

Putting the Cart before the Horse: Latinos and Higher Education

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Introduction

In this paper we argue that social policy in California has put the cart before the horse. While the campaign for Proposition 209 was waged with the claim that it “equalized” opportunity for every citizen, prohibiting special consideration for any person on the basis of his or her racial or ethnic background (Chávez, 1998), in fact, it increased disparities in access to higher education. A difficult and troubling situation—the highly disproportionate access to higher education based on ethnicity-- was made worse, and the state lost a valuable tool in attempting to truly equalize educational opportunity. In the following sections, we review the data on the effect of unequal educational opportunity for Latinos and others, the current situation with respect to higher education in California, the principal barriers that stand in the way of more equal access, and the policy implications of the foregoing, including recommendations for next steps.

A history of slow progress in higher education

High school drop out rates are declining—at least officially—for Latino students in California, from 7.8 percent annually in 1991 to 4.1 percent in 1998 (CBEDS, 1999)¹, and more Latino students are going on to college. Nonetheless, few real gains have been made for this group in higher education access in recent times. A decade ago, in 1989, 17 percent of the students in the three public institutions of higher education in California were Latinos; by 1998 that figure had grown to 25 percent. However, Latinos comprised just 21 percent of the

¹ There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the methodology for counting drop outs in California. Thus, while the annual drop out rates appear to be down dramatically over previous figures, the actual graduation rate for Latinos remains low. The four year graduation rate—the percent of students who graduated 12th grade as a proportion of those who entered in the 9th grade—was only 55.3%. This was the lowest for all ethnic groups.

graduating seniors in California in 1989 and by 1998 that figure had increased by 10 percentage points to more than 31 percent. Thus, the growth in higher education participation for Latinos has actually been more modest than their growth in population share. Moreover, the growth in higher education participation that has been achieved has occurred disproportionately in the lower two segments of the public higher education system. The state university system (CSU) saw the greatest percentage increase in Latino enrollment over the period—42 percent, while the University of California system posted only a meager 10 percent increase in Latino students in spite of the fact that the pool of graduating seniors had grown by almost 50 percent.

All told, approximately two-thirds of graduating seniors go on to some kind of postsecondary education in California, however only 56 percent of Latino graduates enrolled in postsecondary education in 1998. The fact that fewer Latinos go to college than other groups also has an impact on the total college going rate in the state. In 1989, when Latinos comprised 21 percent of the graduating class, 53 percent of all graduates attended one of the three public higher education institutions; in 1998 when their share of the graduates had risen to 31.2 percent, only 49 percent of all graduates went on to one of these three public institutions (California Postsecondary Commission 2000). Thus, the consequences of limited access to higher education for Latinos are substantial not only for the Latino community, but also for the state as a whole.

The slow growth in access to higher education for Latinos and other underrepresented minorities was dealt a further debilitating blow when the University of California regents passed SP1, the resolution barring the consideration of race or ethnicity in admissions, and the voters followed this with the passage of Proposition 209 which extended the ban statewide. Neither the community colleges nor the state university system was greatly affected by Proposition 209, however the impact was severe on the University of California. In 1998, the year that the ban went into effect, 53 percent fewer Latinos were admitted to UC Berkeley and 33 percent fewer were admitted to UCLA. Thus, while the two flagship campuses of the UC system had also been the standard bearers of diversity in the system, their share of Latino freshmen dropped from a high of about 15 percent in 1997 to only 8.6 percent in 1998.

What is at stake?

Access to quality higher education is critical for the welfare of the Chicano/Latino² community, and critical for the welfare of the State of California. With a 41.5 percent share of the state's public school population, Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the schools and growing at the rate of almost one percent per year. Latinos are currently expected to comprise more than half of the K-12 public school students in California within a decade. (Citation?). Thus, California's future well being is intimately tied to the well being of the Latino population. A recent report issued by the California Research Bureau³ details in stark terms the consequences of Latino under-education for the California economy. While Latinos comprised 28 percent of the labor force in 1998, they represented only 19 percent of the wage income. The single biggest reason for this discrepancy is the relatively low level of education of Latino workers. Among white wage earners, 33 percent have at least a bachelor's degree. Among Latinos, only 8 percent are similarly well educated. As Latinos make up a larger share of the labor force, overall wage income can be expected to decline proportionately if this education gap does not close. The current strength of the California economy cannot be sustained under such circumstances.

On the other hand, a RAND study on the economic returns of increasing the education level of Latinos concluded that "Hispanics with a bachelor's degree will pay more than twice as much in taxes as those with only a high school diploma, and Hispanics with a professional degree will pay an estimated three times as much as those with a bachelor's degree" (Sorensen, et al. 1995, pp. 2-3). With increased education of Latinos, the state of California can anticipate significant savings in expenditures for public services such as welfare, Medicaid, and jails and prisons as well (Karozy, Greenwood, Everingham, Hoube, Kilburn, Rydell, Sanders & Chiesa, 1998). In a study of the costs and benefits of closing the education gap for minorities in California and the nation, Vernez (1999) found that the *public benefit* gained versus the cost of increased education, in all cases, favors providing more education. For example, if Latinos were

² The term Chicano/Latino is used to include all Hispanic groups, and Hispanic is synonymous with Latino. The term Chicano, however, refers to individuals of Mexican origin, as does the term Mexican American.

educated at the same level as Whites, every additional dollar spent on education would save the state about \$1.90. About one-third of this savings would come from public expenditures and two-thirds from increased taxes on earnings. When *societal benefits* are computed—public benefits plus the increased disposable income that accrues to individuals—benefits more than double to more than four dollars for every dollar spent on education (Vernez, 1999). This is consistent with national data that show the increase in income for individuals by education in 1998. Each level of increased education confers substantial additional income benefits.

Table 1
Median Annual Household Income,
By Educational Attainment of the Householder, 1998

<9th Grade	\$15,541
<H.S. Diploma	19,851
H.S. Graduate	33,779
Some college	40,015
A.A. Degree	45,258
Bachelors Degree	59,048
Masters Degree	68,115
Doctoral Degree	87,232
Professional Degree	92,228

Source: The College Board, 1999

As important as the economy is for all Californians, there are other compelling reasons to increase Latino access to higher education. Beyond the pecuniary benefits of a college education are numerous social benefits to increasing the education levels of underrepresented groups. Persons with higher levels of education enjoy better health and longer lives (Perna & Swail, 1998), are more likely to attend cultural arts activities, to vote, and to provide leadership in their communities (Mortensen, 1997).

Diversity within educational settings has also been shown to confer cognitive advantages on those students schooled in such settings, especially when this occurs in late adolescence. Thus, not only do underrepresented students obtain benefit from access to higher education, but their non-minority classmates can be expected to benefit cognitively as well. For example, Gurin

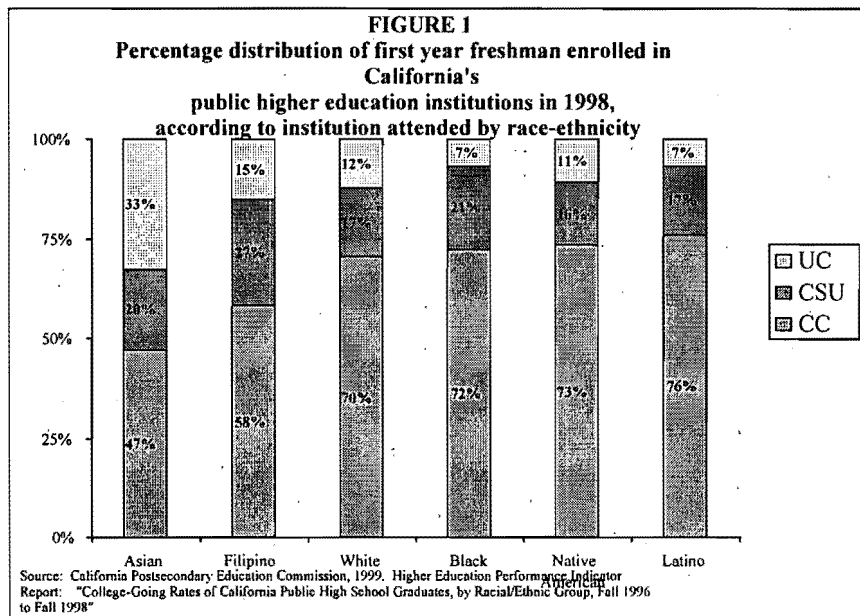
(1999) examined multi-institutional national data, an extensive survey of students at the University of Michigan, and data drawn from a specific program at the University of Michigan.

Based on these analyses, she concluded

that interaction with peers from diverse racial backgrounds, both in the classroom and informally, is positively associated with a host of . . . learning outcomes. Students who experienced the most racial and ethnic diversity in classroom settings and in informal interactions with peers showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills (p.100).

Representation of Chicano/Latino students in the state's higher education institutions

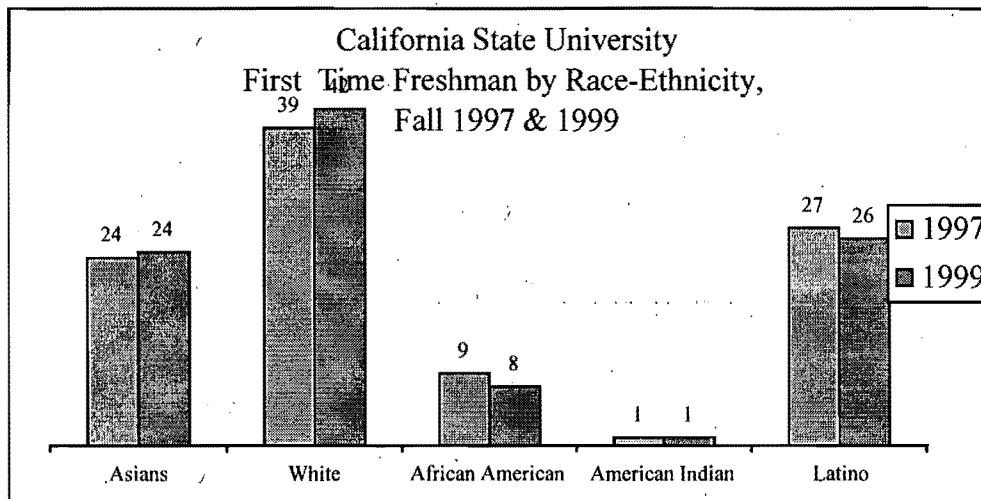
Figure 1 shows the distribution of California public high school graduates enrolling in California's system of public higher education in Fall, 1998. Latinos are more likely to matriculate at a community college compared with other racial/ethnic groups with three-fourths enrolling in a community college (California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), 1999). While the community colleges represent an important pathway to higher education for some students, they are also a dead end for many others. For example, approximately one-third of all 1998 community college students matriculated with the intention of transferring to a four year university yet only about 3 percent of these students actually transfer in any given year (Hardy, 2000). Latinos are underrepresented among the small proportion of students who do transfer. For example, Latinos comprised 24 percent of the 1996 community college enrollment. However, two years later, they were only 12.6 percent of the transfer students to the University of California, and only 17.9 percent of the transfers to the state university system (CPEC, 1999). Many Latino students are lost in the community college system. Matriculation at the state's public four-year institutions also reveals racial differences. While similar proportions of Latinos and white college goers attend California State University (17 percent) Latinos are less likely than whites or Asians to enroll at the University of California (7 percent compared with 12 and 33 percent).



Unequal racial-ethnic distribution in the destinations of California's college going population translates into racial disparities in freshman enrollments at each system of four-year institutions. See Figure 2. With a mandate to enroll the top one-third of California's graduating seniors, and existing in a less competitive environment, the CSU's were able to maintain their freshman enrollments of Chicano/Latinos even after Proposition 209 (27 percent in 1997 and 26 percent in 1999). However, because Latinos represented 31 percent California's 1998 public high school graduating class, these efforts still fall short of achieving parity. Although the ban on affirmative action has not yet had a profound effect on the California State University system, the immediate future may hold a very different scenario. Increasing enrollment pressures on some CSU campuses are causing a "cascading" effect within this system. For example, the CSU San Diego and Cal Poly campuses set higher admissions criteria and turn away significant numbers of CSU-eligible students because of the high demand to attend these schools. Thus, in turning away less "competitively eligible" applicants, CSU San Diego saw a 23 percent drop in Latino freshman enrollment from 1,010 in 1998 to just 715 in 1999. Admissions criteria for transfer students are also stricter than for systemwide, with CSU San Diego now requiring a 2.8

GPA for students wishing to transfer from the community college, as opposed to the 2.0 systemwide. As pressure intensifies for the CSU to accommodate more students, similar cascading can be expected at the more coveted campuses.

