

Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools

Impact of the New Freshman Eligibility Policy at the University of California A Report to the Regents of the University of California

November 2013

Executive Summary

This report examines the impact the 2012 changes to the eligibility policy for freshman admission at the University of California have had on the demographic and academic characteristics of students who applied, were admitted, and stated their intention to register. The changes implemented for 2012 involved (1) elimination of the SAT subject tests as a requirement for eligibility; (2) a decrease from 12.5% to 9% of California high school graduates who were identified as eligible in the statewide context; (3) an increase from 4% to 9% of graduates who were identified as eligible in the local (within-school) context (ELC); and (4) the introduction of a new category of “entitled to review” (ETR) applicants who are assured a comprehensive review of their application at all campuses to which they apply, but who are not eligible for referral to another campus for admission. The 9% statewide and 9% local eligibility was expected to result in approximately 10.5% of California high school graduates being identified as eligible for referral to a campus with available space if they are not admitted to a campus to which they apply.

When the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) initially proposed the changes in eligibility policy six years ago, it anticipated a large increase in applications from California high school graduates due to the increase in eligibility in the local context and the introduction of the entitled to review category. BOARS also articulated two main benefits that were expected to result: that campuses would be able to select students who are better prepared academically, and that the students who enrolled under the new policy would constitute a better representation of California’s various communities.

The data presented in this report indicate that BOARS’s expectations have largely been met. In 2012, the first year that the new policy was in effect, applications from California residents increased by substantially more than the increase in high school graduates. The first term academic performance of the students who enrolled as freshman in 2012 was better than for freshmen who first enrolled in 2010 or 2011 across a variety of measures, including UC grade point average, probation rate, and retention rate. Students who stated their intent to register at the University in 2012 and 2013 are more diverse in terms of ethnicity and socioeconomic status than in the years preceding the change in eligibility policy.

However, the data do not allow one to conclude that these outcomes were the result of the change in eligibility policy *per se*. At the same time that the University was making the transition to the new policy, California was dealing with the most severe recession since the 1930’s, large demographic shifts were occurring within the state, and four of the nine campuses began using holistic review of applicants.

One area of concern is clear: too many applicants are being identified as eligible under the new policy. Rather than identifying 10.5% of applicants as eligible, more than 12.5% of California

high school graduates were found to be eligible in both 2012 and 2013. This makes the potential referral pool of eligible students not selected at a campus to which they apply too large. The lone remaining campus currently accepting referral students in recent years, UC Merced, is receiving more applicants and becoming more selective. It will soon not have the available space upon which referral relies. The eligibility policy as now structured must be modified in the near future to allow the University to continue to provide a referral offer of admission to all eligible applicants.

Introduction

In response to recommendations by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and the Academic Senate, The Board of Regents approved significant changes to the University's freshman eligibility policy in February 2009¹, affecting students who entered the University in fall 2012.

Prior to 2012, California high school graduates who sought admission to the University were either identified as "eligible" or "ineligible." Applicants could be identified as eligible through a comparison with other students in either a statewide or a local context. Statewide eligibility was meant to identify the top 12.5% of all California high school graduates and was achieved by an applicant having a sufficiently high combination of high school grades and standardized test scores, including two SAT Subject Tests, according to a predefined "statewide index." Eligibility in the local context (ELC) identified the top 4% of graduates from each participating high school on the basis of their grade point average in college preparatory ('a-g') courses. The majority of eligible students were admitted to a campus to which they applied and the rest of those who were eligible were referred to another campus with available space^{2,3}. Ineligible applicants could be admitted by exception (known as "A-by-E") if a campus review of the application indicated that the student could be successful at that campus.

The new policy involved four main changes:

- elimination of the requirement that students take the SAT Subject Tests for eligibility or admission;
- a decrease from 12.5% to 9% of students who are identified as eligible on the basis of the statewide index;
- expansion of students who are identified as Eligible in the Local Context (ELC) from the top 4% of graduates in each participating California high school to the top 9%; and
- introduction of a new "Entitled to Review" (ETR) category of students whose applications receive a comprehensive review at all campuses to which they apply, but who are not included in the referral process.

The expectation in 2009, when the details were developed, was that the 9% statewide eligibility and the 9% ELC (sometimes referred to as the "9-by-9 policy") would combine to result in approximately 10.5% of all public high school graduates being identified as eligible. Additional students would be selected from the ETR pool to bring the total admitted population to the 12.5% identified in the California Master Plan for Higher Education.

Several factors motivated the BOARS and the Academic Senate to propose the changes. The faculty recognized that many well-qualified high school students were failing to achieve eligibility because of relatively minor deviations from the specific pattern of courses and tests that constituted the statewide index at the time. In 2007, when the new eligibility policy was first pro-

¹ <http://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/2103.html>

² See [Regents Policy 2103](#)

³ Eligibility has historically meant that applicants who are not admitted to any campus where they apply will be offered admission at a UC campus with available space through a referral process.

posed, BOARS stated⁴: “If the proposal is enacted, two main benefits are expected to result. First, enriching the applicant pool should enable campuses to select a group of students who are better prepared academically.” ... “The second expected benefit is better representation of California’s various communities.” This report will examine the extent to which these expectations have been met through a review of data on the application, admission, enrollment and academic performance of freshmen at the University in the two years before and the two years after the policy took effect.

The first class of freshman admitted under the new 9-by-9 policy began at the University in fall 2012. In September of that year, BOARS submitted a report to the Board of Regents entitled, “Comprehensive Review in Admissions at the University of California: an Update”⁵ that contained preliminary data on the first group of students who applied, were admitted, and had accepted the offer of admission.

This report builds on the report of September 2012 by examining the academic performance at UC of the first students admitted under the new policy, and by analyzing a second year of application, admission, and statement of intent to register (SIR) data under the new policy. It focuses specifically on freshman admissions in light of the 2009 changes to Regents Policy 2103, consistent with reporting requirement D(1) of that policy: “The Academic Senate, through its Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) will evaluate and report annually and at five-year intervals on the academic and fiscal impact of this policy.”

The data shown in this report suggest that admission practices under the new eligibility policy are meeting the faculty’s original goal of enabling “campuses to select a group of students who are better prepared academically.” Whether implementation of the policy has furthered the goal of achieving “better representation of California’s various communities” is less clear, even as the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity among new California resident freshmen has increased. As noted in the 2012 report on Comprehensive Review, one cannot make a definitive connection between academic or diversity outcomes and any single policy change, considering that there have been rapid demographic and economic changes in the state, and the eligibility changes took effect at the same time that four UC campuses transitioned to a single-score individualized review admissions process.

Finally, it is clear that the policy as currently structured will not allow the University to continue its historic referral admission process for eligible students over the long-term. The index used to identify the “top nine percent of California public high school graduates” is, in fact, identifying well over that target. In addition, the overlap between the students identified as eligible on the basis of the statewide index and those identified as ELC is considerably smaller than anticipated when the details of the index and ELC were developed. The Academic Senate has addressed the first problem by adjusting the statewide index to more accurately identify the top 9%⁶, but as the system receives more and more applications, and all campuses becomes more selective, the University is approaching the point where there will be no campus with available space.

