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ABSTRACT

The three case studies in this report describe state-level efforts to address diversity and equity in postsecondary institutions in California, Maryland, and Washington. A preface provides some background on affirmative action programs, litigation history, and the roles of state coordinating agencies and institutional governing boards. The California case study titled, "Planning for Growth and Diversity in California" (Charles A. Ratliff), reviews the history of the state's public higher education policy, and discusses its demographic growth, the fiscal constraints on enrollment, its long-term commitment to educational opportunities, problems of access and diversity, future actions, and evaluation methods. The text is augmented by five displays. "Developing New Strategies for Enhancing Access to College in Maryland" (Howard P. Rawlings and Sheila Ards) reviews the history of Maryland's formerly segregated public higher education system, notes current policies and strategies used to promote access, and also discusses K-12 strategies for improvement. "College Admissions Standards and Equity in Washington" (Jane Sherman) sets out the context of the state's educational history, discusses how the state monitors admissions and diversity, and notes future steps. Five data tables are included. (All the reports contain references.) (CH)

STATE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS DIVERSITY & AND ENHANCE EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES

STATE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS DIVERSITY and ENHANCE EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This report contains brief descriptions and analyses of state strategies in California by Charles A. Ratliff, Maryland by Howard P. Rawlings and Sheila Ards, and Washington by Jane Sherman

May 1997

SHEEO

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ECS

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Cynthia Luna Scott initiated the report while project manager in the ECS Higher Education Unit during 1995-96. Michael Nettles of the University of Michigan, School of Education, participated in the planning of this report and several related conference presentations. Zaretta Hammond provided additional research and writing. Donna Payne-Greenberg, Josie Canales, Mary Beth Murray, Annie Nelson and Sherry Freeland Walker provided organizational and editorial assistance. Charles S. Lenth and Danial Via completed chapter editing and prepared the preface.

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PREFACE

This report focuses on the challenges faced by three states in addressing diversity and equity in postsecondary education. Chapters describe the changing demographic and political contexts in California, Maryland and Washington, and analyze the steps being taken to achieve more equitable postsecondary education outcomes. To set the stage for these short case studies, this preface outlines features of the demographic, political and legal environments within which colleges and universities operate. The preface also outlines previous Education Commission of the States' (ECS) initiatives in this area of postsecondary policy and practice. Building on these previous efforts, ECS seeks to encourage colleges, universities and state leaders in their continuing search to find more effective strategies to enhance equity in postsecondary education.

Diversity and equity are values widely shared in higher education. But they are also flashpoints for controversy and goals that are far from fully achieved. While few people openly dispute the desirability of making campuses more equitable and diverse, there is much debate and conflict about how this might be achieved. Institutional and governmental efforts to address the nation's increasing social diversity are extensive, but progress is slow and uneven. Basic goals of broadening access, improving representativeness and equalizing outcomes have proved difficult to achieve. Measures of equity in postsecondary education show progress but still fall well short of desired levels. Extensive litigation, court decisions that seem to lead in different directions and political cross-pressures add formidable complications to the challenges that colleges and universities face in trying to achieve their goals.

Colleges and universities are being pushed to reflect the increasing social diversity in American society. More than a decade ago, a series of reports by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education called *From Minority to Majority* analyzed how birth rates, interstate migration and continued immigration were creating a new majority out of the formerly "minority" populations in high-growth states, particularly in the Southwest. Similar reports were issued by ECS, the American Council on Education, the Southern Regional Education Board and others. If anything, these reports understated the immediacy of the demographic transformation facing many states and regions. Many urban populations and urban school systems already have become collections of minority populations. Enrollments in several major California universities no longer contain a single "majority" group. This diversity will accelerate as the current school-age populations enter colleges and universities.

Also increasingly apparent are the potential economic and social consequences that would follow from a society that features greater diversity but not greater equity — consequences for individuals and society. For those persons who do not have equal access to or success in education, future career options and earning potential are greatly diminished. This problem is particularly pronounced in fields requiring high levels of education and in technologically sophisticated sectors of the economy. Add these economic effects to the underlying demographic changes, and the consequences for the entire society become increasingly clear. The truth is that with diversity surrounding us and economic realities confronting us, equity still alludes us.

Unless we as a society, and states in particular, do a better job of ensuring that education prepares *all* individuals for full participation in the economy, we will *all* be worse off in the future.

Despite wide acknowledgment of the goal — and the necessity — of achieving greater equity in education, policies and strategies to achieve this goal are still the focus of much debate. In 1995, the California Board of Regents voted to prohibit the use of race, ethnicity or gender criteria in student admissions and employee hiring decisions in the University of California system. This followed a governor's executive order on affirmative action that applied to all state agencies. Further, in the last general election, California voters approved Proposition 209, the California Civil Rights Initiative, which amended the state constitution to prohibit the granting of any preferences based on race/ethnicity, gender or national origin. Implementation of Proposition 209 quickly was set aside by a federal court judge and then, almost as quickly, reinstated by a federal appeals court. Further appeals, probably all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, are expected.

Affirmative action programs are the primary tools used by colleges, universities and other institutions and organizations to promote greater equity and diversity. It is no coincidence that just as California is ahead of most of the nation in demographic changes, it is also ahead in forcing colleges, universities and other public entities to rethink definitions of equity and whether affirmative action and other preferential programs are appropriate strategies to achieve it. Other states are not far behind California. Many higher education governing boards across the country and several state legislatures have undertaken or are proposing a rethinking of affirmative action strategies. Affirmative action is clearly a policy under attack and in transition. The direction affirmative action may take, and which other strategies and tools the nation will adopt to grapple with issues of diversity and equity, are far from certain.

Extensive legal battles add to the uncertainty and complexity surrounding questions of equity. Among recent court rulings is last summer's U.S. Supreme Court refusal to review *Hopwood* v. *Texas.* That decision let stand the Fifth Circuit Court ruling striking down the affirmative action plan for University of Texas Law School admissions. While technically limited to that jurisdiction and parallel applications, *Hopwood* is triggering a broad rethinking of how affirmative action is used and equity is defined across higher education.

A year earlier, in *Podberesky* v. *Kirwan,* the Fourth Circuit Court, following a series of lower court decisions on both sides of the issue, ruled that Maryland's Banneker Scholarship Program, providing scholarships for African-American students, is unconstitutional. That program, established in the late 1970s by the University of Maryland College Park as part of the state plan to address vestiges of its formerly segregated postsecondary system, provided 30 scholarships for African-American students each year. The U.S. Supreme Court is continuing to refuse to hear the Maryland appeal on this case, forcing the state to fold the Banneker Scholarship Program into the Key Scholarship Program, a broader merit-based, race-neutral program. This, in turn, is stretching the Key Scholarship Program resources and adversely affecting African-American students in Maryland.

Litigation History

The complex legal history around equity and affirmative action goes back many years through numerous court rulings. *U.S.* v. *Fordice* (1992) charged states with ending *de jure* segregation in public colleges — including historically black public institutions. *Bakke* v. *University of California* (1978) ruled that special minority admissions programs are unconstitutional, but approved the use of race as a "plus" factor within a comprehensive admission plan aimed at increasing campus diversity. The *Hopwood* ruling appears to reverse *Bakke* and declare that increased diversity, the stated purpose of the Texas Law School admissions program, is not sufficient justification for racial preferences in admissions. These and other court rulings, in turn, go back to *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) which declared "separate but equal" education unconstitutional and set the direction of equity in the years that followed.

The trend in recent rulings is chilling many college and university efforts to use "race" as a factor in admissions and a tool for achieving diversity. The courts seem reluctant to approve racially based preferences except where a history of past racial discrimination is clear, and the ties linking the present use of "race" to overcoming the past effects of that discrimination are strong. Further, courts appear to be demanding ever stronger and clearer ties to past discrimination before sanctioning the present use of racial preferences. This increasingly stringent standard brings the overt racial preferences at the heart of most affirmative action programs into question.

Some opponents of racial preferences suggest that "class," "economic disadvantage" or similar concepts are more appropriate factors to use in admissions than race. But the efficacy of such factors is strongly debated. Many institutions already consider such factors in addition to racial/ethnic considerations, and some studies have suggested that racial diversity on campuses will diminish if race is eliminated from admission decisions even if social class and economic circumstances are introduced or retained as parts of the decisionmaking process.

In addition, there is recent evidence that the elimination of racial preferences may make it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve genuine racial equity and diversity. For example, the number of African Americans and Mexican Americans admitted to the University of Texas Law School following the *Hopwood* ruling has fallen drastically. In the University of California system, applications from whites and Asian Americans are up, while applications from African Americans and Hispanics are down following the adoption of race neutral admission policies.

Direction Setting

As campuses struggle to retain their commitment to diversity and equity within a changing legal and political environment, state coordinating agencies and institutional governing boards can play significant roles in setting the directions for institutional planning and policies. By providing demographic information, monitoring enrollments and determining objectives for minority student representation, and by applying pressure and public accountability when these objectives are not met, boards and agencies can mold, guide and facilitate institutional responses. Similarly, state legislatures and minority legislative caucuses play important roles, often in conjunction with community leaders, in helping to focus institutional efforts and provide direction and resources.

The actions of these parties and others engaged in addressing issues of diversity and equity are illustrated by the three highlighted states in this report.

At the national level, ECS and other organizations continue to call attention to the importance of the issues and the interrelationships between institutional efforts and public policies. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, ECS published reports that both analyze and help to promote these collaborative efforts. These ECS reports included:

- *Focus on Minorities: Trends in Higher Education Participation and Success* (1987, published jointly with the State Higher Education Executive Officers)
- *Serving More Diverse Students: A Contextual View* (1989)
- *Institutional Climate and Minority Achievement (1989)*
- *Responding to Student Diversity: A Community College Perspective (1990)*
- *Achieving Campus Diversity: Policies for Change* (1990, for the National Task Force for Minority Achievement in Higher Education)
- *Promoting Fair College Outcomes: Learning from the Experiences of the Past Decade* (1991)
- *Assessing Progress in Minority Access and Achievement in American Higher Education* (1991)
- *Improving State and Campus Environments for Quality and Diversity: A Self-Assessment* (1992).

