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**Eligibility in the Local Context  
And Applications to the  
University of California**

Paper to be presented at the  
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Equal Opportunity in Higher Education: The Past and Future of Proposition 209

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## **Introduction**

In 1998, the first year that the University of California put into effect the elimination of race-conscious admissions (Resolution SP-1 and Proposition 209) the admission rates for underrepresented minority students Latino, African American and American Indian (hereafter URM) admission rates declined for all campuses throughout the UC system. Moreover, their representation among applications, admits and enrollments decreased substantially for all campuses and especially at UC Berkeley and UCLA. In the years following the abolition of race-conscious policies, the University of California expanded K-12 outreach and introduced two new admissions policies: Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC, implemented in fall 2001, and Comprehensive Review (CR), implemented in fall 2002. Comprehensive Review allows campuses to conduct a more holistic review of UC eligible applicants that goes beyond standardized test scores to consider both academic achievement and the educational and personal context in which students achieve. In contrast, the Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) policy resulted in a third pathway to UC eligibility. In particular, the ELC program grants statewide UC eligibility to the top four percent of each high school's graduating senior class based on grades earned in the A-G coursework series, the 15 academic courses across seven subjects that are required for admission. The representation of URM students among applications, admits and enrollments have gradually increased over the last few years and it is believed that all policies have helped in this regard.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ELC policy and consider the extent to which **all** high schools are facilitating the minimum number of expected applications as dictated by the ELC program. A 2002 UCOP evaluation of the ELC's first two years estimated that the policy stimulated many applications from the state's historically low-feeder public high schools and the vast majority of the stimulated applications were from underrepresented minority groups (UCOP 2002). However, the evaluation also found that only 81 percent of students who were identified by the program as "ELC eligible" eventually applied to UC. Likewise, this paper also compares the representation of URM among the total UC applications from their high school in relation to their representation among all graduates who have completed the A-G coursework series. In so doing, I seek to document the existence of inequalities within California public high schools.

## **ELIGIBILITY IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT**

The University of California grants freshman admission to all California residents who are deemed eligible for admission. For many years there have been only two pathways to

admission: 1) *statewide eligibility*, that considers the combination of GPA and standardized test scores students must obtain with students with lower GPAs needing higher test scores among all students who have completed the A-G courses, and 2) *eligibility through exam alone* which grants eligibility to students who complete sufficiently high test scores on the required standardized tests. A third pathway to eligibility was introduced for fall 2001 admission called “Eligibility in the Local Context” (ELC). This policy outlines a pathway to eligibility to the top four percent of each California high school’s graduating senior class based on grades earned in the A-G coursework series. The ELC program works as follows. Each summer after final grades are recorded, participating high schools submit the transcripts of the top 12.5 percent of the junior class who have completed 11 UC-approved courses to the University of California’s Office of the President. Trained staff members evaluate the transcripts and identify the top 4 percent of the students at each high school based on a UC weighted grade-point average in the 11 courses. UCOP determines the numerical number associated with each high school’s “top four percent” by multiplying the total junior class by the school’s average expected graduation rate over a three year period. For example, High School A with a junior class of 425 students and an average graduation rate of 95 percent would submit the transcripts of 53 students to UCOP for review. UCOP determines that 4 percent of the expected graduating class will consist of 16 students. Therefore, High School A will have 16 “Expected ELC students.”<sup>1</sup> In early fall of that year, UCOP notifies all 53 students at High School A whose transcripts were submitted of the evaluation’s outcome with instructions on a final set of requirements to complete in order to achieve ELC statewide eligibility. The 16 students who were deemed ELC eligible are told they do not need to meet the UC eligibility index but must take the SAT I (or ACT) and the SAT II subject exams and satisfactorily complete all 15 required courses by the end of their senior year with a minimum 3.0 GPA.<sup>2</sup> ELC eligible students who meet all these criteria as well as submit their applications on time are guaranteed a space on a UC campus although not necessarily at the campus or program of their choice.<sup>3</sup> The remaining 37 students are notified if their records indicate they are on track to statewide eligibility.

The number of applications from students who achieve eligibility via the ELC pathway has steadily increased since the program’s inception to reach a high of 12,933 for fall 2006

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<sup>1</sup> This is determined as follows:  $425 \text{ juniors} \cdot .95 = 404 \text{ expected graduates}$ ;  $404 \text{ expected graduates} \cdot .04 = 16$  “Expected ELC students”.