Figure 2



Although the impact of Proposition 209 has been more muted at the State University, the loss of affirmative action as a tool in admissions has had a profound effect on the University of California system. In 1997, while affirmative action was still in effect, 13 percent of the entering freshmen at the University of California were Latino (of these, 11.9 percent were Mexican American⁴). This percentage dropped to only 12 (and 8.8 for Mexican Americans) in 1998 – the first year in which the provisions of Proposition 209 were imposed. The numbers rebounded slightly in 1999, with intensive efforts to recruit students of color who met the university’s eligibility requirements, and 12 percent Latinos (9.3 percent of whom were Mexican-origin students) enrolled systemwide. Some within the university applauded the rapid turnaround in the declining numbers of underrepresented students enrolling, however, this small increase obscured a more troublesome trend – the increasing segregation of the University of California campuses.

⁴ We note in several cases the separate figures for Mexican-origin students, because while Mexican Americans comprise between 80 and 85% of the California Latino population, they generally represent only about two-thirds of the “Hispanic” or “Latino” enrollees in the state’s four year institutions,

Most of the gains in the UC system in 1999 came from increased enrollment at the smaller campuses of the UC system. This phenomenon has become known as “cascading,” or moving the less competitively eligible students, who in most cases are African American and Latino, to the less sought-after campuses. Such segregation of students by campus serves to create a two-tiered system within the University of California with important implications for student and faculty recruitment and ability to attract important research grants. As individual campuses are weakened, so is the university system as a whole. Moreover, the recent research on the cognitive benefits of being educated in diverse settings adds a further dimension to this problem. It is becoming increasingly clear that **all students** stand to lose from being educated in segregated educational settings.

Where California’s public universities have lost students of color -- and Latinos in particular --in the last two years, it appears that the private colleges and universities in the state have made some gains in this area. The states’ accredited private institutions of higher education enrolled approximately 100,000 new students in 1998, and while many were not from California, it is probably safe to assume that the majority of Latino students were from the state⁵. California has almost two-thirds of the nation’s Latino population and most Latinos stay in state for both financial and cultural reasons. Private colleges and universities did not experience the decline in Latino enrollment between 1997 and 1998 that the University of California did. The more significant point, however, is the rapid growth in Latino student enrollment within the private sector. From 1990 to 1999, the private colleges and universities in the state increased their share of Latino students from 9.1 to 14.9 percent—a 39 percent increase compared to the 32 percent increase for the entire public system during a similar period (1989 – 1998)⁶. It is significant as well that much of this increase came during the recession years of the mid-1990s when the cost of a private education was especially difficult to finance for lower income students. Such growth in minority populations had to be accompanied by significant commitment to financial aid.

⁵ Data are not disaggregated by geographic origin of Latino students in the private postsecondary system.

⁶ Data were not yet available for all sectors of the higher education system for 1999 at this writing.

Table 2 California Private Higher Ed Domestic Enrollment, by Percent Ethnicity

Year	(73 institutions)				Total Enrollment
	African Am	Latino	Asian	White	
1990	5.8	9.1	11.7	72.7	94,403
1991	5.8	9.9	13.0	70.5	90,108
1992	6.2	11.4	14.3	67.4	91,548
1993	6.3	12.2	14.6	66.1	93,424
1994	6.5	13.8	15.5	63.4	94,324
1995	6.7	14.4	16.0	62.1	95,293
1996	6.7	15.0	16.4	60.9	95,0379
1997	6.6	14.6	16.2	61.6	98,404
1998	6.6	14.7	15.9	61.8	100,212
1999	6.8	14.9	15.8	61.6	102,282

Barriers to Access to Four-Year Colleges

Given the low transfer rates of community college students to four-year colleges, and the fact that Latino students are more likely to attend community colleges, overall Latino college graduation rates are unlikely to improve if this pattern continues. It is for this reason that understanding the reasons behind the underrepresentation of Latinos at state's public four-year institutions is crucial. We argue that college-bound Latino high school graduates are, in fact, not "choosing" to attend community colleges over four-year colleges. Instead, their choices are *limited* to community colleges primarily because 1) they lack the traditional academic eligibility requirements needed for admission to the state's four-year institutions and 2) they lack the financial resources to move away from home. Lack of preparation is rooted in unequal opportunities in schooling and access to information regarding appropriate college preparation, both of which are grounded in the low levels of socioeconomic status found among Latinos. Before describing eligibility issues and the mechanisms by which family background translates into unequal outcomes, we first describe the socioeconomic status of Latino high school students in California. Table 3 displays parental education and income for several racial-ethnic groups based on College Board 1998 California SAT administration data.⁷

⁷ Of course, the students in this sample are those who intend to go to four year colleges and, thus, are among the highest achievers in their respective ethnic groups. Given the correlation between socioeconomic and

Table 3
Parent Education and Income by Ethnicity
for California College-bound Students, 1998

	% Parents w/ Less than H.S. Diploma	% Parents w/ Some College+	% Income <20K	% Income >100K
African-Am (31,068)	3	48	30	5
Mexican Am (33,288)	36	25	34	4
Native-Am (3,366)	4	56	18	10
Asian-Am (41,389)	13	60	27	10
White (177,015)	1	73	6	22

Source: The College Board, 1998 SAT administration data

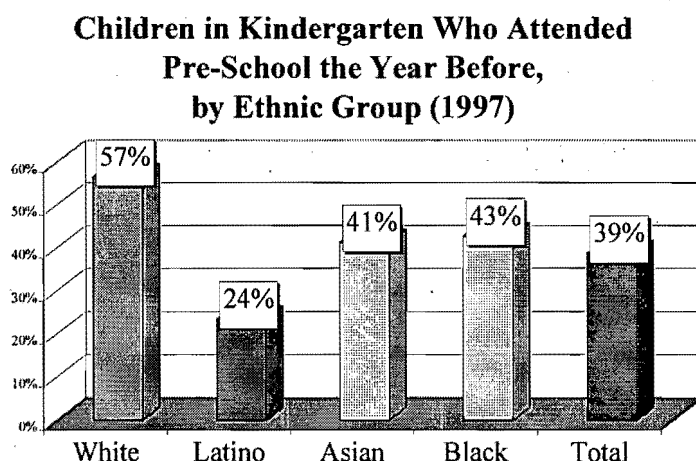
Nearly all of the African American, Native American, and White students' parents have a high school diploma among this college-going group. Likewise, a relatively high percentage of these parents have at least some college education. Notable, however, are the very low levels of parent education among the Mexican American sample--a stunning 36 percent of parents do not have a high school diploma, and only 25 percent have some college, less than half the percentage for Asians and about one-third of that for Whites. As we show below, the low levels of income and parental education among Latinos have implications for their educational experiences in the K-12 system and before.

Unfortunately, low income, often coupled with limited English ability, also result in limited opportunities for preschool education. An important precursor to success in school in contemporary society is attendance in preschool or other structured learning opportunities prior to entering kindergarten. Children of the middle class commonly arrive at kindergarten with the prerequisite skills to begin reading instruction. They know colors, shapes, numbers, and recognize letters; some already read. However, lower income children, and especially Latino children, frequently arrive at school without these learning assets, at least in English. A recent longitudinal study of American kindergartners (West, Denton & Germino-Hausken, 2000) finds

achievement, we can expect that statistics on the general Latino high school graduating class (the majority of whom are not four-year college bound) would be much lower.

that Latino students, along with Native Americans, score lowest of all ethnic groups on an early reading test. For Latinos, two-thirds fell below the 50th percentile in reading skill. California data help to explain why this may be. Proportionately fewer Latino children attend preschool than any other ethnic group, and less than half as many Latinos as White children are provided this opportunity. See Figure 3,

Figure 3



Source:
California Research Bureau of the California State Library using the 1997, October Current Population Survey.
Estimates for this graph on Asians and Blacks are based on a small sample size and thus may be unreliable.

Because Latino students are disproportionately poor and often do not bring the social and economic advantages with them to school that are enjoyed by white and middle class children, schools that serve these children must be prepared to help close the gap in opportunity to learn. Fundamentally, these schools need to be prepared to do more, but the fact is that they often do much less, than schools serving middle class children. Enormous inequalities exist in the schooling of low income Latinos when compared to more economically advantaged white and Asian students.

Eligibility

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) conducts a transcript study of the state's graduating class every four years in an effort to document issues related to eligibility among the state's public high school graduates. Low levels of eligibility for admission to four-year institutions are a primary reason why Latinos and African Americans are underrepresented at the state's two public four-year institutions. For example, while the California State University system is mandated to accept the top 33 percent of California's public high school graduates, only 13 percent of all Latino graduates in 1996 were fully eligible for admission to the CSU (California Postsecondary Education Commission 1998). Even more disheartening: only 4 percent were fully eligible for admission to the University of California system (California Postsecondary Education Commission 1998).⁸ The majority of Latinos are ineligible because they had not completed the required "a-f" high school curriculum. Beyond this, their grade point averages tend to be significantly lower than those of white and Asian students.

Table 4
Grade Point Averages, 1983, 1986, 1990, 1996
California High School Graduates by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	1983	1986	1990	1996	Gain 1983-96
White	2.69	2.65	2.74	2.90	.21
Asian	2.96	2.96	3.11	3.19	.23
Black	2.26	2.29	2.33	2.41	.15
Latino	2.42	2.44	2.44	2.55	.13

⁸ Eligibility for admission to the University of California system is determined by the following factors: 1) completion of a minimum number of college preparatory courses "a-f" curriculum in English, math, science, foreign languages and other electives, 2) minimum grade point average of 3.3 in these courses, 3) college entrance exams such as SAT or ACT and 3 achievement tests. The California State University (CSU) system has similar but less stringent requirements (such as fewer required math courses and lower minimum GPA's and exams are not necessary if the GPA is 3.0 and over) (California Postsecondary Education Commission 1996).

In addition to the evident disparities in grade point averages by ethnicity, it should be noted that grades of all students have improved since these data were first collected in by the California Postsecondary Education Commission in 1983. However, while grade point averages of both African American and Latino students are significantly below those of White and Asian students, the gap between their grades is growing larger with time. Latinos showed the smallest increase in grade point averages over the period. This is due, at least in part, to differences in course-taking patterns. Latinos are less likely to be offered, and to take, advanced placement and honors courses which confer extra points for the purpose of computing grade point averages.

Inequalities in K-12 Schools

Poor Latino children tend to go to poor schools that are attended largely by other poor children. These schools, often in the overcrowded urban centers, have been shown to enjoy fewer resources and less qualified teachers⁹, and have more disciplinary problems and higher turnover of both students and staff and generally have lower aspirations for their students (NCES, 1998). These students are also more likely than middle class white and Asian students to have low aspirations for themselves.¹⁰ Yet another area where Latinos face educational inequity that has direct effects on their potential college eligibility is the area of coursework offerings, particularly in math and science. Adelman (1999) argues that the kind of education to which students are exposed in the K-12 years may be more effective at predicting their postsecondary options and outcomes than any other variable, including their family's socio-economic status. For example, Adelman asserts that no single factor, including test scores and GPA, better predicts college completion for underrepresented students than the rigor of courses students have taken in high school. The best proxy of rigorous coursework is the highest math course completed. Students who take at least one math course

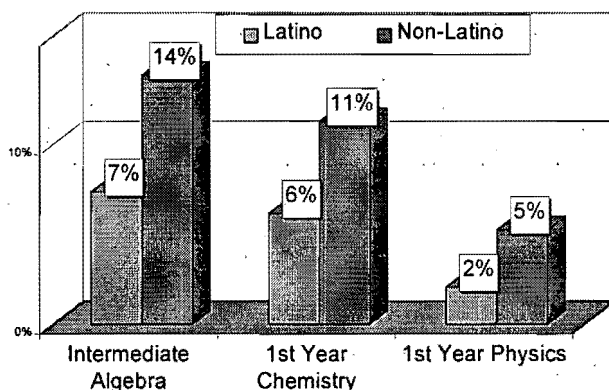
⁹ A recent released report entitled *Teaching and California's Future* by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, found that 20% of teachers in high poverty schools (where the vast majority of Latino students are found) have no teaching credential, and that English Language Learners (about 80% of whom are Latino) are the most likely of all children to be taught by a teacher without a credential or other appropriate preparation to teach them.