This current report is intended to continue ECS' effort to focus attention on the challenges states and institutions face. ECS invited knowledgeable participants to contribute their perspectives on the key issues surrounding equity in postsecondary education and how they are being addressed in California, Maryland and Washington.

State Profiles

In the California chapter, Charles A. Ratliff observes that his state is either about to be overwhelmed by population growth and change or, if appropriate actions are taken, is about to blossom anew as a truly multicultural society and education system. Ratliff, who is deputy director of the California Postsecondary Education Commission, provides a cogent summary of the postsecondary enrollment and equity issues facing his state in the coming decade. He also provides an overview of the political and policy environment in which those challenges will — or will not — be addressed. He concludes with this challenge:

> California's history is one of inclusion for all who dared to dream and work to achieve their goals. Education has been a vital ingredient in the success of these individuals and in the growth of the state into a world-class economic power . . . . New ways must be found to preserve broad access to education beyond high school, and more effective means will be found to promote student achievement.

Maryland faces a different set of circumstances, in part because of slower population growth than California. Maryland is still struggling to overcome the legacies and lingering effects of its once-segregated and still highly differentiated higher education system. Both the state and the institutions are engaged in various strategies "to enhance equal access to college and equal outcomes . . . as two interrelated aspects of equity in education." One of the chapter authors, Howard P. (Pete) Rawlings, is an active participant in supporting new state initiatives as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. His co-author, Sheila Ards, is a professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute in Minnesota. In Maryland, they conclude, "all stakeholders share [responsibility for] obtaining equal education outcomes for all . . . citizens."

In the state of Washington, with minority populations much smaller than California or Maryland's, the issues of quality and equity come together in dealing with student achievement in higher education. The chapter author, Jane Sherman, deputy director of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, observes that the state as well as the institutions have done a comparatively good job in providing equitable access to higher education. This does not mean Washington faces no new challenges, however. Her chapter focuses on the status of college admissions standards in the state and the "steps now being taken to continue progress with respect to enhancing both student achievement and educational equity." She concludes that the "challenges just ahead in both areas are likely to be more demanding than any yet faced."

Together, these three states help to illustrate the complex challenges involved in addressing diversity and equity in higher education. Colleges and universities do not have the choice of backing away from these challenges, nor should states pull back because of controversy or complexity. At the same time, many of the established approaches may need rethinking, if only because the context is continually changing and efforts to enhance equity must be more effective than in the past. As these three states and others clearly demonstrate, the challenges of diversity and equity are vitally important to higher education and the future of the nation.

PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND DIVERSITY IN CALIFORNIA

Charles A. Ratliff

California has a long and proud history of providing postsecondary education access at comparatively low cost to high school graduates and adults. This tradition began after World War II when veterans, and later, their children, began clamoring for more educational opportunities to improve their civilian employability. It has been sustained by citizens' strong belief in the value of higher education and a public commitment to provide broad access to a wide array of public postsecondary institutions. This implied social contract with state residents was possible because of California's wealth. Conversely, that wealth may depend upon ready accessibility to a wide array of high-quality education institutions.

The state's continuing population growth threatens to overwhelm California's historic commitment to broad access to higher education. Current challenges include: (1) the state's growing racial/ethnic diversity; (2) bifurcation in the composition of voters (largely older and white) and students (largely younger and non-white); (3) growing competition for funding among state-funded programs, led by welfare and corrections expenditures; and (4) increased voter involvement in determining public expenditures through ballot initiatives. State population is growing by nearly 800,000 people per year. By the year 2005, nearly a half million more Californians will seek access to public colleges and universities than did so in 1993. Meanwhile, economic pressures are creating tensions between various segments of California society over ways to accommodate this projected enrollment demand while protecting the state's commitment to broad access.

This chapter outlines the challenges California faces in planning for postsecondary growth and addressing diversity issues. It begins with a description of California's postsecondary education system and the programs and activities in place to encourage postsecondary enrollment across all segments of society. It also describes the fiscal constraints associated with providing broad access and recent initiatives to curtail use of race/ethnicity and gender to diversify postsecondary enrollment.

California's experiences in addressing this huge demand for college access within limited resources may be useful to other states that rely heavily on public colleges and universities to provide postsecondary education opportunities to growing and increasingly diverse populations.

Charles A. Ratliff is deputy director of the California Postsecondary Education Commission in Sacramento. A longer version of this chapter was prepared as a research paper for ECS.

The California Context — History and Policy

California's public postsecondary education began with the opening of the California State Normal School (now California State University, San Jose) in 1862, the creation of the University of California in the Organic Statutes Act of 1868 and the establishment of the first junior college program in Fresno in 1910. To build a comprehensive and geographically dispersed postsecondary education system for the state, a succession of steps occurred:

- Normal schools increased in number, then evolved into teachers' colleges and finally state colleges.
- The research university grew from one campus to a nine campus system.
- Community colleges were established throughout the state as a point of initial access or reentry into postsecondary education.
- A vibrant private college and university sector took root, beginning in the mid-1800s and expanding during the early 1900s.

Collectively, these institutions became the foundation for one of the most comprehensive postsecondary education systems in the world.

By the mid 1900s, the system was feeling the pinch of rapidly increasing demand. After World War II, large numbers of veterans returned to the state and used G.I. Bill provisions to pursue education and training beyond high school. By 1959, public-sector competition for students and programs had developed into what former University of California President Clark Kerr termed "real anarchy." In response to massive pressures for growth and limited state resources to finance it, leaders of the university, state college and community college systems appointed a team to study the demand for higher education and methods by which the state could meet this demand. The resulting 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education shaped California's higher education system far more than any other single modern event.

The Master Plan Survey Team consisted of representatives from the independent institutions and the three public systems. While endorsing much of what had evolved in higher education up to that time, the team added several important recommendations, including:

- Give state colleges their own independent governing board.
- Develop junior colleges in areas not yet adequately served.
- Allow different functions to be a guiding principle for the tripartite public system.

The team also reaffirmed the "tuition-free" policy of the university and state college systems, but recommended students be charged for certain operating costs and that all auxiliary services be self-supporting. Operation costs, including faculty salaries, capital outlay, facility maintenance and general operations, were to remain a state obligation but with a portion of community college operations supported by local funds.

The survey team departed significantly from earlier proposals put forward by university and state college representatives by recommending lower-division enrollment in both four-year systems be reduced from approximately 51% to 40% of total enrollment by 1975. At the same time, 50,000 lower-division students were to be diverted to the community colleges.

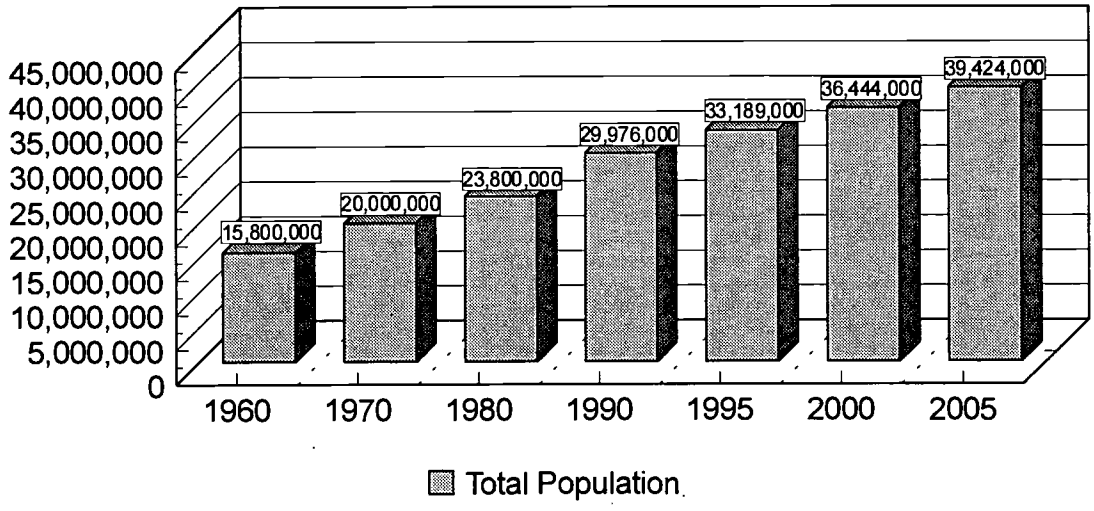
The team also recommended establishing a Coordinating Council of Higher Education to advise the system, legislature and governor on the planning and coordination of higher education. Additionally, the coordinating council — now known as the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) — was made the repository of information on postsecondary education activities and given responsibility for reducing undesirable program duplication.

Demographic Growth

Since the original master plan was adopted, California's population has grown rapidly. As Display 1 shows, California's population grew from 15.8 million in 1960 to 23.8 million in 1980 and 29.9 million in 1990. The 1993 projections issued by the California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit estimate total state population will grow to approximately 39.4 million people by the year 2005, an increase of 6.3 million from 1995 to 2005.

Display I

Actual and Projected State Population, 1960 to 2005



The master plan embodied a state commitment to college access, and the first Californians to benefit fully from that commitment were the "baby boomers." High school graduates and adults of this generation expected to attend a public college or university in the state at low cost, providing they met admission requirements — an expectation that fueled the perception that equality of access to higher education was a fundamental right.