⁴ <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/committees/boars/boars.supplmnt.eligibility.propsl.09.07.pdf>

⁵ <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/committees/boars/BOARSREPORTCOMPREHENSIVEREVIEW2012.pdf>

⁶ http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/reports/RLP_Sakaki_StatewideIndexamendment_FINAL.pdf

Section D(2) of Regents Policy 2103 anticipates that some changes may be necessary in providing that: “Based on the results of these ongoing studies, the Academic Senate should periodically consider recommending adjustments to the guarantee structure.” Admission results for 2012 and 2013 indicate that adjustments will indeed be necessary in the near future. BOARS and the Academic Senate will be considering all options in the coming year, with the goal of recommending adjustments to the guarantee structure by the end of the 2013-2014 academic year.

Analyzing the Effects of the New Policy

Over the past two years, BOARS has worked closely with the UCOP Office of Admissions and the Office of Institutional Research to examine the effects resulting from the new policy. BOARS has evaluated data on students who applied to become freshmen, were admitted, and who submitted Statements of Intent to Register to UC for fall 2010 through fall 2013 admission. This report focuses specifically on California resident freshman at the systemwide level, and provides comparisons of application, enrollment and SIR data for students who applied in the first two years under the new policy (2012 and 2013) with students who applied in the final two years of the old eligibility policy (2010 and 2011). These comparisons examine outcomes over a variety of factors, including ethnicity, gender, school characteristics, academic indicators, family characteristics, and eligibility category. The complete set of data is provided in Table 1. For comparison, data on the number of California public high school graduates, including those who completed the required ‘a-g’ course pattern for UC and CSU eligibility, are given in Table 2.

Application, Admission, and Statement of Intent to Register Outcomes

The University of California has experienced substantial growth in freshman applications from both California residents and nonresidents, particularly since 2012 when the new policy took effect. UC received 139,758 applications (unduplicated count) for fall 2013 freshman admission, a 10.7% increase over 2012 and a 31.8% increase over 2011. California resident students submitted 99,180 of these applications, a 6.2% increase over 2012 and a 16.7% increase over 2011. The 9.8% increase in California resident applicants during the first year of the new policy, from 2011 to 2012, was the largest year-over-year increase in at least the last two decades, and the 16.7% increase from 2011 to 2013 is the largest two-year increase. For comparison, the total number of graduates from California public high schools increased by only 2.0% from 2011 to 2012, and those who completed the ‘a-g’ college preparatory course pattern increased by 5.8%. High school graduation data for 2013 are not yet available.

Table 1. California resident application, admission and statement of intent to register data for freshmen beginning in fall 2010 through fall 2012.

| | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | 2012 | | | 2013 | | |
|----------------------------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|
| | Applicants | Admits | SIRs | Applicants | Admits | SIRs | Applicants | Admits | SIRs | Applicants | Admits | SIRs |
| Total | 82,093 | 70,056 | 35,056 | 85,052 | 61,323 | 35,604 | 93,418 | 63,044 | 36,140 | 99,180 | 63,047 | 35,963 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| African American | 4,772 | 3,064 | 1,391 | 4,865 | 2,615 | 1,402 | 5,719 | 2,834 | 1,537 | 5,982 | 2,731 | 1,427 |
| American Indian | 715 | 618 | 271 | 624 | 420 | 223 | 692 | 438 | 226 | 710 | 393 | 201 |
| Asian | 26,363 | 23,569 | 14,327 | 27,682 | 22,006 | 14,393 | 30,105 | 22,909 | 14,911 | 30,617 | 22,538 | 14,368 |
| Chicano/Latino | 20,346 | 16,149 | 8,029 | 23,984 | 16,029 | 9,096 | 28,068 | 17,133 | 9,651 | 31,793 | 17,607 | 10,171 |
| Pacific Islander | 260 | 184 | 79 | 256 | 158 | 90 | 337 | 180 | 90 | 374 | 191 | 100 |
| White | 25,210 | 22,668 | 9,251 | 25,601 | 18,592 | 9,123 | 25,958 | 17,742 | 8,771 | 26,917 | 17,643 | 8,636 |
| Unknown | 4,427 | 3,804 | 1,708 | 2,040 | 1,503 | 737 | 2,539 | 1,808 | 954 | 2,787 | 1,944 | 1,060 |
| Total URM | 25,833 | 19,831 | 9,691 | 29,473 | 19,064 | 10,721 | 34,479 | 20,405 | 11,414 | 38,485 | 20,731 | 11,799 |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 45,914 | 39,362 | 19,298 | 47,695 | 34,685 | 19,591 | 52,200 | 35,495 | 19,955 | 55,057 | 35,046 | 19,819 |
| Male | 36,080 | 30,653 | 15,747 | 37,298 | 26,619 | 15,466 | 41,128 | 27,517 | 16,175 | 42,852 | 27,165 | 15,688 |
| Unknown | 99 | 41 | 11 | 59 | 19 | 7 | 90 | 32 | 10 | 1,271 | 836 | 456 |
| School Type | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public | 65,536 | 26,060 | 29,870 | 72,308 | 52,647 | 31,429 | 79,373 | 54,116 | 32,337 | 83,507 | 53,627 | 31,733 |
| Private | 11,607 | 10,380 | 3,409 | 11,665 | 8,089 | 3,351 | 12,050 | 7,814 | 3,187 | 11,967 | 7,465 | 3,115 |
| Unknown | 4,950 | 3,616 | 1,777 | 1,080 | 587 | 284 | 1,995 | 1,114 | 616 | 3,706 | 1,955 | 1,115 |
| Low API 1-4 | 14,208 | 10,879 | 6,500 | 16,589 | 11,617 | 7,359 | 18,657 | 12,205 | 7,734 | 19,690 | 11,185 | 7,220 |
| Academic Indicators | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Average High School GPA | 3.68 | 3.78 | 3.83 | 3.69 | 3.83 | 3.85 | 3.68 | 3.85 | 3.87 | 3.68 | 3.88 | 3.91 |
| Average SAT - Reading | 566 | 579 | 579 | 563 | 582 | 579 | 556 | 580 | 575 | 556 | 586 | 583 |
| Average SAT - Math | 591 | 605 | 611 | 590 | 611 | 613 | 581 | 608 | 608 | 578 | 612 | 612 |
| Average SAT - Writing | 573 | 587 | 588 | 572 | 592 | 590 | 566 | 592 | 588 | 556 | 593 | 590 |
| Average ACT | 25 | 26 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 26 |
| Number of a-g Classes | 46 | 47 | 46 | 48 | 49 | 49 | 48 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 48 | 47 |
| Number of Honors/AP | 12 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 15 |

Table 1 continues on the next page.

Table 1 (continued). California resident application, admission and statement of intent to register data for freshmen beginning in fall 2010 through fall 2012.

| | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | 2012 | | | 2013 | | |
|--|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|
| | Applicants | Admits | SIRs | Applicants | Admits | SIRs | Applicants | Admits | SIRs | Applicants | Admits | SIRs |
| Family Characteristics | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Income | 26,722 | 20,868 | 12,278 | 27,674 | 19,616 | 12,622 | 32,691 | 21,375 | 13,444 | 34,747 | 20,506 | 12,955 |
| 1st Generation College | 33,005 | 26,238 | 14,737 | 36,325 | 25,426 | 15,838 | 41,565 | 26,539 | 16,423 | 45,311 | 26,457 | 16,590 |
| Eligibility Category | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Both Index and ELC | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 26,119 | 24,704 | 15,709 | 27,746 | 26,171 | 16,857 |
| Index Only | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 24,960 | 19,387 | 10,126 | 25,904 | 19,229 | 9,816 |
| ELC Only | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 5,535 | 4,341 | 2,526 | 5,441 | 3,840 | 2,296 |
| Entitled to Review | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 27,292 | 13,252 | 7,038 | 29,317 | 12,242 | 6,102 |
| Do Not Meet Above Criteria (A by E) | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 9,512 | 1,360 | 741 | 10,772 | 1,565 | 892 |

SOURCE: University of California Office of the President, Student Affairs, Admissions, 05/26/10, 05/25/11, 05/24/12, and 05/28/13.

