Measuring Diversity through the UC Admissions System

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Abstract

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Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management and Leadership

Diversity is measured through a number of ways, which include higher education for minorities and people of color, equal opportunity for both male and female students, and that both able-bodied and disabled receive the same, equal treatment. Diversity is becoming ever more important with today’s rapid, global and international-minded younger generation. We will explore diversity through analyzing data from the University of California Admissions systems of ethnic minorities and people of color, such as African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American. We will seek out how the University of California measures diversity through their admissions policies and procedures. Through the collection of this data, we will better understand if the removal of affirmative action in California has greatly affected diversity on the nine UC campuses. In Conclusion, this paper will provide a framework for other universities across the nation to better measure and ensure that diversity is upheld through their admission systems and that their college campuses reflect this diversity.
Section 1: Introduction

Diversity in the University of California (UC) System has sometimes been perceived as lacking in numbers and percentages (Jewell, page 38). There are a number of reasons why this is so. This paper will explore the socio-economic reasons why ethnic minorities and people of color are currently underrepresented, in the University of California system. This paper will also explore if there are any quotas and limits set for these minorities at the University of California’s nine campuses. Institutional diversity in higher education: An inquiry into admission trends of ethnic minorities in public institutions, specifically examining the lack of diversity in the University of California (UC) admissions system.

Surprisingly, even though public institutions openly welcome ethnic and cultural diversity, there are many public institutions of higher education that lack adequate and sufficient representation of ethnic minorities. There are several reasons for this, such as a fear of change from the dominant class and groups that have maintained the status quo, universities want to remain selective and competitive by setting their academic bar very high, as well as no clear set path in order to bring about rapid, successful change by way of diversity.

Public institutions share an equal responsibility to their staff, to their students, and to the entire academic community as a whole, to ensure that ethnic and cultural diversity is maintained. Simply maintaining the status quo of a lack of diversity in public institutions of higher education is not acceptable for three main reasons. The first reason is that public universities will lack a great depth of diversity and a lack of diversity means that creative dialogues or ideas cannot be exchanged throughout the academic community. The second reason is that by short-changing the academic community, one is also short-changing the greater local community in which those
universities belong to or subscribe to. The third reason is to prepare the next generation of citizens for a multicultural, multilingual society. Higher education institutions are academic extensions of the greater social-cultural community.
Section 2: Literature Review

There have been many changes in the state of California as seen through educational reform initiatives. One of the main elements of change has been through diversity or a lack thereof at the University of California admissions level. There have been both proponents and opponents alike who have supported or stood against Affirmative Action. Proposition 209 sought to eliminate the positive benefits of Affirmative Action for minorities at the University of California level. For example, Proposition 209 severely prohibited and restricted colleges and universities from factoring in ethnicity or race into their admission policies. After the removal of Affirmative Action at the Higher Educational level, some groups of people such as Whites/Caucasians and Asian Pacific Americans sought to even the playing field so to speak through more equal admissions, based on academic rubrics or extracurricular activities versus ethnic/racial rubrics. In the future, it will be interesting to see how the University of California and Higher Education institutions in general, throughout the state, seek to replace or maintain diversity in their recruitment of ethnic/racial minorities onto their campuses. Through our research, we will aim to answer questions regarding measuring diversity through the UC admissions system. The topics to be discussed will focus on the following themes: the effects of Affirmative Action on the UC admissions system as a whole, the implications of the removal of Affirmative Action on ethnic minorities and students of color, the policy initiatives directed towards ethnic minorities and the educational success as well as challenges of these specific ethnic/racial groups in Higher Education.
A Lack of Diversity

There has always been a lack of diversity in the University of California. According to Jewell (2000), UC Berkeley highlights this dilemma of insufficient diversity. As the UC’s flagship institution of higher education in California, UC Berkeley is recognized prestigiously both nationally and internationally as a model for higher education. As such, UC Berkeley’s admissions bar is set extremely high for both its undergraduate and graduate programs. The campus’s high status ranking as the premier, flagship UC Campus has made it a symbol of privilege as well as a weapon used in the struggles between different ethnic groups fighting over scarce resources. As such an elite school of higher education learning, the UC’s admission process has been the center of intense investigation and criticism in debates regarding affirmative action in the university’s admissions process.

Unfortunately, there was a negative shift towards diversity in general within the University of California’s nine campuses. According to Douglass (1999), by raising the bar of admissions standards and quotas, the decrease of Special Action admits, the increased focus on the SAT and the implemented adoption of the Eligibility Index, all helped to create a negative shift away from a progressive movement of the past, which promoted socio-economic and racial diversity. However, with California’s rapidly changing demographics, the rise of the Civil Rights movement and the passage of the 1965 federal Civil Rights Act helped to elevate the consciousness of Californians to the inequities in access to higher education for minorities and economically disadvantaged groups. Due to several government laws and initiatives, the University of California began gathering data on applicant’s ethnicity and race in 1966. This new data began tracking and measuring California’s specific population growth. This data also made
the University of California realize the great disparities which was highlighted by large-scale immigration from countries such as Mexico and regions such as Asia, referred to as the Pacific Rim.

**Increases in Ethnic Diversity**

As further investigation into the demographic changes occurs within the United States, more scholars have dedicated research into this field of ethnic diversity (Pitts, 2005). For example, in 1980, Whites/Caucasians had made up 80 percent of the total U.S. Population. However, by 2000, that percentage had decreased down to 69 percent, as compared to all other racial and ethnic groups in the country which had comparatively increased. This change in racial terms represents a significant population shift in a relatively short amount of time, and there is evidence present that diversity will continue to increase into the modern, twenty-first century and into the future. Globalization and resulting economic changes in the United States have combined to create never before seen levels of racial and ethnic heterogeneity or diversity. Related to this diversity and heterogeneity, increasingly, more people living in the U.S. are speaking languages other than English at home, people with disabilities are becoming more mobile with better technology and society’s changing attitudes towards these groups (Pitts, 2005).