The state's tripartite public higher education structure reinforced this perception. Under provisions of the master plan, the state provided the top 12.5% of high school graduates access to the University of California. The California State Colleges (later renamed the California State University) provided admission to the top one-third of high school graduates, and the junior colleges (later called California community colleges) admitted students with a high school diploma or its equivalent, or anyone who had reached age 18.

The state's tremendous racial/ethnic diversity also had a significant effect on postsecondary education. In 1985, residents who classified themselves as white made up 60.9% of the population. By 1995, the proportion classifying themselves as white had declined to 53%. By the turn of the century, it is estimated that no racial/ethnic group will represent an absolute majority of the population. Display 2 provides state population data and projections by racial/ethnic group.

Display 2

Total California Population by Race/Ethnicity - 1985 to 2005					
	1985	1990	1995	2000**	2005**
Black	1,925,179	2,116,415	2,293,634	2,470,721	2,625,903
Others*	2,306,795	2,920,639	3,537,383	3,998,683	4,434,831
Latino	6,083,822	7,740,303	9,764,691	11,512,704	13,403,536
White	16,086,853	17,198,646	17,593,222	18,461,749	18,959,844
Total	26,402,649	29,976,003	33,188,930	36,443,857	39,424,114

*Includes Native American and Asians
**Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit 1993 Projections

California's racial/ethnic composition is important because differences among the racial/ethnic groups in growth rates, in-school persistence and high school graduation rates affect eligibility to attend more selective university campuses. Displays 3 and 4 illustrate these differences.

As Display 3 shows, in 1985, students classified as white represented 52.8% of total public school enrollment, compared to 60.9% of the total state population (percentages are calculated from data provided in displays 2 and 3). By 1990, white student enrollment dropped to 47.2% of total public school enrollment. By the turn of the century, it is estimated that the number of Latino and white students in public schools will be roughly equal, with the growth of Latino public school students exceeding all other groups through 2005.

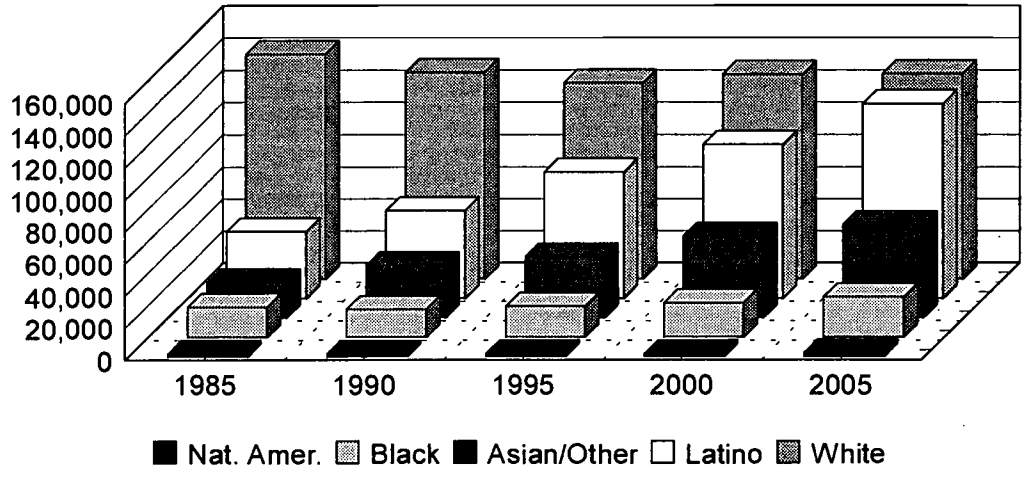
Different achievement rates are evident in high school graduation data. As Display 4 shows, 62.2% of all public high school graduates were classified as white in 1985, dropping to 46.8% of all public school graduates in 1995. By 2005, it is estimated that 61.9% of these graduates will be students of color. These estimates assume that high school attrition rates, which currently exceed 30% for black and Latino students, will remain relatively constant. If improvements in high school retention continue, the change in the racial/ethnic composition of high school graduates will be even more dramatic.

Display 3

K-12 Public School Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity - 1985 to 2005					
	1985	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**
Asian/Other	372,000	490,000	610,000	744,000	887,000
Black	394,000	403,000	453,000	497,000	522,000
Latino	1,139,000	1,538,000	2,011,000	2,749,000	3,472,000
Native Amer.	31,000	36,000	41,000	47,000	58,000
White	2,165,000	2,201,000	2,201,000	2,201,000	2,186,000
Total	**4,101,000**	**4,668,000**	**5,316,000**	**6,238,000**	**7,125,000**
Source: Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, 1993 Projection Series					

Display 4

Public High School Graduates, by Race/Ethnicity - 1985 to 2005



	1985	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**
Nat. Amer.	1,833	1,886	2,157	2,069	2,443
Black	19,013	17,460	19,544	21,569	25,264
Asian/Other	22,381	32,866	38,045	51,252	58,435
Latino	41,958	55,152	79,310	96,307	121,509
White	140,263	128,927	122,438	127,754	128,118
Total	**225,448**	**236,291**	**261,494**	**298,951**	**335,769**

Since the two university systems admit students from different strata of the high school graduating classes, differences among racial/ethnic groups in high school graduation rates and postsecondary admission eligibility affect postsecondary education enrollment demand.

Display 5 provides evidence of the differences in student achievement among racial/ethnic groups. On average, white public high school graduates are twice as likely as their black and Latino counterparts to achieve eligibility for the California State University and the University of California. Asian graduates are twice as likely as their white counterparts to achieve eligibility to both university systems.

Display 5

California Public University Admissions Eligibility by Race/Ethnicity - 1986 and 1990					
	Overall	**Asian**	**Black**	**Latino**	**White**
CSU Master Plan Guidelines	**33%**				
1986 Eligibility	27.5%	50%	10.8%	13.3%	31.6%
1990 Eligibility	34.6%	61.5%	18.6%	17.3%	38.2%
UC Master Plan Guidelines	**12.5%**				
1986 Eligibility	9.1%	24.9%	2.3%	3.1%	10.1%
1990 Eligibility	12.3%	32.2%	5.1%	3.9%	12.7%

Eligibility refers to students who fully meet all admission requirements for each system. Estimates calculated by the California Postsecondary Education Commission.

The percentage of students who met university eligibility requirements for the two university systems improved between 1986 and 1990, and data on public high school students' course-completion patterns suggest the improvement continued during the first half of the 1990s. No other eligibility study has been completed since the 1990 high school graduating class, however, so it is not known whether this trend continues. Even if there is no further improvement in the percentage of university-eligible students, postsecondary education enrollment demand will increase purely as a result of increases in high school graduating classes. If university eligibility rates increase, however, the demand for access to the more selective — and more expensive — university systems also will increase, probably beyond the physical capacity of existing campuses.

Based on demographic trends and conservative assumptions of eligibility rate changes by racial/ethnic group, CPEC projected that overall demand for postsecondary education will increase by approximately 455,000 students between 1993 and 2005. If so, this figure will exceed existing physical capacity and outstrip the resources available to construct new buildings and campuses. Based on other factors, the commission estimated that roughly half of these additional

students cannot be accommodated without construction of new campuses and facilities and/or substantial investment in technology.

Fiscal Constraints on Enrollment Growth

The 1990-91 national recession hit California particularly hard. For the first time since the master plan was adopted, general fund appropriations for the public higher education systems were reduced. Between 1990-91 and 1993-94, appropriations for the University of California were reduced by more than $341 million (16%), and for the California State University, by $170 million (10.3%). Community colleges' general fund appropriations were cut by $857 million (49.4%), although this was partially offset by a $783 million increase in local funding from tax revenue and loans.

In response to these reductions, California's public colleges and universities took several predictable actions:

- Laid off part-time faculty and encouraged early retirement for full-time and tenured faculty
- Closed admissions periods early
- Reduced numbers of course sections offered
- Raised student fees
- Delayed badly needed physical plant maintenance and repairs.

Although no policy decision was made to curtail access to higher education, fiscal decisions by the legislature, governor and governing boards of the public postsecondary systems collectively resulted in enrollment reduction. Actual 1992-93 head count enrollments in the three public higher education systems were 138,721 students below 1990-91 actual enrollments and 261,856 students below 1992-93 projected enrollments.

California's Great Promise — Educational Opportunity

California's long-term commitment to widespread postsecondary education access is increasingly challenged by the combined pressures described above — fiscal stringency, burgeoning population growth, and increasing diversity and divisions within the state's population. Despite these challenges, however, the scope of the postsecondary education enterprise in California remains impressive.

More than 1.8 million students pursue their education at 137 public college and university campuses. Independent colleges and universities educate nearly 200,000 more students, and an additional 400,000 Californians pursue degrees and vocational training at more than 2,200 private degree-granting and vocational schools authorized to operate in the state. California will be called upon to continue to do as much, and more, as it approaches the next century.

California's future is connected firmly to its ability to assure that Californians — in all their diversity — receive high-quality education at all levels and equitable access to postsecondary education opportunities. Significant differences, however, in student achievement across

racial/ethnic groups have resulted in inequitable student access and success in the state's public universities. As noted by a group of legislators reviewing the master plan in the 1980s, "California's demographics are clear and compelling . . . . Over a third of Latino and black youth drop out of high school before the 12th grade. In 1986, only 4.5% of black high school graduates, and 5% of Latino graduates were eligible for admission into the University of California. Less than 30% of the Latino and black students entering either the University of California or the California State University will graduate in five years."

In its report, the Joint Legislative Committee to Review the Master Plan declared: "We seek an educational system which imaginatively ensures that the full benefits of learning are available to persons now in the margins. We want programs of outreach and encouragement which move beyond the formality of opportunity to ensure the access and success of all students. We want opportunities backed up with programs and resources."

