990</u>	<u>Fall 1991</u>	<u>Fall 1992</u>	<u>Fall 1993</u>	<u>Change Fall 1990 to Fall 1993 (percentage points)</u>
American Indian	66.2%	68.3%	62.8%	58.2%	-8.0
African American	60.8%	59.0%	58.8%	56.1%	-4.7
Chicano	60.3%	57.5%	57.8%	58.3%	-2.0
Latino	66.4%	64.6%	62.5%	59.8%	-6.6
Total SAA	61.9%	59.8%	59.2%	58.1%	-3.8

Note 1: California high school graduates based upon actual and projected: DOF Series 1992.

Note 2: New freshmen figures include only domestic California residents.

Note 3: Beginning in Fall 1992, the data on American Indians may reflect changes in the application that better instruct which students should identify themselves as American Indians.

In spite of the developments described above, during the period from Fall 1990 to Fall 1993, the University of California did manage to increase the total number of new resident SAA freshmen from these four ethnic groups who actually enrolled. Nevertheless, the enrollment of new resident SAA freshmen at the University of California has not kept pace with the increase of SAA students graduating from California high schools (see Table 3). SAA students from these four ethnic groups comprised 31.5% of California high school graduates in 1989-90 and increased to 37.3% in 1992-93 (+ 5.8 percentage points). During this same period, the proportion of new resident SAA freshmen from these four ethnic groups enrolling at the University of California actually decreased as a proportion of all new freshmen, decreasing from 19.4% of all new freshmen in Fall 1990 to 19.3% in Fall 1993 (-0.1 percentage points).

**Table 3: New SAA Freshmen at the University of California and California High School Graduates: Fall 1990  
to Fall 1993 by Ethnic Group**

<sup>3</sup> The magnitude of this effect can be demonstrated as follows: Suppose the University had admitted all 1,884 African Americans who applied for admission in Fall 1990. Given the enrollment rate of 60.3%, the University could have expected to enroll 1,145 of these students ( $1,884 \times 60.3 = 1,145$ ). Even though 106 more African Americans applied for admission to the University in Fall 1993 (1,990), the lower enrollment rate for that year would have netted fewer new students than enrolled in Fall 1990 ( $1,990 \times .561 = 1,116$ ). For Latino students the comparable figures are as follows: Fall 1990 equals 983 ( $1,481 \times .664 = 983$ ). Fall 1993 equals 938 ( $1,569 \times .598$ ).

Ethnic Group	Freshmen/HS Graduates	Fall 1990	Fall 1991	Fall 1992	Fall 1993
American Indian	Number of New Freshmen	188	218	172	139
	Percent of all New Freshmen	0.9%	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%
	High School Graduates	1,886	1,997	2,116	2,108
	Percent of All HS Graduates	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
African American	Number of New Freshmen	900	807	842	860
	Percent of all New Freshmen	4.5%	4.2%	4.1%	4.3%
	High School Graduates	17,460	17,119	17,981	18,319
	Percent of All HS Graduates	5.2%	4.7%	4.7%	7.2%
Chicano	Number of New Freshmen	1,964	1,871	1,869	2,124
	Percent of all New Freshmen	9.8%	9.7%	9.2%	10.5%
	High School Graduates	43,897	47,150	53,792	58,949
	Percent of All HS Graduates	18.6%	20.1%	21.8%	23.2%
Latino	Number of New Freshmen	833	813	809	775
	Percent of all New Freshmen	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%
	High School Graduates	11,255	12,090	13,793	15,115
	Percent of All HS Graduates	4.8%	5.2%	5.6%	6.0%
Total SAA	Number of New Freshmen	3,885	3,709	3,692	3,898
	Percent of all New Freshmen	19.4%	19.2%	18.2%	19.3%
	High School Graduates	74,498	78,356	87,682	94,491
	Percent of All HS Graduates	31.5%	33.5%	35.5%	37.3%
	Total New Freshmen at UC	20,022	19,345	20,314	20,216
	Total High School Graduates	236,291	234,164	246,965	253,666

Note 1: California high school graduates based on actual and projected: DOF Series 1992.  
 Note 2: New freshmen figures include only domestic California residents.  
 Note 3: Beginning in Fall 1992, the data on American Indians may reflect changes in the application that better instruct which students should self-identify themselves as American Indians.

Table 4 illustrates that while the number of California high school graduates from these four SAA ethnic groups increased by 26.8% (+19,993) from 1989-90 to 1992-93, the number of new California resident SAA freshmen enrolled at the University from these same groups increased by only 0.3% (+13). The disproportional change is just as pronounced when each group is considered individually. From Fall 1990 to Fall 1993, the absolute number of new American Indian, African American, and Latino students decreased in absolute terms while the number of graduates from California's high schools among these groups actually increased. The number of American Indian high school graduates increased by 11.8% (222) from 1989-90 to 1992-93. During the same period, new California resident American Indian freshmen at the University decreased by 26.1% (-49). African American high school graduates increased by 4.9% (+859) while new African American freshmen decreased by 4.4% (-40). Similarly, Latino high school graduates increased by 34.3% (+3,860) while new Latino freshmen decreased by 7.0% (-58). While the absolute number of new resident Chicano freshmen enrolling at the University increased by 8.1% (+160), this lagged far behind the 34.3% (+15,052) increase in Chicano graduates from California's high schools which occurred over the same period.

**Table 4: Change in New SAA California Resident Freshmen at the University of California and California High School Graduates: Fall 1990 and Fall 1993**

Ethnic Group	Freshmen and High School Graduates	Fall 1990	Fall 1993	Change	
				Number	Perent
American Indian	Number of New Freshmen	188	139	-49	-26.1%
	High School Graduates	1,886	2,108	222	11.8%
African American	Number of New Freshmen	900	860	-40	-4.4%
	High School Graduates	17,460	18,319	859	4.9%
Chicano	Number of New Freshmen	1,964	2,124	160	8.1%
	High School Graduates	43,897	58,949	15,052	34.3%
Latino	Number of New Freshmen	833	775	-58	-7.0%
	High School Graduates	11,255	15,115	3,860	34.3%
Total SAA	Number of New Freshmen	3,885	3,898	13	0.3%
	High School Graduates	74,498	94,491	19,993	26.8%

Note 1: California high school graduates based upon actual and projected: DOF Series 1992.

Note 2: New freshmen figures include only domestic California residents.

Note 3: Beginning in Fall 1992, the data on American Indians may reflect changes in the application that better instruct which students should self-identify themselves as American Indians.

Given the developments described above, it is apparent that unless a striking increase in the number of resident SAA high school graduates applying for admission takes place and/or the enrollment rates for these applicants increases dramatically, the University as a whole, and some individual campuses, will be unable to increase the number of newly enrolled SAA freshmen proportional to the growth of these students graduating from California high schools or to meet the SAA new freshmen enrollment goals as set forth in the University's 1990 SAA Five Year Plan.<sup>4</sup>

### Goals and Objectives of the Study

This study was undertaken to address the second of the two problems described earlier, that is, to identify and develop a greater understanding of the factors that have contributed to a decline in the proportion of SAA applicants who accept the University's offer of admission. In particular, this study examined the role economic factors (increasing fees, the recession, University budget cuts, and financial aid) played in contributing to this decline.

The specific objectives of the study are:

<sup>4</sup> See University of California, *Undergraduate Student Affirmative Action Five Year Plan: 1990-1995*. January 1990.

1. Determine the factors affecting the decisions of SAA non-matriculants by identifying the reasons SAA non-matriculants decided not to attend the University, as well as identify the reasons they selected the institution they will be attending. In particular, this survey hoped to obtain the following information from the non-matriculants:
  - a. The extent to which cost-related factors influenced their decision.
  - b. The effect personal contact had on their decision.
  - c. The degree to which comparisons between the academic reputation of the University of California and the academic reputation of the institution at which they eventually enrolled affected their decision.
  - d. The extent to which perceptions regarding the length of time it takes students to earn a degree at the University of California and the institution at which they eventually enrolled influenced their decision.
2. Identify the institutions SAA non-matriculants will be attending.
3. Obtain a better understanding of the way SAA non-matriculants compare and evaluate the financial aid awards offered by the University of California and those offered by other public and private institutions.
4. Identify and evaluate the non-financial incentives used by public and private colleges and universities to attract SAA non-matriculants.
5. Identify the actions the University of California could have taken to convince SAA non-matriculants to attend the University.

In the analysis that follows, responses to each question are examined for the sample as a whole, and separately for applicants based upon whether they indicated the University of California was their first choice (FC) among all colleges and universities to which they applied, the University was not their first choice (NFC), or they were undecided (UND). Operating on the assumption that the University of California "lost" those applicants for whom the University was initially their top choice, the analysis should help to provide a better sense of the strategies the University might employ to improve its recruitment and enrollment of SAA applicants.

## Outline of the Report

This report is divided into six sections.

- Section I is devoted to describing the design of the survey and the characteristics of the respondents. It contains a brief description of the survey, including its objectives, organization, and administration while Section II outlines the characteristics of the SAA non-matriculants who were actually interviewed. Readers not interested in the design of the survey or the characteristics of the sample should skip this section and begin with Section II.
- Section II examines where SAA non-matriculants applied and why. Included in this section is an examination of the following: 1) the influence of academic ability on choice; 2) a description of where SAA non-matriculants applied; 3) an examination of the self-reported factors influencing where SAA non-matriculants applied; and, 4) the level of personal contact University of California staff and faculty had with the non-matriculants.
- Section III examines where SAA non-matriculants enrolled and why. This section is divided into three parts covering the following: 1) where SAA non-matriculants will eventually enroll; 2) the self-reported reasons respondents provided as to why they selected the college or university they will be attending; and, 3) the self-reported reasons given by the SAA non-matriculants as to why they did not enroll at the University of California.
- In Section IV we take a closer look at the effect of economic factors on the decisions of SAA non-matriculants, especially the influence of total costs and financial aid. This section is divided into three parts which cover the following: 1) the self-reported influence of costs on the decisions of SAA non-matriculants; 2) the type of financial aid offered by the university of California and other institutions; and, 3) self-reported comparisons of the financial aid offers of the University of California and the other colleges and universities which offered the non-matriculants aid.
- In Section V, we examine some of the things which may have persuaded these SAA non-matriculants to enroll at the University of California. In particular, we will review the influence of non-matriculants perceptions of academic quality on their decision where to enroll. Also, we will explore are SAA non-matriculant perceptions regarding the effects

of budget cuts on academic quality, including perceptions of differential expectations regarding the time required to earn a baccalaureate degree at the University of California and other colleges and universities.

- Finally, in Section VI we will present our conclusions and offer some recommendations regarding the recruitment and eventual enrollment of SAA applicants.

## I. The Survey

This survey was designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative information on the factors which affect the decisions of SAA freshmen applicants who were admitted to the University of California but did not enroll. The primary emphasis is on gathering qualitative information on why these applicants made the decisions they made. As noted earlier, this is an exploratory survey. Time and resource limitations placed significant constraints upon the size of the sample. In addition, the retrospective nature of the interviews, together with the self-reported motives, makes qualification of the findings essential.

It also should be pointed out that in a study which relies on interviews, the biases of the interviewer can never be thoroughly expunged from the analysis. Interviews of this sort, while painstakingly structured in order to control for interviewer biases, nonetheless do engage the idiosyncrasies of the interviewer. Follow-up questions often require some judgment on the part of the interviewer. A good interviewer must not only listen to what the respondent says, but must try to get at what the respondent means. Nevertheless, the value of this survey and its findings lies in its ability to illuminate, even if only dimly, some of the many factors affecting the decisions of SAA non-matriculants.