**Affirmative Action Era**

Before the removal of Affirmative Action by California voters, the University of California was able to combat the issue of a lack of diversity by specially admitting minorities or people of color, such as African Americans/Black, Hispanic/Latino and Native Americans. According to Laycock (2004), affirmative action that factors in race was one of the successful
methods that had enabled competitive, prestigious schools, such as the University of California, to significantly reduce their racial identifiability. By doing so, each university could apply the predictors of academic success that worked best for it, and thus could apply those selective admission standards across the board, to all applicants within the applicant pool. These same universities could then consider race at the marginal level, giving special consideration to those minority applicants who had already demonstrated outstanding academic achievements under the usual standards of admissions. In order to negate the segregative impact of highly selective admission standards, this marginal consideration of race was essential (Laycock, 2004).

Undergraduate admissions offices at Berkeley, and law school admissions also, stopped factoring in academic indexes based on a combination of grades and test scores. They substituted instead for more impressionistic assessments of each applicant’s academic strength. Academic scholars report that in 1996, UC Berkeley admitted ninety-four percent of applicants in the top six percent of Academic Index Scores; by 2001, it admitted less than sixty-six percent of these applicants. UC Berkeley Law School quit reporting LSAT scores to the admissions committee. UC Berkeley also quit calculating grade point averages to measure the quality of the undergraduate institution attended.

UCLA Law School deserves to be discussed further due to its unique admission’s initiatives towards promoting diversity and the challenges that this stance towards diversity inevitably created. The specific problem at the UCLA Law School (UCLAW) centered on the issue of admissions into its law school. According to Harris (2002), through resolutions adopted by the University’s Board of Regents in July 1995, decisions about admissions standards were taken from the faculty and administration as part of the state governor’s political agenda. For
example, the UC Regents’ Resolution SP-1 precluded any school in the University of California (UC) system from using race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin as criteria for admission. This represented a radical departure from the policies in place at many of the UC campuses that had enabled the racial integration of even flagship schools like UC Berkeley and UCLA, although on terms that did not sufficiently integrate the equal equation between merit and standardized test scores. This rich racial diversity was in fact one of the more specific features of UCLAW and was a major factor in the decision of quite a few students - many of them white - to select UCLAW over other more prestigious schools (Harris, 2002).

The Elimination of Affirmative Action

The success of the campaign to eliminate affirmative action in the state’s university system fueled the organizing efforts for Proposition 209, also known as the California Civil Rights Initiative, which sought to ban affirmative action without ever mentioning this terminology. The state initiative barred California from discrimination against or offering potential treatment to anyone on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin. In Spring 1996, Proposition 209 was adopted by a majority of California’s voters and the state constitution was changed to prohibit preferences of admission standards based on race, ethnicity, and gender in employment, education and contracting.

As Affirmative Action was removed from California state law and legislation, the question of how the University of California could maintain diversity or uphold the rights of ethnic minorities, such as Native Americans, began to take shape. Native Americans have historically not received the recognition of special status that they deserve from the U.S. Government as well as from the state of California.
Ten years after Proposition 209 first took effect at public universities in California, an important legal and educational question has been largely ignored at the policymaking level: can Native American tribal membership, specifically membership in a U.S. federally recognized tribe, be a positive factor in public university admissions in spite of Proposition 209, which prohibits the consideration of race, color, ethnicity, and nationality? (Reynoso & Kidder, 2008). According to Reynoso & Kidder (2008), within the UC system, the only official programs to allow recognized tribal membership as an admissions factor are the UCLA School of Law and an affiliated graduate student program at the UCLA American Indian Studies Center. Federally recognized tribal membership is not a factor in undergraduate admissions at the UC, nor is it a factor in the CSU system.

Interestingly, it is important to note that current UC and CSU policy, with the exception of some federal cases, dating back to the landmark 1974 Supreme Court ruling in Morton v. Mancari, 12 tribal memberships in a federally recognized American Indian tribe as a political classification, are distinct or separate from classifications based on race, ethnicity and national origin.

Post-Affirmative Action

In addition, as Higher Education institutions, such as the UC and CSU, as well as other large, national universities, began to cope with the absence of Affirmative Action, many types of diversity programs and initiatives began to spring up as a replacement in its absence. According to Rothman, Lipset & Nevitte (2003), educational institutions began to defend affirmative action or diversity programs by trying to prove the positive benefits for all university students in general, rather than as a redress to make amends for past discrimination of minority students.
from white, mainstream society. By doing so, universities such as the University of Michigan and UC Davis showed a willingness to move towards a progress for change. At the University of Michigan specifically, underrepresented minorities, Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans were given a 20-point bonus in an academic point system which rates its undergraduate student applicants on a scale ranging from a minimum of 47 points to a maximum of 150 points (Rothman, Lipset & Nevitte, 2003). This point system is to ensure that minority students are evaluated equally and fairly to white students and other non-minority students, such as Asian Americans. Asian Americans are not considered minorities in the admissions system due to their population representation.