When the full legislature adopted this report, education leaders viewed it as an endorsement of campus, systemwide and intersegmental efforts to increase the diversity of students successfully enrolling and graduating from public colleges and universities in the state. These efforts included:

- Student Affirmative Action Programs — campus-operated programs to identify promising high school students from racial/ethnic groups that historically have been underrepresented in higher education and encourage them to enroll, or, in the case of young women underrepresented in some academic programs, to encourage them to enroll in those programs.

- Early Academic Outreach Programs — campus-operated programs to identify promising middle or junior high school students from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and encourage them to aspire to college enrollment while providing advising and academic assistance toward this end.

- Educational Opportunity Programs — campus-operated programs to provide admissions and financial assistance and personal and academic support services to students from low-income backgrounds with the potential to fulfill the institution's curricular requirements. Services are provided from admission through completion of the student's academic program.

- California Student Opportunity and Access Programs — programs operated by consortiums of secondary and postsecondary education institutions to foster greater academic achievement and college attendance by high school students within various geographical areas of the state.

- California Academic Partnership Programs — programs operated by consortiums of secondary and postsecondary education institutions to strengthen the academic preparation of high school students and the skills of teachers in teaching the curriculum. Programs reside in schools with high concentrations of students from racial/ethnic groups

historically underrepresented in higher education and schools with low college-going rates among their graduates.

- Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Advancement Programs — programs operated throughout the state by consortiums of education institutions and private businesses to strengthen the math and science preparation of middle and high school students from racial/ethnic groups historically underrepresented in these fields and encourage them to pursue postsecondary academic majors in these areas.

Additionally, numerous campus-level and intersegmental efforts disseminate information to students' parents about various college opportunities available in the state, admissions requirements for the more selective systems and campuses, costs of college and available financial assistance, and college entrance examination dates. Until recently, the governing boards of both the California State University and University of California also authorized their admissions offices to incorporate nonacademic factors along with objective academic measures as a means to assemble diverse classes of new students annually.

Access and Diversity

By 1995, after five years of recession, California had growing concerns about the scarcity of various public benefits compared to the demand for those benefits. This concern is evident in voters' choices on various state ballot measures. Voters approved Proposition 187 which directed that tax expenditures benefit only those residents perceived to be entitled to such services, i.e., taxpayers legally residing in the state. Similarly, in 1990, Proposition 140 radically changed the composition of the legislature by imposing term limits.

A scarcity of public benefits also is evident in California's postsecondary education opportunities. Despite a growing state population and a state economy that increasingly relies on a highly educated workforce, fiscally driven decisions between 1990-91 and 1994-95 reduced the number of students enrolling in public colleges and universities. Concerns about increasing enrollment fees, projections of nearly a half million more students seeking access to higher education, deteriorating physical plants and the time required to complete degree programs generated tension over who actually gets admitted to colleges and universities, particularly to the more prestigious campuses of the University of California.

In this environment, it was not surprising that political leaders and portions of the public questioned whether long-standing affirmative action programs in higher education should continue to be supported. In June 1995, Governor Pete Wilson, citing a commitment to fairness, equal opportunity and a color-blind society, addressed such issues directly through Executive Order W-124-95. This order:

- Repeals all previous executive orders calling for affirmative action programs and practices that grant preference on the basis of race, gender, creed, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, or physical or mental disability

- Prohibits any state agency, board or commission from employment discrimination on the basis of race, gender, creed, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, or physical or mental disability

- Requires all state agencies, boards and commissions to take appropriate measures to ensure that qualified applicants are recruited from all segments of the workforce without any barriers to opportunity

- Requires decisions in public employment and contracting to be based on merit

- Requires state agencies, boards and commissions, to the maximum extent allowed by law, to (1) eliminate preferential treatment requirements that exceed federal mandates or state statutory requirements concerning hiring, layoffs and contracting; (2) terminate consultant contracts, advisory committees and awards that foster or encourage preferential treatment; (3) quantify and report to the governor the cost of compliance with federal mandates and state statutory requirements which grant preferential treatment; and (4) draft employment goals and timetables based on the qualified employment pool by job classification, rather than general workforce parity

- Requests all state agencies, constitutional officers and education governing boards not subject to the authority of the executive branch to take actions to voluntarily comply with the intent and requirements of the executive order.

A Wilson appointee to the University of California regents, as well as the governor himself, urged the regents to vote in July 1995 to abolish use of race/ethnicity, gender and national origin as a criteria in admission decisions within the university system. This decision was reached after much controversy and great differences of opinion among regents, students and members of the university community. It culminated a year-long examination of actual undergraduate and graduate admission practices at the various university campuses. The leading regent supporting the policy acknowledged that much progress the University of California made in diversifying its student body would not have been possible without "race-based" admissions decisions. Nonetheless, he contended race-based decisions no longer can be justified and that merit and academic competitiveness should be the dominant decision criteria.

A majority of the regents supported eliminating race/ethnicity, gender and national origin as a criteria in admissions decisions. At the same time, they reaffirmed their commitment to assembling a diverse student body and charged the university administration with devising a new admissions process that considered nonacademic and non-racial/ethnic factors as means for achieving a diverse student body. Moreover, they indicated support for expanding outreach efforts to improve the proportion of students from underrepresented groups who meet university admissions requirements.

Eight so-called affirmative action bills, four each in the assembly and senate, along with two constitutional amendments, were introduced in the 1995 legislative session. If passed, they would have prohibited preferences for race/ethnicity, gender, color or national origin in awarding state

contracts; selecting, promoting, or compensating new employees; or operating public schools, colleges and universities. These bills failed to pass out of the house of origin, blocked largely by solid opposition from Democratic legislators.

In November 1996, California voters approved, by a margin of 54% to 46%, the California Civil Rights Initiative, also known as Proposition 209. Proposition 209 amended the state constitution to prohibit discrimination or the granting of preferences in education, employment or contracting based on race/ethnicity, gender or national origin. Although affirmative action is not mentioned directly in the initiative, many programs designed to attract and support students from underrepresented groups may have to be altered or eliminated as a consequence.

Following the initiative's passage, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of a number of groups opposed to Proposition 209. The suit sought to bar its implementation, challenge its constitutionality and define what is meant by "preference." The district court initially issued an injunction prohibiting implementation of Proposition 209, but in April 1997 a federal appeals court struck down the injunction. Further appeals, probably all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, are expected and will probably continue to delay the initiatives' implementation. California's public colleges and universities continue to operate as usual until the matter is finally resolved, though the University of California, consistent with its earlier regents decision, still plans to eliminate consideration of race/ethnicity and gender in admissions decisions, beginning in spring 1998.

Next Steps

The direction that California is likely to take on diversity and affirmative action issues is difficult to predict. The political and emotional aspects of the public discussion have done more to inflame passions than shed light on appropriate public policies. Two things are certain, however: (1) California's population will continue to grow and become increasingly diverse, and (2) California's economy needs a well-educated workforce, one capable of continuous learning and adaptation. Given these certainties, a healthy and vibrant education system is essential to a healthy and vibrant state.

California's ability to benefit from the strength of its diversity depends, in part, on the success of its education institutions in fostering and sustaining an appreciation for multiculturalism and a pluralistic society. A limited number of tools are available to state policymakers to foster desired changes in public higher education. These tools include the enactment of statutes mandating certain actions, adoption of legislative resolutions expressing the legislature's intent that certain actions occur, budget-control language that links certain actions with the appropriation of funding, executive orders from the governor or chief executive officer of the campuses or systems, and mobilization of public pressure through reporting the differences between desirable goals and current performance.

The challenge to CPEC and the governing boards of the public education system will be to assess and report on progress in achieving the multiple goals of access, success, diversity and quality.

To assure that all parties focus on what is to be achieved, expanded efforts to develop common terminology and a common understanding of current policies and practices in postsecondary education and the division of responsibility are needed. Examples include the following:

- Issues of Access
  - Should the mission of California's two public universities be modified to require admission of only the very best students applying, or should it continue to allow flexibility in deciding which students to admit from among a "pool" of qualified applicants?
  - Can the state afford to continue providing college access to all high school graduates and adults through its public colleges and universities? If not, who should decide the number of students that can be accommodated and what criteria should be used in that determination?
  - How can independent and private colleges and universities be used to better accommodate postsecondary education enrollment demand?
  - How can some of the estimated 455,000 additional students seeking college enrollment in 2005 be accommodated through improved teaching/learning productivity and the application of technology?

- Issues of Success
  - How can colleges and universities graduate more of their students within a reasonable time period? What time period should be considered reasonable for various types of postsecondary education institutions?
  - What alternatives to receiving a degree/credential can be used to assess students' acquisition of value-added competencies and knowledge?

- Issues of Accountability
  - What kinds of outcomes should public colleges and universities be expected to achieve and at what levels?
  - What kinds and what combinations of policy and/or fiscal incentives and disincentives should be employed to encourage achievement of expected outcomes?
  - What measures should be used to assess institutions' progress toward achieving expected outcomes?

Assessing Results

CPEC already issues a number of annual publications to inform the governor, legislature and general public on various outcomes of California's postsecondary education system. It has been limited, however, in its ability to report on institutional successes in several areas by the lack of a comprehensive student-based data system that would allow longitudinal studies. Current publications include: (1) *Student Profiles* — provides aggregate information by race/ethnicity and gender on high school graduates, college freshman enrollment, total community college transfers and total degrees awarded by each system; (2) *Fiscal Profiles* — provides a 20-year summary of fiscal appropriations to public colleges and universities by revenue source and summaries of how those revenues were spent by various expenditure categories; and (3) *Performance Indicators of*

California Higher Education —prepared annually pursuant to Assembly Bill 1808 to provide data on the performance of California's public and independent colleges and universities in specified areas.