Table 2. Graduates from Public California High Schools showing all graduates and those who completed the required “a-g” pattern of courses for UC and CSU eligibility.⁷

| Graduates from California Public High Schools | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | All Graduates | Completed A-G | All Graduates | Completed A-G | All Graduates | Completed A-G |
| Total | 405,087 | 147,071 | 410,476 | 151,666 | 418,598 | 160,494 |
| African American | 27,564 | 7,791 | 27,588 | 7,579 | 28,078 | 8,026 |
| American Indian | 3,169 | 809 | 2,931 | 726 | 3,123 | 779 |
| Asian + Filipino | 53,563 | 31,236 | 54,087 | 32,416 | 54,445 | 34,550 |
| Chicano/Latino | 174,166 | 47,517 | 184,135 | 49,236 | 193,516 | 54,157 |
| Pacific Islander | 2,661 | 829 | 2,588 | 832 | 2,585 | 820 |
| White | 132,931 | 55,262 | 130,582 | 57,280 | 127,801 | 58,110 |
| Unknown | 11,033 | 3,627 | 8,565 | 3,597 | 9,050 | 4,052 |
| Total URM | 204,899 | 56,117 | 214,654 | 57,541 | 224,717 | 62,962 |

⁷ <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/stgradnum.asp?cChoice=StGrdEth&cYear=2011-12&cLevel=State&cTopic=Graduates&myTimeFrame=S&submit1=Submit>

A chart showing the number of California freshman applications, admits, and SIRs for the four year period 2010-2013 is given in Figure 1. As noted in the previous section, the majority of data in this report are from this period: the two years before the implementation of the new eligibility policy and the two years after.

The number of California resident freshman admits and SIRs has remained relatively stable over the period examined, with SIRs for 2013 slightly higher than for 2012. It is important to note that admit data for 2010 and earlier included all eligible students who had received a referral offer. Beginning in 2011, UC Merced changed its referral policy to require students who had not been admitted to a campus to which they applied to “opt in” if they wanted to be included in the referral pool. The admit numbers for 2011 through 2013 include only those applicants who opted in. This is reflected in Figure 1 in the large decrease in reported admits from 2010 to 2011.

With the increase in the number of applications and the steady number of admit offers, the percentage of California resident admits has decreased from 72.1% in 2011 to 63.6% in 2013. At the same time, the percentage of students who accepted an offer of admission by submitting an SIR stayed relatively flat, decreasing from 57.3% to 57.0%, showing that the University continues to be an attractive choice for the students who are admitted.

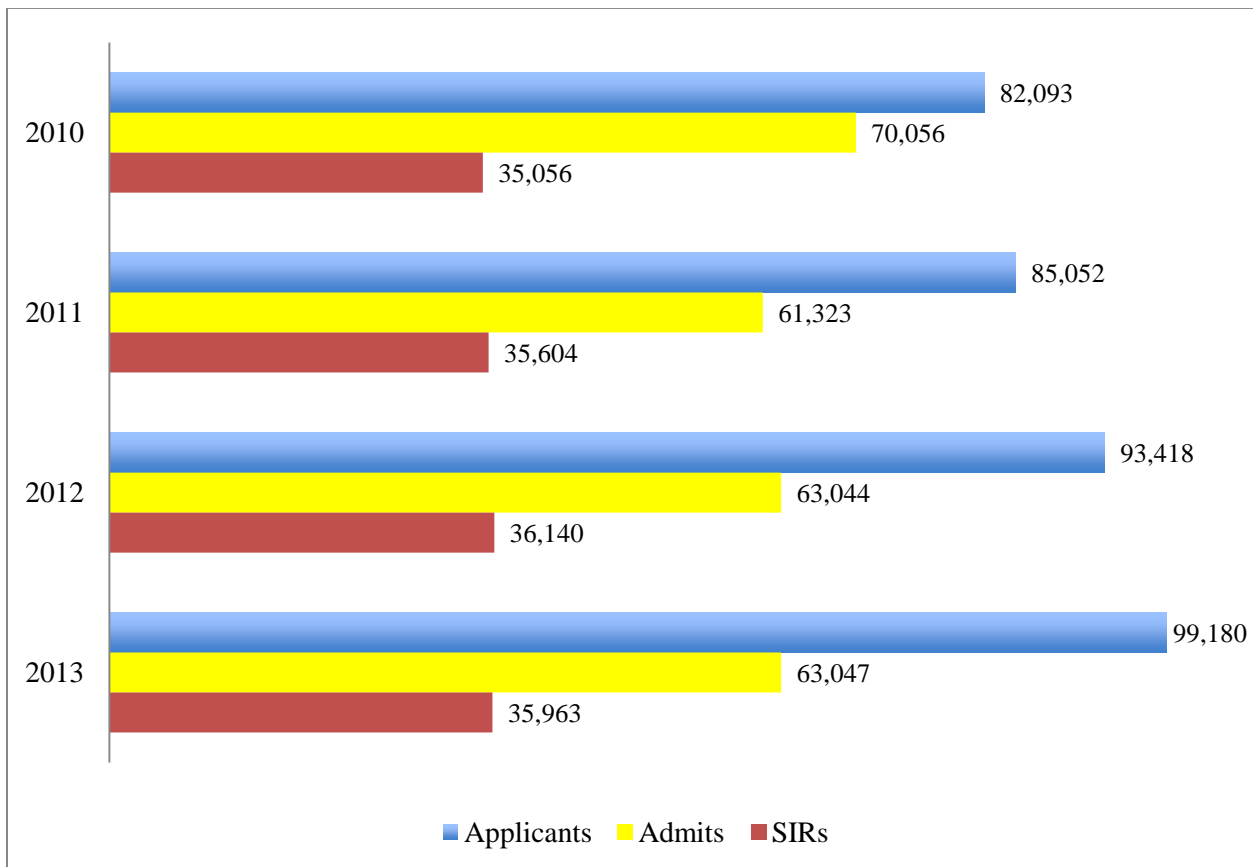


Figure 1. California resident applicants, admits, and SIRs for students applying for fall enrollment between 2010 and 2013

Figure 2 shows the distribution of applicants, admits, and SIRs by eligibility category. In 2012, a total of 56,614 applicants (60.6% of all California applicants) were deemed eligible through either or both the statewide or the ELC route. This represents approximately 12.6% of all California high school graduates⁸. In 2013, the total number of eligible applicants increased to 59,091 (59.6%). In both years since the new policy has been in place, approximately 46.5% of all eligible applicants were eligible according to both ELC and statewide index criteria. Another 44% received their eligibility via the statewide index, but were not ELC. These applicants are referred to in this report as having “Index Only” eligibility. The remaining 9.5% of eligible applicants were “ELC only”.

The relatively large Index Only eligibility pool has, in part, led to the deviation from the original (2009) expectation that the 9-by-9 construct would result in approximately 10.5% of California high school graduates being deemed eligible.

