

Essay 3. UCLA's Commitment to Diversity

Introduction

Our *Institutional Proposal* identifies “diversity” as one of ten campus hallmarks. UCLA’s diversity is well reflected by its student population. Nearly 63% of our undergraduates report that at least one of their parents is foreign-born, 51% grew up speaking a language other than English, and 25% were born outside the United States. Over 23% report a family income of less than \$35,000, and 37% are federal Pell Grant recipients. Students, faculty, and staff thrive in our academic community, where interacting and learning with people of vastly different backgrounds and experiences expand understanding and anchor academic excellence. UCLA is committed to serving the diverse peoples of California; the annual [Washington Monthly](#)¹ rankings have consistently ranked UCLA as one of the top schools in the nation in serving as an “engine of social mobility,” based on UCLA’s “high successful graduation rate given its large numbers of lower-income students.”

In the 1998 WASC [review](#)², UCLA identified diversity as one of the three important priorities for the future of the university. At that time, Proposition 209 had just become State law and the campus was concerned about maintaining its diverse student body and workforce, as well as the excellence that derived from this diversity. The summary [report](#)³ of the WASC site visit team made several thoughtful recommendations, including the appointment of a chancellorial-level committee to develop an overarching diversity statement for the campus, assigning responsibilities for accomplishing articulated goals, and encouraging faculty diversity in teaching and research. The WASC team also urged campus leaders to reinvigorate efforts to “rethink the basic assumptions of identifying excellence in the admissions of students” and to establish programs to increase the diversity of faculty via recruitment and retention. In this essay, we summarize campus efforts to respond to these recommendations and reflect on the challenges UCLA faces in advancing its commitment to diversity.

Strengthening a Campus Approach to Diversity

In 1998, Chancellor Albert Carnesale appointed the Chancellor’s Advisory Group on Diversity ([CAGD](#)⁴), comprising senior administrators, faculty, and leadership of the Academic Senate and the undergraduate and graduate student bodies. As its first task, the group wrote a diversity statement to guide campus efforts and then focused on ways of improving UCLA’s multifaceted approach to the various challenges of diversity. The advisory group also made a number of recommendations to secure pivotal campus leadership; these included the appointments of: 1) an Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Diversity, responsible for initiating programs to enhance campus efforts to recruit and retain faculty from diverse populations; 2) an Associate Vice Provost for Student Diversity, responsible for expanding programs to support UCLA’s diverse student body through the Academic Advancement Program ([AAP](#)⁵); 3) an Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships, to create and oversee the [UCLA in LA initiative](#)⁶; and 4) a council to coordinate UCLA’s academic preparation and [educational partnership programs](#)⁷ for K-14. The CAGD also recommended that the chancellorial reviews of deans and vice chancellors take into account efforts to foster diversity, a practice that holds campus leaders accountable for the diversification of UCLA’s campus community.

Last year (2006-07), Acting Chancellor Norman Abrams led the advisory group (CAGD) and, in anticipation of its tenth year of service, he charged CAGD with examining UCLA’s strategic plans and developing a comprehensive diversity proposal that would spotlight efforts and strengthen commitments to equity and inclusion across all programs and for all members of the campus community. The committee’s report in 2008 will provide a useful roadmap for UCLA’s new Chancellor, Gene Block, who has identified diversity as a major challenge and goal for the campus.

UCLA's Diverse Student Body

The table below shows student diversity data for 1998-99 (last WASC review) and 2006-07. In both years, nearly 50% self identified as students of color (shaded rows); however, the percent of underrepresented minorities declined from 19.3% to 16.7%, with a pronounced decline in the numbers of African American students (33% reduction) and American Indian students (30% reduction).

Populations ⁸	Undergraduate		Graduate		Total		% Total	
	1998-99	2006-07	1998-99	2006-07	1998-99	2006-07	1998-99	2006-07
African American *	1,306	756	439	413	1,745	1,169	5.1%	3.2%
American Indian *	176	106	61	60	237	166	0.7%	0.5%
Asian American	8,987	9,784	2,059	2,242	11,046	12,026	32.4%	32.8%
Chicano/Latino *	3,736	3,824	810	951	4,546	4,775	13.3%	13.0%
White (non-His.)	7,895	8,706	4,732	4,494	12,627	13,200	37.0%	36.1%
Declined to state	1,378	1,298	596	1,392	1,974	2,690	5.8%	7.3%
Foreign	625	958	1,305	1,627	1,930	2,585	5.7%	7.1%
Total	24,103	25,432	10,002	11,179	34,105	36,611	100.0%	100.0%
% Color	58.9%	56.9%	33.7%	32.8%	51.5%	49.5%		
% URM	21.6%	18.4%	13.1%	12.7%	19.1%	16.7%		

* Students from underrepresented minority (URM) populations

1) **Undergraduate Students.** Following the passage of Proposition 209, UCLA's Academic Senate Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools ([CUARS](#)⁹) worked annually to implement and evaluate admission procedures responding to the three core UCLA criteria: academic achievement, personal achievement, and life challenges. CUARS developed an innovative *comprehensive* review, in which each freshman applicant received three independent scores, one for each criterion. Admission was determined by the applicant's combined rating. During this same period, [admissions](#)¹⁰ became more competitive as the number of aspirants increased by ~44% (from 32,792 to 47,317), but the number admitted increased only by ~13% (from 10,830 to 12,189).