CPEC will work closely with the University of California and the California State University to acquire information needed to assess the effect of the universities' recent policy changes on California's ability to continue serving a diverse student population and employ a diverse workforce. Some of the additional data that will be sought and their intended use are summarized below:

- *Number and composition of applicants, students admitted and enrolled* — would assess any changes in the number of students from various racial/ethnic groups applying for admission since adoption of new policy by regents and trustees and voter approval of Proposition 209.

- *Number and composition of eligible applicants denied admission to campus of first choices* — would assess extent to which students fail to gain admission to their first-choice campus and subsequently fail to enroll anywhere within the university, differentiated by racial/ethnic group.

- *Number and composition of regularly admitted students assessed to be in need of remedial instruction* — would assess the extent to which high school graduates are receiving improved academic preparation prior to college enrollment.

- *Types of courses designated as remedial and the composition of student enrollment in them* — would determine if differentiation is made between courses taught for students whose primary language is other than English and those for whom English is their native language.

- *Composition of faculty, staff and administration* — would document any changes in the racial/ethnic and gender composition of the public college and university workforce.

- *Number and composition of faculty recruits declining offers of employment by reason* — would assess the extent to which reasons other than noncompetitive salary offers account for loss of preferred faculty members, differentiated by racial/ethnic and gender group.

Additional qualitative questions that will be examined deal with whether alternative admissions criteria that ignore race/ethnicity or gender simply substitute membership in another category (e.g., low-income school, rural school, etc.) for race/ethnicity.

Conclusion

California faces many complex challenges in sustaining its social commitment to providing broad access to postsecondary education for future generations of young people and adults. The size of the state only adds to the challenge. A half million more students will seek enrollment in

2005 than were enrolled in public colleges and universities in 1993. A rebounding economy, driven largely by information-based employment sectors, could well push demand even higher. The effects of the recession that began in 1990-91 fostered a significant mismatch between demand for various public goods and services and the resources needed to meet that demand. It also brought political changes that threaten to divide the state into enclaves of highly educated prosperous groups and undereducated embittered groups.

California's history is one of inclusion for all who dared to dream and work to achieve their goals. Education has been a vital ingredient in the success of these individuals and in the growth of the state into a world-class economic power. California residents and their elected leaders met the challenges of tremendous growth and hardships before and can do so again. New ways must be found to preserve broad access to education beyond high school and to promote student achievement.

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DEVELOPING NEW STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING ACCESS TO COLLEGE IN MARYLAND

Howard P. Rawlings
Sheila Ards

Equal access or equal outcomes? This question is at the heart of current debates over affirmative action in higher education. Too often this question is posed in either/or terms, as if these are alternatives, rather than related points along an education continuum. In Maryland, high school graduation rates and scores on college entrance examinations are seen as essential steps in enhancing access to college. They are, along with other performance indicators, also significant benchmarks that more equal education outcomes are in fact being achieved. Policies to enhance equal access to college and equal outcomes in education must be viewed together as two interrelated aspects of equity in education.

This chapter summarizes Maryland's extensive efforts to develop effective strategies to enhance college access as a way to achieve more equitable outcomes. In analyzing these efforts, the chapter first looks at the context for college access in Maryland and highlights steps taken over the past two decades as well as progress to date.

Subsequent sections provide overviews of policies and strategies used to promote access to postsecondary education as well as improve the preparation of high school students for college-level work. Strategies at both levels encountered legal challenges, resource constraints and other barriers, yet progress continues to be made. The commitment among Maryland legislators and other policymakers remains strong as more effective strategies continue to evolve.

The Maryland Context

Until 1954, Maryland's segregated public higher education system included four historically black colleges: Bowie State, Morgan State, Coppin State and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the University of Maryland Board of Regents opened all campuses to all students regardless of race. While this ended officially sanctioned segregation, it did not end racial discrimination on campuses or achieve fully integrated institutions. In 1974, Maryland was cited for failing to eliminate vestiges of the former dual system in public higher education, after an earlier plan was rejected as "ineffectual."

Howard P. Rawlings, Appropriations Committee chairman, Maryland House of Delegates, and Sheila Ards of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, prepared a longer version of this chapter as a research paper for ECS — Ensuring Access to College: State Roles and Interests in Maryland.

Not until 1985 and as a result of extensive negotiation with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) did Maryland leaders develop an approved five-year desegregation plan to address racial discrimination in higher education. Pressure from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and African-American state legislators prompted this agreement.

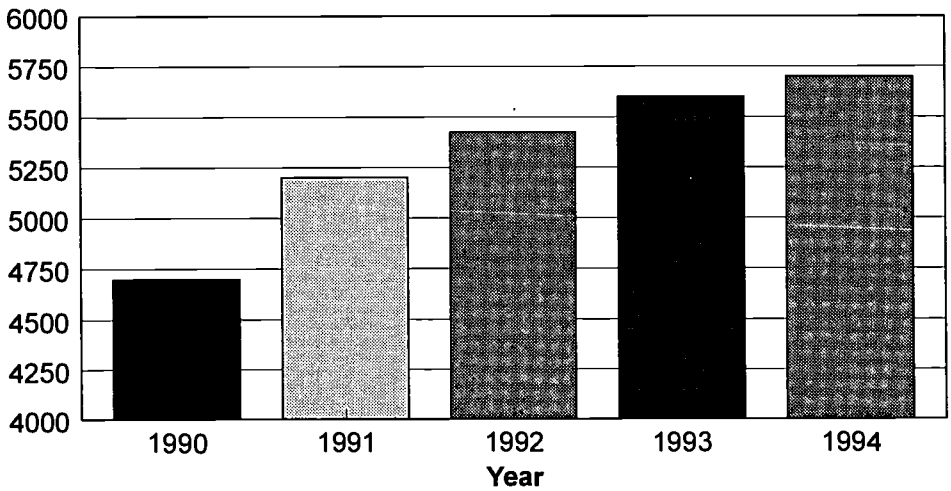
Since 1985, Maryland has undertaken a concerted effort to promote equal access to higher education through statewide policies to improve the recruitment, retention and graduation of students, particularly minorities, and recruit, promote and retain minorities in faculty and professional staff positions. Policy and programmatic changes contributed to African-American undergraduate students' enrollment, retention and graduation rates reaching all time highs.

In addition, the number of African-American full-time faculty has increased significantly since 1990, and the percentage of African Americans entering graduate and professional schools also continues to increase. Today Maryland is viewed as a national leader on this issue, due to improvements in access, equity and performance across a number of areas of higher education. These areas include:

- Between 1990 and 1994, the number of African-American first-time, full-time freshmen entering Maryland's colleges and universities increased from 4,672 to 5,724, an increase of 23% (see Figure 1). Bowie State University experienced a 7.4% increase in full-time undergraduate attendance, Coppin State University experienced 4.7% growth, and Morgan State University grew 4.6%. These increases occurred during a period when overall attendance at Maryland's public four-year institutions increased by only 1.3%.

First-Time Full-Time African-American Enrollment 1990-1994

Figure 1



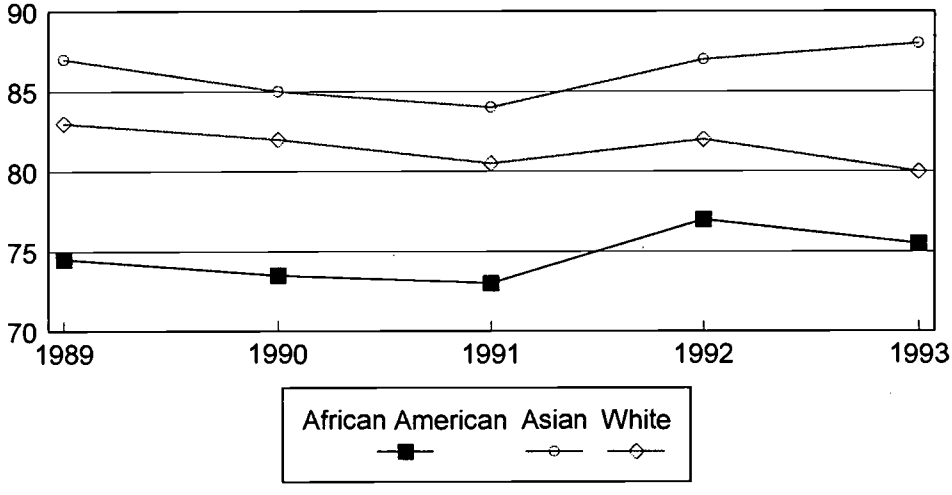
Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission

- As a percentage of undergraduate enrollment, African Americans have achieved rates similar to the percentage of African-American students graduating from Maryland high schools — 24% of total undergraduate enrollment in 1994 compared to approximately 25% of graduating high school students in the state.

- Student retention into the second year of higher education is being monitored closely. As indicated in Figure 2, average second-year retention rates for African-American students fluctuated between 74 and 76%, compared to 80-83% for white students statewide. Significant differences in retention rates appear across institutions, but are less divergent within a single institution. For example, at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP), second-year retention is 84% for African-American students compared to 86% for the total first-year class.

Second Year Retention Rates by Race Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions 1989 - 1993 Cohorts

Figure 2



Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission

- College graduation rates prior to the sixth year of enrollment have increased steadily for African-American students, rising from 30% for students who began college in 1984 to 40% for those who began in 1988. Additional efforts continue such improvements.

- The number of African Americans in full-time faculty positions increased from 690 in 1990 to more than 800 in 1994. At UMCP, even though the total number of faculty declined between 1990 and 1994, the number of African-American faculty rose by 4.4%.

- The percent of African Americans in graduate and professional schools increased significantly. By 1995, African Americans increased to 12.6% of all students in graduate schools and 16.1% of all students in professional schools, up from 6.6% and 11.9%, respectively in 1987. Although many disciplines achieved gains, the largest increases occurred in law, social work and pharmacy.