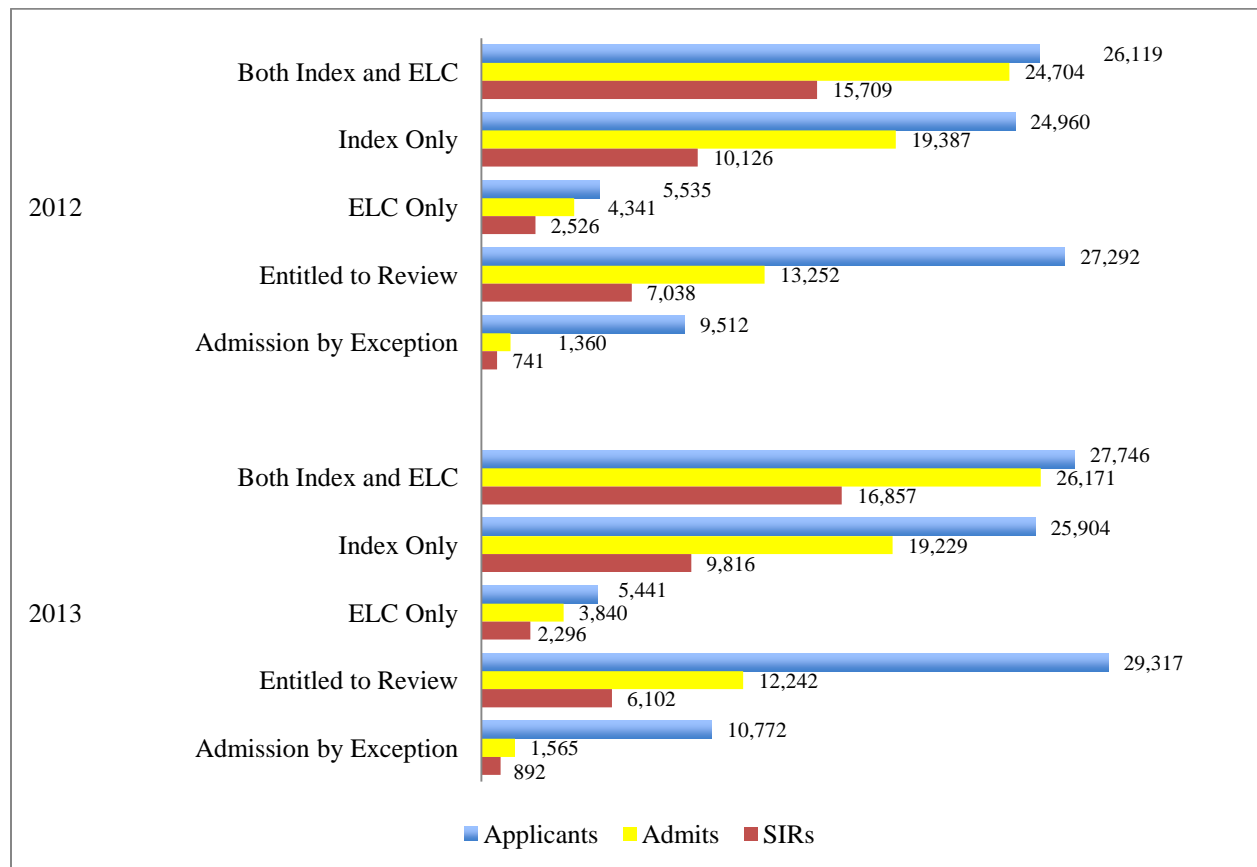


Figure 2. California resident applicants, admits and SIRs under the new policy by eligibility category.

⁸ The California Department of Education reports that there were 418,598 graduates from public high schools in 2012, a substantial increase from the estimate provided by the California Department of Finance that was used in BOARS report on admissions in October 2012. An accurate number of private high school graduates is not available.

In both years, approximately 94.5% of students found eligible according to both the state-wide index and ELC were admitted to at least one campus to which they applied. Of these admitted students, approximately 64% submitted an SIR. In 2012, 85.5% of all eligible applicants were admitted to at least one campus to which they applied. In 2013, the admit rate for all eligible applicants was 83.3%. For both years, the yield⁹ of all admitted eligible applicants was 58.8%.

All eligible applicants who were not admitted to a campus to which they applied were offered the opportunity to opt in to consider a referral offer from the only campus that had available space – UC Merced. In 2012, 234 students from the referral pool submitted an SIR, while in 2013, 188 referral pool students submitted an SIR.

Campuses are also admitting applicants from the Entitled to Review (ETR) pool, with 48.6% of ETR applicants admitted in 2012, and 41.8% in 2013. The yield for ETR admits was 53.1% and 49.8% in 2012 and 2013, respectively. Applicants who are not eligible or in the ETR pool were admitted at a rate of 14.4%, and submitted SIRs at a yield rate of 55% in both years. This latter category of students constitutes the Admission by Exception (A by E) pool, which, in keeping with policy, made up less than 2.5% of SIRs in both years.

The University continues to increase its ethnic diversity through the freshman admission route. Figure 3 shows the percentages of underrepresented minority (URM) applicants, admits and SIRs from 2010 through 2013. Nearly one third of SIRs for 2013 were URM students. A detailed examination of the data in Table 1, shows that the increase is almost entirely due to increases among in Chicano and Latino students. This is consistent with the growth in high school

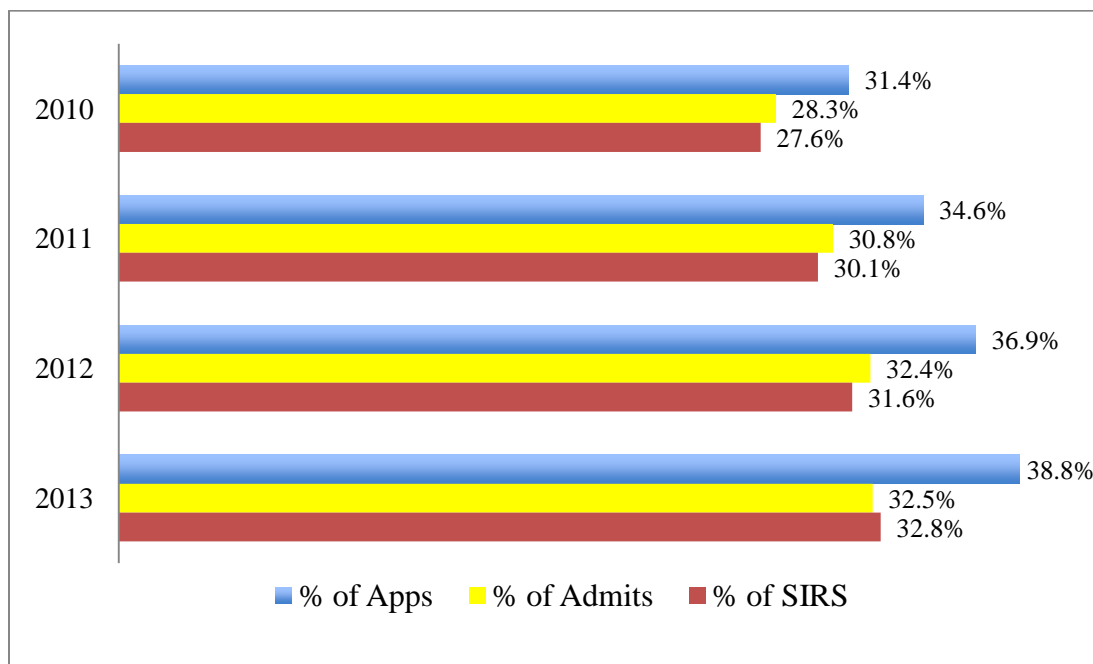


Figure 3. Percentage of California resident applicants, admits and SIRs who are underrepresented minorities.