In Fall [2006](#)¹¹, 59% of freshmen self identified as students of color but the racial-demographics of the incoming class were troubling; only 96 [African American freshmen](#)¹² indicated they planned to enroll, down from an average of 140 registrants in past years. The sharp drop was cause for alarm in the otherwise successful effort to achieve student diversity and appeared reflective of a sense that Proposition 209 had made UCLA particularly less hospitable to African Americans. Compared to their cohorts, African American seniors reported feeling less a part of UCLA's community and less satisfied with campus life than others answering the [Senior Survey](#)¹³. Although African Americans reported feeling less connected, most (91%) were satisfied with their overall UCLA experience.

Prompted by these disturbing trends and the challenges they presented to campus diversity and excellence, CUARS, with support from Acting Chancellor Abrams, worked through the summer 2006 to replace the *comprehensive* review with a *holistic review*¹⁴. Under this process, each applicant receives one score that reflects a holistic assessment of the three admissions criteria. This review facilitates a more contextualized assessment of applicants than the previous one. The new review resulted in a more diverse class, with 390 African American admits; 203 (52%) indicated their intent to enroll. The high yield was facilitated by student and alumni recruitment events and by new scholarships provided by private funds. Also a taskforce that included community leaders helped promote effective community outreach programs. Although State funding for outreach has declined recently, the Chancellor's Office continues to support an array of [outreach](#)¹⁵ programs.

2) **Graduate Students.** In recent years, UCLA's Graduate Division has reshaped its outreach, recruitment, and retention of graduate students in all disciplines. In academic year 2006-07, 15% of

graduate students were underrepresented minorities and 47% were women. With respect to expanded outreach efforts, UCLA collaborates with other campuses to promote diversity by:

a) Information Sharing and Recruitment Support. The Graduate Division participates in a wide variety of regional and national recruitment events and fairs at selected institutions within California. Included are many non-traditional venues such as the national GRE Forums, the Foreign Officer University Fair at the Defense Language Institute, and the McNair National Research Conference. Subject to the proscriptions imposed by Proposition 209, support is also provided for underrepresented graduate students; for example, special fellowships¹⁶ are used to recruit economically disadvantaged students to UCLA graduate and professional programs.

b) Skill and Pipeline Development. The Graduate Division participates in programs designed to expand access to graduate study among economically disadvantaged students, such as UC LEADS¹⁷, NSF funded AGEP¹⁸, and NSF funded UC DIGSSS¹⁹. The Graduate Division also works with UCLA's Division of Undergraduate Education, which sponsors federally funded programs (exempt from 209 restrictions) for underrepresented undergraduate minorities committed to research and graduate studies, including the McNair Scholars Program²⁰ (arts, humanities, social sciences) and the MARC Scholars Program²¹ (math, sciences). Engineering also offers federally funded programs for underrepresented minorities (CEED²²), and many of our professional schools sponsor Career Based Outreach Programs (CBOP²³) to provide outreach to undergraduates from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Faculty and Staff Diversity

1) **Faculty**. The Office for Faculty Diversity was created in 2002 with the appointment of UCLA's first Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Diversity. The office serves as a faculty diversity advocate and is responsible for: creating an array of programs that support and enhance recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, maintaining a diversity website²⁴; updating the UCLA Affirmative Action Plan²⁵; collaborating with chairs, deans, and senior management on all areas pertaining to faculty diversity; and working with the Academic Senate's Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

The Associate Vice Chancellor assists the Vice Chancellor-Academic Personnel (VC-AP) with special projects, such as UCLA's Gender Equity Summit (May 2004), and works with the VC-AP to implement recommendations from investigative reports, such as the gender equity reports²⁶. Faculty committees, appointed jointly by the VC-AP and the Academic Senate Chair in 2000, wrote these detailed reports, which assessed policies for and practices of hiring and compensating women faculty, as well as issues of campus climate. These reports led to the creation of a longitudinal electronic database to track faculty merits and promotions and to a new equity review process for faculty.