### An Economic Perspective

The perspective of this survey, from its initiation, through the questions asked of the respondents, to the conclusions drawn from those responses, is economic in nature. It is our belief that economic factors greatly affect the enrollment decisions of SAA non-matriculants<sup>5</sup>. Further, it is our belief that the

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<sup>5</sup> Econometric models dealing with the relationship between price and demand for higher education typically include five factors: the change in price, usually expressed in constant dollars; the price of substitute options; opportunity costs of attendance or non-attendance; measures of general economic conditions such as unemployment and consumer confidence; and cost discounting defined in terms of financial aid. There are a number of excellent reviews of studies and methodologies. Among them see Chisholm, M. and Cohen, B. "A Review and Introduction to Higher Education Price Response Studies." Boulder, Colorado: National Center for Higher Education Management, 1982. California Postsecondary Education Commission. *The Price of Admission: An Assessment of the Impact of Student Charges on Enrollments and Revenues in California Public Higher Education*. Sacramento: California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1980. Carlson, D., farmer, J. and Weathersby, G. *A Framework for Analyzing Postsecondary Education Financing Policies*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974. Cohn, E. and Morgan, J.M. "The Demand for Higher Education: Additional Evidence." In *1978 Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section*, American Statistical Association, pp. 669-674. Washington, D.C.: American Statistical Association, 1978b. Dresch, S. "A Critique of Planning Models for Postsecondary Education: Current Feasibility, Potential Relevance, and a Prospectus for Future Research." *Journal of Higher Education* 46 (1975): 245-286. Hyde, W., Jr. "The Effect of Tuition and Financial Aid on Access and Choice in Postsecondary Education." In *Issues in Postsecondary Education Finance*, pp. 28-36. Edited by W.D. Hyde, Jr. Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1978. Jackson, G.A. and Weathersby, G.B. "Individual Demand for Higher Education: A Review and Analysis of Recent Empirical Studies." *Journal of Higher Education* 46 (1975): 623-652. McPherson, D. "The Demand for Higher Education." In *Public Policy and Private Education*, pp. 143-196. Edited by D.W. Breneman and C.E. Field. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1978.

recession, with its high rates of unemployment, together with rising student fees and reductions in state and federal financial aid, have intensified the role economic factors play in the decisions of SAA non-matriculants. We believe that SAA non-matriculants are rational decision makers. They weigh the costs and benefits associated with alternative enrollment options, selecting the one option that best meets their needs within the context of their individual circumstances. Certainly a lack of information, or faulty information, may make their decisions appear "non-rational" to some observers. That may well be, indeed our findings suggest that erroneous information often plays a central role in their decision-making process. But this is not to suggest that SAA non-matriculants behave "irrationally," that is, to make decisions outside the context of a method. We believe, and our findings seem to confirm, that SAA non-matriculants make rational decisions that are heavily driven by economic considerations.

### Design and Administration

The interviews were conducted by phone during the months of July, August, and September 1993. The interview consisted of 19 questions that focused on four specific areas of interest. A copy of the survey instrument is contained in Appendix D. The survey included questions which were aimed at gathering the following information:

- 1) Information on the individual and his or her family's socioeconomic status;
- 2) Individual motivations and experiences associated with the college application process in general;
- 3) Individual motivations and experiences with the application process at the University of California in particular; and,
- 4) The factors that played an important role in the individual's final decision process and choice.

The respondents were asked a series of both structured and open-ended questions. The exact number of questions each respondent was presented with depended upon several factors. For example, non-matriculants who applied for admission to more than one campus of the University of California were presented with a follow-up question asking them to rank order the campuses. Non-matriculants who indicated they will be receiving financial aid at the college or university they decided to attend were asked additional questions regarding the type and amount of aid they were offered. The average interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. The questions were not pre-tested, although modifications to some of the questions were made during the course of the interviews.

A total of 44 non-matriculating applicants were interviewed<sup>6</sup>. All 44 non-matriculants interviewed applied for admission as freshmen for Fall Quarter 1993 and all attended and graduated from public high schools in California. All but one of the non-matriculants interviewed will be attending an institution of higher education in Fall 1993. The individuals selected as potential participants in the survey were drawn from the population of freshmen non-matriculants eligible to participate in the University's Student Affirmative Action program<sup>7</sup>. A randomized sample of non-matriculants was drawn from among individuals in four ethnic groups: African American, American Indian, Chicano, and Latino. All the non-matriculants were admitted by at least one campus of the University of California.<sup>8</sup> None of those interviewed accepted the University's offer of admission.

### Characteristics of the Non-Matriculants

The non-matriculants in the sample were stratified into three academic ability groups based upon their scores on an academic index (AI). Scores on the AI are derived from the individual's high school grade point average and scores on standardized aptitude and achievement tests<sup>9</sup>. Non-matriculants were separated into three AI groups: High, Medium, and Low. Based upon information obtained during the interview, the respondents were further separated into three groups based upon their preference for the University of California at the time they applied for admission. The three groups are: those for whom the University of California was their first choice (FC) among all the colleges and universities to which they applied; those for whom the University of California was not their first choice (NFC); and, those who were undecided (UND). The characteristics of the survey respondents are displayed in Table 5. The distribution of respondents across ethnic identity, gender, and academic ability is contained in Table 6.

The non-matriculants interviewed were generally highly motivated and ambitious. Better than eight out of ten (86.3%, n=38) of the SAA non-matriculants indicated a desire to pursue an advanced degree. In response to the question, "What is the highest degree you ultimately plan to earn?," better than one-third (36.4%, n=16) of the non-matriculants indicated a Masters degree. Another one-quarter (27.3%, n=12) of the non-matriculants indicated a professional degree (law, business or medical). Finally, better than two out

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<sup>6</sup> Phone interviews were completed with 41 applicants and the parents of 3 others.

<sup>7</sup> A total of 1,211 SAA applicants met this criteria (American Indian=50; African American=220; Chicano=729; and Latino=212).

<sup>8</sup> The respondents were all California residents with California addresses who applied on time for admission to Fall Quarter 1993 as first-time freshmen. All had at least one regular admit code, were not deferred by any campus, and were not canceled by any campus due to death or falsification. Every individual had declined admission to the University (SIR code= 2-6 or blank).

<sup>9</sup> The Academic Index is calculated by multiplying the individual's high school grade point average (capped at 4.0) by 1000 and adding this to the sum of the individual's scores on the SAT Math, SAT Verbal and the three Achievement tests. The maximum score on the AI is 8,000. Under the stratification scheme, High includes those with AI scores ranging from 6500 to 8000, Medium from 5600 to 6499, and Low from zero to 5599.

of ten (22.7%, n=10) indicated a Ph.D. Just over one-half (52.3%, n=23) of the total SAA non-matriculants will be the first in their family to attend college.

**Table 5: Characteristics of Survey Respondents**

Category	Classification	Number	Percent
Ethnic Identity	African American	11	25.0%
	American Indian	8	18.2%
	Chicano	10	22.7%
	Latino	15	34.1%
	Total	44	100.0%
Gender	Male	25	56.8%
	Female	19	43.2%
	Total	44	100.0%
Academic Ability	High	14	31.8%
	Medium	16	36.4%
	Low	14	31.8%
	Total	44	100.0%
UC Choice	First Choice (FC)	23	52.3%
	Not First Choice (NFC)	13	29.5%
	Undecided (UND)	8	18.2%
	Total	44	100.0%

**Table 6: Survey Respondents by Ethnic Identity, Academic Ability, and Gender**

Ethnicity	Academic Ability						Total	
	High		Medium		Low		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
African American	2	2	2	2	2	1	6	5
American Indian	2	0	2	2	1	1	5	3
Chicano	2	2	2	0	2	2	6	4
Latino	2	2	4	2	2	3	8	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>

#### IV. Where SAA Non-Matriculants Applied and Why

SAA non-matriculants applied for admission to a wide range of colleges and universities, private and public, both in-state and outside of California. Where SAA non-matriculants applied, the number of applications they filed, and the nature of the institutions at which they applied are shaped by a number of factors. Among the more important factors influencing the decision of where an individual applies is the academic ability of the individual.<sup>10</sup> A number of other factors also affected the decisions of SAA non-matriculants. Included among the more important factors influencing SAA non-matriculant decisions regarding where to apply are the academic reputation and prestige of the institution, its location, the overall campus environment, including the size of the campus, and cost.

##### Academic Ability and College Preference

One of the more striking findings of the interviews was the extent to which SAA non-matriculants altered their preference for the University of California during the course of the application and admission process. The interviews revealed that a majority of SAA non-matriculants seriously considered attending the University of California before deciding to enroll at another institution (see Table 7). Over half (52.3%) of the non-matriculants indicated that the University of California was their first choice at the time they submitted their application for admission. The remaining non-matriculants reported that either the University of California was not their first choice (29.5%), or indicated that they were undecided (18.2%) at the time they submitted their application.

Preference for the University of California was not evenly dispersed across the SAA non-matriculants.<sup>11</sup> Academic ability, as measured by the Academic Index (AI), proved to be an important factor affecting the preference of SAA non-matriculants (see Table 7)<sup>12</sup>. High ability SAA non-matriculants were less likely

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<sup>10</sup> In their book entitled *College Choice in America*, Manski and Wise developed a model based upon individual choice to account for student preference following high school graduation. Their model is based upon econometric functions. Manski and Wise found that the perceived quality of an institution is the single most important determinant of student choice. The average SAT score for an institution's class of freshmen was judged by actual and potential applicants to be a powerful indicator of the institution's overall academic quality. Manski and Wise found that applicants do not necessarily choose the highest quality school. Rather, an applicant is most likely to select an institution with an average SAT score 100 points above his/her own. See Charles F. Manski and David A. Wise, *College Choice in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

<sup>11</sup> This is should not be surprising given the findings of numerous studies into student choice. Generally speaking, studies have found that higher ability students have more and different college options than do students with lower academic ability. With the exception of highly competitive programs, such as certain Engineering majors, SAA students with AI scores greater than 6500 should be admitted to most, if not all, institutions to which they apply.

<sup>12</sup> The small sample size precludes any definitive discussion of the relationship between preference, ethnic identity, and academic ability. Nevertheless, among the SAA applicants interviewed, African Americans and Chicanos appear somewhat

than medium or low ability SAA non-matriculants to rank the University of California as their first choice. Nevertheless, better than one-quarter of the high ability SAA non-matriculants indicated that the University of California was their first choice. Among the fourteen high ability SAA non-matriculants, 28.6% indicated that the University of California was their first choice. Among the remaining high ability SAA non-matriculants, half (50.0%) indicated the University of California was not their first choice, with the remainder (21.4%) indicating they were undecided.

By contrast, better than half (56.3%) of the sixteen SAA non-matriculants in the middle range of the AI indicated that the University of California was their first choice with just under one in five (18.7%) undecided. Only one quarter (25.0%) of SAA non-matriculants in the middle range of the AI indicated that the University of California was not their first choice. Low ability SAA non-matriculants were the most likely to indicate the University of California was their first choice with nearly three-quarters (71.4%) indicating the University of California as their first choice. The remaining one-quarter of low ability SAA non-matriculants were evenly split between those who were undecided (14.3%) and those for whom the University of California was other than their first choice (14.3%).

**Table 7: Applicant Preference by Academic Ability**

UC Preference	Academic Ability						Total	
	High		Medium		Low			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
First Choice	4	28.6%	9	56.3%	10	71.4%	23	52.3%
Not First Choice	7	50.0%	4	25.0%	2	14.3%	13	29.5%
Undecided	3	21.4%	3	18.8%	2	14.3%	8	18.2%
Total	14	100.0%	16	100.0%	14	100.0%	44	100.0%

Obviously, intervening factors altered the decisions of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was originally their first choice. These individuals, representing over half of the sample, might have accepted the University's offer of admission had these factors not intervened to affect their decision.

#### Where SAA Non-Matriculants Applied

more likely to identify the University of California as their first choice than are American Indians or Latinos. Half of the four high ability African American applicants (n=2) and half of the 4 high ability Chicano applicants (n=2) indicated that the University of California was their first choice compared to none of the American Indian and Latino applicants.

Excluding their applications to the University of California, the forty-four SAA non-matriculants applied to 126 colleges and universities located both in California and outside the state. These included private four-year colleges and universities, public four-year colleges and universities, California Community Colleges, and the Military/Maritime Academies. The SAA non-matriculants applied to an average of 2.9 colleges and universities (excluding the University of California). Private colleges and universities, both in California and outside the state, were among the types of institutions most frequently applied to by SAA non-matriculants. Stanford and USC were the most popular private universities receiving 8 and 7 total applications, respectively (see Appendix A for a list of all the colleges and universities applied to by the non-matriculants).