<sup>2</sup> The minimum GPA requirement was 2.8 up until recently – it was increased to 3.0 for the freshmen admissions cycle of fall 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Every year a few ELC eligible students who apply are not admitted due incomplete applications.

admissions (UCOP 2006). The proportion of underrepresented minority students among ELC applicants increased from 21 percent in 2002 to 25 percent in 2006. Their representation among the non-ELC applicants was similar for these years. Looking at all URM applicants in 2006, only 18 percent of them were ELC applicants – and this was also true for both Asian and White students. In brief, it appears that URM students and non-URM students are equally represented among the ELC applicants in relation to their representation among the non-ELC applicants. A UCOP evaluation of the ELC’s first two years found that high school participation (which is completely voluntary) reached 97 percent for public schools and 78 percent for private schools. The participation rate for schools with historically low UC admission rates increased to 95 percent. The vast majority (81 percent) of students who were identified as ELC eligible eventually applied to UC. Finally, the evaluation estimated that the policy generated 2,065 additional applications, the majority of which were from underrepresented minorities, especially Latino students.<sup>4</sup> The latter is especially good news because the UC-wide admit rate for students who achieve eligibility through the ELC pathway is nearly 100 percent (see table 1). Likewise, the yield rate for underrepresented minority ELC admits was slightly higher at 54% compared with 50% for non-ELC URM admits.

**Table 1: Applications, Admit and Yield Rates for ELC and Non-ELC Underrepresented Minorities, Asian and White California Residents University-Wide, Berkeley, and UCLA: Fall 2002 Admissions Cycle**

		University-Wide			Berkeley		UCLA	
		<u>Applications</u>	<u>Admit Rate</u>	<u>Yield Rate</u>	<u>Admit Rate</u>	<u>Yield Rate</u>	<u>Admit Rate</u>	<u>Yield Rate</u>
URM	ELC	2,253	99.9	54.4	68.4	29.3	46.3	41.1
	Non-ELC	11,057	74.3	50.0	18.1	40.9	14.8	35.0
Asian	ELC	3,622	100.0	70.7	72.5	40.1	61.2	50.9
	Non-ELC	16,576	85.6	64.7	21.3	40.7	19.8	47.9
White	ELC	4,115	100.0	55.8	75.4	27.3	51.4	46.4
	Non-ELC	19,525	88.0	48.1	24.5	29.7	18.0	42.1

Source: University of California Office of the President, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Of the approximately 8,000 Chicanos/Latinos who applied to UC for 2001 Fall admission from participating ELC high schools, it is estimated that nearly 14 percent (or 1,120) were encouraged by the ELC policy.

The ELC policy (along with its counterpart in Texas, “the Ten Percent Plan”) is unique because it has faced criticism from both proponent and opponents of race-based affirmative action. One set of critics argues that four percent is too small to impact disadvantaged students and the vast majority of students eligible under the ELC policy would have achieved statewide eligibility anyway (see Guiser 1998 for the analyses on which this point is made). Moreover, the policy’s success at increasing diversity is predicated on continued racial-ethnic segregation in high schools (Horn & Flores 2003, Chapa, J. 2006). Finally, unlike the University of Texas’ “Ten Percent” plan that guarantees admission to the top 10 percent of each public high school to UT Austin, the state’s flagship campus, the ELC policy does not address access to the system’s flagship campuses (Berkeley and UCLA) because it only guarantees admission to the UC system and not necessarily the campus of choice. Although URM ELC students are more likely to be admitted to Berkeley and UCLA compared with their non-ELC counterparts, their admit rates remain lower than those of Asian and White students, even for ELC students (see table 1). The opposite side of the political spectrum argues that because the policy does not require a minimum performance on standardized tests (students merely need to take the tests) the academic indicators of students from low-performing high schools who achieve UC eligibility via the ELC will be substandard and these students will be unprepared for the rigor of UC. Likewise, students in low performing schools also have an unfair advantage in comparison to students who attend schools with large numbers of highly qualified and motivated students and, as a result, face tougher competition to reach the top four percent of their graduating class.

Despite these criticisms, the ELC has been hailed as a reasonable alternative to race-based affirmative action because it recognizes two important facts: 1) high achieving students who attend California’s low performing and low-UC feeder public high schools have faced a set of structural conditions that go beyond family background and individual motivation that has limited their successful navigation toward entrance to the University of California and, as such, reaching the top of their classes should be rewarded, and 2) educational opportunities vary across schools and this is not random - the schools with the least amount of educational opportunities also tend to be filled with disadvantaged students. The ELC program is also looked upon favorably by its supporters because it provides an institutional link between UC and individual high schools. It essentially places UC \*in\* each high school. While this may be a moot point for schools that have historically been high UC-feeder schools, it is easy to see how this can be a boon to students at schools that have historically sent few students to UC. Indeed, it asks schools to, at minimum, identify the top 12.5 percent of their junior class to be evaluated for ELC.