¹⁰ Data collected on more than 500 students from the class of 2001 in two high diverse Northern California high schools show that Latino students were significantly less likely to aspire to attend a four year college than all other

beyond Algebra 2 in high school are significantly more likely to complete college, across all ethnic groups (Adelman, 1999). Given the importance of high school curriculum for long-term postsecondary outcomes, we are compelled to ask how does pre-college curriculum differ between students from low income and minority backgrounds and all others?

Figure 4

Selected Course Enrollment for High School Students, 1997-98



Source: California Department of Education.

As seen in Figure 4 only half as many Latino students enroll in intermediate algebra as do all other students, thus significantly reducing their eligibility for selective four year colleges, as well as curtailing their preparation in mathematics.¹¹ Likewise, they are only about half as likely to enroll in chemistry or physics as non-Latino students. While some might argue that these coursetaking patterns represent preferences exercised by students, there is evidence to suggest that students must make “choices” within the limited opportunities offered within their schools.

ethnic groups: Whites:48%; Asians: 50%; African Americans: 56%; Latinos: 34% (Gándara. Unpublished CREDE data.)

¹¹ These data mirror national level statistics on Latinos and mathcourse taking patterns. According to a recent National Center for Education Statistics report, Latinos graduate from high school having completed fewer advanced math courses compared with their white and Asian counterparts. While they have nearly closed the gap with whites with respect to taking Geometry (69 percent vs. 73 percent), only 51 percent of Latinos have taken an Algebra II course compared with 62 percent of whites and 67 percent of Asians. Likewise, only 14 percent of Latinos have taken a Trigonometry class compared with 19 percent of whites and 25 percent of Asians. (US Department of Education, 1998). This also has implications for persistence: students who take at least one math course beyond Algebra 2 in high school are significantly more likely to complete college, across all ethnic groups (Adelman, 1999).

First, schools with predominantly low-SES and minority students as well as inner-city schools offer fewer advanced math and science courses (Oakes et al 1990). Also, nationwide, students who are in college-preparatory programs yet attend high schools with predominantly low-SES students take fewer academic courses compared with college preparatory students who attend higher socioeconomic status schools. (Rock et al 1985). Therefore, being “college prep” or “college bound” does not guarantee particular course taking patterns across schools. The evidence suggests that one reason why Latinos are lacking in academic coursework completion that is crucial for eligibility for admission to CSU and UC is that they are not offered the opportunities to take advanced courses.

Unequal opportunities to take rigorous coursework also have implications for eligible students who compete for admission to the highly competitive flagship campuses. The availability of Advanced Placement courses is a serious issue as University of California awards an additional grade point for each AP or honors course taken and passed with at least a C. Thus, on a four-point scale, taking these courses can increase students’ grade point averages considerably. A recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California showed that there is considerable disparity both in a – f courses (those classes required for eligibility to the University of California, and increasingly for the CSU as well) and in Advanced Placement courses across schools. The lowest income schools offered only 52 percent of their classes as meeting a – f requirements, while this figure rose to 63 percent in the highest income schools. Similar patterns held up when the analysis was done by percent non-white students in the school (Betts, Rueben & Danenberg, 2000). Likewise, Betts, et al. found that “the median high SES school has over 50 percent more AP courses than the median low-SES school” (p. 72).

To some extent this is reflected in the differences in GPAs that college-bound students register by ethnicity. However, less rigorous academic preparation also results in lower test scores on standardized tests used for college admission, which in turn reduces Latino students’ competitiveness for the most highly competitive state campuses. See Table 5.

Table 5
Profile of California's College-Going Students
College Board Data, 1998

	Black (8,868)	Mex Am (18,494)	Latino (6,606)	Asian (29,889)	Am Ind (1,415)	White (56,217)
Percent of School	8.7	37*	4.3*	11.1	.9	37.8
Percent of SAT takers	6.2	13	4.6	21	.9	39.5
Average GPA	2.86	3.08	3.09	3.36	3.12	3.33
SAT:						
Mean Verbal	433	442	450	488	489	532
Mean Math	428	452	456	550	497	540
% Top 10% Class	9	14	14	23	16	24

In sum, Latino students are disadvantaged with respect to eligibility at every point: with respect to grade point averages, test scores, adequacy of pre-college preparation, and rigor of coursework. Thus, any reworking of quantitative admission formulas can have only very limited effects with respect to increasing Latino access to higher education. Fundamental problems of inequalities in schools create barriers that are not addressed in current admissions procedures. Two lawsuits were filed in 1999 that address these issues. The first *Daniel vs. The State of California* argues that minority and low income students are not given enough A.P. course options in their high schools thereby impeding their grade-point averages. The second, *Rios vs. The University of California Board of Regents* argues that UC Berkeley's admissions practice of giving extra weight to AP courses favors whites and Asians.

Lack of Information Regarding College Requirements

Much of this racial-ethnic variance in eligibility is explained by significant variation in socioeconomic status, parental education in particular. Family background characteristics have long been associated with students' educational achievement and many studies have concluded that family background explains the largest portion of the variance in student achievement (Coleman, et al., 1966; Jencks, et al., 1972; Puma, et al., 1997). However, while parental attitudes toward education, parents' expectations, and involvement in their children's schooling certainly form an important part of the family background or home environment (cf. Puma, et al.

1997), we would like to stress another mechanism by which low parental education translates in low achievement: lack of information regarding college requirements and preparation.

A vast and expanding qualitative literature based largely on interviews with students, teachers, and parents has shown that college educated parents are crucial sources of information as their children go through the educational system. For example, highly educated parents are keenly aware of the implications of taking Algebra versus Basic math in junior high school and actively intervene when they disagree with their children's placement (Useem 1992). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education are largely unaware of the implications of being tracked into a low math course and tend to trust the school personnel's decisions (see Lareau 1987 for similar research that contrasts middle and low SES parents' approaches to their children's schooling). McDonough's (1997) study of college bound girls in Northern California shows that girls from working class families apply to fewer schools and rarely consider prestigious colleges or universities (private as well as public) as a feasible choices. Instead, they tend to apply to state university campuses. Furthermore, they receive little guidance from the school counselors at the large schools they attend who are overworked and hardly know them. Girls from upper middle class families with similar grades and SAT scores, on the other hand, apply to many different prestigious private schools, rarely consider the CSU system an option, and treat flagship UC schools as "backups" in case they do not get accepted to their first choices. Their parents understand the significance of selectivity of college and potential earnings and encourage them to apply to a variety of different schools. Their high school counselors also communicate the idea that certain schools are more acceptable than others.

Only 25 percent of Mexican American college bound students in California in 1998 came from families where at least one parent had some level of college experience. As a result, Latinos have less access to important information and resource networks to adequately represent their children's interest and students cannot rely on their parents for crucial information. Instead, they must rely on "institutional agents" such as teachers and counselors within the educational system to facilitate their postsecondary preparation and, as a result, their choices,

knowledge, and outcomes are largely reliant on forming these relationships (Stanton-Salazar 1997). One study of 70 Chicano professionals from working class and lower income backgrounds, showed how instrumental knowledge necessary to navigate the education system came, in large part, from teachers or white middle-class classmates (Gándara, 1995).¹² Thus while Latino parents are often accused of providing little support and encouragement for their children's education, Gándara's research showed that having high aspirations and high parental encouragement is not necessarily enough to ensure the success of Latinos from low socioeconomic status families. In California, there is only about one counselor to every 450 high school students statewide, however, in crowded inner city high schools where most Latinos go to school, the ratio is often much higher. Thus, Latinos students often receive little or no counseling about how to prepare themselves for college. For low income Latino students there is the additional problem that many see their counselors not as allies, or sources of support, but as gatekeepers who all too often refuse them admission to the courses that would prepare them for college. Considerable evidence has mounted that counselors in low income schools often underestimate the abilities of their students and track them into non-college preparatory courses based on assumptions that they do not have the ability to undertake more rigorous coursework (Oakes, 1985; Romo & Falbo, 1996). Of course, this is a vicious cycle because once tracked into the slower groups it is difficult, if not impossible, for these students to ever compete with their peers who have become proficient in material to which they have never even been exposed.

A relatively new feature on the educational landscape is the mushrooming business of private, for hire, college counseling. Given the inadequate counseling resources on the high school campuses, parents with sufficient means have increasingly been paying for counseling services outside the schools. These counselors can increase a student's chances of being selected into competitive colleges by advising on effective application strategies, as well as increase the chances of even mediocre students finding a college that meets their needs (McDonough, Korn

¹² Latino students are increasingly likely to be educated in segregated schools that provide fewer opportunities for inter-racial contact and the development of personal and social networks that can increase cultural capital and

& Yamasaki, 1997; Douglas, 1989). Such advantages are not normally available to low income Latinos and serve to maintain inequality of access to higher education.

Limited Financial Resources

Limited financial resources remains a powerful impediment to postsecondary education for many low income, underrepresented students. Between one-fourth and one-third of all eligible students in California receive no financial aid from the state to help them go to college. Because Latino students are disproportionately poor, they are more likely to fall into the category of students needing financial aid. The increasing shift in financial aid policy from grants to loans leads to a fear of incurring debt that cannot be repaid or that places an excessive burden on the family. Furthermore, concerns about forgoing income that could relieve family financial stresses during the years of study can convince some students to reject higher education.

The cost of a college education encompasses more than the cost of tuition for young people from low income families. They must also weigh heavily the costs of forgone income, and the fact that they will not be able to help their families financially while they are in college. Therefore, even if college costs are covered by grants and/or loans, it can be a difficult decision for some low-income youth to forgo helping their families at an age when they can be productive wage-earners. In a study of high achieving, low-income Chicano students, Gándara (1995) found that it was relatively common for older siblings to forgo college in favor of work so that younger siblings might have the opportunity to study as family finances were augmented by the incomes of the older siblings.

Some students, and their families, may take themselves out of the running for higher education based on perceptions that do not fit reality. For example, research shows that many students are unclear about the costs of a college education and about the options that exist for paying college tuition (Akerhielm, et al., 1998). "Sticker shock" has been shown to scare off

promote social mobility. Latino students today are more likely to be attending segregated schools than in 1972

some low income students who lack adequate information about grants and loans that can make college possible, or who fear going into debt for school because it is perceived as too burdensome on the family. Moreover, students tend to overestimate the costs of college, imagining an even greater barrier than actually exists (King, 1996). Nonetheless, it is clear that low income students are more responsive to grants than to loans. That is, more low-income students can be expected to enroll in college if it does not require that they burden themselves and their families with debt in order to do so (St. John, 1990; 1994).

Graduate Education and Faculty

The attention on freshman enrollments has masked to some extent the even greater declines in Chicano/Latino enrollment in the state's graduate and professional schools which have witnessed a disturbing trend over the last several years, exacerbated by Proposition 209. This is especially discouraging since Latinos received 13.6 percent of the Bachelor degrees from the University of California in 1997-98 and 18.8 percent of these degrees from CSU, creating a significant pool of future Latino graduate and professional students.¹³

California State University and University of California Bachelor Degrees Conferred: Academic Year 1997-98

California State University	Number	Percent
Asian Americans	9,480	20.6
African Americans	2,716	5.9
Chicano/Latinos	8,619	18.8
American Indians	558	1.2
White	24,534	53.4
Total*	45,907	100.0

University of California	Number	Percent
Asian Americans	10,124	36.6
African Americans	987	3.6
Chicano/Latinos	3,754	13.6
American Indians	275	1.0
White	12,512	45.2
Total	27,652	100.0

when desegregation efforts were at their height. (Orfield & J. Yun 1999).