SAA non-matriculants were more likely to apply to private four-year colleges and universities than they were to apply to public four-year institutions. Slightly fewer than two-thirds (62.7%) of the applications filed by SAA non-matriculants were filed at private four-year colleges and universities, located either in California or outside the state (see Summary at the bottom of Table 8). Private four-year colleges and universities, both in-state and out-of-state, received nearly twice as many applications from SAA non-matriculants as did public four-year colleges and universities. While private four-year colleges and universities received 62.7% of the non-matriculant's applications, public four-year institutions received only 34.1%.

Better than one-third (35.7%) of the 126 total applications filed by SAA non-matriculants were filed at private four-year colleges and universities in California and slightly more than one-quarter (27.0%) were filed at out-of-state private, four-year colleges and universities (see Table 8). Campuses of the California State University system also received a sizable portion of the applications filed by SAA non-matriculants. Approximately one-fifth (21.4%) of the total applications filed by SAA non-matriculants were filed at the CSU. Out-of-state public four-year colleges and universities received 9.5% of the applications. The California Community Colleges and the Military/Maritime Academies each received 3.2% of the applications.

### Academic Ability and Application Patterns

High ability SAA non-matriculants were more likely to apply to private four-year colleges and universities than either medium or low ability non-matriculants. Better than eight out of ten (81.9%) of the applications filed by high ability SAA non-matriculants were filed at private four-year colleges and universities located either in California or outside the state compared to only 53.3% of the applications filed by medium ability non-matriculants and 53.8% of the applications filed by low ability non-matriculants (see Summary at the

bottom of Table 8). High ability SAA non-matriculants also were more likely to apply for admission to four-year colleges and universities, both private and public, located outside of California than either medium or low ability non-matriculants. Just over half (52.4%) of the applications filed by high ability SAA non-matriculants were filed at four-year institutions outside California. Low ability non-matriculants filed 41.0% of their applications at four-year colleges and universities outside the state while medium ability non-matriculants filed 26.7% of their applications at such institutions.

The applications sent by high ability SAA non-matriculants to private colleges and universities were almost evenly divided between those located in California and those located outside the state (see Table 8). High ability SAA non-matriculants sent 42.9% of their applications to private four-year colleges and universities located in California and 38.1% of their applications to four-year institutions located outside the state. A very small proportion of applications were filed by high ability SAA non-matriculants at the CSU or California Community Colleges. Only 2 (4.8%) of the applications filed by high ability SAA non-matriculants were filed at the CSU and another 2 (4.8%) were filed at California Community Colleges. The remaining 4 (9.5%) applications filed by high ability SAA non-matriculants were filed at military and maritime academies.

Medium ability SAA non-matriculants filed more than one-third (37.8%) of their applications at private four-year colleges and universities located in California (see Table 8). The CSU, which received 28.9% of the applications filed by medium ability SAA non-matriculants, was the second largest recipient of applications filed by these individuals. Private four-year colleges and universities located outside California received 15.6% of the applications filed by medium ability SAA non-matriculants while public four year institutions, also located outside of California, received 11.1%. Only 3 (6.7%) applications filed by these non-matriculants were sent to California Community Colleges.

The applications of low ability SAA non-matriculants were fairly evenly spread across the three types of institutions. The CSU received 30.8% of the applications filed by low ability SAA non-matriculants while private four-year colleges located outside California received 28.2% and private colleges located in California received 25.6% (see Table 8). The single remaining application filed by a low ability SAA non-matriculants was filed at California Community Colleges.

<b>Table 8: Type of Institution to Which Non-Matriculant Applied by Academic Ability</b>
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Type of Institution	Academic Ability						TOTAL	
	High		Medium		Low			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
California Private	18	42.9%	17	37.8%	10	25.6%	45	35.7%
Out-of-State Private	16	38.1%	7	15.6%	11	28.2%	34	27.0%
CSU	2	4.8%	13	28.9%	12	30.8%	27	21.4%
Out-of-State Public	2	4.8%	5	11.1%	5	12.8%	12	9.5%
California Community College	0	0.0%	3	6.7%	1	2.6%	4	3.2%
Military/Maritime Academy	4	9.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	3.2%
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Summary</b>								
Total Four-Year	42	100.0%	42	93.3%	38	97.4%	122	96.8%
Private Four-Year	34	81.0%	24	53.3%	21	53.8%	79	62.7%
Public Four-Year	8	19.0%	18	40.0%	17	43.6%	43	34.1%
California Four-Year	20	47.6%	30	66.7%	22	56.4%	72	57.1%
Out-of-State Four Year	22	52.4%	12	26.7%	16	41.0%	50	39.7%

High ability SAA non-matriculants were slightly more likely to apply to a greater number of colleges and universities than either medium or low ability non-matriculants (see Table 9). High ability non-matriculants applied to an average of 3.0 colleges and universities (excluding the University of California). Medium ability SAA non-matriculants applied to an average of 2.8 institutions, as did low ability SAA non-matriculants.

SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice spread their applications evenly between public four-year colleges and universities, both in-state and out-of-state, and private four-year colleges and universities (see Table 10). These non-matriculants filed 40.0% of their applications at private four-years colleges and universities and filed 45.4% of their applications at public four-year colleges and universities. Better than one-third (34.5%) of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filled applications at CSU.

**Table 9: Average Number of Colleges and Universities Applied to by SAA Non-Matriculants by Type of Institution.**

Academic Ability	Total Applications	Total Applicants	Average
High Academic Ability	42	14	3.0
Medium Academic Ability	45	16	2.8
Low Academic Ability	39	14	2.8
Total	126	44	2.9

### Preference and Application Patterns

There is a distinct differential pattern of application filing among the SAA non-matriculants who preferred or did not prefer the University. This differential is most pronounced when examining the application pattern between groups across private and public four-year colleges and universities. While SAA non-matriculants across all three preference groups filed nearly all their applications at four-year colleges and universities, those SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filed a smaller portion of their applications at private four-year institutions than either those non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice or those non-matriculants who were undecided (see Summary at the bottom of Table 10). In addition, the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filed a greater proportion of their applications at public four-year institutions than either non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice or those non-matriculants who were undecided. While SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filed 41.8% of their applications at private four-year colleges and universities located either in California or outside the state, those non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice and those non-matriculants who were undecided filed 80.0% and 76.9%, respectively, of their applications at private four-year institutions.

No similar differential application pattern emerged across four-year institutions located in California and outside the state. SAA non-matriculants in all three groups filed nearly an equal majority of their applications at four-year colleges and universities, either public or private, located in California (see Summary at the bottom of Table 10). SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was

their first choice, filed 54.5% of their applications at four-year institutions in California and 38.2% of their applications at four-year institutions outside California. The figures for SAA non-matriculants for whom University of California was not their first choice were 60.0% and 40.0%, respectively, while the figures for undecided SAA non-matriculants were 57.7% and 42.3%, respectively.

SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filed a greater proportion of their applications at the CSU than did either SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was not their first choice or undecided SAA non-matriculants (see Table 10). SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filed 34.5% of their applications at the CSU. These non-matriculants filed nearly equal proportions of the applications at private four-year institutions located in California (20.0%) and private institutions located outside California (21.8%). The remainder of their applications were filed at four-year public institutions located outside California (9.1%), California Community Colleges (7.3%), and at the military/maritime academies (7.3%).

SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice filed the majority (51.1%) of their applications at private four-year colleges and universities located in California. Private institutions located out of state received better than one-quarter (28.9%) of the applications filed by these non-matriculants. Neither the CSU nor public institutions outside the state were very popular with these non-matriculants. Only a small portion of the applications filed by SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice were sent to public colleges and universities located outside California (11.1%) or the CSU (8.9%).

Undecided SAA non-matriculants tended to favor private colleges and universities located in California with their applications (see Table 10). Private four-year institutions located in California received 42.3% of the applications filed by undecided SAA non-matriculants. Slightly more than one-third (34.6%) of the applications filed by these non-matriculants went to private colleges and universities located outside the state. The remainder of the applications filed by undecided SAA non-matriculants went to the CSU (15.4%) and public four-year institutions located outside California.

**Table 10: Preference for the University of California by Applications Filed at Other Institutions**

Type of Institution	UC Preference						TOTAL	
	First Choice		Not First Choice		Undecided			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
California Private	11	20.0%	23	51.1%	11	42.3%	45	35.7%
Out-of-State Private	12	21.8%	13	28.9%	9	34.6%	34	27.0%
CSU	19	34.5%	4	8.9%	4	15.4%	27	21.4%
Out-of-State Public	5	9.1%	5	11.1%	2	7.7%	12	9.5%
California Community College	4	7.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	3.2%
Military/Maritime Academy	4	7.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	3.2%
Total	55	100.0%	45	100.0%	26	100.0%	126	100.0%
<b>Summary</b>								
Total Four-Year	51	92.7%	45	100.0%	26	100.0%	122	96.8%
Private Four-Year	23	41.8%	36	80.0%	20	76.9%	79	62.7%
Public Four-Year	28	50.9%	9	20.0%	6	23.1%	43	34.1%
California Four-Year	30	54.5%	27	60.0%	15	57.7%	72	57.1%
Out-of-State Four Year	21	38.2%	18	40.0%	11	42.3%	50	39.7%

SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice filed a greater average number of applications at other colleges and universities than did either undecided non-matriculants or non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice (see Table 11). Non-matriculants who described the University of California as their first choice filed an average of 3.9 applications at colleges and universities other than the University of California, compared to an average of 1.9 for undecided non-matriculants and an average of 2.8 for non-matriculants for whom the University was not their first choice.

**Table 11: Average Number of Colleges and Universities Applied to by SAA Non-Matriculants by Preference for the University of California**

UC Preference	Total Applications	Total Applicants	Average
First Choice	55	14	3.9
Not First Choice	45	16	2.8
Undecided	26	14	1.9
Total	126	44	2.9

### Factors Influencing Non-Matriculant Choice

The SAA non-matriculants were asked to describe the factors that made the University of California or other institution their top choice. Among undecided SAA non-matriculants and SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice, the University's academic reputation and prestige were the most frequently cited factors influencing their preference. More than one-quarter (29.5%) of the respondents said academic reputation and prestige made the University of California their top choice.

Following in importance to academic reputation and prestige among undecided SAA non-matriculants and SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice was the location and overall environment of a particular campus. One quarter (25.0%) of undecided and first-choice SAA non-matriculants identified location and campus environment as the most important factors influencing their preference.

Among SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice, the order of the factors shaping preference was somewhat different. Campus size rather than academic reputation and prestige was the most important factor affecting the preference of these individuals. Six out of ten (61.4%) SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice indicated that the size of the campus most strongly influenced their preference. In almost all instances, the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice preferred a campus that was smaller than the University of California campus where they applied for admission.

The academic reputation and prestige of the college or university was still an important factor shaping the preference of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice. Just under one-third (29.5%) cited the academic reputation and prestige of their first choice college or university as an important factor influencing their preference. Another one-quarter (22.7%) noted that a

specific academic program had caused them to prefer their first choice over the University of California.

The following is a list of the colleges and universities preferred by SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was not their first choice.<sup>13</sup>

Cal. Tech.	Notre Dame
Colorado	Occidental College
Claremont McKenna	Santa Clara
Cornell	Spellman
Harvard	Stanford
NYU	Whitman (Oregon)

#### Level of Personal Contact with University Personnel

Personal contact, prior to and during the application and admission process, has consistently been found to be one of the more important factors affecting student choice. The SAA non-matriculants were asked if they had been personally contacted by a representative from the University of California either prior to or after they submitted their University application. Although the majority (59.1%) of SAA non-matriculants indicated they had no personal contact with a University representative prior to submitting their application, nearly two-thirds (63.6%) said they had personal contact with a University representative after submitting their application. Additional questioning of the respondents left it unclear as to whether the non-matriculant or the University initiated the post-application personal contact. Since a number of non-matriculants mentioned the lack of personal attention as one of the reasons they decided not to attend the University of California, the question of contact initiation could be of critical importance.<sup>14</sup> When asked about campus visitation, three out of four (77.3%) non-matriculants said they visited at least one University of California campus. While non-matriculants were not asked questions pertaining to particular outreach programs, a few campus offices were identified by non-matriculants as being particularly effective in their outreach efforts. They included:

- The Educational Opportunity Program at Santa Cruz.