Currently, the statistics²⁷ for gender and ethnic diversity among tenure-ranked faculty are 28% women, 8.9% underrepresented minorities (URM), and 23.3% faculty of color (including Asian Americans and URM). In 1996, the year Proposition 209 became law, the statistics for faculty were 23% women, 8.3% URM, and 19.5% faculty of color. Diversity data²⁸ plotted for the past decade show a slight increase in the proportion of women while the proportion of African American (at ~3%) and Hispanic faculty (~5%) remains flat. Among the challenges to increasing faculty diversity is retention; too often, the number hired each year is offset by losses to other institutions. The proportion of women and URM by academic areas²⁹ is uneven and for most does not reach availability pools.

UCLA has taken steps to strengthen faculty committee search procedures³⁰ to include oversight of faculty committee composition and search committee training, as well as documentation that searches have been broad and inclusive. Department chairs and deans also participate in training sessions pertaining to affirmative action issues and State laws, as they are held accountable for ensuring that the recruitment pools are inclusive and well documented. Effective Fall 2007, the Associate Vice Chancellor will serve as the Vice Provost-Faculty Diversity and Development and will work closely with the Provost and Chancellor to assign more visibility and centrality to faculty diversity issues.

2) Staff. UCLA has the largest staff workforce (~18,500 career staff) among UC campuses. As of 2006, our workforce comprised 39% URM staff, 62% staff of color (including Asian Americans and URM), and 65% women (see [Workforce Summary](#)³¹). For many underserved groups, advancement has been difficult, and to enhance upward mobility, UCLA's Campus Human Resources has identified and adopted strategic goals that include investing in staff development and attracting a diverse applicant pool through community outreach.

Academic and Research Programs Focused on Diversity Issues

In recent years, UCLA has also developed a number of academic programs focused on issues of diversity, as well as underserved populations and societal disparities. In the development of the UCLA General Education (GE) curriculum, for example, faculty identified diversity as a key element of two foundation areas (Arts and Humanities; Society and Culture; see *Essay 4*), which stimulated departments to include issues of diversity in a wide variety of GE courses. Also, with the departmentalization of two ethnic studies programs (*Essay 7*), students have new opportunities to major in [Chicana and Chicano Studies](#)³² and [Asian American Studies](#)³³. Other options are available for interdisciplinary majors in [Women's Studies](#)³⁴ and [Afro-American Studies](#)³⁵, as well as minors in [Disability Studies](#)³⁶ and [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies](#)³⁷. In other areas, students who minor in [Education Studies](#)³⁸ focus on understanding the interactions between the legal, social, and economic forces that influence and shape education—often leading to poor academic preparation for low-income, minority children in urban and rural settings.

In response to a growing interest in teaching about diversity, many departments have expanded their efforts to develop new programs or concentrations. Political Science, for example, recently established [Race, Ethnicity and Politics](#)³⁹, a new field built around the problem of racial and ethnic difference and modern politics. The School of Law recently created a program in [Critical Race Studies](#)⁴⁰, which attracts students and faculty committed to racial justice studies and legal practice, and UCLA's American Indian Studies program jointly developed a program in [Law and American Indian Studies](#)⁴¹ with the School of Law; this program leads to a J.D. and an M.A. and produces graduates committed to the practice of Indian law and who have a deep understanding of tribal culture. These are only a few examples from the rich array of UCLA academic programs focused on diversity and equity.

UCLA has also developed several interdisciplinary research centers that facilitate and support faculty and students who study a wide range of issues focused on diversity, inclusion, and access for minority peoples. Many of these centers include strong service components, often partnering with local communities, as well as State and national agencies. For example, UCLA has a center for [minority health](#)⁴², devoted to the elimination of health disparities in racial and ethnic minority populations. We also have a [Center for the Study of Women](#)⁴³, four [Ethnic Studies Centers](#)⁴⁴ (American Indian Studies Center, Asian American Studies Center, Bunche Center for African American Studies, and the Chicano Studies Research Center), as well as an [Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access](#)⁴⁵ dedicated to improving public schools in urban neighborhoods. These programs, and others, have fostered an engaged community of scholars that will continue to develop new programs and attract centers, such as [The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles](#)⁴⁶, formerly based at Harvard.

Next Steps. UCLA's new website [Diversity@UCLA](#)⁴⁷ declares, "Diversity is a core value of UCLA" and proclaims, "We have a responsibility to do whatever can be done, legally and appropriately, to preserve and expand the diverse nature of our university community." In the coming year (2007-08), the CAGD has been asked to continue its examination of campus action plans and to develop a comprehensive strategic proposal to strengthen efforts to increase equity and inclusion across all programs and for all members of the campus community. The committee's report will provide a useful roadmap for Chancellor Gene Block, who has identified diversity as a major challenge and goal for the campus (see *Essay 1*).