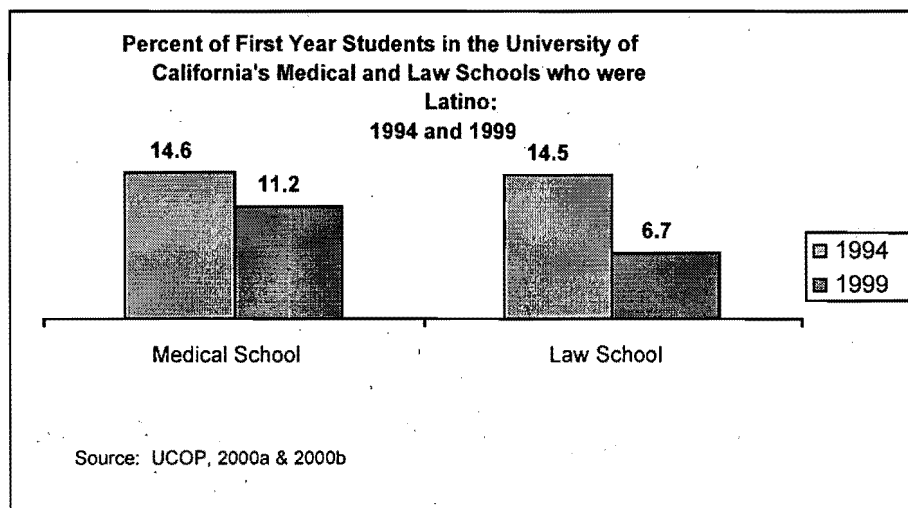
¹³ By contrast, in 1984-85, Latinos received just 5 percent of the undergraduate degrees from UC, and only 9.6 percent from CSU in 1990-91, the earliest year for which we were able to obtain data.

*Total only includes students who reported a race/ethnicity

SOURCE: CSU, & UCOP, 1999

Enrollments in professional schools have declined considerably since mid-decade. For example, in 1994, 10.9% of all University of California medical school first year enrollees were Chicano¹⁴. This figure declined steadily through the decade to only 6.3% in 1999.¹⁵ Similar trends have been noted at the state's law schools. In 1994, the three University of California law schools registered a high of 14.5% Latinos, but by 1999 this figure had fallen to just 6.7%. More than five percentage points were lost in the year after Proposition 209.

Figure 5



¹⁴ Medical school enrollment data include breakdowns by Mexican-origin, and "other Hispanic" which in graduate and professional schools often include a fair percentage of students who emanate from outside of California and the U.S. and tend to come from more advantaged backgrounds than the California Mexican-origin population.

¹⁵ It should be noted that this number combines both Mexican-origin and all other Latinos.

Such a decline in representation of Latinos in the academic pipeline has serious consequences for representation in the professions. A recent report from the University of California at Los Angeles¹⁶ noted that fewer than 5% of physicians statewide are Latino: a meager number to serve the burgeoning Latino population that often depends on Latino health professionals for their “cultural competence” and ability to communicate effectively in Spanish. Indeed, minority physicians have been shown to be more likely to practice in underserved communities compared with non-minority physicians (Komaromy, et al 1996; Cantor, et. al 1996). Given the effects of SP-1 on minority enrollments at UC Berkeley and UCLA we can expect even fewer minority students among medical students in the future as these two campuses are two of the five institutions in the country that produce the most accepted minority medical school applicants (as described in Karabel 1998).¹⁷

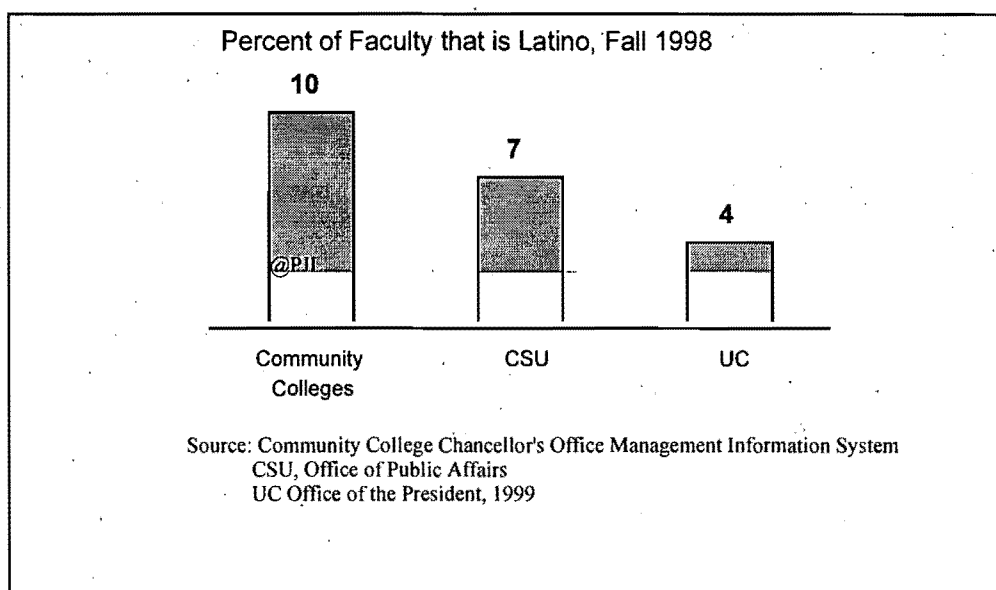
The effect of the elimination of affirmative action on the academic graduate programs at the University of California has been less pronounced. The proportion of new registrants who were Latino system wide was 6.9 percent in 1995 and 6.3 percent in 1998 (UCOP, 1999).¹⁸ However, these figures were only 5.2 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively, at UC Berkeley, a campus that has a very high number of top ranked graduate programs. And although Latinos constituted 7 percent of the University of California’s conferred doctorates in 1984-85 and 9 percent in 1997-98, relatively little progress has been made in diversifying the faculty at all three systems of public education.

¹⁶ The study was released January 20, 2000 by The Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at UCLA.

¹⁷ The other three institutions are: UT Austin (an institution that also recently experienced elimination of affirmative action), Xavier (LA) and Howard (traditionally black institutions).

¹⁸ This does not include students in the profession schools such as law, medicine, MBA, dental, pharmacy, etc.

Figure 6



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Although Latinos are found in large proportions at the community colleges and the CSU, only 10 and 7 percent of the faculty at the community colleges and CSU were Latino in Fall, 1998. The percentage of faculty in the University of California who is Latino was 4 percent, and it has fluctuated between 4.1 and 4.5 percent for most of a decade. The stagnant level of Latino faculty hiring within the University of California begs the question: Why has this problem been so intransigent given the increasing numbers of graduates of UC? The common response is that the pool of candidates is still too small in most disciplines to make any significant inroads.

A recent study for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (Smith, 1996), however, calls into question the extent to which the low rates of hiring of minority faculty are, in fact, due primarily to the small pool of applicants. In this study of 298 Ford, Mellon, and Spencer fellowship recipients, 93% of whom received their Ph.D.'s from elite, Research I universities, Smith found that, although perceived to be "sought after," the great majority of these individuals (89%) in fact had few if any offers for tenure track appointments--54% of the

Putting the Cart before the Horse: Latinos and Higher Education

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Introduction

In this paper we argue that social policy in California has put the cart before the horse. While the campaign for Proposition 209 was waged with the claim that it “equalized” opportunity for every citizen, prohibiting special consideration for any person on the basis of his or her racial or ethnic background (Chávez, 1998), in fact, it increased disparities in access to higher education. A difficult and troubling situation—the highly disproportionate access to higher education based on ethnicity-- was made worse, and the state lost a valuable tool in attempting to truly equalize educational opportunity. In the following sections, we review the data on the effect of unequal educational opportunity for Latinos and others, the current situation with respect to higher education in California, the principal barriers that stand in the way of more equal access, and the policy implications of the foregoing, including recommendations for next steps.

A history of slow progress in higher education

High school drop out rates are declining—at least officially—for Latino students in California, from 7.8 percent annually in 1991 to 4.1 percent in 1998 (CBEDS, 1999)¹, and more Latino students are going on to college. Nonetheless, few real gains have been made for this group in higher education access in recent times. A decade ago, in 1989, 17 percent of the students in the three public institutions of higher education in California were Latinos; by 1998 that figure had grown to 25 percent. However, Latinos comprised just 21 percent of the

¹ There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the methodology for counting drop outs in California. Thus, while the annual drop out rates appear to be down dramatically over previous figures, the actual graduation rate for Latinos remains low. The four year graduation rate—the percent of students who graduated 12th grade as a proportion of those who entered in the 9th grade—was only 55.3%. This was the lowest for all ethnic groups.

graduating seniors in California in 1989 and by 1998 that figure had increased by 10 percentage points to more than 31 percent. Thus, the growth in higher education participation for Latinos has actually been more modest than their growth in population share. Moreover, the growth in higher education participation that has been achieved has occurred disproportionately in the lower two segments of the public higher education system. The state university system (CSU) saw the greatest percentage increase in Latino enrollment over the period —42 percent, while the University of California system posted only a meager 10 percent increase in Latino students in spite of the fact that the pool of graduating seniors had grown by almost 50 percent.

All told, approximately two-thirds of graduating seniors go on to some kind of postsecondary education in California, however only 56 percent of Latino graduates enrolled in postsecondary education in 1998. The fact that fewer Latinos go to college than other groups also has an impact on the total college going rate in the state. In 1989, when Latinos comprised 21 percent of the graduating class, 53 percent of all graduates attended one of the three public higher education institutions; in 1998 when their share of the graduates had risen to 31.2 percent, only 49 percent of all graduates went on to one of these three public institutions (California Postsecondary Commission 2000). Thus, the consequences of limited access to higher education for Latinos are substantial not only for the Latino community, but also for the state as a whole.

The slow growth in access to higher education for Latinos and other underrepresented minorities was dealt a further debilitating blow when the University of California regents passed SP1, the resolution barring the consideration of race or ethnicity in admissions, and the voters followed this with the passage of Proposition 209 which extended the ban statewide. Neither the community colleges nor the state university system was greatly affected by Proposition 209, however the impact was severe on the University of California. In 1998, the year that the ban went into effect, 53 percent fewer Latinos were admitted to UC Berkeley and 33 percent fewer were admitted to UCLA. Thus, while the two flagship campuses of the UC system had also been the standard bearers of diversity in the system, their share of Latino freshmen dropped from a high of about 15 percent in 1997 to only 8.6 percent in 1998.

What is at stake?

Access to quality higher education is critical for the welfare of the Chicano/Latino² community, and critical for the welfare of the State of California. With a 41.5 percent share of the state's public school population, Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the schools and growing at the rate of almost one percent per year. Latinos are currently expected to comprise more than half of the K-12 public school students in California within a decade. (Citation?). Thus, California's future well being is intimately tied to the well being of the Latino population. A recent report issued by the California Research Bureau³ details in stark terms the consequences of Latino under-education for the California economy. While Latinos comprised 28 percent of the labor force in 1998, they represented only 19 percent of the wage income. The single biggest reason for this discrepancy is the relatively low level of education of Latino workers. Among white wage earners, 33 percent have at least a bachelor's degree. Among Latinos, only 8 percent are similarly well educated. As Latinos make up a larger share of the labor force, overall wage income can be expected to decline proportionately if this education gap does not close. The current strength of the California economy cannot be sustained under such circumstances.