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<sup>13</sup>Additionally, one non-matriculant for whom the University of California was not his first choice indicated that his top choice was "any private college."

<sup>14</sup> Personal contact during the application and admission process seems to be related to SAA non-matriculant views regarding the level of personal attention they could expect if they enrolled at the University of California. Non-matriculants who reported little or no personal attention during the application process also tended to indicate that small class sizes and close contact with faculty were important factors affecting their enrollment decision.

- The MEChA program at Los Angeles.
- Admissions and Outreach at Irvine.
- Admissions and Outreach at Los Angeles.
- The High School Mentor Program at Davis.

### Concluding Remarks

A number of factors affect where SAA non-matriculants apply for admission. There is a strong relationship between the applicant's academic ability, as measured by the academic index and the pattern of institutions at which the applicant applies. It is clear that SAA non-matriculants are applying to colleges and universities which they perceive to be quality institutions. It is clear they select institutions where they believe they will fit in academically. That is, individual SAA non-matriculants have a good idea of their academic abilities in relation to the academic requirements of various institutions. It also is clear that SAA non-matriculants apply to a broad spectrum of institutions, applying to an average of 3.0 colleges and universities other than the University of California. While the academic quality of the institution is a major determinant of preference at this stage, price and cost seem much less important. SAA non-matriculants are applying to institutions whose total costs cover a wide range. While it is distressing to learn that the University of California is the first choice of so few high ability SAA non-matriculants, it should not be surprising, given the competitive environment which characterizes the recruitment of high ability applicants, especially SAA applicants, in California and the nation.

### **Section III: Where Non-Matriculant Enroll and Why**

While academic quality seems to be the most important factor affecting where SAA non-matriculants apply, it also continues to be an important factor affecting their decision on where to enroll. However, in addition to academic quality, other factors exert powerful influences on the applicant's decision-making. Applicants who are offered admission by various institutions must now make their final decision. Total cost, the availability and type of financial aid the individual is offered, as well as individual perceptions regarding the value of the educational experience offered by one institution over that of another enter into the equation. In the section that follows, we will examine some of the reasons reported by SAA non-matriculants as to why they selected the institution they did select, as well as why they did not select the University of California.

#### Where Non-Matriculants Enrolled

All but one of the 44 SAA non-matriculants will be attending college this fall (see Table 12).<sup>15</sup> Of the total SAA non-matriculants attending a college or university, 93.0% will be attending a four-year institution (see Summary at the bottom of Table 12). The majority (55.8%) of the 43 non-matriculants will attend private four-year colleges and universities located either within California or outside the state. Just over one-third (37.2%) will attend public four-year institutions located either within California or outside the state. Two-thirds (65.1%) of the SAA non-matriculants will be attending four-year colleges and universities within California while 27.9% will attend four-year institutions outside the state.

The largest proportion (39.5%) of non-matriculants will attend private four-year institutions within California (see Table 12). One-quarter (25.6%) of the SAA non-matriculants will attend CSU and 16.3% will attend out-of-state private four-year institutions. The remaining non-matriculants will be attending either public four-year institutions located out-of-state (9.3%), California Community College (7.0%), or the United States Military Academy at West Point(2.3%).

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<sup>15</sup> This single student, interested in improving her chances of attending an Ivy League college, will be spending an extra year at a preparatory high school.

### Academic Ability and College Choice

High ability and low ability SAA non-matriculants are somewhat more likely than medium ability SAA non-matriculants to attend four-year colleges and universities, both private and public, located within California and outside the state (see Summary at the bottom of Table 12). While 100.0% of both high and low ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at four-year colleges and universities, only slightly more than three-quarters (76.9%) of medium ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at such institutions.

High ability SAA non-matriculants are much more likely than either medium or low ability non-matriculants to attend private four-year colleges and universities. Three out of four (76.5%) high ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at private four-year colleges and universities located both in California and out of state. The remaining 23.5% of high ability non-matriculants enrolled at public four-year colleges and universities. By contrast, medium ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled equally in public (38.5%) and private (38.5%) colleges and universities. Low ability SAA non-matriculants somewhat favored public over private institutions. Just over half (53.8%) of low ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled in public four-year colleges and universities while 46.2% enrolled at private four-year institutions.

Low ability SAA non-matriculants favored California four-year colleges and universities over out-of-state institutions by a margin of roughly three to one (see Summary at the bottom of Table 12). Three-quarters of low ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at four-year colleges, both public and private, located in California while just under one in four (23.1%) enrolled at four-year institutions outside the state. The majority of both high and medium ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at four-year colleges and universities, both public and private, located in California. Six out of ten (61.5%) medium ability non-matriculants enrolled in four-year institutions within California but only 15.4% enrolled in four-year institutions outside the state. Among high ability SAA non-matriculants, 58.8% enrolled in four-year colleges and universities within California and 41.2% enrolled in four-year institutions outside the state.

High ability SAA non-matriculants preferred private colleges and universities in California than any other type of institutions. The majority (58.8%) of high ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at private four-year colleges and universities located in California (see Table 12). Equal proportions of high ability non-matriculants enrolled at private (17.6%) and public (17.6%) four-year colleges and universities outside of California. The remaining 5.9% of high ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The largest proportion of medium ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at the CSU (see Table 12). The

CSU attracted 38.5% of medium ability non-matriculants. Equal proportions of medium ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at private colleges and universities in California (23.1%) and California Community Colleges (23.1%). The remaining 15.4% of medium ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at private four-year colleges and universities located outside the state.

The CSU was more popular among low ability SAA non-matriculants than it was among either high or medium ability non-matriculants (see Table 12). The CSU attracted 46.2% of low ability SAA non-matriculants. Private four-year colleges and universities in California were also popular among low ability non-matriculants. Just under one-third (30.8%) of the low ability SAA non-matriculants enrolled at private four-year institutions within the state. Out-of-state, private, four-year colleges attracted 15.4% of these non-matriculants and the remaining 7.7% enrolled at out-of-state, private, four-year institutions.

**Table 12: The Type of Institutions SAA Non-Matriculants Will be Attending by Academic Ability**

Type of Institution	Academic Ability						TOTAL	
	High		Medium		Low		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
California Private	10	58.8%	3	23.1%	4	30.8%	17	39.5%
Out-of-State Private	3	17.6%	2	15.4%	2	15.4%	7	16.3%
CSU	0	0.0%	5	38.5%	6	46.2%	11	25.6%
Out-of-State Public	3	17.6%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	4	9.3%
California Community College	0	0.0%	3	23.1%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%
Military/Maritime Academy	1	5.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.3%
Subtotal Enrolled	17	100.0%	13	100.0%	13	100.0%	43	100.0%
Not Attending College	0		0		1		1	
Total	17		13		14		44	
<b>Summary</b>								
Total Four-Year	17	100.0%	10	76.9%	13	100.0%	40	93.0%
Private Four-Year	13	76.5%	5	38.5%	6	46.2%	24	55.8%
Public Four-Year	4	23.5%	5	38.5%	7	53.8%	16	37.2%
California Four-Year	10	58.8%	8	61.5%	10	76.9%	28	65.1%
Out-of-State Four Year	7	41.2%	2	15.4%	3	23.1%	12	27.9%

### Where Non-Matriculants Enrolled by UC Preference

Better than eight out of ten (87.0%) SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice will be attending four-year colleges and universities, either public or private (see Summary at the bottom of Table 13). One-third (34.8%) of the SAA non-matriculants will attend private four-year institutions located either in California or outside the state while better than half (52.2%) will attend public four-year institutions. Slightly under two-thirds (65.2%) of SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice will attend four-year institutions, either public or private, within California while 21.7% will attend four-year institutions outside the state.

The greatest number of SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was originally their first choice will be enrolling at the CSU (see Table 12). Better than one-third (39.1%) of these non-matriculants will be enrolling at the CSU. Approximately one-quarter (26.1%) of SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was originally their first choice will enroll at private four-year institutions in California. The remaining SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice will be attending California Community College (13.0%), out-of-state private four-year institutions (8.7%), out-of-state public four-year institutions (8.7%), or the United States Military Academy (4.3%).

All the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice and who will be attending a college or university in the fall will be attending a four-year institution (see the Summary at the bottom of Table 12). The majority (83.3%) will attend private four-year colleges and universities located either in California or outside the state, with the remainder (16.7%) attending public four-year institutions. Two-thirds (66.7%) of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice will attend four-year colleges and universities within California, both private and public, while the remaining one-third (33.3%) will attend four-year out-of-state institutions, both public and private.

Two-thirds (66.7%) of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice will be attending private four-year colleges and universities within the state. The remaining non-matriculants will be evenly split between private (16.7%) and public (16.7%) four-year institutions outside of California. None of these SAA non-matriculants will be attending either the CSU or California Community College.

All the SAA non-matriculants who were undecided about their college preference, will be attending four-year institutions in the fall (see the Summary at the bottom of Table 12). Three out of four (75.0%) undecided SAA non-matriculants will be attending private four-year colleges and universities, either within California or outside the state, while the remaining one-quarter (25.0%) will attend public four-year institutions. Just under two-thirds (62.5%) of these SAA non-matriculants will attend four-year colleges and universities within California, either public or private, while the remaining one-third (37.5%) will attend four-year institutions outside the state. Just over one-third (37.5%) of the SAA non-matriculants who were undecided at the time they filed their application for admission will be attend a private four-year college or university within California, while another one-third (37.5%) will attend a private four-year institution outside of California. The remaining one quarter (25.0%) will attend the CSU.

**Table 13: The Type of Institutions SAA Non-Matriculants Will be Attending by Preference for the University of California**

Type of Institution	UC Preference						TOTAL	
	First Choice		Not First Choice		Undecided		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
California Private	6	26.1%	8	66.7%	3	37.5%	17	39.5%
Out-of-State Private	2	8.7%	2	16.7%	3	37.5%	7	16.3%
CSU	9	39.1%	0	0.0%	2	25.0%	11	25.6%
Out-of-State Public	2	8.7%	2	16.7%	0	0.0%	4	9.3%
California Community College	3	13.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%
Military/Maritime Academy	1	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.3%
Subtotal Enrolled	23	100.0%	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	43	100.0%
Not Attending College	0		1		0		1	
Total	23		13		8		44	
<b>Summary</b>								
Total Four-Year	20	87.0%	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	40	93.0%
Private Four-Year	8	34.8%	10	83.3%	6	75.0%	24	55.8%
Public Four-Year	12	52.2%	2	16.7%	2	25.0%	16	37.2%
California Four-Year	15	65.2%	8	66.7%	5	62.5%	28	65.1%
Out-of-State Four Year	5	21.7%	4	33.3%	3	37.5%	12	27.9%

### The Reasons Non-Matriculants Did Not Accept the University of California

The reasons given by SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice to explain why they decided to decline the University's offer of admission are dominated by financial considerations.<sup>16</sup> The majority (56.5%) of SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice cited financial considerations as the single most important factor affecting their decision to decline the University's offer of admission (see Table 14).<sup>17</sup> Over one-fifth (21.7%) of the SAA non-matriculants said they received a better overall financial aid package from the institution they selected while another 17.4% said the University of California's financial aid offer was insufficient to meet their needs. An additional 8.6% of SAA non-matriculants said their decision was affected by the lateness of the University's financial aid offer.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to financial aid affecting their decisions, SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice cited two other financial factors. Perceptions regarding the length of time required to earn a baccalaureate degree at the University of California was cited by one non-matriculant as the most important factor. This individual believed that the extended time-to-degree would raise the overall cost of the University to a level greater than the total costs the individual would incur at the institution this individual selected. Another non-matriculant cited the budget cuts endured by the University of California as the most significant factor. This individual believed the University had so diminished its academic program that the value of the undergraduate experienced was discounted. As a result, this individual decided to attend another institution where the perceived benefits were greater than perceived costs.

The other factors cited by the SAA non-matriculants covered a broad range of issues. The largest single reason, aside from financial considerations, was the fact that 17.4% of the non-matriculants were not admitted at their preferred University of California campus. While the University of California was their

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<sup>16</sup> Initially, only non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice were asked this question. Subsequently, the question was also posed to the non-matriculants who were undecided.

