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## California Postsecondary Education Commission

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# Update on the Commission's University Eligibility Study for the Class of 2007

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The Commission has started collecting data for the 2007 University Eligibility Study. This study is the latest in a series that began in 1966 to estimate the percentage of California public high school graduates who meet the admission requirements of the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC). California Education Code Section 66903 (q) directs the Commission to conduct periodic eligibility studies. The most recently completed eligibility study was for the high school graduating class of 2003.

Eligibility studies are conducted by collecting a sample of transcripts from high schools throughout the State. The transcripts are reviewed by university staff to compare admission requirements with the courses, grades, and test scores of the sampled students. Statewide eligibility rates are estimated from this sample.

### **Contacting schools**

In May 2007, staff at the Survey Research Center at UC Berkeley drew a sample of 205 schools based on a plan developed by a statistical consultant for the study. Initially, 185 of these schools will be contacted, with the remainder held in reserve in case the initial response is not adequate. In late August, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Commission Executive Director wrote to the district superintendents responsible for these schools to announce the study and request their cooperation. An example of the letter is included on pages 3 and 4 of this update. The principals of the selected schools were copied on this letter.

Schools will be contacted in mid-September when results are available for students who qualify as 2007 graduates after passing the California High School Exit Examination in the summer session. Vangent Inc., UC's contractor for collecting and handling student data in the Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) program, will collect data from schools. Vangent staff have identified a technical contact at each school and will arrange with this staff member to transmit data.

### **California School Information System**

Throughout the planning stages of the study, there has been an interest in using the California School Information System (CSIS) to collect data from schools. CSIS is a state-funded system that facilitates electronic transfer of student information between schools, colleges, and other educational agencies. UC's admissions office already uses CSIS to collect data from some of the schools submitting 11th-grade transcripts as part of its ELC program.

After the sample of schools was selected, CSIS staff assessed the feasibility of using their system to collect transcript data for the eligibility study. CSIS staff inventoried the student information systems used by the schools in the sample and found that all of them could transmit data using CSIS. CSIS staff then developed a plan and schedule for the work needed to collect data for the study. This work consisted mainly of the programming needed to conduct validity checks on the data collected from schools and transmit the data to UC.

CSIS staff completed a plan in June, but because of uncertainty regarding the state budget, CSIS management were unable to commit staff to this project. In late July, the Commission and UC staff made the decision to proceed with the study using UC's system in which data will be collected from schools by the UC contractor. Nevertheless, this experience has shown that it will be possible to collect data with CSIS for future eligibility studies.

**Next steps**

Vangent will collect data from schools between mid-September and the end of November. The data will be processed by a system that gives a preliminary automated evaluation of UC and CSU eligibility for each student at the selected schools. The course and grade data will then be loaded into a viewing system so that admission staff from UC and CSU can review the results of the automated evaluation and evaluate cases where this does not give a conclusive determination of eligibility.

UC will conduct training for evaluators from both UC and CSU in November. Evaluation of the sample will take place between November 2007 and August 2008. Senior UC and CSU admission staff will then review these results and produce a file of eligibility results by September 2008. Staff at the Commission, UC, and CSU will then conduct the statistical analysis needed to estimate statewide eligibility rates from this sample. A report on UC and CSU eligibility rates will be released no later than the late fall of 2008.

**Example of letter to district superintendents**



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
JACK O'CONNELL, State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
1430 N Street, Suite 5602  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901  
(916) 319-0800



**CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
MURRAY J. HABERMAN, Executive Director  
770 L Street, Suite 1160  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-1000

August 23, 2007

Jim Negri, District Superintendent  
Acalanes Union High School District  
1212 Pleasant Hill Road  
Lafayette, CA 94549-2623

Dear Superintendent Negri:

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) will shortly begin collecting data for the 2007 University Eligibility Study. This is the latest in a series of studies to estimate the percentage of California public high school graduates eligible to enter the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems.

CPEC conducts periodic eligibility studies in cooperation with the UC, CSU and the California Department of Education (CDE). These studies are crucial in assessing how well the state is doing in providing students with the opportunity to continue with their education after high school. The results of the study will help identify the obstacles that students face in qualifying for admission to UC and CSU and will help guide the development of programs to increase college-going by groups that have historically been underrepresented in higher education.

The 2007 University Eligibility Study will be conducted by collecting course and grade information for graduating seniors from a sample of 180 public high schools in California. Data will be collected and transmitted electronically from schools' student record systems, so the study will require only minimal effort by your staff.

Two schools in your district—Campolindo High and Miramonte High—have been selected for the study. Staff from UC plan to contact schools in September and make arrangements to collect data.

*continued, next page*

**Example of letter to district superintendents — continued**

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August 23, 2007  
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Please be assured that the study will report only statewide and regional eligibility rates. No data identifying individual students, schools, or school districts will be released by CPEC. Only CPEC, CSU, and UC will have access to the data. Each organization guarantees to protect the confidentiality of all information provided by schools.

Because the study is conducted by a state agency to evaluate state education programs and protects the identity of students and their parents, access to student records without written consent is authorized as an exception under California *Education Code* Section 49076(a)(3) and the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations codified in 34 *Code of Federal Regulations* sections 99.31(a)(3)(iv) and 99.35(a).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the 2007 University Eligibility Study, please contact Adrian Griffin, Study Director, California Postsecondary Education Commission, at (916) 322-2299 or by e-mail at [eligibilityquestions@cpec.ca.gov](mailto:eligibilityquestions@cpec.ca.gov).

We appreciate your cooperation in past eligibility studies and look forward to working with you on the 2007 University Eligibility Study.

Sincerely,

  
JACK O'CONNELL  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education

  
MURRAY J. HABERMAN  
Executive Director  
California Postsecondary Education Commission

JO/MH:ag

cc: Principal, Campolindo High School  
Principal, Miramonte High School