- At UMCP, the number of applications from minority students increased as well as the number of acceptances. Minority applications rose from 1,324 in 1990 to more than 1,900 in 1994. African Americans had the largest growth in actual numbers of applications, although Native Americans had the highest percentage growth.

Over the past decade, Maryland improved both African-American student access to higher education and African-American faculty representation. These improvements were the result of new strategies undertaken to broaden access to Maryland's public institutions. The following sections review these strategies.

Policies and Strategies to Promote Access

When Maryland committed to OCR's 1985 desegregation plan, state policymakers recognized the need for a new administrative infrastructure to help implement the plan. As a result, in 1988 state leaders reorganized the coordinating and governing structures for public higher education. The prior state structure consisted of a coordinating board with very limited authority and two separate higher education administrative entities, one with oversight over the state college system and the other over the state university system.

Under the new structure, one major education system, the University of Maryland System, was formed with oversight over all but two of the state's public colleges and universities. Morgan State University and St. Mary's College retained their independent governing boards. This reorganization also created a much stronger coordinating entity — the Maryland Higher Education Commission — with substantial oversight over all the state's public and private higher education institutions.

Maryland and OCR officials agreed on several goals to measure continuing progress in integrating the historically white colleges and universities and enhancing the historically black institutions. A recent paper for the higher education commission succinctly stated that the State of Maryland sought to improve equal educational opportunities by achieving three overarching principles:

- Adopt a comprehensive, deliberate and systemwide approach to eliminating racial disparity and cultivating equal educational opportunity.
- Organize, shape and attune to the needs and interests of students in K-16 education.
- Be accountable educationally and fiscally to various constituency needs.

Several initiatives illustrate Maryland's serious commitment to hold education leaders accountable to constituent needs. For example, as part of a larger strategy to promote diversity,

remedy past discrimination and provide financial support to students, two scholarship programs were initiated to increase minority undergraduate enrollments in Maryland's colleges and universities.

The Benjamin Banneker Scholarship Program, developed at UMCP, was part of Maryland's effort to remedy vestiges of its formerly segregated system. When established in 1978, the program offered full scholarships for up to 30 black students with 3.0 or higher grade-point averages and SAT scores of 900 or above. The scholarship covered tuition, room, board and mandatory fees for four years. Because of recent court challenges and changes to this program, funding will be provided only until 1998 and only for students currently in the program.

In 1990, Daniel Podberesky, a Hispanic student, challenged the Banneker Program in U.S. district court *(Podberesky* v. *Kirwan)*. Podberesky applied for a Francis Scott Key Scholarship — a merit-based, race-neutral, four-year, full-financial scholarship program from the university. He was not awarded a Key Scholarship, nor was he considered for a Banneker Scholarship because he was not African American. In 1991, the district court ruled in favor of the university, saying the Banneker Program served a compelling public interest. This opinion was based in part on OCR's earlier finding that the state and university were not complying with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In 1992, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the lower court had failed to make a specific finding on the present effects of past discrimination and remanded the case back to the district court. In effect, the appeals court found the Banneker Program unconstitutional because only African-American students were eligible for it. The university appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which, to date, refuses to hear arguments in the case.

In response to the court decision, UMCP merged the Banneker Program with the Key Scholarship Program. Today, the sole criterion for a Banneker-Key scholarship is academic merit. Students must have at least a 3.0 grade-point average and score 1,000 on the SAT to be considered. Additionally, leadership skills, extracurricular activities, community involvement and the university's goals for maintaining a diverse student body are taken into account when awarding scholarships.

While the state-funded scholarship program survived in this modified form, the court cases and rulings negatively affected minority students. In its first year of implementation, 19 of the 72 Banneker-Key scholarship recipients were African-American students, compared to 36 who received Banneker scholarships the previous year. In response to the immediate impact of the federal court ruling on African-American student scholarships, the UMCP president made a commitment to African-American legislators that the university would find ways to support additional minority student scholarships from institutional resources.

Scholarship programs at other University of Maryland campuses also were affected. The Meyerhoff Scholarship, established at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, originally was designed as a merit-based program to promote the education of African Americans in science and engineering. The average SAT score for Meyerhoff scholars is 1,220, and most have

a high school GPA of at least 3.85. Scholarship recipients also must be committed to pursuing graduate education in the sciences or mathematics. Beginning with the 1996 entering class, the scholarship program no longer is exclusively for African-American students, however. Meyerhoff scholarships now are open to all high-achieving students, based on new selection criteria that include a commitment to work with inner-city students on improving their reading and math skills and a desire to contribute to disadvantaged communities in their chosen careers.

In some ways the Banneker decision contributed to a reaffirmation of programs to ensure greater access for underserved minorities in Maryland. University and college officials are examining ways to increase the minority presence in higher education while adhering to requirements of the Banneker decision. At the state level, new grant programs and other strategies are being proposed. For example, Maryland is in the process of designing and implementing a Diversity Grant program. This program will provide funding to help colleges and universities enrich their academic environment by increasing financial aid to needy students from culturally diverse and traditionally underrepresented populations.

Another part of Maryland's strategy is to reach students at the beginning of their secondary schooling. Toward this end, the state began providing Guaranteed Access Grants in 1996. These grants provide 100% of an applicant's financial need, up to the cost of full-time tuition at UMCP. These awards target the state's neediest students, who are identified in 9th grade for early intervention and college preparation. To qualify for the grant, a student must be a Maryland resident in his or her senior year at a Maryland high school, complete a college-preparatory program or an articulated tech-prep program, have a cumulative 2.5 grade-point average for grades 9-12 in high school and have a family annual income that qualifies for the federal Free Lunch Program. In 1995-96, 541 grants were awarded.

K-12 Education Strategies

Maryland policymakers understand that improvements must begin earlier in students' academic careers in order to prepare them for the challenge of college. In addition to financial support for minority students, the state began an initiative to hold schools more accountable for poor academic performance. This initiative resulted in the state-level takeover of several schools and additional state intervention in many others. The Maryland State Department of Education has proposed high school testing requirements prior to graduation to ensure students are minimally prepared for a college curriculum.

For many urban school districts, however, minority achievement revolves around funding. The current method of financing public education in many urban areas challenges the neediest district — those with a large proportion of low-income families and a dwindling tax base. Lack of resources also creates a greater need for management reform to help districts use scarce resources efficiently. In Baltimore, the state and legislature work with the Baltimore School district to promote reforms to increase student performance. Several different school finance and governance models are being explored.

Maryland officials recognized that the state would have to play a bigger role at the primary and secondary levels if change was to occur for minority students. As a result, in 1990 policymakers instituted the Maryland School Performance Program for grades K-12. Through cooperation with parents, educators and citizens, the program sets public school targets for the year 2000. Each year, schools present a "report card" to the public and other interested groups as evidence of progress toward achieving the targets. The targets help school, district and state leaders examine critical aspects of instructional programs to ensure all students receive quality instruction, hold educators accountable for quality instruction and guide efforts toward school improvement. If and when a school does not meet benchmarks toward achieving these targets, state officials work with local school improvement teams to improve the schools' academic performance, with the possibility of a state takeover as a final option.

Maryland has come a long way in providing equal access to quality education, but more work is needed before equal outcomes are obtained. Maryland leaders understand where the state is on this continuum of equal access to equal outcomes and how far it needs to go, and they have designed a system for the public, educators and others to share responsibly in obtaining equal education outcomes for all citizens.

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COLLEGE ADMISSIONS STANDARDS AND EQUITY IN WASHINGTON

Jane Sherman

Historically, Washington State has performed well across many areas of education. High school graduation rates are at or near the top nationally. A full array of community colleges and public universities provides access to postsecondary education to a large proportion of new graduates and adults. And the state's strong economic base supports public investment in education and employs graduates at all levels. With these conditions, it is hardly surprising Washington is among the states defining explicit college admissions standards and ensuring these standards do not conflict with the underlying public needs and purposes for education — namely, to provide all groups in society with access to the full range of educational opportunities.

This does not mean, however, that there are no conflicts or challenges. Indeed, as the state moves toward higher standards for high school graduation and college admission, policymakers and educators alike must ensure these standards are implemented in ways that do not infringe upon the equally important goals of access and equity.

This chapter describes recent steps taken in the state of Washington to address these related goals. Beginning with a brief description of the state context, the chapter examines the status of state minimum college admissions standards and equity policies, the procedures and results from monitoring progress in both policy areas, and the steps being taken to continue progress in enhancing both student achievement and educational equity. Washington's experience may be instructive to other states in the process of raising or redesigning college admissions standards or in addressing important issues of access and equality.

The Context in Washington

Washington is a state with a small, growing population of people of color. Of 5.3 million total population, 16% identify themselves as African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander or Hispanic. More than 18% of community and technical college enrollments and 17% of public baccalaureate enrollments are students of color, although not evenly distributed across ethnic groups (see Table 1).

This chapter was prepared by Jane Sherman, deputy director for academic affairs, Higher Education Coordinating Board, Washington.

Table 1

Ethnicity of Public Higher Education Students Compared to State Population – 1994			
	Proportion of State Population	Community and Technical College Students	Public University Students
African American	3.3%	3.9%	2.5%
American Indian	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.5%	8.1%	10.0%
Hispanic	5.3%	4.2%	3.2%
Total	**16.0%**	**18.1%**	**17.4%**

Sources: Office of Financial Management, Higher Education Coordinating Board, and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

As a state, Washington takes pride in this record of providing access to higher education. Yet, it faces many of the same challenges as other states in continuing to improve the performance of its colleges and universities in terms of both student achievement and in serving increasingly diverse state populations. Many individuals and organizations play roles in addressing these challenges, including the state legislature; the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; public community colleges, state colleges and universities; other state and local agencies; and the state-level Higher Education Coordination Board (HECB), which oversees key areas of higher education policy.