On the other hand, a RAND study on the economic returns of increasing the education level of Latinos concluded that "Hispanics with a bachelor's degree will pay more than twice as much in taxes as those with only a high school diploma, and Hispanics with a professional degree will pay an estimated three times as much as those with a bachelor's degree" (Sorensen, et al. 1995, pp. 2-3). With increased education of Latinos, the state of California can anticipate significant savings in expenditures for public services such as welfare, Medicaid, and jails and prisons as well (Karoly, Greenwood, Everingham, Hoube, Kilburn, Rydell, Sanders & Chiesa, 1998). In a study of the costs and benefits of closing the education gap for minorities in California and the nation, Vernez (1999) found that the *public benefit* gained versus the cost of increased education, in all cases, favors providing more education. For example, if Latinos were

² The term Chicano/Latino is used to include all Hispanic groups, and Hispanic is synonymous with Latino. The term Chicano, however, refers to individuals of Mexican origin, as does the term Mexican American.

educated at the same level as Whites, every additional dollar spent on education would save the state about \$1.90. About one-third of this savings would come from public expenditures and two-thirds from increased taxes on earnings. When *societal benefits* are computed—public benefits plus the increased disposable income that accrues to individuals—benefits more than double to more than four dollars for every dollar spent on education (Vernez, 1999). This is consistent with national data that show the increase in income for individuals by education in 1998. Each level of increased education confers substantial additional income benefits.

Table 1
Median Annual Household Income,
By Educational Attainment of the Householder, 1998

<9th Grade	\$15,541
<H.S. Diploma	19,851
H.S. Graduate	33,779
Some college	40,015
A.A. Degree	45,258
Bachelors Degree	59,048
Masters Degree	68,115
Doctoral Degree	87,232
Professional Degree	92,228

Source: The College Board, 1999

As important as the economy is for all Californians, there are other compelling reasons to increase Latino access to higher education. Beyond the pecuniary benefits of a college education are numerous social benefits to increasing the education levels of underrepresented groups. Persons with higher levels of education enjoy better health and longer lives (Perna & Swail, 1998), are more likely to attend cultural arts activities, to vote, and to provide leadership in their communities (Mortensen, 1997).

Diversity within educational settings has also been shown to confer cognitive advantages on those students schooled in such settings, especially when this occurs in late adolescence. Thus, not only do underrepresented students obtain benefit from access to higher education, but their non-minority classmates can be expected to benefit cognitively as well. For example, Gurin

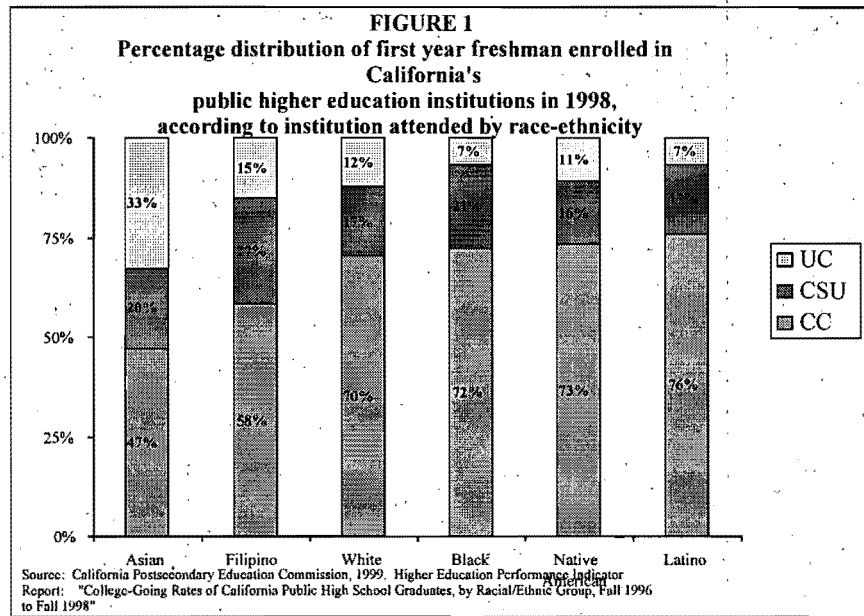
(1999) examined multi-institutional national data, an extensive survey of students at the University of Michigan, and data drawn from a specific program at the University of Michigan.

Based on these analyses, she concluded

that interaction with peers from diverse racial backgrounds, both in the classroom and informally, is positively associated with a host of . . . learning outcomes. Students who experienced the most racial and ethnic diversity in classroom settings and in informal interactions with peers showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills (p.100).

Representation of Chicano/Latino students in the state's higher education institutions

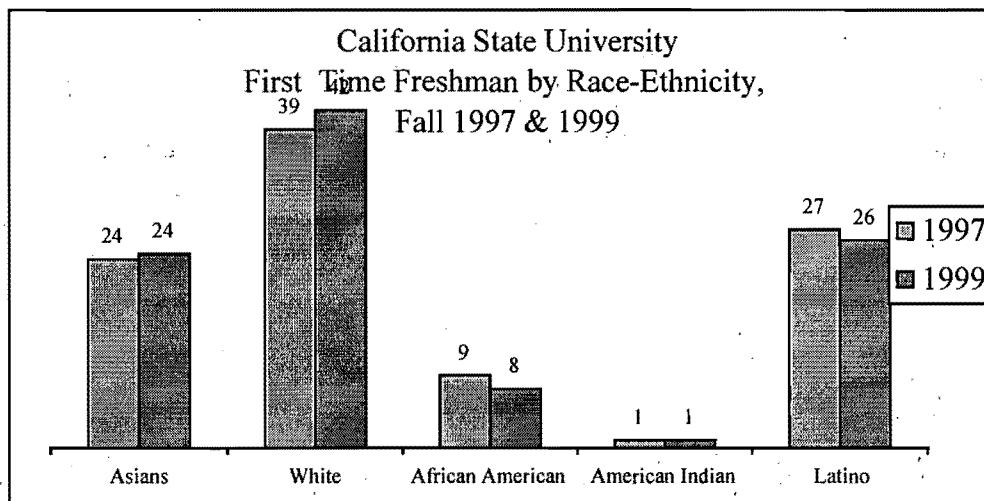
Figure 1 shows the distribution of California public high school graduates enrolling in California's system of public higher education in Fall, 1998. Latinos are more likely to matriculate at a community college compared with other racial/ethnic groups with three-fourths enrolling in a community college (California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), 1999). While the community colleges represent an important pathway to higher education for some students, they are also a dead end for many others. For example, approximately one-third of all 1998 community college students matriculated with the intention of transferring to a four year university yet only about 3 percent of these students actually transfer in any given year (Hardy, 2000). Latinos are underrepresented among the small proportion of students who do transfer. For example, Latinos comprised 24 percent of the 1996 community college enrollment. However, two years later, they were only 12.6 percent of the transfer students to the University of California, and only 17.9 percent of the transfers to the state university system (CPEC, 1999). Many Latino students are lost in the community college system. Matriculation at the state's public four-year institutions also reveals racial differences. While similar proportions of Latinos and white college goers attend California State University (17 percent) Latinos are less likely than whites or Asians to enroll at the University of California (7 percent compared with 12 and 33 percent).



Unequal racial-ethnic distribution in the destinations of California's college going population translates into racial disparities in freshman enrollments at each system of four-year institutions. See Figure 2. With a mandate to enroll the top one-third of California's graduating seniors, and existing in a less competitive environment, the CSU's were able to maintain their freshman enrollments of Chicano/Latinos even after Proposition 209 (27 percent in 1997 and 26 percent in 1999). However, because Latinos represented 31 percent California's 1998 public high school graduating class, these efforts still fall short of achieving parity. Although the ban on affirmative action has not yet had a profound effect on the California State University system, the immediate future may hold a very different scenario. Increasing enrollment pressures on some CSU campuses are causing a "cascading" effect within this system. For example, the CSU San Diego and Cal Poly campuses set higher admissions criteria and turn away significant numbers of CSU-eligible students because of the high demand to attend these schools. Thus, in turning away less "competitively eligible" applicants, CSU San Diego saw a 23 percent drop in Latino freshman enrollment from 1,010 in 1998 to just 715 in 1999. Admissions criteria for transfer students are also stricter than for systemwide, with CSU San Diego now requiring a 2.8

GPA for students wishing to transfer from the community college, as opposed to the 2.0 systemwide. As pressure intensifies for the CSU to accommodate more students, similar cascading can be expected at the more coveted campuses.

Figure 2



Although the impact of Proposition 209 has been more muted at the State University, the loss of affirmative action as a tool in admissions has had a profound effect on the University of California system. In 1997, while affirmative action was still in effect, 13 percent of the entering freshmen at the University of California were Latino (of these, 11.9 percent were Mexican American⁴). This percentage dropped to only 12 (and 8.8 for Mexican Americans) in 1998 –the first year in which the provisions of Proposition 209 were imposed. The numbers rebounded slightly in 1999, with intensive efforts to recruit students of color who met the university’s eligibility requirements, and 12 percent Latinos (9.3 percent of whom were Mexican-origin students) enrolled systemwide. Some within the university applauded the rapid turnaround in the declining numbers of underrepresented students enrolling, however, this small increase obscured a more troublesome trend –the increasing segregation of the University of California campuses.

⁴ We note in several cases the separate figures for Mexican-origin students, because while Mexican Americans comprise between 80 and 85% of the California Latino population, they generally represent only about two-thirds of the “Hispanic” or “Latino” enrollees in the state’s four year institutions,

Most of the gains in the UC system in 1999 came from increased enrollment at the smaller campuses of the UC system. This phenomenon has become known as “cascading,” or moving the less competitively eligible students, who in most cases are African American and Latino, to the less sought-after campuses. Such segregation of students by campus serves to create a two-tiered system within the University of California with important implications for student and faculty recruitment and ability to attract important research grants. As individual campuses are weakened, so is the university system as a whole. Moreover, the recent research on the cognitive benefits of being educated in diverse settings adds a further dimension to this problem. It is becoming increasingly clear that **all students** stand to lose from being educated in segregated educational settings.

Where California’s public universities have lost students of color -- and Latinos in particular --in the last two years, it appears that the private colleges and universities in the state have made some gains in this area. The states’ accredited private institutions of higher education enrolled approximately 100,000 new students in 1998, and while many were not from California, it is probably safe to assume that the majority of Latino students were from the state⁵. California has almost two-thirds of the nation’s Latino population and most Latinos stay in state for both financial and cultural reasons. Private colleges and universities did not experience the decline in Latino enrollment between 1997 and 1998 that the University of California did. The more significant point, however, is the rapid growth in Latino student enrollment within the private sector. From 1990 to 1999, the private colleges and universities in the state increased their share of Latino students from 9.1 to 14.9 percent—a 39 percent increase compared to the 32 percent increase for the entire public system during a similar period (1989 – 1998)⁶. It is significant as well that much of this increase came during the recession years of the mid-1990s when the cost of a private education was especially difficult to finance for lower income students. Such growth in minority populations had to be accompanied by significant commitment to financial aid.

⁵ Data are not disaggregated by geographic origin of Latino students in the private postsecondary system.

⁶ Data were not yet available for all sectors of the higher education system for 1999 at this writing.

