SP-1 and SP-2

Q. What are SP-1 and SP-2?
A. In July 1995, the University of California Board of Regents adopted two resolutions, called SP-1 and SP-2, that changed the university’s admissions, hiring and contracting practices. SP-1 eliminated consideration of race and gender in the admission of students to the university. SP-2 eliminated race and gender as considerations in UC’s hiring and contracting practices, except where such action would result in the university’s loss of federal or state funds. The first full entering freshman class admitted under SP-1 enrolled at UC in fall 1998.

Q. What is Proposition 209?
A. Proposition 209, passed by California voters in November 1996, prohibits consideration of race and gender in state employment, education and contracting programs – regardless of the University of California’s Regental or administrative policies.

Q. Who are the Regents, and how did they vote on SP-1 and SP-2?
A. The Regents are the governing body of the University of California system. There are 26 Regents, including seven ex officio members, 18 members appointed by the governor, and one student Regent selected by the board. Members appointed by the governor serve 12-year terms.

On July 20, 1995, the Regents approved SP-1 by a 14-10 vote, with one abstention. SP-2 was approved by a vote of 15-10.

Currently there are three vacancies on the board. Action by the board requires a majority of members present.

Q. How are freshman applicants admitted to UC today?
A. UC remains fully committed to offering the broadest possible access to an affordable, high-quality UC education for qualified students. There are two steps to the process.

First, students are determined to be “eligible” for the UC system based on their high school grades and scores on standardized tests or by ranking in the top 4 percent of their high school class. Eligibility guarantees a student a space somewhere in the UC system, though not necessarily at the student’s campus of choice.

Second, individual campuses admit students from the pool of UC-eligible applicants in a “two-tier” selection process. Specific criteria vary by campus, but in general, 50-75 percent of the incoming class currently is admitted on the basis of academic achievement. This may include grades, test scores, outstanding work in a particular subject area, completion of college preparatory courses beyond the minimum eligibility requirements, assessments of a student’s 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 additional factors, such as 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 codified as a Regental policy by SP-1. The specific proportions of the class admitted in each tier have varied over time and by campus.

(continued)
Q. How is UC helping prepare high school students to become eligible for college?

A. UC has dramatically expanded its efforts to improve the academic preparation of K-12 students for college, particularly those from educationally or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The university’s outreach efforts include partnerships between UC campuses and K-12 schools, student-centered academic development programs, and professional development programs for K-12 teachers and principals. These programs are a high priority for UC.

Q. How have UC’s entering freshman classes changed under SP-1?

A. The first full entering freshman class admitted under SP-1 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 Americans, American Indians, Chicanos and Latinos) 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 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.

Complete data tables are available on the Web at: http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/commserv/studstaff.html

Q. What other changes have occurred in UC’s admissions process in recent years?

A. For fall 2001, UC adopted a new eligibility index that places more weight on the SAT II Subject Tests and less on the SAT I test. Also for fall 2001, UC adopted the “Eligibility in the Local Context” program, which grants UC eligibility to the top 4 percent of students in each California high school based on their grades in UC-required courses. UC President Richard C. Atkinson has proposed a new program called “Dual Admissions” which would offer admission to a community college and then a UC campus to students in the top 4 percent to 12.5 percent of their high school’s graduating class. And, President Atkinson has proposed that UC no longer require the SAT I for freshman applicants, while continuing to require three SAT II Subject Tests, which he believes are better measures of a student’s mastery of high school coursework. The Dual Admissions and SAT proposals are currently being evaluated by UC’s Academic Senate.

Useful Web links

Text of SP-1: http://www.ucop.edu/regents/policies/sp1.html

Text of SP-2: http://www.ucop.edu/regents/policies/sp2.html

Current composition of the Board of Regents: http://www.ucop.edu/regents/regents.html

UC admissions statistics: http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/commserv/studstaff.html


UC admissions process overview: http://www.ucop.edu/pathways/infoctr/introuc/