<sup>17</sup> Financial considerations also were cited by undecided non-matriculants as important factors affecting their decisions. Half (50.0% n=4) of the undecided non-matriculants cited financial considerations, and the majority (37.5% n=3) indicated they received better financial aid offers from their selected institution.

<sup>18</sup> It is important to note the role financial consideration played in the decisions of SAA non-matriculants who elected to enroll at the CSU or California Community College. Only two of the CSU-bound SAA non-matriculants cited financial reasons for selecting the CSU instead of the University of California. Both of the students who will be attending the CSU this fall are doing so reluctantly because they didn't receive enough financial aid from the University. Other non-matriculants selected the CSU because they were not accepted by their first-choice UC campus (n=2), because the University of California was not as highly ranked in their particular major (n=2), or because of family considerations (n=1). Of the non-matriculants who will be attending a California Community College, two indicated that finances played a role in their decision to enroll at community college. One non-matriculant said he decided to enroll at a community college because the University of California's financial aid offer was late. The other non-matriculant acknowledged that he was not admitted at the University of California campus closest to his home and therefore couldn't afford to attend an institution where he would have to live off campus. All the non-matriculants attending California Community Colleges expressed an intent to transfer to the University of California in two years.

first choice, the campus(es) which actually admitted them was of a lower preference. All of these SAA non-matriculants enrolled at a college or university that was of higher preference than the University of California campus(es) that offered them admission. When asked if they would have selected the University of California had they been admitted by their preferred campus, most said they would have accepted the University's offer.<sup>19</sup>

Two SAA non-matriculants provided responses that were related to the academic program and social environment of the campus. The non-matriculant who preferred a smaller institution opted to attend a small private four-year college. The other non-matriculant enrolled at a university which offered the academic major that interested the individual. Finally, one non-matriculant cited family considerations as the reason for not accepting the University's offer. This individual would have enrolled at the University had this individual's twin brother also been admitted. Both siblings applied to the campus but only one was admitted. This non-matriculant preferred to forego his preferred enrollment option in order to remain with his twin brother.

**Table 14: Primary Reasons Given by SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Their First Choice for Not Accepting the University's Offer of Admission.**

Response	Number	Percent
<b>Financial</b>		
Received better financial aid offer from selected institution.	5	21.7%
U.C. did not offer sufficient financial aid.	4	17.4%
The financial aid offer from U.C. was late.	2	8.7%
The length of time required to graduate from U.C. raises total costs.	1	4.3%
Diminished value of U.C.'s academic program due to budget cuts.	1	4.3%
<b>Subtotal Financial</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56.5%</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Non-matriculant not offered admission to first choice U.C. campus.	4	17.4%
Non-matriculant preferred smaller institution.	2	8.7%
Academic program/major not offered by U.C.	2	8.7%
Family considerations	2	8.7%
<b>Subtotal Other</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>19</sup> The respondents found this hypothetical question somewhat difficult to answer since so many other considerations, such things as financial aid and housing, could affect their decisions.

Below are four of the comments made by SAA non-matriculants regarding the reasons they decided not to enroll at the University of California. Each is followed by a notation on how these responses were classified.

- *My twin brother and I applied to the same schools. I got into UC but my brother didn't, so both of us will be going to CSU.* [family considerations]
- *It would have cost me more to go in-state to the University of California than to go out-of-state to school.* [received a better financial aid offer from selected institution]
- *I couldn't afford to go to the University of California. UC offered me a partial scholarship but that wasn't enough. I would have gone there (UC) if they had given me more money.* [UC did not offer sufficient financial aid]
- *I decided to go out-of-state because I heard horror stories from friends at the University of California [about] cutbacks in classes.* [diminished value of UC's academic program due to budget cuts]

Interestingly, recent increases in student fees was not cited by any of the SAA non-matriculants as a factor affecting their choice. Odd as this may appear, there may be at least three explanations that could account for this. First, since many of the non-matriculants who needed financial assistance were offered some form of financial aid, it is possible the aid served as a form of "cost discounting," that is, the non-matriculants were spared from the full financial impact of rising fees. Second, it could be that SAA non-matriculants do not look at the individual items that make-up the overall total cost of enrollment. Rather, these individuals may only consider the total cost in relation to their out-of-pocket expenses and their perceived return on investment. A third explanation occasionally advanced holds that new students are not sophisticated enough to understand the complexities of calculating the costs and benefits of a college education. New freshmen, so the argument goes, only come to know about fee increases after they enroll, developing their greater understanding by following campus debates on the topic.

The findings from this study tend to partially refute this third explanation. It was clear from the interviews that SAA non-matriculants do have an appreciation, albeit vague at times, for the relationship between the costs of enrollment, the cost discounting effect of financial aid, and the return on their investment that a baccalaureate degree represents. These individuals most certainly do not understand the subtle difference between fees and tuition, nor do they always have accurate and precise information upon which to base

their judgments. Things such as time-to-degree or the relative merit of one academic program over another are often based more on perceptions than fact. Nevertheless, the SAA non-matriculants, to the best of their ability, are making "rational" decisions that are influenced to a great extent by economic factors. Their decision process may at times be described as "non-rational," that is, lacking in solid factual information, but it certainly cannot be characterized as "irrational," that is, devoid of method.

### Reasons Non-Matriculants Selected an Institution

The SAA non-matriculants were asked to describe the reason why they selected the college or university they plan to enroll in this fall. Academic and financial considerations were the most important factors affecting non-matriculant choice (see Table 15). The reasons given by SAA non-matriculants for selecting a particular institution were almost evenly split between academic and financial considerations. Academic factors were reported by 41.9% of the respondents, while financial factors were reported by 39.5%. Just under one in five (18.6%) described other factors as most strongly influencing their decision. A more precise break-down of responses by preference groups is contained in Tables 16 through 18.

Reason for Selecting Other Institution	First Choice	Not First Choice	Undecided	Total	
	FC	NFC	UND	Number	Percent
Financial	8	5	4	17	39.5%
Academic	9	7	2	18	41.9%
Other	6	0	2	8	18.6%
TOTAL	23	12	8	43	100.0%

Among SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice, 34.8% of the respondents cited financial considerations as the most important factor, 39.1% cited academic considerations, and 26.1% cited other considerations (see Table 16). Among the financial factors affecting the decision of these SAA non-matriculants, the level of financial support offered by the institution they selected and campus location were each cited by 13.0% of the respondents.<sup>20</sup> Among the academic reasons given by SAA non-matriculants, campus size was cited by 21.7% of the respondents, while the availability

<sup>20</sup> Campus location was included under financial considerations because the respondents noted that going away to college was just too expensive. They wanted to stay close to home in order to reduce their total expenses.

of a particular major or academic program was cited by 17.4%.<sup>21</sup> One quarter (26.1%) of these non-matriculants cited reasons other than financial or academic considerations .

**Table 16: Reasons Given for Selecting a Particular Institution by SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California was Their First Choice**

Response	Number	Percent
<b>Financial</b>		
Financial support from selected institution.	3	13.0%
Campus location.	3	13.0%
Guarantee of four-year graduation.	2	8.7%
<b>Total Financial</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34.8%</b>
<b>Academic</b>		
Campus size.	5	21.7%
Academic major/program.	4	17.4%
<b>Total Academic</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39.1%</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Personal attention given by institution.	2	8.7%
Other factors.	4	17.4%
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26.1%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Among the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice, academic considerations were more likely to affect their decision than were financial considerations (see Table 17). The majority (58.3%) of these SAA non-matriculants cited academic considerations as the primary reason they selected another college or university over the University of California. Campus size (25.0%) and the availability of a particular major or academic program (25.0%) were the two most cited academic reasons cited by non-matriculants. The academic prestige of the institution they preferred was cited by one individual. Still, a sizable proportion (41.7%) of SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice cited financial considerations as important factors affecting their decision. One-quarter of these SAA non-matriculants identified the financial aid offered by the institution they selected as an important factor affecting their decision.

<sup>21</sup> Included under the heading of "campus size" are such things as the desire to attend a small campus, the desire to attend small classes, and having a better opportunity to interact directly with faculty.

**Table 17: Reasons Given for Selecting a Particular Institution by SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California was not Their First Choice**

Response	Number	Percent
<b>Financial</b>		
Financial support from selected institution.	3	25.0%
Campus location.	1	8.3%
California economy.	1	8.3%
<b>Total Financial</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41.7%</b>
<b>Academic</b>		
Campus size.	3	25.0%
Academic major/program.	3	25.0%
Academic prestige and reputation.	1	8.3%
<b>Total Academic</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>58.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Among those SAA non-matriculants who were undecided, financial considerations were cited by half (50.0%) of the respondents as important factors affecting their decision of where to enroll (see Table 18). The financial considerations were evenly split between the level of financial aid offered by the institution they selected (25.0%) and the shorter time-to-degree (25.0%). Academic and other considerations each accounted equally for the remaining considerations affecting college choice.

**Table 18: Reasons Given for Selecting a Particular Institution by Undecided SAA Non-Matriculants**

Response	Number	Percent
<b>Financial</b>		
Financial support from selected institution.	2	25.0%
Guarantee of four-year graduation.	2	25.0%
<b>Total Financial</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<b>Academic</b>		
Academic major/program.	2	25.0%
<b>Total Academic</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25.0%</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Athletic considerations.	1	12.5%
Other factors.	1	12.5%
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Concluding Remarks

While the decision of where an applicant will decide to enroll is a complex process involving a large number of factors, it is clear from the responses that total costs and the academic prestige of the institution are among the primary factors SAA non-matriculants rely upon when making their decisions. Certainly individual institutions greatly influence the decisions through a number of actions. The most immediate and influential of all actions a campus can take appears to involve the awarding of financial aid. In the following section we will further explore the influence of financial aid on the decisions of SAA non-matriculants

#### **Section IV. A Closer Look at Costs and Financial Aid**

An understanding of the process by which college applicants make decisions together with uncovering the factors they use to inform that process are central to understanding and affecting applicant choice. A rational enrollment decision requires that one not only be able to accurately calculate the total costs one will incur, but requires one to estimate the return on investment one can expect to receive from that investment. When calculating total costs, an applicant must first discount the cost by the type and amount of financial aid offered by the institution. In addition, the applicant must project the total time required to earn a degree. The longer it takes to earn a degree, the higher the costs of one's education. Macroeconomic factors, such as a recession, also should enter into the equation. Typically, recessions make college both less affordable and more highly valued. When calculating the return on investment, the applicant must take into consideration the quality of the education he or she will receive, as well as the value a degree from a particular institution carries with it. A number of questions were put to SAA non-matriculants to discover the degree to which they relied upon such an econometric model when making their decision. The results indicate that SAA non-matriculants do make rational enrollment decisions, based upon a process similar to that described above. Perceptions regarding total costs, the quality of the educational program, and the value of a degree from a particular institution inform the decisions of SAA non-matriculants.

##### The Effect of Recession and Cost

The SAA non-matriculants were asked three questions designed to gather information about the effect the recession and rising costs may have had on their decision of where to enroll. The non-matriculants were asked two specific questions and one open-ended question on the issue. One structured question asked if the non-matriculant's decision had been directly affected by the recession.<sup>22</sup> The second structured question asked the non-matriculants if someone in their immediate family had been laid-off from work during the preceding eighteen months. In addition to these two structured questions, the non-matriculants were asked an open-ended question to describe the ways in which the cost of attending a particular college or the recession affected their college-selection process.

Just over half (52.3%) of the SAA non-matriculants said the recession had an affect on their college choice and eventual decision of where to enroll (see Table 19). As noted in the previous section, the non-

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<sup>22</sup> If the respondents were unsure as to what the interviewer meant by the question, the interviewer mentioned such things as unemployment, reduced income, uncertainty over one's future financial situation, or general "belt-tightening" by parents or members of their family.

matriculants were looking at such things as the total financial aid package, time-to-degree, and proximity of home as ways to off-set the costs of enrollment. Preference for the University appears to be related to the influence of recessionary factors. SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice and those SAA non-matriculants who were undecided were more likely to have their decision affected by recessionary factors than were SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was not their first choice. Among SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was their first choice, over half (56.5%) said that the recession had affected their decision on where to enroll. Similarly, 62.5% of undecided SAA non-matriculants acknowledged the effect of the recession on their decision. Even though the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was not their first choice were much less likely to report that the recession influenced their decision, still more than one-third (38.5%) of these individuals were affected by it.