Although it is a coordinating rather than a governing board, the HECB has statutory responsibility with respect to setting minimum college admissions standards and ensuring minority student participation. Specifically, the statute that created the HECB in 1985, as a successor to an earlier, less independent agency, included the following duties: "Establish minimum admissions standards for four-year institutions," and "make recommendations to increase minority participation, and monitor and report on the progress of minority participation in higher education." (Revised Code of Washington 28B.80.350)

During the late 1980s, the HECB studied and established policy in both areas, and continues to monitor results. Washington started fairly early to upgrade its admissions standards for public baccalaureate education. Like many other states, it long has been involved in efforts to bring underrepresented groups more fully into higher education. Only recently have state policymakers and other leaders begun to examine seriously whether these two sets of policies support or conflict with each other.

In 1989, the HECB adopted a new policy, Minimum Requirements for Admission to Public Baccalaureate Institutions, designed to raise admissions standards at public institutions across the state. This policy was born during a time of great concern about the extent of postsecondary remedial education being supported by state resources. The legislature in particular perceived that

public resources were "wasted" when unprepared students attempted college-level work. While strong sentiments favored raising standards, equally great concerns were expressed about the effect on students of color; students from small, rural high schools; and other underrepresented groups. The adopted policy attempted to take these concerns into account.

The centerpiece of this policy is an Admissions Index (AI) that combines high school grade-point average (GPA) with SAT or ACT scores. Grades count twice as much as test scores, and higher achievement on one compensates for lower levels on the other. Two minimum AI numbers were set by HECB — one for the research universities (AI 28) and the other for regional institutions (AI 13). The AIs were set empirically to predict an 80% chance of success (defined as a C average or better earned during freshman year) at research institutions and a 65% chance of similar success at the other public four-year institutions. The index was revalidated against current freshman grades in 1994, with very slight adjustments made.

The second component of the policy is the core course requirement, which specifies an array of college-preparatory coursework to be taken in high school. Applicants must have completed 15 "subject years" to be eligible for regular admission. This includes four years of English, three years of mathematics, two years of science (including one lab), three years of social studies, two years of another language (including sign language and Native American Languages) and one year of fine, visual, or performing arts or an academic elective. The 1989 standards were to be phased in over several years, with the core course requirements fully implemented in fall 1992.

Which specific courses meet these requirements has been — and continues to be — a subject of ongoing discussion among the high schools, universities and HECB.

Under the 1989 standards, Washington's 33 community and technical colleges continued to be an open-enrollment system. Their strong transfer role and the state's unusually consistent articulation policies have provided a reliable pathway toward baccalaureate education. In their historical roles and in current policy, the community colleges have served as important starting points for students underprepared at the high school level, as well as for well-prepared students who are looking for lower cost, local education.

In addition to these basic standards, HECB policies deal with what exceptions or alternatives should be allowed and for what reasons. While the board's original intent remains a matter of discussion, it is fair to say the board has two related goals in deciding on an alternative admissions policy.

First, alternative admissions criteria are intended to encourage student body diversity, broadly defined. They are not designed just to encourage winning athletic teams, but also to allow students who excel in the arts, who come from small schools with limited course offerings, and who have learning disabilities or other such disadvantages to attend public institutions.

Second, alternative admissions policies are intended to allow institutions to reach out to underprepared students, including those with low expectations of themselves and their futures during crucial high school years. Many students of color fit this description, and the board clearly

articulated its intent that minimum admissions standard should not get in the way of institutional efforts to reach out to students belonging to underrepresented groups.

With these goals in mind, and after intense discussions, the board set alternative admissions at a maximum of 15% of new enrollments at each institution. The alternative standards required students to have a minimum high school GPA of 2.0, to have taken the SAT or ACT (no minimum score) and to be missing no more than three subject years of the core course requirements. Different exceptions apply to applicants over 21 years of age, or with GED certificates, and from high schools not using a grading system.

An unexpected concern arose early when anecdotal reports indicated that African-American high school students in particular were sometimes refusing to take the SAT in protest over its supposed cultural bias or the bias perceived in all standardized testing. Recruiters and mentors attempted to address this problem in their conversations with high school students of color. It is not known how widespread the problem was or how successfully it was counteracted.

During these same years, the HECB formulated policies to advance the participation of both students and faculty of color in higher education. The Policy on Minority Participation and Diversity sets measurable statewide goals for enrollment, transfer, progress and completion at all levels, as well as for employment of faculty and administrators. It also identifies qualitative goals for campus climate. Goals are stated in terms of participation rates for each ethnic group comparable to rates for all state residents as a whole. Goals for faculty and administrators include an indicator of current "availability" in each employment category. Each baccalaureate institution, along with the community and technical college system as a whole, developed a plan that identified how it would contribute to meeting the statewide goals and report successes annually to the HECB.

In 1991, the legislature committed approximately $3 million to minority recruiting and retention, allocated among the individual institutional budgets according to their size. These funds continued as a line amount in each subsequent state budget, an important symbolic as well as fiscal commitment by the state.

Additionally, Washington's public institutions seriously took up the charge to serve all the state's citizens. Baccalaureate institutions set their own enrollment goals for attracting students of color that were more demanding than the statewide goals set by HECB. For example, the University of Washington could use its statewide mission as the state's flagship research institution to justify enrollment goals for students of color based on their representation in the statewide population. But because the university is located in Seattle/Tacoma, the state's largest urban area with the largest concentration of people of color, it set its diversity enrollment goals to match the local, rather than the statewide, population. On the other hand, the other baccalaureate institutions, all of which are located in less urban areas with much less ethnically diverse populations, have assumed goals for themselves based on statewide populations — a much more demanding goal than one based on the local population from which they draw the largest proportion of their students.

The community and technical colleges — with their strong ties to local communities throughout the state — have succeeded more than any other sector in attracting and graduating students of color. Their two current priorities include meeting more fully the needs of the growing Hispanic population and preparing higher proportions of students of color to transfer successfully to baccalaureate institutions.

Other state-level commitments to ethnic diversity in higher education include the affirmative action statute, RCW 41.06.020(11), 150(22), and 49.74; the Governor's Executive Order 93-03 developed by the Governor's Affirmative Action Policy Committee; and the Department of Personnel's guidelines reissued in 1993. Most of these state-level initiatives are directed toward employment policy and require various levels of reporting about classified, administrative, and faculty hiring and promotion.

Monitoring Admissions and Diversity

How do Washington leaders know if any of these initiatives work? And more to the point, how do they know whether or not efforts to raise admissions standards counteract efforts to enroll more students of color? Three main sources of information help illuminate the interplay between admissions standards and diversity efforts:

- Analysis of the relationship between the admissions standards and freshman success rates
- Analysis of retention rates and the need for remedial education
- Analysis of participation rates.

The relationship between admissions standards and freshman success rates

In 1994, the HECB reviewed whether or not the new admissions standards were reliably predicting freshman success rates over time and determined that this was indeed the case, thus validating continued use of the AI and core requirements.

When use of the new admissions standards began in the 1990s, two universities already used standards considerably higher than the HECB minimums. These universities continued to do so after the HECB minimums were established. At one research university, whose previous institutional standards had been more in line with the lower standards at regional universities, the new standards required the use of the higher AI. In this case, the HECB standards seemed to help that university align its admissions standards with its mission and expectations for student achievement.

Students generally seemed to benefit from having clearer state expectations of what constituted adequate preparation for college-level work, and from knowing what levels of high school achievement would prepare them to compete successfully in higher education. Students also should be able to predict their chances of acceptance at a specific public institution.

In the high schools, however, there were complaints that the curriculum was being skewed toward academics by the requirement that specific courses be available for all students intending

to go to college. Whether this works to the detriment of other students' needs or prevents development of interdisciplinary and applied curricula has been a consistent point of friction. It has attracted legislative attention, been examined by task forces and has contributed to the current interest in rethinking admissions standards.

Retention rates and the need for remedial education

Another way to attempt to examine the effect of admissions standards on enrollment patterns is to analyze retention rates over time and review the needs for remedial education. Other things being equal, retention rates should rise and remedial education should decline if students arrive better prepared academically. But the analysis to date is inconclusive.

As indicated in Table 2, spring-to-fall first-time freshman retention rates at baccalaureate institutions changed significantly over the past nine years, but not in a pattern that would suggest a strong influence from admissions standards. Freshman retention rates increased from 81.5% statewide in 1986 to a peak of 87.2% in 1993. (Fall-to-fall rates, which might be more informative, are not consistently available for the relevant time period.) Clearly, this is one indicator that should move in concert with higher standards if policy goals are being met.

Table 2

Spring-to-Fall First-Time Freshman Retention Rates*									
Spring to Fall	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Statewide Freshman Retention Rate	81.5	82.4	84.2	85.3	86.2	85.8	86.7	87.2	86.6
* Retention Rate = Percent of freshmen enrolled for spring term who return the following fall Source: Office of Financial Management, 1995									

One also would expect to see the amount of remedial education decrease as the admissions standards took hold. Efforts to understand the effect of admissions standards on remedial education, however, are clouded by changing definitions of "remedial" and changing institutional placement testing requirements. The HECB currently is engaged in a legislatively mandated project to (1) set a common, statewide definition for remedial education, (2) ensure consistent reporting back to state agencies and (3) identify appropriate state and institutional roles in providing remedial education.

For the most part, baccalaureate institutions deny providing substantial amounts of remedial education, but insist that some remedial courses must be available, in some form, at every institution. Recent agreements ended the last offerings of intermediate algebra for college credit at both the community college and baccalaureate levels. At least one university is providing additional support to remedial-level students in regular classrooms and showing promising results. Most institutions are using or exploring technology-based approaches to providing or improving remedial-education services.