Table 2 California Private Higher Ed Domestic Enrollment, by Percent Ethnicity

Year	(73 institutions)				Total Enrollment
	African Am	Latino	Asian	White	
1990	5.8	9.1	11.7	72.7	94,403
1991	5.8	9.9	13.0	70.5	90,108
1992	6.2	11.4	14.3	67.4	91,548
1993	6.3	12.2	14.6	66.1	93,424
1994	6.5	13.8	15.5	63.4	94,324
1995	6.7	14.4	16.0	62.1	95,293
1996	6.7	15.0	16.4	60.9	95,0379
1997	6.6	14.6	16.2	61.6	98,404
1998	6.6	14.7	15.9	61.8	100,212
1999	6.8	14.9	15.8	61.6	102,282

Barriers to Access to Four-Year Colleges

Given the low transfer rates of community college students to four-year colleges, and the fact that Latino students are more likely to attend community colleges, overall Latino college graduation rates are unlikely to improve if this pattern continues. It is for this reason that understanding the reasons behind the underrepresentation of Latinos at state's public four-year institutions is crucial. We argue that college-bound Latino high school graduates are, in fact, not "choosing" to attend community colleges over four-year colleges. Instead, their choices are *limited* to community colleges primarily because 1) they lack the traditional academic eligibility requirements needed for admission to the state's four-year institutions and 2) they lack the financial resources to move away from home. Lack of preparation is rooted in unequal opportunities in schooling and access to information regarding appropriate college preparation, both of which are grounded in the low levels of socioeconomic status found among Latinos. Before describing eligibility issues and the mechanisms by which family background translates into unequal outcomes, we first describe the socioeconomic status of Latino high school students in California. Table 3 displays parental education and income for several racial-ethnic groups based on College Board 1998 California SAT administration data.⁷

⁷ Of course, the students in this sample are those who intend to go to four year colleges and, thus, are among the highest achievers in their respective ethnic groups. Given the correlation between socioeconomic and

Table 3
Parent Education and Income by Ethnicity
for California College-bound Students, 1998

	% Parents w/ Less than H.S. Diploma	% Parents w/ Some College+	% Income <20K	% Income >100K
African-Am (31,068)	3	48	30	5
Mexican Am (33,288)	36	25	34	4
Native-Am (3,366)	4	56	18	10
Asian-Am (41,389)	13	60	27	10
White (177,015)	1	73	6	22

Source: The College Board, 1998 SAT administration data

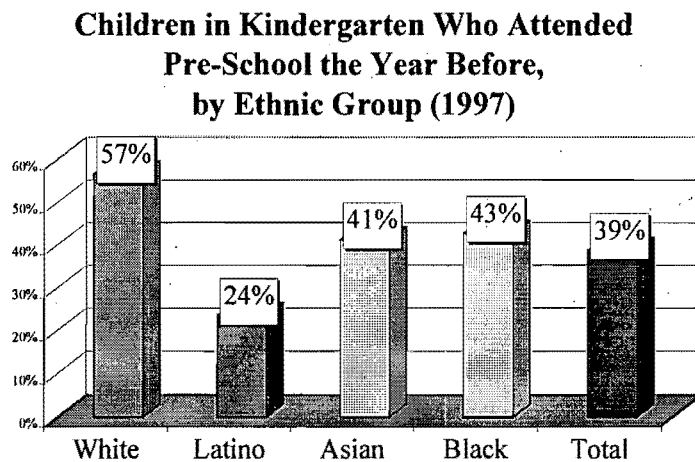
Nearly all of the African American, Native American, and White students' parents have a high school diploma among this college-going group. Likewise, a relatively high percentage of these parents have at least some college education. Notable, however, are the very low levels of parent education among the Mexican American sample--a stunning 36 percent of parents do not have a high school diploma, and only 25 percent have some college, less than half the percentage for Asians and about one-third of that for Whites. As we show below, the low levels of income and parental education among Latinos have implications for their educational experiences in the K-12 system and before.

Unfortunately, low income, often coupled with limited English ability, also result in limited opportunities for preschool education. An important precursor to success in school in contemporary society is attendance in preschool or other structured learning opportunities prior to entering kindergarten. Children of the middle class commonly arrive at kindergarten with the prerequisite skills to begin reading instruction. They know colors, shapes, numbers, and recognize letters; some already read. However, lower income children, and especially Latino children, frequently arrive at school without these learning assets, at least in English. A recent longitudinal study of American kindergartners (West, Denton & Germino-Hausken, 2000) finds

achievement, we can expect that statistics on the general Latino high school graduating class (the majority of whom are not four-year college bound) would be much lower.

that Latino students, along with Native Americans, score lowest of all ethnic groups on an early reading test. For Latinos, two-thirds fell below the 50th percentile in reading skill. California data help to explain why this may be. Proportionately fewer Latino children attend preschool than any other ethnic group, and less than half as many Latinos as White children are provided this opportunity. See Figure 3,

Figure 3



Source:
California Research Bureau of the California State Library using the 1997 October Current Population Survey.
Estimates for this graph on Asians and Blacks are based on a small sample size and thus may be unreliable.

Because Latino students are disproportionately poor and often do not bring the social and economic advantages with them to school that are enjoyed by white and middle class children, schools that serve these children must be prepared to help close the gap in opportunity to learn. Fundamentally, these schools need to be prepared to do more, but the fact is that they often do much less, than schools serving middle class children. Enormous inequalities exist in the schooling of low income Latinos when compared to more economically advantaged white and Asian students.

Eligibility

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) conducts a transcript study of the state's graduating class every four years in an effort to document issues related to eligibility among the state's public high school graduates. Low levels of eligibility for admission to four-year institutions are a primary reason why Latinos and African Americans are underrepresented at the state's two public four-year institutions. For example, while the California State University system is mandated to accept the top 33 percent of California's public high school graduates, only 13 percent of all Latino graduates in 1996 were fully eligible for admission to the CSU (California Postsecondary Education Commission 1998). Even more disheartening: only 4 percent were fully eligible for admission to the University of California system (California Postsecondary Education Commission 1998).⁸ The majority of Latinos are ineligible because they had not completed the required "a-f" high school curriculum. Beyond this, their grade point averages tend to be significantly lower than those of white and Asian students.

Table 4
Grade Point Averages, 1983, 1986, 1990, 1996
California High School Graduates by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	1983	1986	1990	1996	Gain 1983-96
White	2.69	2.65	2.74	2.90	.21
Asian	2.96	2.96	3.11	3.19	.23
Black	2.26	2.29	2.33	2.41	.15
Latino	2.42	2.44	2.44	2.55	.13

⁸ Eligibility for admission to the University of California system is determined by the following factors: 1) completion of a minimum number of college preparatory courses "a-f" curriculum in English, math, science, foreign languages and other electives, 2) minimum grade point average of 3.3 in these courses, 3) college entrance exams such as SAT or ACT and 3 achievement tests. The California State University (CSU) system has similar but less stringent requirements (such as fewer required math courses and lower minimum GPA's and exams are not necessary if the GPA is 3.0 and over) (California Postsecondary Education Commission 1996).

In addition to the evident disparities in grade point averages by ethnicity, it should be noted that grades of all students have improved since these data were first collected in by the California Postsecondary Education Commission in 1983. However, while grade point averages of both African American and Latino students are significantly below those of White and Asian students, the gap between their grades is growing larger with time. Latinos showed the smallest increase in grade point averages over the period. This is due, at least in part, to differences in course-taking patterns. Latinos are less likely to be offered, and to take, advanced placement and honors courses which confer extra points for the purpose of computing grade point averages.

Inequalities in K-12 Schools

Poor Latino children tend to go to poor schools that are attended largely by other poor children. These schools, often in the overcrowded urban centers, have been shown to enjoy fewer resources and less qualified teachers⁹, and have more disciplinary problems and higher turnover of both students and staff and generally have lower aspirations for their students (NCES, 1998). These students are also more likely than middle class white and Asian students to have low aspirations for themselves.¹⁰ Yet another area where Latinos face educational inequity that has direct effects on their potential college eligibility is the area of coursework offerings, particularly in math and science. Adelman (1999) argues that the kind of education to which students are exposed in the K-12 years may be more effective at predicting their postsecondary options and outcomes than any other variable, including their family's socio-economic status. For example, Adelman asserts that no single factor, including test scores and GPA, better predicts college completion for underrepresented students than the rigor of courses students have taken in high school. The best proxy of rigorous coursework is the highest math course completed. Students who take at least one math course

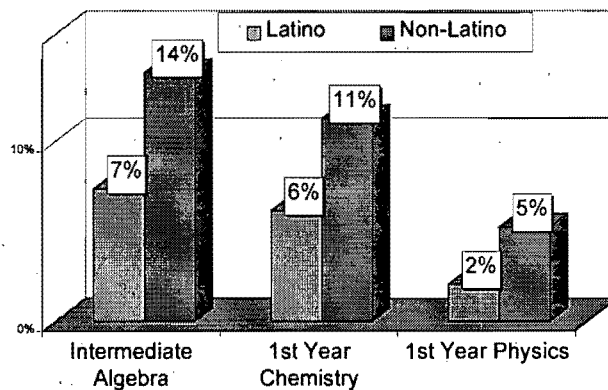
⁹ A recent released report entitled *Teaching and California's Future* by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, found that 20% of teachers in high poverty schools (where the vast majority of Latino students are found) have no teaching credential, and that English Language Learners (about 80% of whom are Latino) are the most likely of all children to be taught by a teacher without a credential or other appropriate preparation to teach them.

¹⁰ Data collected on more than 500 students from the class of 2001 in two high diverse Northern California high schools show that Latino students were significantly less likely to aspire to attend a four year college than all other

beyond Algebra 2 in high school are significantly more likely to complete college, across all ethnic groups (Adelman, 1999). Given the importance of high school curriculum for long-term postsecondary outcomes, we are compelled to ask how does pre-college curriculum differ between students from low income and minority backgrounds and all others?

Figure 4

Selected Course Enrollment for High School Students, 1997-98



Source: California Department of Education.

As seen in Figure 4 only half as many Latino students enroll in intermediate algebra as do all other students, thus significantly reducing their eligibility for selective four year colleges, as well as curtailing their preparation in mathematics.¹¹ Likewise, they are only about half as likely to enroll in chemistry or physics as non-Latino students. While some might argue that these coursetaking patterns represent preferences exercised by students, there is evidence to suggest that students must make “choices” within the limited opportunities offered within their schools.

ethnic groups: Whites:48%; Asians: 50%; African Americans: 56%; Latinos: 34% (Gándara. Unpublished CREDE data.)

¹¹ These data mirror national level statistics on Latinos and mathcourse taking patterns. According to a recent National Center for Education Statistics report, Latinos graduate from high school having completed fewer advanced math courses compared with their white and Asian counterparts. While they have nearly closed the gap with whites with respect to taking Geometry (69 percent vs. 73 percent), only 51 percent of Latinos have taken an Algebra II course compared with 62 percent of whites and 67 percent of Asians. Likewise, only 14 percent of Latinos have taken a Trigonometry class compared with 19 percent of whites and 25 percent of Asians. (US Department of Education, 1998). This also has implications for persistence: students who take at least one math course beyond Algebra 2 in high school are significantly more likely to complete college, across all ethnic groups (Adelman, 1999).

First, schools with predominantly low-SES and minority students as well as inner-city schools offer fewer advanced math and science courses (Oakes et al 1990). Also, nationwide, students who are in college-preparatory programs yet attend high schools with predominantly low-SES students take fewer academic courses compared with college preparatory students who attend higher socioeconomic status schools. (Rock et al 1985). Therefore, being “college prep” or “college bound” does not guarantee particular course taking patterns across schools. The evidence suggests that one reason why Latinos are lacking in academic coursework completion that is crucial for eligibility for admission to CSU and UC is that they are not offered the opportunities to take advanced courses.

Unequal opportunities to take rigorous coursework also have implications for eligible students who compete for admission to the highly competitive flagship campuses. The availability of Advanced Placement courses is a serious issue as University of California awards an additional grade point for each AP or honors course taken and passed with at least a C. Thus, on a four-point scale, taking these courses can increase students’ grade point averages considerably. A recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California showed that there is considerable disparity both in a – f courses (those classes required for eligibility to the University of California, and increasingly for the CSU as well) and in Advanced Placement courses across schools. The lowest income schools offered only 52 percent of their classes as meeting a – f requirements, while this figure rose to 63 percent in the highest income schools. Similar patterns held up when the analysis was done by percent non-white students in the school (Betts, Rueben & Danenberg, 2000). Likewise, Betts, et al. found that “the median high SES school has over 50 percent more AP courses than the median low-SES school” (p. 72).

To some extent this is reflected in the differences in GPAs that college-bound students register by ethnicity. However, less rigorous academic preparation also results in lower test scores on standardized tests used for college admission, which in turn reduces Latino students’ competitiveness for the most highly competitive state campuses. See Table 5.