Despite widespread public and community support for helping minorities in general terms, setting ethnic and racial preferences in college admissions have increasingly been met with some adversity, through both the courts and in state legislation. As a direct result of these challenges, several states have adopted admissions policies to ensure that their incoming student body consists of Black and Hispanic students without relying strictly on racial or ethnic admissions criteria. These alternative policies include reducing or eliminating reliance on the SAT or ACT tests (the University of Michigan’s program awards a maximum of 12 points for standardized test scores) and admitting a fixed percentile of the top students in each graduating high school class to further move away from strictly race-based admissions (Rothman, Lipset & Nevitte, 2003).

In contrast, proponents of Affirmative Action found many positive elements and rewards towards diversifying the greater academic community. Tom & Bassett (2004) found that among the proponents for affirmative action in university admissions is the argument that a diverse
student body helps to create a beneficial learning environment for all university students. The argument supports the claim that diversity benefits all students, minorities and nonminorities equally. Diversity also helps to directly enhance classroom learning and it helps to prepare university students for the pluralistic, multicultural society where they will live and work after graduation (Tom & Bassett, 2004).

Tom & Bassett (2004) also found empirical evidence and consideration of theoretical models that linked diversity to positive educational outcomes. Evidence showed that no statistically significant correlation exists between the perception of improved educational quality and student body diversity. In this scholarly article, presented is a nonsurvey-based statistical analysis of the relation between high school diversity and learning outcomes at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). This article considers the impact of diversity after controlling for a number of areas that affect GPA. These other areas include the student’s ACT scores and class rank, gender, racial/ethnic background, whether their school is in Chicago, and whether the high school has a measure of high quality (Tom & Bassett, 2004). The quality of high school is measured by the average ACT score of all high school students who took the exam at their respective school.

The research analysis conducted was based on cross-sectional data and grade inflation did not affect the test results. After conducting the study, the research found that depending on the diversity measure, a student, minority or nonminority, from a diverse high school as compared to a non diverse high school has an overall one-fourth to one-half point higher GPA (Tom & Bassett, 2004). The study also found that students at the lower end of the GPA distributions benefit more from diversity than from those of the higher GPA spectrum. In addition, there is a
major gender difference found between male and female students. Female students were found to be helped most by diversity.

In addition to college and university campuses being helped by the implementation of diversity measures and programs, government and the public can also benefit from multiculturalism in several ways. Riccucci & Saidel (1997) found that the study of representative bureaucracy research has focused on the demographic representativeness of public bureaucracies, an issue that remains relevant not only to researchers but also to elected government officials with the authority to do so. The composition of the government workforce is an example of the level of openness of bureaucracies to diversify with people of all backgrounds. This serves as an indicator of measurement towards the equality of opportunity and access to people of diverse backgrounds. In addition, it can promote the legitimacy of government bureaucracies in that diverse communities may have a greater sense of self-investment and self-establishment when the bureaucracies that serve these communities (e.g. police, health, social services, etc.) are more transparently diverse (Ricucci & Saidel, 1997).

With the active recruitment of Black and Hispanic students from colleges and universities, there has been a number of educational partnerships that have begun to spring up across the state of California. According to Domina & Ruzek (2012), comprehensive educational partnerships between public K-12 schools and California public universities, have tended to produce from school districts, disproportionately large Black and Hispanic student populations. In 1990, nearly 46% of students in California school districts that eventually implemented partnerships were Black or Hispanic, compared to 40% of students in school districts that implemented no partnership. As California’s Hispanic population began to rapidly increase over
the research period, student enrollments grew statewide, and this gap broadened between Black or Hispanic and their non-Black and non-Hispanic peers. By 2005, nearly 60% of students in districts with program partnerships with local universities were Black or Hispanic, compared to approximately 50% of students in districts with no implemented partnerships at their schools. However, enrollments of minorities were relatively low in districts participating in partnership programs at both the beginning and the end of the time period, even though these districts also experienced a dramatic increase in their Hispanic population.

Despite the positive evidence of Hispanic and Black students in program partnerships at the K-16 levels, however, districts involved in comprehensive K-16 partnerships have historically been underrepresented at California’s public 4-year universities. Students in districts with comprehensive K-16 partnerships were slightly more likely than their peers in schools with no partnership programs to enroll in community colleges. However, even though enrollment rates from school districts with comprehensive K-16 partnerships increased rapidly over the study period, in 2005 graduates from districts with comprehensive K-16 partnerships were no more likely to enroll at CSU campuses than students elsewhere in the state, and less likely to enroll at UC campuses (Domina & Ruzek, 2012).

**Educational Success of Different Ethnic/Racial Groups**

It is interesting to note that although successful initiatives and program partnerships were implemented at colleges and universities, there is a strong research that African Americans and Hispanics were less likely than Whites/Caucasians to succeed in college or university. St. John and Hu (2001) found that African Americans in three years studied between 1990-1991, 1993-1994, 1996-1997 and Hispanics in 1993-1994, were less likely to persist in college or university
than their White counterparts, when only student racial/ethnic background variables were included in the models. However, when college grades and other college experience variables were included in the longitudinal study, the significant differences in probability of college persistence for different racial/ethnic groups disappeared. In addition, no significant differences among racial/ethnic groups were found after controlling for student background information, college experience, and financial aid variables.

These findings combined suggest that the disparity in college and university persistence among racial/ethnic groups existed in Indiana’s postsecondary educational system, but financial aid or student finances did not appear to be a source of the disparity found. Rather, the findings from this study highlight the importance of improving student college grades and overall college experiences, especially for African Americans and Hispanics, as a means of improving opportunity to continue in Higher Education among racial/ethnic minority groups (Hu & St. John, 2001).