⁹ Yield in this report is defined as the percentage of admitted students who submit their SIR.

graduates among these ethnic groups, and reflects the growth in the applicant pool from these groups. Overall, the increase from 2011 to 2012 in SIRs from URM students was 6.5%, while Table 2 shows that the number of all URM high school graduates increased by 4.7%, and for URM students who graduated having completed ‘a-g’, the increase was 9.4%. The two year increase in SIRs from 2010 to 2012 was 17.8%, while the corresponding increase for all URM high school graduates was 9.7% and for those who completed ‘a-g’, the increase was 12.2%. Again, data for 2013 high school graduates are not yet available.

Similarly, the trend for enrollments of both low-income and first-generation college-going students generally has been increasing. Figure 4 shows the percentage of SIRs among all new students in these demographic classifications.

When the new policy was proposed, one of the concerns was that opening the process to more applicants through the expanded ELC and the new ETR category would reduce the academic quality of students at the University. This has turned out not to be true. Figure 5 shows the high school grade point average and the sum of the three required SAT scores for applicants, admits and SIRs over the past four years¹⁰. The average high school GPA of applicants did not change over this period, while it increased from 3.83 to 3.91 for admits who submitted an SIR.

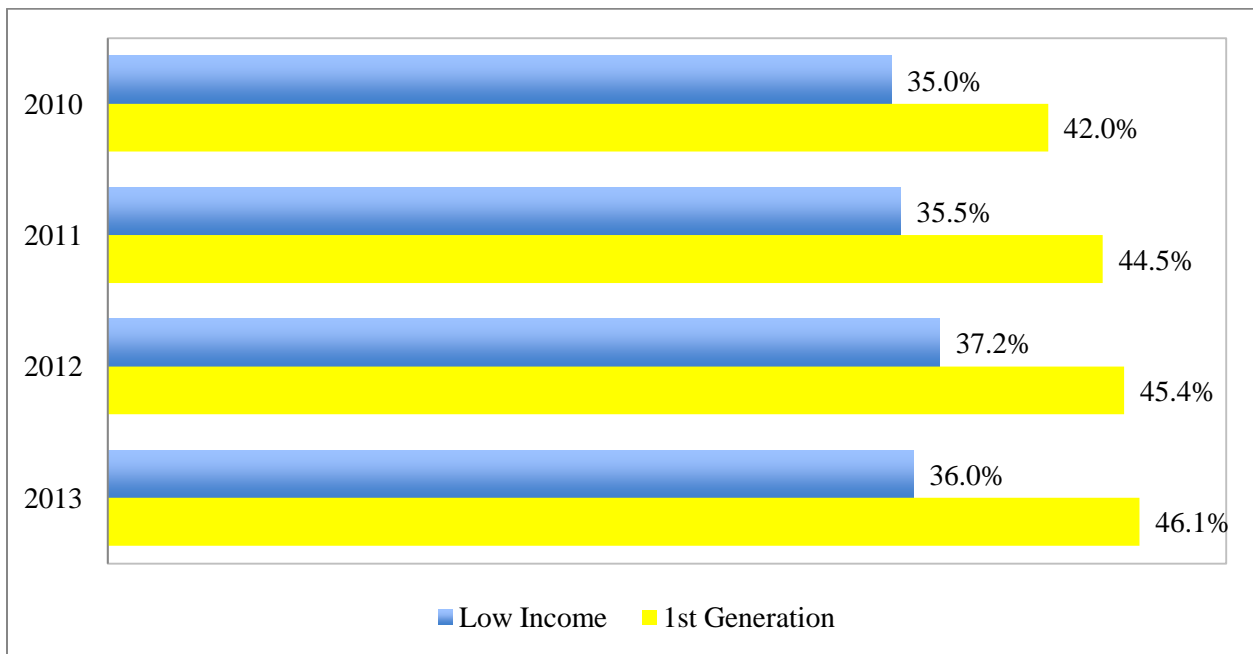


Figure 4. Percentage of California resident SIRs identified as low income and first-generation college-going.

¹⁰ The academic index is computed by multiplying the weighted and capped high school GPA by 1,000 and adding this to the total of the three SAT Reasoning Tests. This is not the same index used to identify students who are eligible through the statewide context.

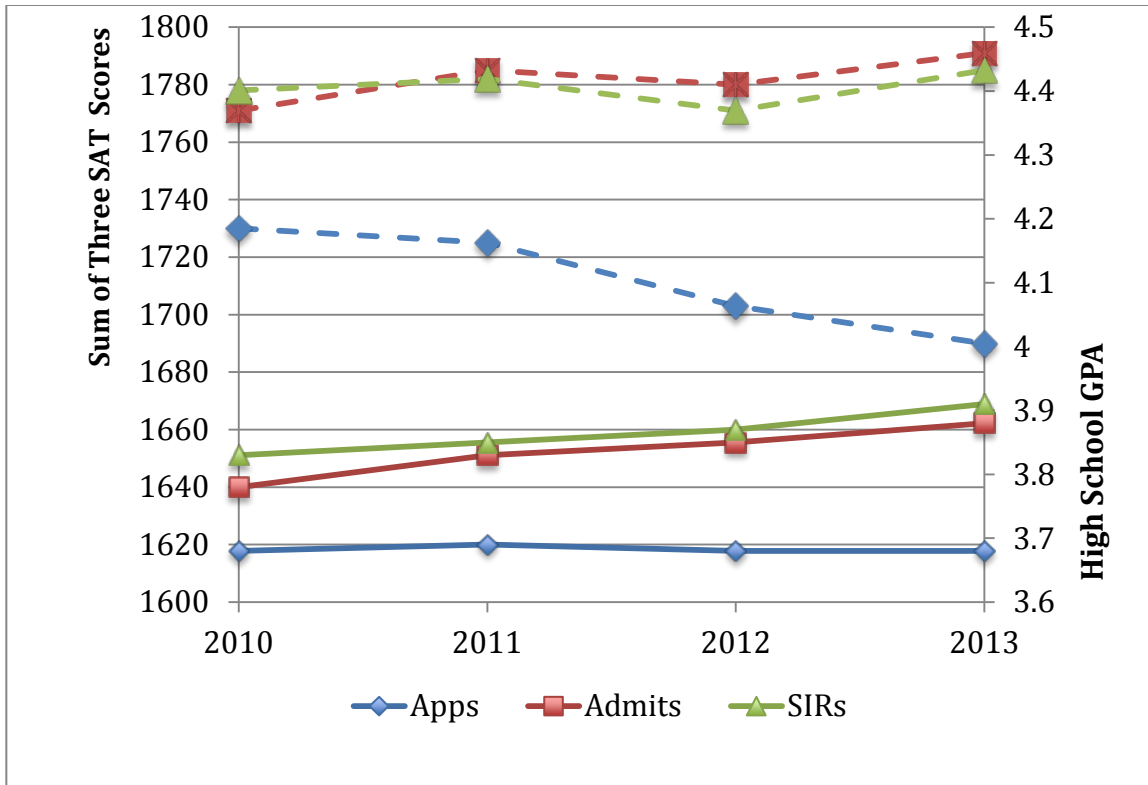


Figure 5. Academic indicators of California resident applicants, admits and SIRs. Solid lines give the average high school weighted capped grade point average (GPA) for each group. Dashed lines give the sum of the scores on the three required SAT reasoning tests: math, reading and writing.