**Table 19: Did the Recession Affect Non-Matriculant's Decision on Where to Enroll?**

Preference Group	Number Percent	Recession Affected Non-Matriculant's Decision		Total
		Yes	No	
First Choice	N %	13 56.5%	10 43.5%	23 100.0%
Not First Choice	N %	5 38.5%	8 61.5%	13 100.0%
Undecided	N %	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	8 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>N</b> <b>%</b>	<b>23</b> <b>52.3%</b>	<b>21</b> <b>47.7%</b>	<b>44</b> <b>100.0%</b>

In order to obtain a better idea of how the recession might have affected SAA non-matriculants, the interviewer asked each respondent if a member of their immediate family had been laid-off from work during the preceding eighteen months. One-fifth (22.7%) of the SAA non-matriculants reported that a member of their immediate family had been laid-off during the preceding eighteen months (see Table 20). Once again, preference for the University appears to be related to unemployment. Only 7.7% of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice reported someone in their immediate family being laid-off. Just over one-quarter (26.1%) of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University was their first choice and more than one-third (37.5%) of undecided non-matriculants reported the lay-off of a family member during the preceding eighteen months.

**Table 20: Was Someone in Non-Matriculant's Immediate Family Laid-Off from Work During the Preceding Eighteen Months?**

Preference Group	Number Percent	Family Member Laid-Off During Past 18 Months		Total
		Yes	No	
First Choice	N	6	17	23
	%	26.1%	73.9%	100.0%
Not First Choice	N	1	12	13
	%	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%
Undecided	N	3	5	8
	%	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>77.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Listed below are some of the comments made by SAA non-matriculants to the open-ended question on the effects of costs and the recession on their decision-making. The responses have been separated according to preference groups.

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Their First Choice:

- *I really felt that I got caught in the middle-class squeeze. My parents couldn't afford to send me to college, but I don't qualify for financial aid.*
- *My parents and I sat down and compared the cost of attending Riverside versus Cal. Poly. [Pomona]. [Even though] Riverside offered me a Chancellor's scholarship, Cal. Poly. was still cheaper.*
- *I'm applying for [nonresident] amnesty at the University of California [if I am not granted residency] I [will] have to pay out-of-state tuition. At CSU Fullerton I'll pay California resident fees.*
- *Things are different now than they were some years ago, even the cost of going to state universities is high. Any student who can qualify or receive aid from somewhere will take it.*
- *I decided to go out-of-state because of the cutbacks in California.*
- *The spiraling cost of education in California makes it cheaper to go out-of-state.*

SAA Non-Matriculants Who Were Undecided.

- *I heard rumors about not being able to get classes because of cutbacks, and not being able to get out in four years. Lots of my friends were trying to get out of California.*
- *The recession affected where I could afford to go.*
- *My Dad had been laid-off, so it was important to know how much financial aid I would get before making a decision.*
- *My father got laid off, so I knew I had to come up with the money to pay for my education.*

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Not Their First Choice:

- *I'm not from a wealthy family, so afford ability was important.*
- *UCSD and the UC system as a whole have been adversely affected by the economy, so I thought it was safer to attend USC.*
- *The price of education in California keeps going up, and the state is spending less and less on education.*
- *Because of the recession, I was unsure how I was going to afford college.*

Comparisons Between Financial Aid Offers

It has been established that financial aid is a very important factor influencing the enrollment decisions of SAA non-matriculants. It also has been established that for some SAA non-matriculants, especially those for whom the University of California was their first choice, the level of aid offered by other colleges and universities compared to that offered by the University weighed heavily in their decision. In order to more clearly understand the non-matriculant's final decision, they were asked to compare the financial aid package offered by the University of California with that offered by the institution where they enrolled. Specifically, the SAA non-matriculants were asked which financial aid package best met their needs. The results are displayed in Table 21.

Two out of three (66.6%) SAA non-matriculants described the financial aid package offered by the institution where they enrolled as better than the package offered by the University of California (see Table 21).<sup>23</sup> Fewer than one-quarter (23.8%) judged the financial aid offer from the University of California as better. A small portion (9.5%) rated the offers equal.

**Table 21: Comparisons by SAA Non-Matriculants of Financial Aid Packages Offered by the University of California and the Institution at Which They Enrolled**

Institution	Number	Percent
University of California	5	23.8%
Non-Matriculant's College Choice	14	66.7%
Offers about Equal	2	9.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Don't Know	8	
Did not apply at UC/did apply other.	5	
Did not apply at UC/did not apply other.	6	
<b>Subtotal Enrolled at 4-Year</b>	<b>40</b>	
Enrolled at CCC.	3	
Will not attend college.	1	
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>44</b>	

The SAA non-matriculants also were asked to evaluate the timeliness of the financial aid offer presented by the University of California. The non-matriculants were specifically asked to compare and determine which institution, the University of California or the college or university where they will enroll, made the more timely offer. The results are displayed in Table 22. By a margin of nearly three to one, the SAA non-matriculants judged their institution's offer of aid as more timely than the University's. Fewer than one-quarter (23.1%) of SAA non-matriculants judged the University of California's financial aid offer as more timely, compared to 61.5% who judged the offer by their preferred institution more timely. One-sixth (15.4%) of the SAA non-matriculants judged both as timely.

**Table 22: Comparisons by SAA Non-Matriculants of the Timeliness of Financial Aid Offers**

<sup>23</sup> Only the 40 non-matriculants who will be attending four-year colleges and universities were asked this question. Also, 11 students were excluded from answering this question since they did not apply for aid at UC. The interesting point about these 11 students is that 1) six did not apply for aid at either UC, or at the institution at which they will enroll and, 2) five did not apply for aid at UC., but did apply for and were granted aid at the institution at which they will enroll this fall. In effect, these 5 students made their decision of where to enroll before even applying for aid at UC.

Institution	Number	Percent
University of California	6	23.1%
Non-Matriculant's College Choice	16	61.5%
About the Same	4	15.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Don't Know.	3	
Did not apply at UC/did apply other.	5	
Did not apply at UC/did not apply other.	6	
<b>Subtotal Enrolled at 4-Year</b>	<b>40</b>	
Enrolled at CCC.	3	
Will not attend college.	1	
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>44</b>	

The SAA non-matriculants were also asked to describe the degree to which they expected their parents to assist them in paying for their college expenses not covered by financial aid. The results are displayed in Table 23. Just under one-third (30.6%) of SAA non-matriculants expect their parents will pay for those expenses not covered by financial aid. Better than half expect their parents to pay for some of the expenses. Nearly one-third (30.6%) expect their parents will pay for more than one-half, 5.6% expect their parents will pay for about half, and 22.2% expect their parents to pay for less than half. Only 11.1% do not expect their parents to provide any financial assistance. When the SAA non-matriculants were asked a follow-up question on how they expected to pay for those costs not covered either by financial aid or by contributions from their parents, the non-matriculants most frequently indicated they would depend on wages earned from work, both over summer and during the school term.

**Table 23: Parental Assistance with Costs not Covered by Financial Aid.**

Proportion of Parental Assistance	Number	Percent
All	11	30.6%
More than Half	11	30.6%
About Half	2	5.6%
Less than Half	8	22.2%
None	4	11.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Full financial aid	4	
Attend CCC	3	
Not attend College	1	
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>44</b>	

Finally, the SAA non-matriculants were asked an open-ended question asking them to comment on the cost

of the college or university where they were planning to enroll and the costs associated with attending the University of California. In particular, they were asked to discuss the role financial aid played in their decisions. Some of their responses are provided below. The responses have been separated into preference groups.

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Their First Choice:

- *UC is cheaper than Georgetown, but my loans will be less at Georgetown.*
- *Cal Poly. is cheaper with no money than UC with money.*
- *I received an estimate from UCR, but I was afraid that the actual cost of going to UCR would have been more than the estimate, so I'm going to Cal. State LA..*
- *Cal. State Fullerton is a better deal because it's cheaper than UC.*
- *I would have paid a little less at Irvine, but it wasn't enough to offset my interest in going to a smaller school.*
- *I'm not eligible for financial aid, but I'll save money by going to the University of Arizona because I'm guaranteed to get out of school in four years, instead of hoping to get out in five.*

SAA Non-Matriculants Who Were Undecided.

- *I am only going to Cal. State Dominguez Hills because Loyola Marymount and UC didn't give me enough money.*
- *UC costs more in the long run because it takes longer to graduate.*
- *I never heard from UC. I kept calling. I finally got a quote [offer of financial aid] from UCSC over the phone, but I couldn't take a chance that they might give me less when I finally got an award letter. I never did get the letter.*
- *UC's new financial aid process is screwed up!*

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Not Their First Choice:

- *I'm not eligible for need-based financial aid. USC made an impression on me because they made an effort to offer me something.*
- *I couldn't afford to go to UC, there was too much left over for me to pay.*
- *Occidental had a lower loan package than UC.*
- *Occidental responded quickly [with financial aid information] and kept in touch with me the whole time. They let me know when things were changing and when they needed more information. UC was slower.*
- *I didn't really pursue financial aid at Davis because it was my last choice, but I would have been paying more to go to UC than to go to Santa Clara.*

## Section V: What Could the University Have Done Differently?

### Financial Incentives to Enroll

Since financial considerations were cited by such a large proportion of SAA non-matriculants as an important factor affecting their decision of where to enroll, those non-matriculants who will be attending a four-year college or university in the fall were asked the following question: In your opinion, is there anything that the University of California could have offered you in terms of scholarships or financial aid to have persuaded you to attend?<sup>24</sup> Their responses are displayed below in Table 24.

It is clear that the offer of greater financial incentives would have affected the decisions of many of these SAA non-matriculants. Just over half (52.5%) of all SAA non-matriculants who will be attending four-year colleges or universities in the fall acknowledged that greater financial incentives, in the form of scholarships or financial aid, could have persuaded them to enroll at the University of California (see Table 24). A sizable proportion (42.5%) of the SAA non-matriculants noted that they could not have been persuaded, while one individual said he/she was unsure.<sup>25</sup>

The non-matriculants' original preference for the University of California made a difference when it came to the efficacy of increased financial incentives. A sizable majority of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice acknowledged that greater financial incentives could have persuaded them to attend the University of California. Six out of ten (60.0%) of these non-matriculants said they might have enrolled at the University of California in response to greater financial support. Just over one-third (35.0%) of these SAA non-matriculants said increased financial incentives would not have altered their decision. The majority (50.0%) of undecided SAA non-matriculants also said increased financial incentives might have altered their decision. Even though the majority (58.3%) of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice said that increased financial incentives would not have affected their decision, a sizable portion (41.7%) nevertheless did note that financial incentives might have altered their decision.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Forty of the forty-four non-matriculants will be attending four-year colleges and universities. Three will be attending California Community Colleges and one has decided to wait one additional year before enrolling in college.

<sup>25</sup> One undecided SAA non-matriculant noted that financial incentives offered by the University of California would have no effect on his decisions because "taking 5-6 years to graduate scared me off from attending the University of California."

<sup>26</sup> The meaning of "increased financial incentives" can be an ambiguous term. Two of the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was not their first choice noted that the only way they would reconsider the University is if the University offered scholarships that covered the full costs of their education.

**Table 24: Could the Offer of Greater Financial Incentives by the University of California Alter the Enrollment Decision of SAA Non-Matriculants?**

Preference Group	Number Percent	Number			TOTAL
		Yes	No	Not Sure	
First Choice	Number	12	7	1	20
	Percent	60.0%	35.0%	5.0%	100.0%
Not First Choice	Number	5	7	0	12
	Percent	41.7%	58.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Undecided	Number	4	3	1	8
	Percent	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	100.0%
TOTAL	Number	21	17	2	40
	Percent	52.5%	42.5%	5.0%	100.0%

### Non-Financial Incentives to Enroll

In addition to offering financial incentives to persuade applicants to enroll, colleges and universities can offer a host of non-financial incentives to prospective students. The SAA non-matriculants were asked if they had been offered such non-financial incentives and, if they had been offered such incentives, the relative importance these incentives played in their decision of where to enroll. The results are displayed in Tables 25 and 26 below.