In order to really achieve equal opportunity for minorities to persist in postsecondary education, public policy focusing on financial affordability is key, but is not the whole solution. Perhaps having an intervention that focuses on enhancing student college achievement of minorities would help to balance the remaining, societal inequality, in college and university persistence rates (Hu & St. John, 2001).

As there has been a focus and highlight in academic institutions of higher education that ethnic minorities have historically struggled to climb the educational or professional ladder, Hispanics/Latinos have particularly struggled in the medical field. Although public debate has mainly focused on underrepresented minority groups among medical professionals such as
doctors, many groups, especially Latinos/Hispanics, are also underrepresented in the nursing profession (Coffman, Rosenoff & Grumbach, 2001). California is the most populous state in America and as such, has one of the most racially and ethnically diverse populations, making it particularly interesting as a case study for measuring diversity in the nursing field of higher education.

There are two possible explanations for the lack of diversity in the nursing field that pertain to differences in the pursuit of higher education among racial/ethnic groups. According to Coffman, Rosenoff & Grumbach (2001), the first reason is that lower rates of high school graduation and college admission among ethnic minorities reduce the number of minority students who pursue careers in nursing and other fields that require college degrees. The second reason is that racial/ethnic minorities who chose to pursue a higher education may be less inclined than Whites are to obtain a degree in nursing.

African Americans and Latinos are also underrepresented among RNs relative to the working-age population in California. The current gap is most markedly obvious for Latinos, who account for 28 percent of working-age adults in California but only 5 percent of RNs (Coffman, Rosenoff & Grumbach, 2001). Latina graduates were found to be less likely than non-Latina White graduates were to receive degrees in other health and science fields as well.

According to Coffman, Rosenoff & Grumbach (2001), among women, Latinas have the lowest rates of high school graduation and college admission of any racial/ethnic group in California and also the lowest percentage of college graduation with the exception of Native Americans. Asian American women have the highest college graduation rates. The research conducted also found comparable patterns for males across racial/ethnic groups. Data collected
also found that students in the state of California are graduating high school at higher rates than in past generations. However, African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans continue to have much higher school dropout rates than their Asian and non-Latino White counterparts do.

Finally, the research conducted analyzed differences in education curricula across racial and ethnic groups, because of the inequality amongst high school graduates in the quality of education received. To estimate the percentage of students who were found to be well prepared for college, data was collected on the percentage of students who were University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) eligible. The UC and CSU educational systems have specific science and math course requirements for undergraduate admission. Twenty-six percent of Latina graduates of California public high schools in 1998 were found to be UC/CSU eligible, as compared to 31 percent of African American, 45 percent of non-Latina white, and 62 percent of Asian American female graduates (Coffman, Rosenoff & Grumbach, 2001). Males were generally less likely to be UC/CSU eligible, but differences across racial/ethnic groups were found to be similar.

The Model Minority Myth

With the success of Asian Pacific Americans, there has been a backlash towards this very small minority group in California. This backlash has not only been felt through friction from other minority groups but also from bias admission practices within the University of California itself towards Asian Americans. For example, Wang (1988) found that the Asian American Task Force on University Admissions (ATFUA), a community group co-chaired by two Asian American judges in northern California, accused the University of California at Berkeley (UCB) of suddenly changing its admission policies and practices. It did so by trying to slow down, and
possibly even tried to stem the tide or tsunami of rising Asian American enrollments and declining white enrollments. The key questions raised in this study is, in the Post-Bakke era, have elite universities in the U.S. introduced other criteria, some of which are nonacademic and subjective, in the name of increasing student diversity to maintain the structure of white privilege and domination against the emerging, competitive racial group of Asian Americans? (Wang, 1988).

The overrepresentation of Asian American students was thus a major preoccupation of UC President, David P. Gardner. In an Associated Press story, dated December 12, 1986, Gardner said that changes in admissions policy are needed because Asians compromise more than 20% of the undergraduate enrollment at UC campuses but make up only 6% of the state’s population (Wang, 1988). This racial imbalance thus justified UC President Gardner’s policy implementation of decreasing Asian American UC enrollment at its then nine selective campuses (Wang, 1988).

Further in (Wang, 1988), President Gardner labeled this phenomenon of Asian Americans as overrepresentation and racial imbalance and he claimed that this overpopulation of one racial group was having an adverse effect on the UC systems’ attempt to increase the enrollments of Hispanics/Latinos and Blacks. He also discussed that overrepresentation has caused unrest among some ethnic groups, including whites, who had been experiencing a decline in overall representation at the UC Campuses. To correct the racial imbalance, President Gardner called for new legislation to make UC enrollment more accurately reflect the population of California. It is important to note that Asian American and white applicants do not compete with
applicants in the protected categories, such as protected status that ethnic minorities receive (Wang, 1988).

In summary, according to Wang (1988) it was acceptable for a UC Campus to reject academically excellent students, not based on meritocratic grounds, but in the name of diversity. Gardner successfully introduced this idea into a new admissions policy adopted by the UC Regents on May 20, 1998. This policy implementation was aimed more at preventing overrepresentation of Asian Americans than at admitting underrepresented blacks and Hispanics based on their percentage in the California population. Diversity, in this sense, is an affirmative action program for less competitive and declining white applicants and a tokenism for underrepresented minorities, such as the model minority myth (Wang, 1988). The Model Minority Myth bases the argument that Asian Americans are the perfect or most hard-working minority, thus pitting Asian Americans against other less desirable minorities, such as Hispanic/Latinos and Blacks/African Americans.

