Ongoing Review of the UC Admissions Process

In May, the UC Board of Regents unanimously rescinded SP-1, the 1995 resolution that prohibited consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in the admissions process. The resolution reaffirms the university's commitment to enrolling a student body both demonstrating high academic achievement and reflecting California's diverse population. The rescinding resolution also reasserted the shared governance role of the UC faculty in determining admissions criteria. With this in mind, President Richard C. Atkinson has asked the Academic Council, the body that represents the UC 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.

Current Admissions Process

Eligibility Students are determined to be "eligible" for UC through one of two ways, by meeting the statewide eligibility criteria or by being considered under the new Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) Program. Students reach statewide eligibility based on their high school grades and scores on standardized tests. To determine this the university currently uses a statewide eligibility index - a sliding scale in which relatively low high-school grade-point averages can be offset by high test scores, and vice versa. High school GPA is the driving factor, in that modest test scores are required of students who have average to above-average grade-point averages. The Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) program offers another route to admission by accepting those students identified in the top 4 percent of their high school class based on GPA earned in 11 units of UC-specified academic courses. The ELC program was developed to recognize that student achievement is relative to the educational opportunities available at individual schools. Both routes guarantee a student a space somewhere in the UC system, though not necessarily at the student's campus of choice.

Two-Tier Selection Process Individual campuses admit students from the pool of UC-eligible applicants in a "two-tier" selection process. Specific criteria vary by campus, but under current policy, 50-75 percent of the incoming class must be admitted on the basis of academic achievement. This may include grades, test scores, outstanding work in a particular subject area, completion of additional college preparatory courses, academic performance in relation to the educational opportunities available in the school, and other academic factors. The balance of the class is admitted on the basis of these academic factors plus extracurricular accomplishments, special talents, unusual leadership or intellectual qualities, academic accomplishments in the context of disadvantaged circumstances, and other factors.

This "two-tier" selection structure has been part of UC's undergraduate admissions policy and guidelines since the 1960s, though it was formalized as a Regental policy by SP-1. The specific proportions of the class admitted in each tier have varied over time and by campus. For more specific information on how UC eligibility and admissions are presently determined visit: http://www.ucop.edu/pathways/infoctr/introuc

Academic Council Admissions Review

The Academic Council admissions review initiated by President Atkinson will examine the "two-tiered" admissions policy. The work of the Academic Council committee responsible for this review, began with a meeting held on May 24-25, 2001. The meeting was a first step in establishing guiding principles about UC’s admissions policies. It is anticipated that the recommendations of the committee will be completed this summer and will then be submitted to the full faculty for review. The work of the committee is being fast-tracked in order to meet President Atkinson’s request that any Regents’ action on this review, following the timely recommendations of the Academic Senate, will be effective for students who matriculate in Fall 2002. Ultimately, the Regents would have to approve any recommendations that come from the UC faculty. Regardless of outcome, 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.

FOR MORE UC NEWS CALL 510.987.9200 OR VISIT UC NEWSWIRE AT www.ucnewswire.org