The majority (62.5%) of SAA non-matriculants were not offered any type of non-financial incentive by the college or university at which they enrolled. Even so, one-third (35.0%) did acknowledge that such incentives were offered to them. Those SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice, as well as those for whom it was not, were much more likely to have been offered non-financial incentives than were undecided SAA non-matriculants. No doubt this reflects the greater incidence of high ability students among these two groups.

**Table 25: Was Non-Matriculant Offered Non-Financial Incentive?**

Preference Group	Number Percent				TOTAL
		Yes	No	Don't Know	
First Choice	Number	8	11	1	20
	Percent	40.0%	55.0%	5.0%	100.0%
Not First Choice	Number	5	7	0	12
	Percent	41.7%	58.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Undecided	Number	1	7	0	8
	Percent	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	100.0%
TOTAL	Number	14	25	1	40
	Percent	35.0%	62.5%	2.5%	100.0%

Those SAA non-matriculants who were offered some form of non-financial incentive were asked a follow-up question regarding the efficacy of the award. The results are displayed in Table 26. Better than half (57.2%) of those SAA non-matriculants who were offered non-financial incentives by the college or university at which they enrolled acknowledged that these offers had a very important (42.0%) or important (14.3%) affect on their decision of where to enroll.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 26: How Important Were Non-Financial Incentives?**

Importance	Number	Percent
Very Important	6	42.9%
Important	2	14.3%
Not Important/Don't Know	6	42.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Listed below are they types of non-financial incentives received by SAA non-matriculants. The incentives are displayed separately by preference group and each entry is followed by the number of non-matriculants who were offered the incentive.

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Their First Choice:

- Admission into Honors Program. (4)

<sup>27</sup> Non-financial incentives include a wide variety of things. About one-third of the non-matriculants noted in response to follow-up questions on this subject that more personal attention from University personnel would have gone a long way to encourage them to select the University of California over the college or university they did select.

- Specific support program such as CSU Sacramento's Migrant Program. Other incentives included special counseling programs. (3)
- Preferential course registration. (1)
- The promise of smaller class size. (1)
- Letters from members of special interest groups or clubs encouraging applicant to enroll. (1)

#### SAA Non-Matriculants Who Were Undecided.

- Special "freshmen-only programs." (1)

#### SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Not Their First Choice:

- Honors program. (1)
- Personal attention through application and enrollment. (1)

#### Comparing Academic Reputation

Incentives, both financial and non-financial, were found to be important factors affecting the enrollment decisions of SAA non-matriculants. It also has been determined that SAA non-matriculants evaluate the overall costs of attending one university over another and compare those costs against the perceived "return on investment" provided by each institution. Since it is difficult to accurately affix a quantifiable value to the concept of return on investment, many individuals simply rely on the academic reputation and prestige of the institution to serve as the equivalent. It follows, therefore, that if one seeks to affect a change in the decisions of SAA non-matriculants, one must have some understanding of the perceived return on investment these individuals ascribe to a degree from the University of California. Generally speaking, the higher the perceived return on investment of a University of California degree, the lower the marginal increase in incentives, whether financial or non-financial, required to alter non-matriculant choice.

SAA non-matriculants attending four-year colleges and universities were asked to compare the academic reputation of their selected institution to the academic reputation of the University of California. They also

were asked to identify the sources they used to make such comparisons. The results are displayed in Tables 27 and 28 below. It is striking to see that slightly better than one-third (35.0%) of the SAA non-matriculants acknowledged that the college or university they will be attending has a lower academic reputation than the University of California (see Table 27). This is all the more striking given human tendencies toward post-hoc rationalization. Only 20.0%, or one in five, SAA non-matriculants rate the academic reputation of the institution they will attending as better than the University of California. Even if the responses of those who believe the academic reputation of the institution they will be attending is better (20.0%) than the academic reputation of the University of California are combined with the responses of with those who believe the two are roughly equivalent (20.0%), the SAA non-matriculants are nearly evenly split (40.0% v. 35.0%) on the question.

**Table 27: A Comparison of Academic Reputations**

Academic Comparison	Number	Percent
Selected College Better	8	20.0%
Both the Same	8	20.0%
Selected College Not as Good	14	35.0%
Don't Know/Not Sure	10	25.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The SAA non-matriculants who indicated that the academic reputation of the college or university they will be attending this fall is not as good as the academic reputation of the University of California, will for the most part, be attending the CSU. It also should be noted that SAA non-matriculants who will be attending private and out-of-state public institutions also indicated that the academic reputation of the institution they will be attending is not as good as the academic reputation of the University of California.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> As indicated previously, non-matriculants are attending the CSU either for financial reasons or because of their interest in a particular academic program that either is not offered or is more highly rated than the program offered at the University of California.

SAA non-matriculants who rated the college or university they selected as less prestigious than the academic reputation of the University of California will be attending the following institutions this fall:

CSU Chico	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
CSU Dominguez Hills	Arizona
CSU Fullerton	Chapman
CSU Los Angeles	Grand Canyon College
CSU Sacramento	Santa Clara
CSU San Bernardino	West Point

In an effort to better identify the sources of information SAA non-matriculants use to make comparisons between institutions, and to uncover the kinds of things that are important to non-matriculants when selecting a college, the SAA non-matriculants were asked to indicate from a list of seven sources, those which they used to rate the academic reputations of the University of California and the institution they selected. In addition, the SAA non-matriculants were asked to describe, in some detail, the campus attributes they judged as important factors affecting the overall quality of an institution. The sources of information used by SAA non-matriculants, as well as attributes used to assess institutional quality, can help to focus the recruitment efforts of University Admission and Outreach personnel to increase the enrollment of SAA applicants.

SAA non-matriculants use multiple sources to gather information about prospective colleges and universities (see Table 28). The respondents identified family and friends as their most often used sources for information on colleges and universities. Nearly two-thirds (65.0%) of the SAA non-matriculants obtained their information on colleges and universities from family and friends. College brochures (60.0%), high school counselors (55.0%), and Peterson's Guide (52.5%) also were used by a majority of SAA non-matriculants. Less often used by SAA non-matriculants were such things as national rankings (40.0%), the average SAT scores of new freshmen (35.0%), and the average grade point average of enrolled students (27.5%). Even though such things as SAT scores and average GPA's are less used than other sources, a sizable proportion of SAA non-matriculants make use of them. Better than one-third of SAA non-matriculants use SAT scores and over one-quarter use the average GPA.

<b>Table 28: Sources of Information About Colleges and Universities</b>
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Source	Number	Percent
Family and Friends	26	65.0%
College Brochures	24	60.0%
High School Counselors	22	55.0%
Petersons	21	52.5%
National Rankings	16	40.0%
SAT	14	35.0%
GPA	11	27.5%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>40</b>	

With respect to the attributes identified by SAA non-matriculants to assess a quality education, it should not be surprising to find that these attributes were similar to the attributes the non-matriculants identified as important both in the college application process and in affecting their ultimate enrollment decision. SAA non-matriculants identified the following attributes of a quality education:<sup>29</sup>

- A commitment to excellence in instruction, as exemplified by small class size and personal attention from professors. (45.0%)
- A strong history of preparing graduates for their career (both training and professional contacts) and the successful placement of graduates in professional or graduate school. (17.5%)
- The location of the campus and the overall cultural, academic, and social environment (15.0%).
- The availability of a wide range of campus resources and facilities for student use. (15.0%)
- Opportunities to participate in a broad range of social activities and the opportunity to get involved in extra-curricular activities (social and academic). (7.5%)
- The ability of an institution to produce graduates who are "well-rounded," that is, individuals who are well-prepared, both academically and socially. (7.5%)

### Perceptions Regarding Time to Degree

<sup>29</sup> Only the forty non-matriculants who will be attending four-year colleges and universities were asked this question. Respondents were allowed to identify more than one attribute.

Calculating the overall cost of a college education requires an estimation of the total amount of time that will be required to earn a degree. In order to better understand the decisions of SAA non-matriculants, they were asked to compare their estimates of the length of time required to earn a degree at the University of California with the time required to earn a degree at the college or university at which they were planning to enroll. The results are displayed in Table 29.

Nearly half (47.5%) of the SAA non-matriculants believe it would take them longer to earn a degree at the University of California than it would at the college or university where they will enroll (see Table 29). Just under one-third (30.0%) believed it would take about the same length of time and 15.0% believed they would require more time at the institution where they were planning to enroll. Preference for the University made little difference in perceptions of time-to-degree, with the exception of undecided non-matriculants. Undecided SAA non-matriculants were nearly unanimous (87.5%) in their belief that it requires a longer time to earn a college degree at the University of California than it does at the institution where they will enroll. The data do demonstrate that large portions of SAA non-matriculants believe it requires more time to earn a degree at the University of California than is required at the college or university where they are planning to enroll.

**Table 29: Perceived Time to Degree at Selected Institution and the University of California**

Time to Degree Comparison	Preference Group						TOTAL	
	First Choice		Not First Choice		Undecided		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
UC Longer	8	40.0%	4	33.3%	7	87.5%	19	47.5%
Selected College Longer	3	15.0%	3	25.0%	0	0.0%	6	15.0%
About Same	7	35.0%	4	33.3%	1	12.5%	12	30.0%
Don't Know	2	10.0%	1	8.3%	0	0.0%	3	7.5%
TOTAL	20	100.0%	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	40	100.0%

The non-matriculants were asked in an open-ended question to comment on the source of their information or the nature of their concerns. As the comments below illustrate, there is a strongly held belief among SAA non-matriculants that it is difficult, if not impossible, to graduate from the University of California in four years. It also is evident that this belief is both perpetuated and capitalized upon by some other institutions in order to further their own recruitment and outreach efforts. It also is interesting to note that there were non-matriculants who believed it would take them longer to complete their degree at the

institution they selected compared to the time required at the University of California.<sup>30</sup> Some of the responses provided by SAA non-matriculants are provided below.

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Their First Choice:

- *Classes are too difficult to get into at the University of California.*
- *There is less one-on-one attention [for those who] need help at the University of California.*
- *Representatives from Loyola Marymount University say that 80% of their students finish in 4 years.*

SAA Non-Matriculants for Whom the University of California Was Not Their First Choice:

- *Loyola [Marymount University] almost guarantees that you'll be out in 4 years. UCLA said the same thing, but they [would only] guarantee graduation in 5 years.*
- *Santa Clara guarantees that you'll be out in 4 years. You don't have to worry about classes filling up. If there are 5 extra students they'll open a new class. Private schools pamper you.*
- *My counselor said that it was rare to finish at [the University of California] in 4 years. It usually takes 5 or 6. I can't afford to stay in school more than 4 years.*
- *There are too many [budget] cutbacks in California. [The University of California] just plain out says that you won't get out for 5 or 6 years.*
- *UCSD has been affected by the state economy and the [budget] cutbacks. USC is private so it hasn't been affected by the recession. At UCSD, classes are being cut [and] students can't graduate in 4 years because they can't get classes.*

SAA Non-Matriculants Who Were Undecided.

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<sup>30</sup> One non-matriculant who was planning to attend the CSU felt it would take him six years to graduate. Another felt it would take longer because he was not being given credit for AP classes taken in high school. Finally, one non-matriculant felt his major (engineering) would extend his time to degree.

- *It is just too hard to get out of the University of California in four years.*
- *[All I hear about time to degree are] rumors. I couldn't get a straight answer from [anyone at the University of California] when I asked them how long it would take me to get a degree.*

## VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The responses of SAA non-matriculants to the this survey revealed a great deal of information about the factors that affected their decision to reject the University of California's offer of admission. For the most part, SAA non-matriculants made rational decisions about where to enroll. They gathered relevant information about the various institutions and used this information in making their decision. The decision-making model used by SAA non-matriculants was firmly grounded in what we might describe as a "classic" economic prototype, that is, the decisions made by SAA non-matriculants were primarily driven by financial considerations. The factors they used to evaluate one college or university over another can be grouped into three areas: 1) the total costs of purchasing an education; 2) the perceived quality of the education purchased; and, 3) the expected return on their investment in education.