**Ultra-Competitive UC Admissions**

Some researchers have strong supportive evidence that the University of California is not only trying to limit the number of some ethnic minorities altogether through their admission systems, but has also become markedly ultra competitive with the elimination of Affirmative Action by way of Proposition 209. Santos, Cabrera & Fosnacht (2010) found that the number of Black/African American, Chicano (a political term used for Mexican Americans in the U.S.) and Hispanic/Latino freshman students entering the UC system dropped between the years of 1995 and 1998. In contrast, the number of White and Asian American students increased during the same time period. In addition, the demographics for the state of California has been shifting over
the past decade with Latina/os comprising a substantially larger proportion of the college-aged population.

Additional research supports evidence that high schools with large Latino populations tended to have very low UC application rates, thus, their students were not enrolling (Santos, Cabrera & Fosnacht, 2010). In contrast, schools with significant African American student bodies tended to have comparable UC application rates as a majority of White high schools. Yet fewer African American students enrolled due to low admissions rates signifying the ultra competitiveness of UC admissions.

Another study examined how UC’s undergraduate admission policies changed after the implementation of Proposition 209, as a function of the differing admission criteria among the selectivity of UCLA, UC Davis and UC Riverside specifically. The study found that highly and moderately selective UC campuses have increasingly competitive admissions standards as determined by the significance of GPA and SAT on predicting admissions (Santos, Cabrera & Fosnacht, 2010).

Further research has even shown that the final college destinations of the most academically prepared UC applicants varies by race. While the enrollment rate of all students to the system has consistently hovered over 60% in recent years, top underrepresented applicants increasingly enroll at selective private institutions, such as the prestigious Ivy League. The UC enrollment gap between Underrepresented Minorities (URMs) and majority of top applicants denied admission to Berkeley or UCLA during the period studied was nearly 60% (Santos, Cabrera & Fosnacht, 2010).
Changes in UC Admissions Policies

Despite the University of California’s admissions actively prohibiting certain ethnic/minority groups from being accepted into their campuses due to overrepresentation, some researchers according to Koretz, Rusell, Shin, Horn & Shasby (2002) have argued that admissions tests such as the SAT or ACT should be discarded completely in order to produce a student body which represents the racial/ethnic composition of the entire state population of California. Thus, in 1997, a university task force made a recommendation that the University of California drop the SAT as an admission requirement to avoid a steep decline in the enrollment of minorities at the university’s flagship campuses of UCLA and UCB.

In studying the admission process in California, the following results were found: replacing the former admissions process that included preferences with a race-neutral model based solely on GPA and SAT scores had major effects at the two most selective campuses in the UC System, but much smaller effects at both moderate-and low-selectivity campuses (Koretz, Rusell, Shin, Horn & Shasby, 2002). Both black and Hispanic/Latino student groups were also noticeably underrepresented in the moderately and least selective UC Campuses, but this underrepresentation derived from other factors other than the actual admission process. Specifically, whether a student decided to take the SAT and whether the student met the minimum eligibility criteria for admission into the UC system (Koretz, Rusell, Shin, Horn & Shasby, 2002). The actual admission decision had a primary impact in the representation of black and Hispanic/Latino students only for those highly selective UC campuses (Koretz, Rusell, Shin, Horn & Shasby, 2002).
Finally, the adverse impact of a race-neutral admissions policy was not only the result of ethnic group differences in academic scores on admissions tests. A race-neutral model based solely on GPA also produced an under-representation of minority groups. The effects of using GPAs alone are smaller because the gap between groups in grades is smaller than the gap in average test scores (Koretz, Rusell, Shin, Horn & Shasby, 2002).

**Effects of Proposition 209**

Some authors found that Proposition 209 was a major blow to both affirmative action programs as well as diversity initiatives within California state higher education institutions. Atkinson & Pelfrey (2004) discovered in their research that Proposition 209 banned affirmative action in all public entities in the state, including its public higher education tier system which included the following: the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC). The success of Proposition 209 unfortunately meant that California became a national leader in taking apart race-attentive programs throughout the public education system.

As a public organization, the University of California is expected to enroll Californians of every racial, economic, and social background. For nearly three decades, affirmative action has been a necessary ingredient that allowed UC to admit talented underrepresented minority students who for whatever reason did not meet its academic standards for grades and test scores. Affirmative action sought to level the playing field for underrepresented students to make up for a society full of large disparities of income, opportunity and quality of K-12 schools (Atkinson & Pelfrey, 2004). The University of California considers students underrepresented if they are members of a racial or ethnic group whose collective eligibility rate for UC is measured at below
12-½ percent (Atkinson & Pelfrey, 2004). These include minority groups such as: African Americans, Native Americans and Chicanos/Latinos.

UC’s own studies indicated that using economic disadvantage instead of race would result in more White/Caucasian and Asian students becoming eligible, instead of more underrepresented minorities. Interestingly, during the same time period of study, Atkinson & Pelfrey (2004) found that the proportions of disadvantaged students admitted to UC’s more selective campuses, such as UCB and UCLA have not declined but rather increased in numbers.

In discussing affirmative action, there are two different sides of viewpoints. Supporters of affirmative action claim that it is simply a matter of social justice to help the traditionally excluded have an opportunity to discover the American dream (Atkinson & Pelfrey, 2004). Opponents of affirmative action, however, argue that preferences are substantially unfair to individuals who are not deemed members of minority groups, and that affirmative action encourages a culture of dependence among those it claims to help out (Atkinson & Pelfrey, 2004).