Table 5
Profile of California's College-Going Students
College Board Data, 1998

	Black (8,868)	Mex Am (18,494)	Latino (6,606)	Asian (29,889)	Am Ind (1,415)	White (56,217)
Percent of School	8.7	37*	4.3*	11.1	.9	37.8
Percent of SAT takers	6.2	13	4.6	21	.9	39.5
Average GPA	2.86	3.08	3.09	3.36	3.12	3.33
SAT:						
Mean Verbal	433	442	450	488	489	532
Mean Math	428	452	456	550	497	540
% Top 10% Class	9	14	14	23	16	24

In sum, Latino students are disadvantaged with respect to eligibility at every point: with respect to grade point averages, test scores, adequacy of pre-college preparation, and rigor of coursework. Thus, any reworking of quantitative admission formulas can have only very limited effects with respect to increasing Latino access to higher education. Fundamental problems of inequalities in schools create barriers that are not addressed in current admissions procedures. Two lawsuits were filed in 1999 that address these issues. The first *Daniel vs. The State of California* argues that minority and low income students are not given enough A.P. course options in their high schools thereby impeding their grade-point averages. The second, *Rios vs. The University of California Board of Regents* argues that UC Berkeley's admissions practice of giving extra weight to AP courses favors whites and Asians.

Lack of Information Regarding College Requirements

Much of this racial-ethnic variance in eligibility is explained by significant variation in socioeconomic status, parental education in particular. Family background characteristics have long been associated with students' educational achievement and many studies have concluded that family background explains the largest portion of the variance in student achievement (Coleman, et al., 1966; Jencks, et al., 1972; Puma, et al., 1997). However, while parental attitudes toward education, parents' expectations, and involvement in their children's schooling certainly form an important part of the family background or home environment (cf. Puma, et al.

1997), we would like to stress another mechanism by which low parental education translates in low achievement: lack of information regarding college requirements and preparation.

A vast and expanding qualitative literature based largely on interviews with students, teachers, and parents has shown that college educated parents are crucial sources of information as their children go through the educational system. For example, highly educated parents are keenly aware of the implications of taking Algebra versus Basic math in junior high school and actively intervene when they disagree with their children's placement (Useem 1992). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education are largely unaware of the implications of being tracked into a low math course and tend to trust the school personnel's decisions (see Lareau 1987 for similar research that contrasts middle and low SES parents' approaches to their children's schooling). McDonough's (1997) study of college bound girls in Northern California shows that girls from working class families apply to fewer schools and rarely consider prestigious colleges or universities (private as well as public) as a feasible choices. Instead, they tend to apply to state university campuses. Furthermore, they receive little guidance from the school counselors at the large schools they attend who are overworked and hardly know them. Girls from upper middle class families with similar grades and SAT scores, on the other hand, apply to many different prestigious private schools, rarely consider the CSU system an option, and treat flagship UC schools as "backups" in case they do not get accepted to their first choices. Their parents understand the significance of selectivity of college and potential earnings and encourage them to apply to a variety of different schools. Their high school counselors also communicate the idea that certain schools are more acceptable than others.

Only 25 percent of Mexican American college bound students in California in 1998 came from families where at least one parent had some level of college experience. As a result, Latinos have less access to important information and resource networks to adequately represent their children's interest and students cannot rely on their parents for crucial information. Instead, they must rely on "institutional agents" such as teachers and counselors within the educational system to facilitate their postsecondary preparation and, as a result, their choices,

knowledge, and outcomes are largely reliant on forming these relationships (Stanton-Salazar 1997). One study of 70 Chicano professionals from working class and lower income backgrounds, showed how instrumental knowledge necessary to navigate the education system came, in large part, from teachers or white middle-class classmates (Gándara, 1995).¹² Thus while Latino parents are often accused of providing little support and encouragement for their children's education, Gándara's research showed that having high aspirations and high parental encouragement is not necessarily enough to ensure the success of Latinos from low socioeconomic status families. In California, there is only about one counselor to every 450 high school students statewide, however, in crowded inner city high schools where most Latinos go to school, the ratio is often much higher. Thus, Latinos students often receive little or no counseling about how to prepare themselves for college. For low income Latino students there is the additional problem that many see their counselors not as allies, or sources of support, but as gatekeepers who all too often refuse them admission to the courses that would prepare them for college. Considerable evidence has mounted that counselors in low income schools often underestimate the abilities of their students and track them into non-college preparatory courses based on assumptions that they do not have the ability to undertake more rigorous coursework (Oakes, 1985; Romo & Falbo, 1996). Of course, this is a vicious cycle because once tracked into the slower groups it is difficult, if not impossible, for these students to ever compete with their peers who have become proficient in material to which they have never even been exposed.

A relatively new feature on the educational landscape is the mushrooming business of private, for hire, college counseling. Given the inadequate counseling resources on the high school campuses, parents with sufficient means have increasingly been paying for counseling services outside the schools. These counselors can increase a student's chances of being selected into competitive colleges by advising on effective application strategies, as well as increase the chances of even mediocre students finding a college that meets their needs (McDonough, Korn

¹² Latino students are increasingly likely to be educated in segregated schools that provide fewer opportunities for inter-racial contact and the development of personal and social networks that can increase cultural capital and

& Yamasaki, 1997; Douglas, 1989). Such advantages are not normally available to low income Latinos and serve to maintain inequality of access to higher education.

Limited Financial Resources

Limited financial resources remains a powerful impediment to postsecondary education for many low income, underrepresented students. Between one-fourth and one-third of all eligible students in California receive no financial aid from the state to help them go to college. Because Latino students are disproportionately poor, they are more likely to fall into the category of students needing financial aid. The increasing shift in financial aid policy from grants to loans leads to a fear of incurring debt that cannot be repaid or that places an excessive burden on the family. Furthermore, concerns about forgoing income that could relieve family financial stresses during the years of study can convince some students to reject higher education.

The cost of a college education encompasses more than the cost of tuition for young people from low income families. They must also weigh heavily the costs of forgone income, and the fact that they will not be able to help their families financially while they are in college. Therefore, even if college costs are covered by grants and/or loans, it can be a difficult decision for some low-income youth to forgo helping their families at an age when they can be productive wage-earners. In a study of high achieving, low-income Chicano students, Gándara (1995) found that it was relatively common for older siblings to forgo college in favor of work so that younger siblings might have the opportunity to study as family finances were augmented by the incomes of the older siblings.

Some students, and their families, may take themselves out of the running for higher education based on perceptions that do not fit reality. For example, research shows that many students are unclear about the costs of a college education and about the options that exist for paying college tuition (Akerhielm, et al., 1998). “Sticker shock” has been shown to scare off

promote social mobility. Latino students today are more likely to be attending segregated schools than in 1972

some low income students who lack adequate information about grants and loans that can make college possible, or who fear going into debt for school because it is perceived as too burdensome on the family. Moreover, students tend to overestimate the costs of college, imagining an even greater barrier than actually exists (King, 1996). Nonetheless, it is clear that low income students are more responsive to grants than to loans. That is, more low-income students can be expected to enroll in college if it does not require that they burden themselves and their families with debt in order to do so (St. John, 1990; 1994).

Graduate Education and Faculty

The attention on freshman enrollments has masked to some extent the even greater declines in Chicano/Latino enrollment in the state's graduate and professional schools which have witnessed a disturbing trend over the last several years, exacerbated by Proposition 209. This is especially discouraging since Latinos received 13.6 percent of the Bachelor degrees from the University of California in 1997-98 and 18.8 percent of these degrees from CSU, creating a significant pool of future Latino graduate and professional students.¹³

California State University and University of California Bachelor Degrees Conferred: Academic Year 1997-98

California State University	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Asian Americans	9,480	20.6
African Americans	2,716	5.9
Chicano/Latinos	8,619	18.8
American Indians	558	1.2
<u>White</u>	<u>24,534</u>	<u>53.4</u>
<u>Total*</u>	<u>45,907</u>	<u>100.0</u>

University of California	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Asian Americans	10,124	36.6
African Americans	987	3.6
Chicano/Latinos	3,754	13.6
American Indians	275	1.0
<u>White</u>	<u>12,512</u>	<u>45.2</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>27,652</u>	<u>100.0</u>

when desegregation efforts were at their height. (Orfield & J. Yun 1999).

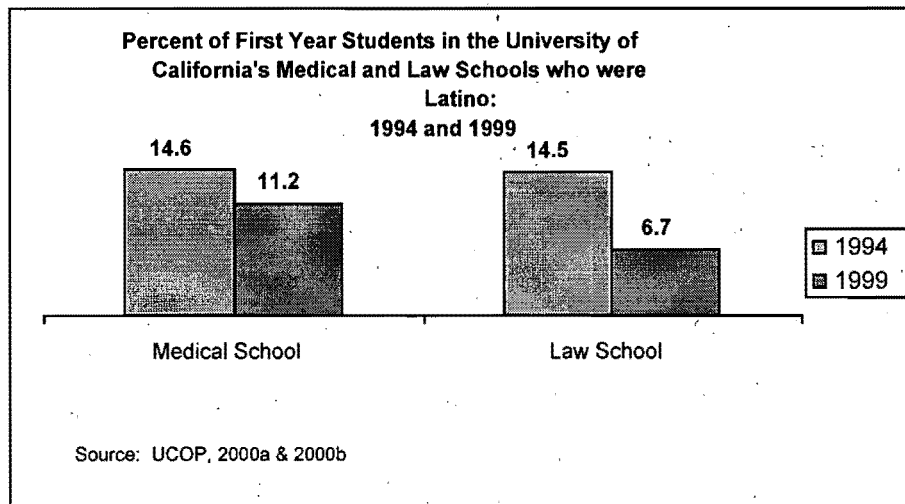
¹³ By contrast, in 1984-85, Latinos received just 5 percent of the undergraduate degrees from UC, and only 9.6 percent from CSU in 1990-91, the earliest year for which we were able to obtain data.

*Total only includes students who reported a race/ethnicity

SOURCE: CSU, & UCOP, 1999

Enrollments in professional schools have declined considerably since mid-decade. For example, in 1994, 10.9% of all University of California medical school first year enrollees were Chicano¹⁴. This figure declined steadily through the decade to only 6.3% in 1999.¹⁵ Similar trends have been noted at the state's law schools. In 1994, the three University of California law schools registered a high of 14.5% Latinos, but by 1999 this figure had fallen to just 6.7%. More than five percentage points were lost in the year after Proposition 209.

Figure 5



¹⁴ Medical school enrollment data include breakdowns by Mexican-origin, and "other Hispanic" which in graduate and professional schools often include a fair percentage of students who emanate from outside of California and the U.S. and tend to come from more advantaged backgrounds than the California Mexican-origin population.

¹⁵ It should be noted that this number combines both Mexican-origin and all other Latinos.

Such a decline in representation of Latinos in the academic pipeline has serious consequences for representation in the professions. A recent report from the University of California at Los Angeles¹⁶ noted that fewer than 5% of physicians statewide are Latino: a meager number to serve the burgeoning Latino population that often depends on Latino health professionals for their “cultural competence” and ability to communicate effectively in Spanish. Indeed, minority physicians have been shown to be more likely to practice in underserved communities compared with non-minority physicians (Komaromy, et al 1996; Cantor, et. al 1996). Given the effects of SP-1 on minority enrollments at UC Berkeley and UCLA we can expect even fewer minority students among medical students in the future as these two campuses are two of the five institutions in the country that produce the most accepted minority medical school applicants (as described in Karabel 1998).¹⁷

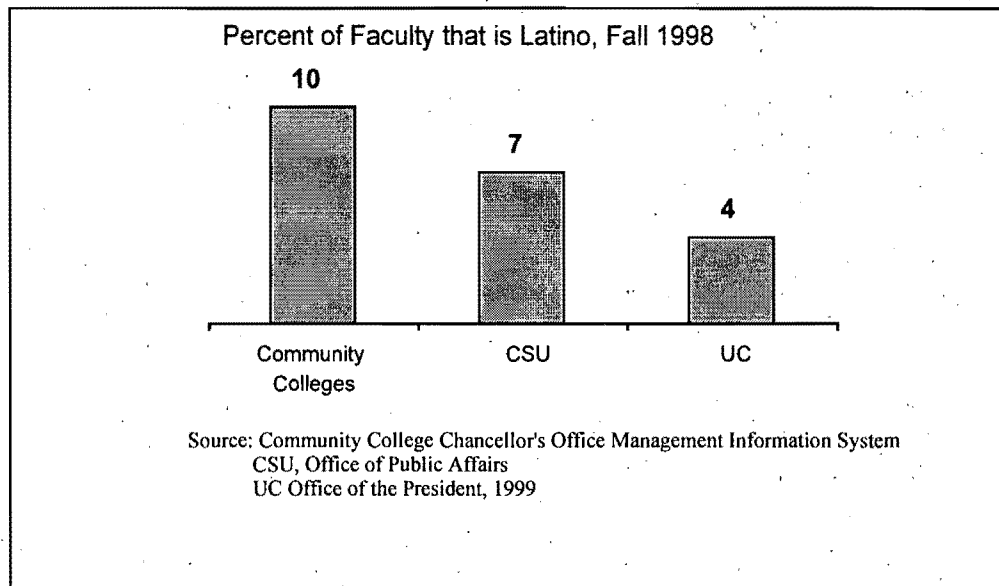
The effect of the elimination of affirmative action on the academic graduate programs at the University of California has been less pronounced. The proportion of new registrants who were Latino system wide was 6.9 percent in 1995 and 6.3 percent in 1998 (UCOP, 1999).¹⁸ However, these figures were only 5.2 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively, at UC Berkeley, a campus that has a very high number of top ranked graduate programs. And although Latinos constituted 7 percent of the University of California’s conferred doctorates in 1984-85 and 9 percent in 1997-98, relatively little progress has been made in diversifying the faculty at all three systems of public education.