The sum of the SAT scores among applicants did decrease over this time period, but it was essentially unchanged for SIRs, increasing from by 7 points between 2010 and 2013. As shown later in this report, the slight decrease in SAT scores (from 1782 to 1771) among SIRs from 2011 to 2012 did not adversely affect their academic performance at the University of California. In fact, students who began in 2012 did better than students who began in either 2010 or 2011.

New Policy Features

The new eligibility policy introduced the Entitled to Review category, and substantially expanded the ELC from 4% to 9%. Many of the ETR and the ELC 5-9%¹¹ applicants would have been found ineligible under the old policy and would likely not have applied.

In both 2012 and 2013, about 30% of California resident applicants were identified as Entitled to Review. In both years, a significant number of them (48.6% in 2012 and 41.8% in 2013) were admitted to a UC campus to which they applied, indicating that there are students in the ETR pool who have strong credentials and who are being admitted.

¹¹ Students who are ranked in the 5th to 9th percentile of their high school class based on GPA.

In both 2012 and 2013, slightly more than 4% of California resident applicants were identified as being in the ELC 5-9% group who would not have been eligible under the previous policy. In these first two years of the new policy, 75% and 68% of the ELC 5-9% applicants, respectively, were admitted to a campus to which they applied. Some of these students may not have applied for UC admission in the past, but campuses are admitting them at a high rate. Those not admitted were offered the opportunity to opt into the referral pool for admission to UC Merced.

The ELC-Only and ETR pools have higher percentages of students who are first generation college goers, who graduated from low API schools, and who are from underrepresented minority populations than are found in the entire pool of applicants, admits and SIRs. Figure 6 compares the percentages of students in these eligibility and demographic categories with all California residents who submitted an SIR. These data show that among those SIRs who were identified as ELC Only, fully 85% are first generation college going students; 62% of them graduated from low API schools (API 1 to 4), and 73% are underrepresented minority students.

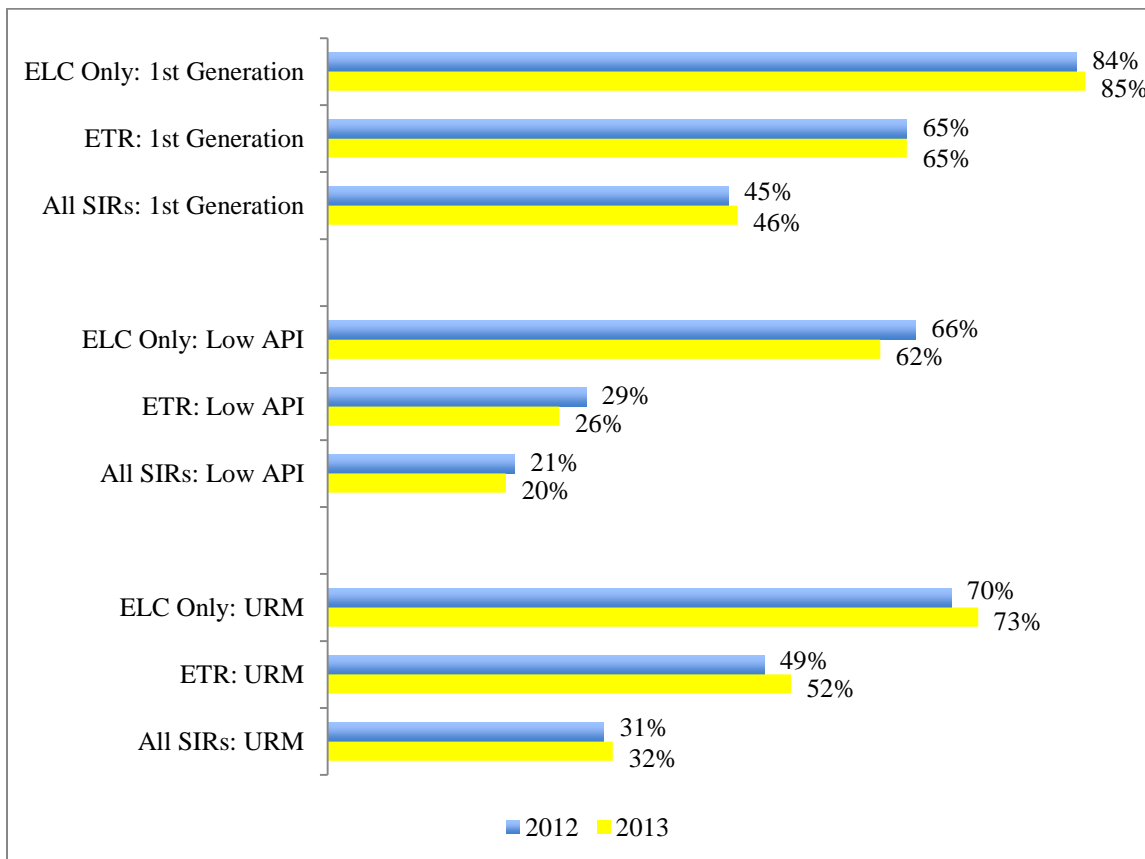


Figure 6. Percentages of SIRs from the ELC Only pool, ETR pool, and all California residents.

First-Term Student Performance at UC

The preceding sections have addressed outcomes of the admissions process itself. BOARS also examined the performance of students once they had matriculated as freshmen at one of the nine UC campuses. The average first-term (quarter or semester) freshman grade point average, probation rate¹² and persistence rate¹³ were evaluated for all students who began in fall 2010, fall 2011, and fall 2012. These results are shown in Table 3. A statistical significance test examining the differences in average GPAs from one year to the next was also performed.

Table 3. First-term academic performance of California freshmen across all nine undergraduate campuses.

| Year of First Term | Enrolled Students | Average GPA | Probation Rate | Persistence Rate |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| 2010 | 32,314 | 2.895 | 10.0% | 97.7% |
| 2011 | 32,050 | 2.903 | 10.6% | 97.6% |
| 2012 | 33,086 | 3.002* | 9.1% | 98.6% |

* p-value for the difference in average GPAs between this year and the prior year is less than 0.0001

Students selected under the new freshman eligibility policy performed better on all three measures: their average GPA and persistence rates were higher than in either of the previous two years, and their probation rate was lower. A statistical comparison of average GPAs predicts a 15% likelihood that the change from 2010 to 2011 was due to chance, but a negligibly small likelihood (less than 0.01%) that the change from 2011 to 2012 was due to chance. The fact that the change from 2010 to 2011 is so much smaller than from 2011 to 2012 suggests that grade inflation at the University is probably not the cause of the observed increase in first term GPA. Average GPAs increased across academic disciplines and ethnicities, as shown in Table 4. Almost all of the increases from 2011 to 2012 were found to be statistically significant.

This clear statistical significance is due in part to the large number of students considered. The Cohen's-d effect size for the overall GPA change is 0.14, suggesting that this GPA difference may be difficult to detect in subsequent analyses. This highlights the importance of continuing to monitor the performance of students in subsequent years.

Table 4. First-term grade point average California freshmen across all nine undergraduate campuses.

| Year of First Term | Academic Discipline | | | | Ethnicity | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | Arts & Humanities | Social Sciences | STEM | Other | Am. Indian | African Am. | Asian | Chicano-Latino | White |
| 2010 | 3.08 | 2.88 | 2.83 | 2.94 | 2.97 | 2.67 | 2.9 | 2.66 | 3.11 |
| 2011 | 3.07 | 2.91 | 2.85 | 2.93 | 3.01 | 2.72 | 2.95* | 2.66 | 3.14 |
| 2012 | 3.14* | 2.99* | 2.97* | 3.02* | 3.04 | 2.75 | 3.07* | 2.74* | 3.19* |

* p-value for the difference in average GPAs between this year and the prior year is less than 0.0001

¹² Probation rate is based on the number of students whose fall term GPA was less than 2.0, excluding GPAs of 0.00 if the student persisted to the next term.