**Affirmative Action Impacts on Public Policy**

Some researchers argue that minority representation will not only positively affect minorities themselves in terms of educational gains but help to advance political gains as well. Hicklin & Meier (2008) discuss how theoretical logic leads us to believe that any increase in minority representation will result in real policy gains for minority groups. Theoretically, descriptive and substantive representation are nearly inextricably linked together, as we make the assumption that minority representativeness will likely behave differently than their Anglo [Caucasian] counterparts in advocating for minority interests (Hicklin & Meier, 2008).
Hicklin & Meier (2008) also argue that in the K-12 public education systems, a series of studies have found increased minority representation in the decision-making organization process, such as the school board, was positively associated with increased student performance (standardized test scores, attendance, graduation rates) for minority student groups (Hicklin & Meier, 2008). Hypothesis 1 proposes that increased minority representation in the state legislature will most likely positively affect levels of minority student enrollments at local public universities (Hicklin & Meier, 2008).

There were several judicial rulings such as the court cases of Bakke, Hopwood and the Michigan cases, which each altered a university’s ability to include race as a factor in determining admissions and financial aid. In the Hopwood case, the 1996 ruling of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals restricted all use of race in admissions’ decisions for public universities in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Thus, eliminating those universities’ ability to attract minority students through any race-targeted admissions policies or substantial programs (Hicklin & Meier, 2008). The Michigan cases lifted the Hopwood ban on race based admissions but still placed some legal restrictions on how a university incorporates race into its admissions process. Hypothesis 3 proposes that restricting the use of race in admissions will negatively affect levels of minority student enrollment (Hicklin & Meier, 2008).

Previous research has shown that the institution’s level of selectivity has a significant effect on the relationship between race restrictions and minority enrollments for universities restricted under the Hopwood case and under California State’s Proposition 209 (Hicklin & Meier, 2008). Since most previous research does not include universities of varying degrees of selectivity or competitiveness, we do not know much about how these differences affect
admission outcomes. Hypothesis 4 proposes that the effect of race restrictions on minority student enrollment ultimately relies on the institution's level of selectivity (Hicklin & Meier, 2008).

Some researchers have further supported the argument that California’s educational legislation is based primarily on a voter system of its citizens. According to Gitell & Kleiman (2000), California’s political culture is based on a long tradition of populist reforms and an electorate system that has steadfastly accepted these reforms. For example, since 1911, citizens of California have enjoyed the direct democracy tools of initiative, referendum and recall that are part of the state constitution (Gitell & Kleiman, 2000). The will of the electorate figures strongly in the state’s political thinking (Gitell & Kleiman, 2000). California was one of the first states to establish 2-year colleges that were locally based and operated, and the state has led the nation in such schools and the number of students enrolled at these institutions of higher learning (Gitell & Kleiman, 2000). This populist tradition also influenced the foundation of a large network of 4-year colleges in the 1950s and 1960s. California’s Master Plan, the much anticipated strategic plan for higher education, promised complete access and affordability to all residents and is a reflection of the popular will of its citizens according to Gitell & Kleiman (2000).

In recent years, California has had a surge of voter initiatives in which legislation is decided by voters, such as critical decisions in the area of higher education (Gitell & Kleiman, 2000). The most influential piece of legislation that affected access to higher education in California was Proposition 209, which eliminated affirmative action at the higher education college level (Gitell & Kleiman, 2000).
In addition to real policy gains in the political field, some researchers have argued that higher levels of education will ultimately benefit ethnic minorities. According to Contreras (2005), higher levels of education are key to higher wages and help to provide a better chance for better employment and life options for underrepresented communities. California educates one out of every eight students in the country and is the most diverse in the union. However, despite the state’s high diversity level, equality for everyone was not promoted in Sacramento, the state’s capital. Proposition 187, an initiative passed in California in November 1994, sought to deny health and social services, including the ability to access public education for undocumented immigrants and their children (Contreras, 2005). However, in 1995, Proposition 187 was struck down by the district courts as unconstitutional. Another law was introduced, Proposition 209, passed in 1996, banned the consideration of race, ethnicity, or gender in college and university admissions (Contreras, 2005). In addition, in 1998, Proposition 227 was passed by California voters, seriously restricting the use of non-English languages for the instruction of English learners (Contreras, 2005).

**Passage of Proposition 209 & SP-1**

Following the passage of Proposition 209, the University of California (UC) system witnessed declines in their underrepresented, minority student applications and admissions across many of its campuses, most severe among the flagship campuses - UCLA and UC Berkeley (Contreras, 2005). Before affirmative action had been eliminated altogether, it helped to provide universities some anonymity in student admission decisions and allowed the university to maintain a modest representation of underrepresented minority students, even at the most selective campuses. In the absence of affirmative action, underrepresented students are now
expected to compete for a very selective admission against more economically and socially privileged White and Asian students, despite the well-documented and thoroughly researched differences in opportunity to learn provided by the state’s K-12 public school system (Contreras, 2005).

Since GPA is a measure of academic performance with additional points for Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, these points provide students with access to an Honors and AP curriculum, a competitive edge over disadvantaged minority students whose schools simply lack the resources to offer such courses. The implications of this research on access and equality are obvious. Students with access to Honors-level curriculum and AP courses will have a greater likelihood for higher, inflated GPAs, thereby enhancing their chance of admission to both moderately and highly selective UC campuses (Contreras, 2005).

In addition, according to Contreras (2005), the quantitative findings also suggest that students are being admitted solely based on an academic rubric. Proposition 209 and SP-1, therefore, required a Tier 1 admissions rubric, despite a nominal presence of additional criteria that were allowable characteristics to factor in (Contreras, 2005). Any positive growth of the UC admissions criteria produced a minimal effect on underrepresented student minority access post Proposition 209 (Contreras, 2005).