¹⁶ The study was released January 20, 2000 by The Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at UCLA.

¹⁷ The other three institutions are: UT Austin (an institution that also recently experienced elimination of affirmative action), Xavier (LA) and Howard (traditionally black institutions).

¹⁸ This does not include students in the profession schools such as law, medicine, MBA, dental, pharmacy, etc.

Figure 6



Although Latinos are found in large proportions at the community colleges and the CSU, only 10 and 7 percent of the faculty at the community colleges and CSU were Latino in Fall, 1998. The percentage of faculty in the University of California who is Latino was 4 percent, and it has fluctuated between 4.1 and 4.5 percent for most of a decade. The stagnant level of Latino faculty hiring within the University of California begs the question: Why has this problem been so intransigent given the increasing numbers of graduates of UC? The common response is that the pool of candidates is still too small in most disciplines to make any significant inroads.

A recent study for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (Smith, 1996), however, calls into question the extent to which the low rates of hiring of minority faculty are, in fact, due primarily to the small pool of applicants. In this study of 298 Ford, Mellon, and Spencer fellowship recipients, 93% of whom received their Ph.D.'s from elite, Research I universities, Smith found that, although perceived to be "sought after," the great majority of these individuals (89%) in fact had few if any offers for tenure track appointments--54% of the

science Ph.D.'s took post doctoral positions or sought other positions outside of academe because no tenure track offers were forthcoming. In her summary statements, Smith quotes one Chicana with a Ph.D. in American History, as representative of the comments heard from many:

I would say that I find it a little surprising that I do not regularly get phone calls with regards to recruitment. We are so few, it's amazing that most universities will say, "We can't find anybody," yet persons like myself are not recruited. I think I should be getting phone calls, and I don't get phone calls (Smith, 1996, p. 134).

A related problem is the low levels of hiring of Latino administrators. While Latino faculty are almost certainly important in helping to create a more hospitable campus climate for Latino students, university administrators often hold more power in decisionmaking, and have access to budgets that can allow them to have a direct impact on minority student recruitment, retention, and well-being. Hence, the hiring of high-level Latino administrators must be viewed as an important priority in raising the profile of Latino issues within academe. However, a recent study by Haro (1995) of university CEO hiring practices found that, while the popular perception was that Latino candidates were highly sought after, in fact, they fared more poorly in the hiring process than both White males and females. The reason most often given for not making offers to highly qualified Latino applicants was a difference in "style" that did not fit with the expectations of the recruitment committee. Among the components of style that were especially significant to respondents in this study were appearance and access to important networks, two attributes that were almost certainly affected by the candidates' ethnicity.

Higher Education Policies that Exacerbate the Problem of Access

Remediation.

Recent trends toward strengthening the standards at all levels of education have resulted in policies to decrease or eliminate remedial classes for students who do not meet university standards in certain core academic areas. The CSU has adopted a policy to reduce the demand

for remedial courses to only 10% by 2007 (CPEC, 1999). Given that nearly half of all students entering the CSU in 1998 needed remedial instruction, this decrease in offering of such courses means that many students will not be able to enroll. Given the acknowledged inadequacies of many of the schools that Latino students attend, it is likely that a high proportion of these rejected students will be Latinos.

The shift in weighting of the SAT I and SAT II.

Beginning with the entering class in 2001, the University of California will shift the weighting of its admissions formula to place 75% emphasis on the SAT II (achievement tests) and 25% on the SAT I (aptitude). Because Latino students are disproportionately educated in poor schools with less rigorous curricula than white and Asian students, this decision may further exacerbate the problems of achieving a *competitive* level of eligibility. Analyses of the probable effects of this change, however, suggest a number of possibilities. Because the SAT II tests are less speeded than the SAT I, it is possible that students with equal ability will perform better on SAT IIs.¹⁹ On the other hand, a simulation study conducted by the UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) found that the new eligibility index incorporating the SAT II scores was likely to include more Latino students than the old SAT I-dependent index. This, however, was largely due to the scores achieved on the student-selected third test²⁰. New outreach efforts on the part of the university have just begun to provide SAT I preparation courses, with the expectation that these scores can be raised. It is not clear that SAT II scores, so heavily dependent on high school curriculum, will be as amenable to short-term intervention. Moreover, since most problems of omitted tests occur among the SAT II series,²¹ there is reason to expect that at least until high school counseling improves, some portion of the otherwise eligible Latino students will be lost in the transition.

The shift to an admissions policy that substitutes socio-economic status for ethnicity

¹⁹ An in-house simulation conducted at ETS yielded this outcome with a sample of recent applicants.

²⁰ UC BOARS internal document, Derivation of the University of California Statewide Eligibility Index, February, 2000.

²¹ A recent test of the effects of the new formula was run at the UC Irvine campus. Investigators found that a substantial number of underrepresented students who were admitted in the 1999-2000 year would not have been admitted under the new guidelines because of students' propensity to omit one or more of the SAT II series, or to take the wrong sequence.

With the prohibition of affirmative action, low socio-economic status (SES) has been used a proxy variable to increase diversity. The initial assumption was that this would increase the numbers of ethnic minorities as well. This policy, however is fraught with problems. Using SES as a criterion does not capture significant numbers of Latinos for a variety of reasons. One critical reason, however, is that many marginally eligible “middle class” Latinos are lost to the pool of potential admittees. Usually, with no more than one generation out of poverty, low levels of accumulated capital, and an educational background that includes poor public schooling and less competitive postsecondary institutions, many children of the Latino middle class are not well prepared to compete with their solidly middle class White and Asian peers. In fact, Latinos from the highest income bracket perform only slightly better than Whites from the lowest income bracket on SAT tests, reflecting more limited educational experiences than are assumed to accompany the status of “middle class” (Miller, 1995; Gándara, 1998). Thus, those students whose families are newcomers to a tenuous middle class status, but whose experiences and dispositions may better prepare them to succeed in the competitive environment of UC than their somewhat lower income peers with similar grades but from weaker schools, are not eligible under these new guidelines.

Management of enrollment pressures brought on by Tidal Wave II

Due the increasing numbers of children of the “baby boomers” reaching college-age, higher education institutions in California are anticipating a surge in enrollment. The CSU will need to accommodate about 130,000 more students by 2010 and the UC is expected to accommodate another 56,000 by that date (CPEC, 1999). There are not enough spaces in these institutions to assimilate that number of students. To date, enrollment pressures have resulted in turning away thousands of qualified Latino students from the most competitive campuses. In 1998, the UC Berkeley turned away 616 Chicano/Latinos with GPAs of 4.0 or better and average SAT scores of 1170. These students were not considered “competitive” at UC Berkeley and were rerouted to campuses where the enrollment pressures were not as great. As the pressure

increases on the five institutions—Irvine, Santa Cruz, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and Davis—that are not as impacted as Berkeley, UCLA, and San Diego, the University of California will have to find new ways of accommodating students. The University is currently reviewing its options which include year round schedules, distance learning, and increased class sizes. One can assume, however, that the least competitive students will be given the fewest, and least attractive, options. And, this can have the effect of reducing the attractiveness of UC for those students.

Policy Options

There have been two major responses to the demise of affirmation action in university admissions. On the heels of the Hopwood decision, Texas implemented the 10 percent plan, making eligible for the University of Texas the top ten percent of students from each high school in Texas. Early returns suggest that this approach may be at least modestly successful in that state. Admissions of Latino students have increased to levels commensurate with the pre-Hopwood period and retention of Latino students is higher, due primarily to an extensive web of support programs put into place along with the ten percent plan (Walker, 2000). Unfortunately, the circumstances that exist in Texas, making the ten percent plan a viable alternative for that state do not hold in California. With the capacity to accept the top ten percent of students in the state, and an institution that is less selective than UC, UT is able to accommodate the yield from this strategy without turning away any qualified students. California, on the other hand, does not have the additional capacity to accept the top ten percent of its high school graduates.

The second strategy, and the one implemented by the University of California, is extensive student outreach. The outreach strategy incorporates a panoply of activities, but they can be categorized by two types: student-centered strategies that focus on providing individual students with academic support, guidance, and information about preparing for and applying to college; and school centered activities geared toward curricular and teaching reform in the schools that students attend. The University of California contends that it spent \$250 million on its outreach activities in 1999-2000. It is not yet known to what extent these activities have

affected the eligibility of Latino students, however a review of such programs nationwide raises concerns about the extent to which they can be expected to contribute to short-term increases in *competitive eligibility* for Latino and other underrepresented students (Gándara & Bial, 2000).

What options, then, could hold the hope of significantly increasing access to higher education for Latino students? We suggest several.

- (1) To decrease the cascading problem, and increase access to the most competitive campuses, the University of California could withhold a portion, say 30 percent, of its admissions slots to be distributed equally across campuses by the Office of the President. In this way, students who are eligible for UC, whether competitively eligible or not, could have an equal chance at being assigned to a campus of their choice.
- (2) Given the limited impact of long term outreach strategies for increasing access to selective institutions for students now in California's high schools, a more immediate yield could be expected by significantly increasing the resources applied to those Latino students most likely to meet eligibility criteria. A recent evaluation study of the Puente program which serves Latino students found that the most significant impact of the program was on those high achieving Latino students who were assumed to be "on track" for matriculating in a four year institution, but would not have done in the absence of the program intervention (Gándara, et al., 1998). Equipped with the knowledge that even high achieving Latino students are at risk for not successfully matriculating into four year colleges, middle class Latino students should be included in the pool of students to be targeted with special resources.
- (3) To increase the yield of Latino college students over the long term, outreach efforts will have to engage schools in significant reform activities, consistent with the lessons learned from effective outreach programs, but in an intensive and comprehensive approach. Strategies should include experimental coursework involving collaboration between university and high school faculty to create better

linkages between high school offerings and university expectations. Fundamental reforms in K-12 schools will be necessary to reduce the need for remediation at the college level and increase the eligibility of more Latino students to four year institutions.

- (4) Efforts must be redoubled to capture more students in the community college pipeline by providing early admission to the four year institutions, accompanied by intensive monitoring of community college students and financial aid to make this transition possible.
- (5) Following Texas' example, the University of California campuses must put into place an extensive academic support system to ensure that those Latino students who are admitted to the university can not only survive, but succeed in this environment. A recent report by Gándara and Maxwell-Jolly conducted for the College Board (1999) points to some of the strategies that have been used effectively by colleges across the country to foster high achievement among underrepresented students. Such strategies include summer bridge programs, adjunct instruction to ensure success in gate-keeper courses, reorganization of undergraduate curricula, and organized peer study groups that support both social and academic adaptation of underrepresented students.

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