¹³ Persistence rate is the ratio of students who begin the second term of their freshman year after completing fall term.

The changes in probation and persistence rates shown in Table 3 were not examined statistically, but they improved for all disciplinary categories except for a very slight increase in the probation rate for students in Arts and Humanities. The probation rate for that major rose from 6.42% in 2011 to 6.45% in 2012. This is equivalent to one additional student on probation at the end of fall 2012 compared with 2011. The overall decrease in probation rate from 10.6% in 2011 to 9.1% in 2012 represents roughly 470 fewer students on probation at the end of fall 2012. Similarly, the increase in persistence rate from 97.6% in 2011 to 98.6% in 2012 corresponds to approximately 335 more students returning for winter quarter or spring semester, compared with 2011.

These first data on student performance are positive and suggest that BOARS's stated intention that the new policy would enable campuses to select a group of students who are better prepared academically is being met. However, these results are for the first term only, and BOARS will continue to closely monitor the progress of matriculated students admitted under the new policy.

Recalibration of the Statewide Index for Eligibility

As noted previously, when BOARS developed the details of the statewide index and ELC identification for the new eligibility policy, it projected that the 9-by-9 structure would identify as eligible about 10.5% of the California public high school graduating class, and that an additional 2% would be admitted under the ETR criteria, to bring UC to the 12.5% figure expected under the Master Plan. In its October 2012 report to the Regents on Comprehensive Review, BOARS noted that the current statewide admissions index for freshmen applicants was identifying too many students for statewide eligibility, and that a recalibration would be necessary.

The data demonstrate vividly why BOARS came to this conclusion. In 2012, the statewide index identified 43,761 applicants from California *public* high schools as eligible, representing 10.5% of the 418,598 public high school graduates for that year¹⁴. For the class entering as freshmen in 2013, the index identified 45,581 applicants from public high schools, or 11.1% of the total estimated number of public high school graduates. For both 2012 and 2013 then, UC had more applicants eligible in the statewide context than had been originally projected for the ELC and statewide index-eligible *combined*. Indeed, for 2013, the current statewide index identified some 8,600 applicants from public high schools beyond those in the top 9%.

Throughout the 2012-2013 academic year, BOARS discussed options for recalibrating the statewide index in an effort to return the percentage of California public high school graduates who would be identified as eligible at the statewide level to 9% as specified in Regents' Policy 2103. BOARS reviewed in detail several options for recalibrating the index, and selected one that would have much more accurately identified the top 9% of public high school graduates who applied to UC for 2013. This new statewide index, along with the one that it replaces, appears in Table 5.

¹⁴ Regents Policy 2103 states that the statewide index should identify the top 9% of *public* high school graduates. The data shown in Table 1 are for all California high school graduates, including both public and private schools.

To be clear, this recalibration does not change the 9-by-9 policy or alter the target of 9% of public high school graduates who should be identified as eligible statewide. It only changes how those 9% are identified. The Assembly of the Academic Senate approved the proposal for the new, recalibrated statewide index in June, 2013. It will first affect students applying in fall 2014 for admission in fall 2015.

BOARS estimates that the new index would have reduced the number of applicants eligible in the statewide context in 2013 by 8,621 students. However, 2,777 of those students were also eligible in the local context, so the total reduction in eligible students using the new index would have been 5,844. Of the students who would not have been eligible, 3,708 were admitted to at least one campus to which they applied, leaving 2,136 applicants who would not have been in the referral pool for 2013, had the new index been in place.

The likely effect of the new index on diversity is estimated by examining the demographics of the 2,136 applicants who would not have been in the referral pool under the new index. Overall, the referral pool for public high school graduates in 2013 would have been reduced by 25.4%, from 8,421 applicants to 6,285 had the new index been used. By ethnicity, referrals to white students would have decreased by 28.3%, to Asian American students by 27.2%, and to underrepresented minority students by 20.6%. The percent decrease would have been greater for students in high API schools than for those in low API schools, and would have been greater for students from wealthier families than for students from low-income families. This reflects, to some extent, the fact that more high-API and high-income students are found to be eligible in the statewide context.

Table 5. Comparison of the current and new (effective 2015) statewide eligibility indices.

| Weighted High School GPA | Minimum UC Score ¹⁵ | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | Current Index | New Index |
| 3.00 - 3.04 | 263 | 277 |
| 3.05 - 3.09 | 261 | 275 |
| 3.10 - 3.14 | 259 | 273 |
| 3.15 - 3.19 | 256 | 270 |
| 3.20 - 3.24 | 254 | 268 |
| 3.25 - 3.29 | 252 | 266 |
| 3.30 - 3.34 | 249 | 263 |
| 3.35 - 3.39 | 246 | 260 |
| 3.40 - 3.44 | 244 | 257 |
| 3.45 - 3.49 | 241 | 254 |
| 3.50 - 3.54 | 238 | 251 |
| 3.55 - 3.59 | 234 | 248 |
| 3.60 - 3.64 | 231 | 245 |
| 3.65 - 3.69 | 228 | 242 |
| 3.70 - 3.74 | 225 | 238 |
| 3.75 - 3.79 | 221 | 235 |
| 3.80 - 3.84 | 217 | 231 |
| 3.85 - 3.89 | 214 | 227 |
| 3.90 - 3.94 | 210 | 224 |
| 3.95 - 3.99 | 206 | 220 |
| 4.00 - 4.04 | 202 | 216 |
| 4.05 - 4.09 | 198 | 212 |
| 4.10 - 4.14 | 193 | 207 |
| 4.15 - 4.19 | 189 | 203 |
| 4.20 - 4.24 | 184 | 198 |
| 4.25 - 4.29 | 180 | 194 |
| 4.30 - 4.34 | 175 | 189 |
| 4.35 > | 171 | 184 |

¹⁵ The statewide index is a threshold for assigning eligibility. It is based on both GPA and the UC Score. The UC score may be determined from either SAT scores or ACT scores as given in the admissions index website: <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/california-residents/admissions-index/>. For the SAT, the UC Score may be computed as $UC\ Score = 60 + 0.10 * (\text{Math} + \text{Reading} + \text{Writing})$. For the ACT, the UC Score must be determined from the table provided in the admissions index website. For a particular GPA range, a student must achieve the specified minimum UC Score to be eligible.

The Future of UC's Master Plan Commitment and Referral

Section C(4) of Regents Policy 2103 states: "Freshman applicants deemed Eligible in the Statewide Context or Eligible in the Local Context who are not admitted to any campus where they apply will be offered admission at a UC campus with available space." To this point, there has always been at least one campus with available space. However, as the number of applications increases and UC Merced matures into a more selective campus, it is clear that this will not be the case indefinitely.

In 2013, the total potential referral pool, from both public and private high schools in California, consisted of 10,318 California resident applicants who were identified as being eligible either in the statewide or local context, but were not offered admission to a UC campus to which they applied. These students were offered the chance to consider referral admission at UC Merced, and in the end 188, or 1.8%, of these applicants submitted an SIR.