**Persistence and Degree Attainment**

However, some researchers are much more skeptical about the academic progress and gains of ethnic minorities in terms of the time of degree completion and degree attainment. Brock (2010) argues that although access to higher education has increased markedly over the past forty years, student success in college, as measured by persistence and degree attainment,
has not improved at all for some ethnic minority groups. Brock (2010) also makes the argument that changes in federal policy and public attitudes since the mid-1960s have made higher education more accessible to women, minorities, and nontraditional students. By doing so, it has shifted the center of gravity in higher education away from traditional four-year colleges toward less selective community colleges. However, students at two-year colleges, were found to be far less likely than those at four-year institutions to complete a college-level degree. He continues to support his argument with the fact that America’s higher education system must try harder in order to promote student success. Three areas, he says that are particularly needed for reform are the following: remedial education, student support services and financial aid (Brock, 2010).

Educational institutions that were found to need the most aid are those that provide the greatest access to nontraditional and underprepared students in community colleges and less selective universities, such as ethnic minorities, women and older students (Brock, 2010).

Access to Higher Education has increased substantially over the generations, although some racial and ethnic groups still remain underrepresented (Brock, 2010). This has been so as measured by success in college and university, in terms of persistence and degree attainment, which has not improved. At public, two-and four-year institutions, Asian and Pacific Islanders have the highest persistence and degree completion rates of any racial or ethnic minority group, followed by non-Hispanic whites, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic blacks (Brock, 2010). The longitudinal studies carried out by the U.S. Government lack sufficient numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives to accurately report on these specific ethnic groups (Brock, 2010).

Finally, some ethnic groups, such as African American and Hispanic males, are very much underrepresented on college campuses across the nation according to Brock (2010).
Among these groups, overall rates of degree attainment have not improved in decades. Time-to-degree completion has also been steadily increasing, particularly at two-year college institutions. Remedial education programs often do a better job of weeding out students than helping them to advance to transferable, college-level courses and degrees (Brock, 2010). These academic trends run opposite to the nation’s need for a sizeable college-educated workforce in an era of global, international competition (Brock, 2010). In addition, young people need a college degree to better their chance of landing a suitable, well-paying, stable job so that they can successfully support their families.

**Benefits of Institutionalized Diversity**

In support of the claim that ethnic minorities need more education to better their quality of life, Morphew (2009) makes the argument that greater institutionalized diversity provides for greater learning options for students because they are afforded more choices and institutions can adapt their unique strengths to students’ needs. In addition, greater institutionalized diversity allows a diverse society like ours to create and maintain a system that can be flexible with the changes required of it by society and it also makes it harder for the state or any central authority to use higher education as an instrument for the indoctrination of younger generations (Morphew, 2009).

Further studies also found that there appeared to be zero (or negative) growth in the general institutional diversity of the U.S higher education system as measured in the two snapshot years studied. This is true even though the study period exhibited great change in terms of higher education’s students, their attendance status, distribution across undergraduate and
graduate populations, changing higher education governance structures at the state level, and the diversification of higher education’s revenue streams (Morphew, 2009).

The findings regarding specific trends in institutional diversity can be summarized in two statements. First, new highly populated institutional types tended to be either larger not-for-profits offering advanced degrees or smaller for-profits offering two- or four-year degrees (Morphew, 2009). Second, highly populated institutional types in 1972 that became less populated in 2002 were smaller not-for-profits offering two- and four-year degrees (Morphew, 2009).

Organizations are faced with competing demands for what services they should offer or how they should be structured will strive to find a balance between accommodating these demands while still maintaining their institutional core (Morphew, 2009). The policy and leadership lesson: while organizations may change, greater diversity is not a likely product in highly institutionalized environments because of the notions of what is legitimate for these organizations still dominates (Morphew, 2009).

An example of institutional legitimacy and power among ethnic/racial groups is a model that provides a useful conceptual lens for understanding why colleges and universities as well as many other kinds of organizations are prone to incremental change, even when faced with changes in their environments that is not incremental at all (Morphew, 2009). In highly institutionalized environments, sea change on the part of organizations and their leaders is not possible: it runs contrary to the very essential notions of survival and legitimacy, which runs hand in hand in these organizational types (Morphew, 2009).
Institutionalized Racism and Classism in Higher Education

Finally, there is an argument that supports the claim as previously mentioned that ethnic minorities are more likely than their White/Caucasian peers to finish their education at the 2-year college level according to Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon (2014). Despite large minority enrollments, there is also the claim that 2-year colleges have not effectively served as the gateway to a bachelor’s degree for large numbers of lower-income and ethnic minority students, who are less likely to transfer to 4-year institutions as their White/Caucasian peers (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014). There were additional findings that 2-year colleges with higher percentages of Hispanic or African American students have lower 6-year transfer rates than colleges with fewer racial and ethnic minorities (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014). In this respect, transferring has a social stratifying function, positioned at the intersection between the sectors of higher education and permitting only a select groups of students, typically those from middle- and upper-class backgrounds, a competitive advantage in the form of higher degrees and credentials (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014).