### The Cost of Education

SAA non-matriculants were acutely aware of, and responsive to, the out-of-pocket costs associated with selecting one college or university over another. Financial aid, which is in effect a form of cost-discounting, affected the college selection process of SAA non-matriculants in a number of ways. For most SAA non-matriculants, the up-front or out-of-pocket costs of enrollment placed severe constraints upon their options. Many non-matriculants, who did not receive what they considered to be sufficient financial aid, felt forced to select institutions they judged to be of lesser quality simply because they could not afford to attend their preferred choice. For example, the SAA non-matriculants for whom the University of California was their first choice, but who decided to attend the CSU, to a large degree, were making just such a choice. Even though these individuals placed a high value on attending the University of California, they could not afford the cost. The interviews revealed that some SAA non-matriculants who originally preferred the University of California were enticed away by generous offers of financial aid from other colleges or universities, particularly from some of the smaller, private, four-year institutions. Compounding the problem of affordability was the fact that many non-matriculants reported that the University of California poorly communicated the non-matriculant's financial aid status or was not as timely in making their financial aid award as was the college or university the non-matriculant selected.

The recession also appears to have affected the decisions of many SAA non-matriculants. The recession appears to have affected non-matriculants in two ways. First, it had a direct effect on their ability to pay for college. Just over one in five non-matriculants reported that a family member had been laid-off in the last 18 months. Such an event can have both tangible financial as well as psychological effects that extend

well beyond the duration of the event. Second, the recession seems to have affected non-matriculant perceptions regarding both the current quality and the future of publicly funded colleges and universities in California. This observation is borne out by the large numbers of non-matriculants applying to, and ultimately deciding to attend, private institutions and, to a lesser extent, public institutions located outside of California.

### The Quality of Education Purchased

SAA non-matriculants were very concerned about the quality of the institution they selected. They selected those institutions which provided them with the highest quality education they could afford. Two factors were the most often cited indicators of quality: campus size and time-to-degree.

For many of the SAA non-matriculants, the size of a campus, the definition of which included such things as the availability of small classes and close contact between professors and their students, was a very important factor affecting their decision of where to enroll. The desire to attend a small campus seemed to be a surrogate for the non-matriculant's desire for close personal attention from the institution. Many SAA non-matriculants felt overwhelmed or intimidated by the prospect of going off to college. Non-matriculants were greatly impressed by those institutions, whether public or private, that established and maintained close personal contact with them throughout the admission process.

The total amount of time required to earn a degree from an institution was another important measure used by SAA non-matriculants to assess the quality of an institution. In effect, time-to-degree served as both a measure of quality and as a factor affecting total cost. The interviews revealed that there is a widely held perception that it takes longer than four years to graduate from the University of California. This prompted many non-matriculants to select a colleges or university where they believed they could graduate in less time. The perception that it is almost impossible to graduate from the University of California in four years is both advanced and perpetuated by some private and public four-year institutions. The guarantee of graduation in four years is used by some colleges and universities, both public and private, to recruit and enroll SAA students. The guarantee of graduating in four years is used by some colleges and universities to convince students that enrollment in their institution is more cost effective.

### Return on Investment

It was clear from the interviews that SAA non-matriculants are very concerned with the return they can expect from their investment in a college education. When asked to describe what a quality education means to them, SAA non-matriculants said a high quality college or university does such things as competently prepares their graduates for a career, demonstrates it can provide graduates with professional contacts, and has proven an ability to place its graduates in professional and graduate schools. It also is clear from the interviews that private colleges and universities do very well in describing the return on investment that accrues from enrollment. In the case of these SAA non-matriculants, the University of California does not appear to have placed enough emphasis on such things.

### A Final Note

While the purpose of this study was to explore the factors that affect the enrollment decisions of SAA non-matriculants with the goal of increasing the number of admitted SAA applicants who eventually enroll, it must be kept in mind that our desire to enroll these individuals at the University of California should not interfere with what is best for them. As things presently stand, it would be difficult to argue that the SAA non-matriculants made poor decisions. Each made the best decision possible given their individual circumstances, options, and the information that was available to them. There are a number of things the University of California might undertake to improve the number of SAA applicants who accept an offer of admission; however, we should understand that superficial inducements, however successful in the short-run, are not the proper response. As we respond to the challenges of increasing the enrollment of SAA applicants, we should keep in mind that our first obligation is to the applicant. We must trust in the applicant's ability to make judgments on what is best for him or her.

### Recommendations

Based on the information generated from this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The University should provide applicants who apply for and receive financial aid with information on how to compare the University's aid package with financial packages from other institutions. Many SAA applicants lack important information that could help them to estimate the differences in the total costs of attending one institution over another. Lacking such information, some SAA applicants make economic choices based upon incomplete evaluations. As a result, some SAA applicants select institutions they

mistakenly believe will be less expensive than the University of California.

2. Admissions and financial aid offices should more closely coordinate the timing between admission notification and the offer of financial aid. Offers of financial aid which arrive significantly later than admission notifications frustrate SAA applicants who want to have all the pertinent information, especially financial aid information, prior to making their final decision. Additionally, the timeliness of financial aid offers is of critical importance because some SAA applicants don't complete their aid applications with the University once they receive satisfactory offers of financial aid from other institutions.
3. The University should address misperceptions on the part of SAA applicants regarding actual time-to-degree and the availability of classes at the University. The University also should better publicize the availability of small classes and opportunities for student-faculty interaction.
4. The University should attempt to increase the level of personal interaction with SAA applicants before and after the applicants submit their application. SAA applicants who were attracted to smaller institutions were so attracted because those institutions made a significant effort to communicate with them through all stages of the college application process.
5. The University should more clearly articulate the value of its baccalaureate degree. While the University of California may be perceived as more expensive than other institutions, SAA applicants should also be aware that the University of California offers a stronger undergraduate academic program than many other institutions. In particular, the University should expend its efforts and resources to improve the types of information received by the sources SAA applicants identified as influential in their college selection (high school counselors, parents, etc.). In addition, the University should better publicize those qualities that SAA applicants indicated as exemplary of a quality education (good teaching, career preparation, campus environment, etc.).

## Appendix A

### Where SAA Applicants Filed Applications for Admission By Academic Ability and Type of Institution

<b>Table A-1</b>				
<b>Applications Filed at CSU</b>				
Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>CSU</b>				
Los Angeles	0	0	4	4
Northridge	1	1	1	3
San Luis Obispo	1	1	1	3
Bakersfield	0	1	1	2
Chico	0	2	0	2
Dominguez Hills	0	1	1	2
Fullerton	0	1	1	2
Pamona	0	1	1	2
San Jose	0	2	0	2
Humboldt	0	1	0	1
Long Beach	0	1	0	1
Sacramento	0	0	1	1
San Bernadino	0	1	0	1
San Francisco	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>

**Table A-2**  
**Applications Filed at Private Institutions in California**

Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>California Private</b>				
Stanford	6	1	1	8
USC	3	2	2	7
St Marys	1	2	1	4
Loyola Marymount	0	1	2	3
Occidental	2	1	0	3
University of the Pacific	1	1	1	3
Claremont McKena	1	1	0	2
Pepperdine	0	1	1	2
Santa Clara	0	2	0	2
Whittier	0	1	1	2
Cal Tech	1	0	0	1
Chapman College	0	1	0	1
Harvey Mudd	1	0	0	1
Mills	0	0	1	1
Morehouse	0	1	0	1
Pitzer	0	1	0	1
University of Redlands	0	1	0	1
University of San Diego	1	0	0	1
University of San Francisco	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>

**Table A-3**  
**Applications Filed at Out-Of-State Private Institutions**

Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>Out-of-State Private</b>				
Harvard	2	0	1	3
Cornell	1	1	0	2
MIT	2	0	0	2
Princeton	2	0	0	2
Yale	1	0	1	2
Brandeis	0	0	1	1
Brown	1	0	0	1
Bucknell	0	1	0	1
Clark-Atlanta College	0	1	0	1
Columbia	0	1	0	1
Emory (Atlanta)	0	1	0	1
Georgetown	0	1	0	1
Grambling	0	0	1	1
McAllister College	0	0	1	1
NYU	1	1	0	2
Reed College (Oregon)	1	0	0	1
Rice	1	0	0	1
Seattle Pacific	0	0	1	1
Southern Methodist	1	0	0	1
Spellmand	1	0	0	1
Tufts	0	0	1	1
University of Evansville	0	0	1	1
Wells College (N.Y.)	0	0	1	1
Wheaton	0	0	1	1
Whitman (Oregon)	1	0	0	1
Willamette (Oregon)	1	0	0	1
Wesleyan	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>34</b>

**Table A-4**  
**Applications Filed at Out-Of-State Public Institutions**

Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>Out-of-State Public</b>				
Arizona	1	0	1	2
Colorado	0	1	0	1
Grand Canyon	0	1	0	1
Indiana	0	1	0	1
Michigan	0	1	0	1
Northern Arizona	0	0	1	1
Oregon State	0	1	0	1
Portland State	0	0	1	1
Southern Oregon State	1	0	0	1
SUNY-Stonybrook	0	0	1	1
UNLV	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>

**Table A-5**  
**Applications Filed at California Community Colleges**

Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>CA Community College</b>				
Bakersfield	0	1	0	1
Foothill	0	1	0	1
Orange Coast	0	1	0	1
Solano	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table A-6**  
**Applications Filed at Maritime/Military Academies**

Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>Military/Maritime Academy</b>				
Airforce	1	0	0	1
California Maritime Academy	1	0	0	1
Naval Academy	1	0	0	1
West Point	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table A-7**  
**Summary of Applications Filed**

Type of Institution/Campus	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>TOTAL APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>126</b>
Total Applicants	14	16	14	44
Avg applications per applicant	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.9

  

Type of Institution	Academic Ability			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
California Private	18	17	10	45
Out-of-State Private	16	7	11	34
Out-of-State Public	2	5	5	12
CSU	2	13	12	27
California Community College	0	3	1	4
Military/Maritime Academy	4	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>126</b>

## Appendix B

### UC Campus Preferences Among SAA Non-Matriculants

Students for Whom UC was their first choice (Number of First Choice students indicating UC campus preferences. n=15)

First Choice UC campus	Second Choice UC Campus	Third Choice UC Campus
Los Angeles 4 1/2 (Tie)	Los Angeles-4	Santa Barbara-4
Berkeley-3 1/2	(Tie)Irvine-2	Irvine-2
Santa Barbara-3	San Diego-2	Riverside-2
Irvine-2	Santa Cruz-2	Berkeley-1
Riverside-1	Davis-1	Davis-1
Davis-1	Riverside-1	Irvine-1
	Santa Barbara-1	Los Angeles-1

Undecided Students (Number of students UND students indicating UC campus preference. n=7)

First Choice UC campus	Second Choice UC campus	Third Choice UC campus
Irvine-2	Davis-2	San Diego-2
Los Angeles-2	Los Angeles-1	
Santa Barbara-2	Berkeley-1	Riverside-1
Berkeley-1 1/2 (Tie)	Riverside-1	Santa Barbara-1
San Diego-1/2 (Tie)		
Santa Cruz-1	San Diego-1	

Students For Whom UC was not their First Choice (Number of NFC students indicating UC campus preferences. n=6)

First Choice UC Campus	Second Choice UC Campus	Third Choice UC Campus
Berkeley-2	Riverside-3	Santa Barbara-2
Davis-1	Berkeley-1	Los Angeles-1/2 (Tie)
Irvine-1	Irvine-1	Santa Cruz-1 1/2
Los Angeles-1	San Diego-1	Berkeley
Santa Cruz-1	Santa Cruz-1	

## Appendix C

### Reasons SAA Non-Matriculants Applied to Only One UC Campus

Ten (Five *first-choice* and five *not first-choice*) of the 44 students surveyed only applied to only one UC campus. These students listed the following reasons for only applying to one UC school.

#### Students For Whom UC was their First Choice

- o Student was only interested in attending one particular UC school-2
- o Student needed or wanted to attend the UC campus closest to their home-1
- o Student couldn't afford the application fees to apply to more than one campus-1

#### Students For Whom UC was not their First Choice

- o UC a "back up" school only-2
- o Student like the location of a particular UC campus-2
- o Student was interested in a particular major (communications)-1
- o Student was looking for a particular size campus-1