Participation rates

To explore how students of color fared under the 1990 admissions standards, researchers examined participation rates before and after full implementation of the new standards. The annual *Statewide Progress Report on Diversity and Participation by People of Color in Higher Education* shows generally positive, but somewhat mixed, results across sectors and ethnic groups. Table 3 shows data on undergraduate participation rates from this report.

Table 3

Undergraduate Participation Rates* (as percent of total population group)

		African American	American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Statewide Population
Community and Technical Colleges	1990	3.20	3.94	5.83	3.57	3.66
	1991	4.12	4.58	6.44	3.67	3.90
	1992	4.23	4.53	6.47	3.80	3.83
	1993	5.71	5.16	7.31	4.21	4.46
	1994	5.72	5.21	6.89	4.21	4.15
Public Four-Year Institutions	1990	1.65	1.55	3.84	1.11	1.83
	1991	1.52	1.64	3.84	1.29	1.79
	1992	1.46	1.68	3.72	1.24	1.78
	1993	1.56	1.71	3.68	1.32	1.79
	1994	1.51	1.91	3.49	1.32	1.71

*Participation Rate = All members of the group enrolled in higher education ÷ all members of the group × 100
Source: HECB calculation from IPEDS and SBCTC data

Of particular note is the fact that all ethnic groups appear to have been equitably represented in community and technical college enrollments since at least 1990, as are Asian/Pacific Islanders and American Indians (as of 1994) at the four-year institutions. The Hispanic participation rate is growing significantly.

Overall participation rates at community and technical colleges are growing but are declining at four-year institutions. African-American participation rates are declining slightly faster than overall rates at four-year institutions. This kind of analysis provides Washington with important information about where past efforts have been successful and where new efforts need to focus.

To understand whether the admissions process is part of the problem or part of the solution, the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs recently published another helpful source of information, *Affirmative Action – Who's Really Benefiting: Part 2, Public Higher*

Education. The commission focused on how the public four-year institutions used the alternative admissions standards in 1994 and analyzed higher education hiring for 1993 and 1994.

Table 4 displays the 1994 percentage of newly admitted freshmen enrolled from each ethnic group at the University of Washington under the HECB regular minimum standards and alternative standards.

Table 4

First-Time Enrolled Freshmen Admitted to the University of Washington Under Regular and Alternative HECB Standards

1994	Regular Admissions Enrolled	Alternative Admissions Enrolled	Total Admissions Enrolled	Percent Alternative Admissions	Percent of All Admissions By Ethnic Group
White	2,172	41	2,213	1.9%	63.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	704	101	805	12.5%	23.0%
African American	45	48	93	51.6%	2.7%
Hispanic	82	44	126	35.0%	3.6%
Native American	21	12	33	36.4%	0.9%
Other	217	2	219	0.9%	6.3%
Total	3,241	248	3,489	7.1%	100.0%

Source: Washington Commission on African American Affairs, 1995

Table 5 shows a different pattern of use for the alternative standard at Washington State University, based largely on a broader applicant pool.

Table 5

First-Time Enrolled Freshmen Admitted to Washington State University Under Regular and Alternative HECB Standards					
1994	Regular Admissions Enrolled	Alternative Admissions Enrolled	Total Admissions Enrolled	Percent Alternative Admissions	Percent of Admissions by Ethnic Group
White	1,731	279	2,010	13.9%	81.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	110	29	139	20.9%	5.6%
African American	35	25	60	41.7%	2.4%
Hispanic	72	18	90	20.0%	3.6%
Native American	36	12	48	25.0%	1.9%
Other	124	10	134	7.5%	5.4%
Total	2,108	373	2,481	15.0%	100.0%
Source: Washington Commission on African American Affairs, 1995					

From this information, the commission concluded that the alternative admissions standard does benefit substantial proportions of students of color who enroll at the baccalaureate institutions, but that the majority of the policy's beneficiaries are white. Numerically — although not proportionately — whites are the primary beneficiaries of the alternative standard. For example, whites represent slightly more than half of all students enrolled under alternative standards statewide, but this group accounts for only 7% of all whites admitted. African Americans represent about 12% of all students enrolled under alternative standards statewide, but those students make up 45% of the total African-Americans admitted.

Clearly, the alternative standard allows the state to set higher admissions standards without negatively affecting institutions' ability to attract a diverse student body, including more students of color.

Next Steps

Based on experience with the current admissions process, Washington's focus on students of color is moving to (1) precollege initiatives to improve expectations and preparation; (2) steps to enhance success once students are enrolled by improving transfer, retention, and graduation; and (3) the potential effects of the next major change in the admissions standards toward proficiency-based standards.

Outside of higher education itself, Washington is experiencing some of the same challenges to affirmative action as other states. Legislation was introduced in the Washington House of Representatives to eliminate all affirmative action in state government, including public higher education. Affirmative action opponents started the process of filing and collecting signatures for an initiative to accomplish the same goal.

None of the state's boards of regents or trustees shows any sign of backing away from affirmative action, however. Both the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Higher Education Coordinating Board recently revised their policy statements on diversity and participation by students of color in ways that maintain their traditional commitment to these efforts. Organizations such as the Commission on African American Affairs regularly issue public information reports.

How the state handles the move towards proficiency-based admissions standards will be one of the next major challenges. The state has mandated K-12 restructuring, with a Certificate of Mastery issued to students around age 16. As a result, the K-12 system soon will be based on students meeting competency standards in a number of academic areas at three different points in their school careers. Assessment efforts include newly developed standardized tests, classroom assessments and student performance activities. Some schools already are beginning to move away from traditional class and course structures. With this restructuring process under way, higher education has no choice but to rethink both its expectations for entering freshmen and the format by which their preparation is evaluated and reported.

In addition, there is a concern about the continuing need for remedial courses. This concern suggests that Washington's current standards do not provide sufficiently precise information to students about the necessary preparation for college-level work and that test scores do not adequately evaluate students' readiness. Proficiency-based standards are expected to enhance both students' preparation and the information available to them and colleges to assess readiness for college.

Finally, Washington public higher education leaders realize that requiring the traditional academic course pattern limits the flexibility of both educators and students to develop and pursue alternative paths of high-quality learning. Washington leaders are committed to finding ways to identify and measure what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college. Educators must have the flexibility to build many different high school programs that allow students to acquire these competencies.

Ensuring that the effects of such policy changes on students of color are assessed and that steps are taken to address any potential negative impacts will be important. There is concern that much more extensive standardized testing will be the fall-back solution if other means of evaluation prove unwieldy or unreliable. Such a result might be worse rather than better if it narrows the basis for assessing students.

What, then, are the next steps for Washington? In the current context, Washington through HECB and public institution efforts, will do the following:

- Continue to vigorously pursue all current efforts and to implement the policies already in place, monitor their success, review the 15% alternative admissions policy and promote graduate fellowships and other efforts. The University of Washington, for example, expanded both its admissions criteria and its admissions staff in order to consider all its applicants individually across many factors.

- Respond to the challenges directed at affirmative action as they arise, and be prepared with positive alternatives in case they are needed. The board's Policy on Minority Participation and Diversity is not an affirmative action policy as such. Institutions are encouraged to develop strategies to further the goals of the policy. As other states have begun to discover, additional strategies are possible.

- Begin rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of current institutional efforts to promote participation by people of color in order to ensure the greatest return on investment of time, effort and state funding.

- Take note of successes when they occur and maintain and monitor those areas. HECB and others must demonstrate that the state's efforts pay off and that resources can be redirected to solve the next problem.

- Continue to develop and then implement proficiency-based admissions standards, while carefully monitoring effects on students of color during and after the pilot-testing phases.

As Washington state continues its activity in both admissions and diversity policy in higher education, challenges just ahead in both areas are likely to be more demanding than any yet faced. So far, reactions by both the institutions and policymakers suggest that new challenges will be eagerly and creatively met.

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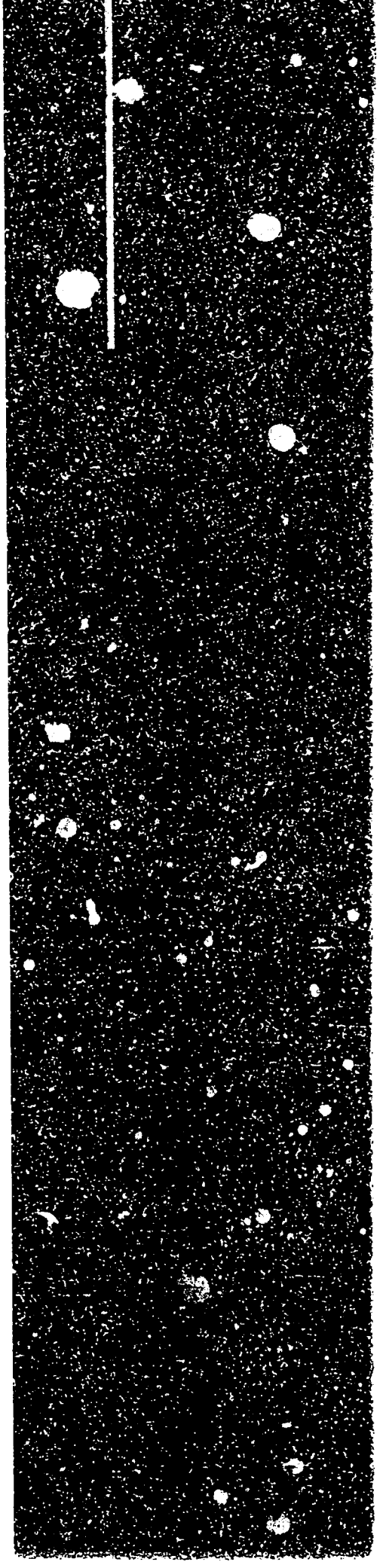

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