Affluent classes are increasingly gaining access to the baccalaureate through the community college, often at the cost of displacing students from underrepresented minority/ethnic groups. These research studies suggest that transferring serves to create opportunities to pursue a bachelor’s degree or graduate work for some groups more than others. From this perspective, the transfer system (e.g. transfer policies and procedures) reinforces inequality in educational attainment and serves to perpetuate social stratification of different social classes (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014).
Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon (2014) also found that a history of racial injustice is maintained through contemporary policies and practices, and is reflected in the dramatic differentials, in opportunity and other outcomes that still exist between people of color and Whites/Caucasians. From this perspective, transfer policies and practices can be discriminatory in nature and function as a form of institutionalized racism, where institutionalized racism is defined as racism that occurs in structures and operations at the organization level (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014). However, it is important to note that institutionalized racism in the form of policy is most often unintentional (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014). Referred to as indirect institutionalized discrimination, this form of racism occurs with no prejudice or intent to harm any specific group in particular, despite its negative impacts on minoritized populations (Chase, Dowd, Pazich & Bensimon, 2014).
Section 3: Research Gap and Question

In answering the several proposed research questions, this paper is expected to shed light on the admission practices of the University of California, California’s top institution of public higher education. In further examining the admission practices within University of California (UC) system, this paper is expected to measure the amount of diversity and the presence of the following ethnic minorities: African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American. These specific groups are historically disadvantaged both economically and socially.

In addition, these groups of ethnic minorities have also been historically kept out of American institutions of higher education and thus have been kept out of achieving the American Dream. They have also been excluded through university admission measures and rubrics as well, through political policies, for example, with the elimination of Affirmative Action, as well as by economic reasons, such as high poverty levels and first-generation college status. Some minorities, such as Hispanics/Latinos also have to deal with the disadvantage of immigration status. With that being said, the following are our proposed research questions:

❖ How do higher education institutions, specifically colleges and universities, measure ethnic and cultural diversity on their campuses?
❖ With the elimination of Affirmative Action, how have colleges and universities sought to maintain diversity through their admissions systems?

Background

The chosen research background setting of this paper will seek to measure the admission trends in higher education public institutions within the United States. In addition, my research background further exams specifically how the University of California implements diversity
measures through their admissions process. By examining the admission practices of higher education universities, while specifically analyzing the admission practices of the University of California, this research paper seeks to better understand how ethnic and socio-economic diversity is defined and measured. The student backgrounds analyzed are primarily focused on the following groups: African Americans, Hispanic/Latino and Native Americans.

This field of research is relevant and important to the field of public administration because higher education is an educational institution. As such, the field of public administration can learn from higher education the importance of diversity and how to implement cultural, socio-economic diversity into the public education sector. The private education sector can also gain a valuable lesson in diversity as it seeks to diversify both its students and employees.
Section 4: Research Design

The research methodology, strategies and tools that will be used will be based primarily on quantitative data or numerical data. The numerical data will take the form of statistical data, percentages and student population numbers based on their respective ethnic group. Each ethnic group will consist of general identifications such as: African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American. The reasoning for this is to study the different ethnic minorities at public universities of higher education, specifically at the University of California, in general ethnic groups, rather than in specific sub-ethnic groups.

The research design will include strategies to help in understanding all of the specific answers involving admission practices through the many parameters and trends that public institutions, such as universities, tend to adhere to and maintain. These admission practices will be examined both on a historical scale as well as within the modern spectrum of present day.

Methodology and Data Collection Methods

For the purpose of quantitative research methods and to provide the best understanding possible of future research regarding the content being discussed, data was conducted by collecting sample sizes of admitted freshman and transfer students, categorized by their affiliated minority group, in a quantitative manner. The sample population being measured would be undergraduate college students, specifically at the University of California campuses, as well as some graduate and professional law students. It is important that these specific groups of students be included in the sample size because in order to properly measure diversity, we must know the percentages or population numbers of minority students being admitted into the University of California, within a given academic year. A graph depicting ethnic minorities of
African American/Black, Latino/Hispanic and Native American freshman and transfer students admitted between the years 2000 and 2010 was also included in the research conducted.

We determined that although the University of California has implemented several policies post-Affirmative Action, a negative decline in the enrollment of ethnic minorities has effectively resulted. There is likewise no substantial evidence that current University of California admission policies have increased enrollment numbers of ethnic minorities at its nine campuses. This is especially true for the flagship schools of UC Berkeley and UCLA. Thus, the most substantial data that we were able to conduct was nominal research. Through this, it allows the reader to make a more scientific and accurate depiction of measuring diversity within a specific time period. However, data is continuously changing due to admission policies and further research must be conducted in the future by academic scholars and the greater academic community.
Section 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper analyzed the admission trends of public institutions of higher education in an ethnically diverse perspective. In addition, this paper answered the main question of what steps or action has the University of California (UC) taken to increase diversity within its student body.

By delving deep into the University of California admission system, this research paper clearly identified how the UC System measures the admission rates of the following ethnic groups: African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American. Hispanic/Latino and African American groups, specifically, still remain relatively small in terms of overall student population at the University of California, the top-tier level of California state’s higher education system. Finally, this research paper concludes with the examination of admission trends of both historical and modern-day evidence to better measure what kinds of admission trends will exist in the future, especially as ethnic minorities or people of color are expected to steadily grow in the coming years in California to one-day become the population majority.

As minorities and people of color begin to take hold as a majority in the state of California, political policies towards these fragile, sensitive communities will begin to shift and change. These political policies will especially begin to change by way of educational policies, first from the legislative side of the state capital of Sacramento and hopefully, gradually trickle down to slowly transcending the state’s institutions of higher education. Once this happens, the educational institutions of the University of California and California State University will forever change towards a greater path of diversity. Only time will tell if this change towards diversity can be maintained without causing significant problems for other ethnic groups in the
state, such as the declining White/Caucasian majority as well as the ever-increasing Asian Pacific American minority.
References


