



Admissions and outreach

The University of California is committed to providing the broadest possible access to an affordable, top-quality college education for California's high-achieving students. This document provides a brief overview of recent developments related to the university's admissions process and outreach programs targeting students in California's public schools and community colleges.

SP-1 rescinded

On May 16, 2001, the UC Board of Regents unanimously rescinded SP-1, the 1995 resolution that prohibited consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in the admissions process. Nevertheless, UC has complied with and will continue to be governed by Proposition 209, which amended the California Constitution to prohibit consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in state employment, education and contracting. Indeed, the Regents reaffirmed this as a commitment in the resolution rescinding SP-1.

The rescinding resolution also made several important additional statements, including:

- The university will continue to "seek out and enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of backgrounds characteristic of California."
- The Academic Senate "shall determine the conditions for admission to the university, subject to the approval of the Regents." UC President Richard C. Atkinson already has asked the faculty to review UC's admissions policies and recommend to the Regents a new approach in which campuses would review all UC applicants in a comprehensive way, rather than admitting a portion of the class on the basis of academic factors alone.
- UC will provide programs promoting the retention and graduation of enrolled students, will work to improve the transfer of community college students to the university, and will pursue on a long-term basis its commitment to outreach programs that improve the early academic preparation of students who will be seeking a college education.

The full resolution is available on the Web at <http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/commserv/access/propres.htm>.

Admissions outcomes

The first full entering freshman class admitted under SP-1 and Proposition 209 enrolled at UC in fall 1998. Several trends in the admissions results of the last several years are apparent:

- Systemwide, the number of underrepresented minorities (African American, American Indian and Chicano/Latino students) admitted to and enrolling in the UC system dropped between 1997 and 1998.
- However, since 1998, their numbers have been rebounding. In fact, more underrepresented minorities were admitted to UC for fall 2001 than for fall 1997, the last year before SP-1 and Proposition 209 fully took effect for freshmen.
- In proportional terms, underrepresented minorities account for 18.6 percent of the admitted freshman class for fall 2001, compared to 18.8 percent for fall 1997.
- Growth in the number of admitted underrepresented minority students since 1998 has occurred at all campuses, including the UC system's most selective campuses.
- There was a 17 percent increase in the number of underrepresented minorities admitted to the UC system between fall 2000 and fall 2001 alone.

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New initiatives in admissions

UC has undertaken several new initiatives to maximize access to the university for qualified students. These initiatives are linked by a common thread: the goal of creating an admissions process that is fair to all students, that expands educational opportunity, that recognizes student achievement, and that considers achievement in the context of the opportunities available to the student.

- **Eligibility in the Local Context:** This program grants UC eligibility to the top 4 percent of the graduating class in each California high school, based on grades in UC-required courses. The Regents adopted the program to ensure that high-performing students from all areas of the state have access to UC, regardless of the level of educational enrichment available in their schools. The university estimates that the program generated 2,100 additional applications to UC for fall 2001 – half of them from underrepresented minority students, and one-fifth from students of all ethnic backgrounds who live in rural areas of California.
- **Dual Admissions Program:** President Atkinson has proposed this program to expand upon the ELC approach and offer an additional path to UC eligibility. Under the Dual Admissions Program, students who rank in the top 4 percent to 12.5 percent of the graduating class at their high school – and who are not already UC-eligible under the university’s statewide criteria – would be granted admission to UC, provided they first complete a transfer program at a community college. This proposal has been approved by the UC faculty and is expected to be acted on by the Regents this summer.
- **Comprehensive review of applications:** Under this proposal by President Atkinson, UC campuses would move away from quantitative formulas in reviewing student applications and instead review all applications in a comprehensive way. High school grades and standardized test scores would be reviewed along with such considerations as special talents, unusual leadership or intellectual qualities, and accomplishments in the context of disadvantage, among others.
- **Proposal to no longer require the SAT I:** In an effort to encourage greater mastery of high school subject matter among UC applicants, President Atkinson has recommended to the Academic Senate that UC no longer require the SAT I test for freshman admission. UC would continue to use the SAT II tests – which are achievement tests more closely linked to the high school curriculum – pending the development of new exams that would even more closely measure what students have actually learned in school. The proposal is currently under review by the UC faculty.

Progress of outreach programs

UC has dramatically expanded its efforts to improve academic preparation for a UC education among students in California’s K-12 schools and community colleges, particularly those from educationally or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The university’s initiatives include partnerships between UC campuses and individual schools, student-centered academic development programs, and informational outreach programs for prospective students and their families. Key points about this effort include:

- **Numerical goals:** The UC Outreach Task Force identified specific goals for the outreach effort. They are (1) to double the number of UC-eligible students from both student academic development programs and UC partner schools over a five-year period, and (2) to increase by half the number of students from these programs and schools who are “competitively eligible” for admission at the highly selective UC campuses.
- **Commitment to accountability:** UC has developed a rigorous program to evaluate the effectiveness of its outreach programs by (1) measuring progress toward the numerical outcome goals listed above, and (2) establishing benchmark measures of student progress early in the academic pipeline, to determine if participants in UC outreach programs at early ages are “on track” for UC eligibility.
- **Progress being made:** UC outreach programs are having an effect. To take just one example, the total number of UC-eligible graduates of the university’s Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) rose 17 percent between 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The number of UC applicants from EAOP rose 20 percent over that one-year period, and the number of admitted and enrolling students from EAOP both increased 23 percent. The initial five-year evaluation period for UC outreach programs began in 1998-99 and ends in 2003-04.
- **Commitment to long-term improvement:** UC is focusing many of its outreach efforts on short-term initiatives aimed at immediately improving UC-going rates of students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. But truly improving the educational attainment levels of students in California’s K-12 schools is a complex, long-term project. The university is committed to long-term outreach efforts – starting in elementary and middle school – that provide our best hope of improving UC eligibility rates by improving students’ basic academic skills.