Over the past two years, Merced has experienced the second highest application growth rate in the UC system, as well as a 19% increase in its SIR rate. While these increases bode well for Merced and its pursuit of greater selectivity and excellence, they put additional pressure on the UC system's continued ability to offer a referral pathway to eligible applicants.

One of BOARS's most significant concerns going forward is that the University will soon have no campus with available space, which throws into question its historical ability to offer admission to all eligible applicants. The University of California must address this quickly.

Section D of Regents Policy 2103 points to a possible avenue for action by stating:

D(1) The Academic Senate, through its Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) will evaluate and report annually and at five-year intervals on the academic and fiscal impact of this policy; and

D(2) Based on the results of these ongoing studies, the Academic Senate should periodically consider recommending adjustments to the guarantee structure.

BOARS began considering how the guarantee structure might be adjusted during the 2012-2013 academic year, and will be examining all options in the coming year, from technical adjustments to structural changes. BOARS has viewed eligibility as an important element of the overall admissions process, and is hesitant to recommend adjustments that would alter it in a significant way. However, it is apparent that something must be done soon to address that fact that in the near future, capacity will limit the University's ability to accommodate all eligible students. BOARS has not developed recommendations for specific adjustments to the guarantee structure, but anticipates presenting recommendations to the full Academic Senate and the Board of Regents within the coming year.

Nonresident Admission

The new admissions policy applies to California residents only, and was written before fiscal pressures forced UC campuses to increase their recruitment and enrollment of nonresidents. These efforts have led to significant increases in applications from domestic nonresidents (42%) and international students (124%) between 2011 and 2013, which have in turn led to increases in admission offers to nonresidents, and finally to more nonresidents enrolling at the University. In 2013, nonresidents comprised 18.3% of total freshman SIRs compared to 12.4% in 2011. Figure 7 shows these outcomes in more detail.

BOARS recognizes that campuses have actively recruited nonresident students for a variety of reasons, and that nonresidents provide needed revenue that increases access for California residents. BOARS also recognizes that more nonresident students on a UC campus can enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience for all students.

As nonresident enrollment has increased, BOARS has sought assurance from campuses that California residents are not being turned away to make room for less-qualified, but higher-paying non-residents. In June 2011, BOARS adopted a clarification¹⁶ to its July 2009 principles for the admission of nonresidents, stating that nonresidents admitted to a campus must compare favorably to California residents admitted to that campus. In December 2011, BOARS recommended procedures¹⁷ for the evaluation of residents and nonresidents to ensure that campuses meet the compare favorably standard. BOARS also resolved that campuses should report annually to BOARS on the extent to which they are meeting the compare favorably standard.

Conclusion

The new freshman eligibility policy has been in place for two years, and the data presented in this report indicate that it has allowed campuses to select students who are better prepared academically. More students are applying than under the old policy, suggesting that the expansion of ELC and introduction of ETR have removed some of the barriers that may have discouraged students from applying in the past. The students who are enrolling under the new policy are performing well at the University, and the diversity of the freshman class has continued to increase.

BOARS remains committed to helping the University of California meet its Master Plan obligation to select from the top 12.5% of California high school graduates, and to provide at least a referral offer of admission to all eligible applicants. However, the current 9-by-9 structure is identifying too many students as eligible, and as such will have to be modified in the near future. BOARS will be examining options in the coming year, and will report to the Academic Council, the Assembly of the Academic Senate, and the Board of Regents, as appropriate, with recommendations for additional changes.

¹⁶ http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/reports/DS_MGY_LPBOARSNRPrinciple6.pdf

¹⁷ http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/reports/RMA_MGYreBOARSresolutiononevalofresidents_non-residents_FINAL.pdf

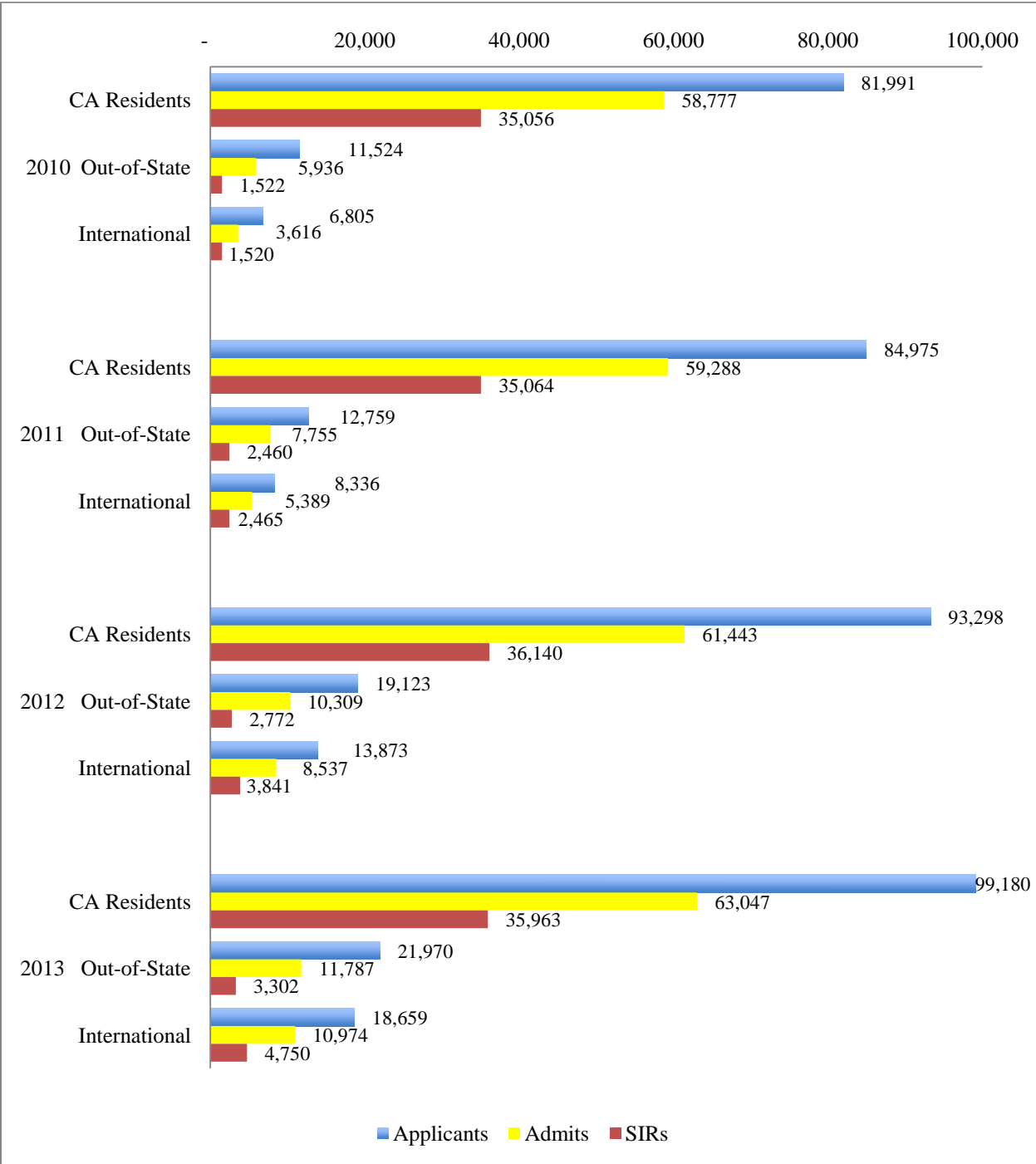


Figure 7. Applicants, Admits and SIRs by residency for 2010 through 2013.