Although UCOP only identifies and deems ELC eligible the top four percent of the expected graduating class, the remaining 8.5 percent may well have been students on a track to the CSU or a community college and getting a personal letter from UC with explicit instructions on how to proceed toward UC eligibility may have put them on the track to UC. Indeed, one of the goals of the policy is to help promote a college-going culture within all high schools.

### **A-G Coursework: The Key to Access**

As stated above, the majority of UC eligible students achieve eligibility through statewide eligibility or through the ELC. Both of these pathways include successful completion of the A-G coursework series as the minimum requirement. It is this requirement that locks many students out of both UC and CSU as this A-G coursework series is required for admission to both segments of the state's system of public higher education.

The proportion of California public high school graduates who complete the A-G coursework series reached a peak in 1998 with 36.6 percent completing the college preparatory curriculum. The number of graduates increased faster than the number of graduates completing the A-G curriculum and as a result, by 2003 the proportion of graduates having completed this curriculum declined to 33.5 percent (CPEC 2005). However, by 2005, the pattern reversed itself and the A-G completion rate for all public graduates was 35.2 percent (California Department of Education 2006). Although URM students' representation among the A-G graduates reached a high of 30.9 percent in 2005 and was a marked improvement in comparison to their representation in 1999 which was 25.8 percent, this increase was merely a reflection of their increasing representation among the state's public high school graduates which reached 45 percent in 2005. These groups are still underrepresented among the A-G graduates in relation to their representation among all public school graduates. Moreover, the **rate** at which URM graduates complete the A-G coursework series has remained, for the most part, unchanged in the last six years. In 1999, URM public school graduates completed the A-G coursework series at a rate of 22.9 percent and in 2005 that figure was 24.2 percent. The pool of URM graduates from which to draw UC applicants, whether for the ELC program or not, is small, indeed.

The abolition of race-conscious admissions policies resulted in greater attention paid to the inequities across schools, especially inequality in access to the A-G coursework series. In a recent report titled, *California College Opportunity Report 2006*, UCLA researchers identify three major institutional roadblocks to college: insufficient counselors, high student-teacher ratios as well as high levels of mismatch between teacher training and assignment to college

preparatory courses, and lack of universal access of opportunity to take college-preparatory courses within individual high schools (with over 50 percent of all high schools not offering enough courses for all students to enroll in college preparatory courses). One in eight California high schools experienced all three roadblocks and only 7 percent of their graduates enrolled in a four-year public college in fall 2004. Schools with all three roadblocks are also severely racially segregated minority schools and nearly half of all California Latinos public school students attend severely segregated schools. (UC Accord 2006). Looking across districts, EdTrust reports that only 17 percent of the state's school districts provide all enrolled students with the opportunity to take the A-G coursework series, and this is inversely correlated with the enrollment of disadvantaged students. San Jose Unified school district was the first district in the state to mandate the A-G curriculum as part of its graduation requirements beginning with the freshmen class of 1998. A-G completion rates for Latinos and other underrepresented minority groups have risen dramatically without an increase in dropout rates although the gap between URM and Asian/White students remains (Lin, 2006). Los Angeles Unified school district also recently changed its graduation requirements for the class of 2008 to match the A-G coursework series. Finally, California Assemblyman Coto recently proposed AB 1896 that would require high schools to enroll students in either an A-G coursework curriculum or one that prepares them for a technical career. The bill, at the time of this writing, is still in committee.

While the expansion of access to the A-G coursework series is a step in the right direction for improving access to four-year colleges for underrepresented minorities, it is just one of several steps needed toward meeting eligibility requirements for UC, as described above in the section on UC eligibility pathways. Students must also perform well in their courses as well as take the SAT. Moreover, students must **apply** to UC in order to be considered for admission. While racial-ethnic differences in UC eligibility rates among high school graduates explain most of the variation in applications rates, there is reason to believe that submitting applications is a hurdle for many underrepresented minority students. A recent study by the California Postsecondary Education Commission showed that while the UC eligibility rates of 2003 African-American and Latino high school graduates have increased over that last 10 years to reach 6.2 and 6.5 percent respectively, UC entry rates for African-American and Latino graduates have *decreased* to 3.3 and 3.4 (CPEC 2005). Because the sharpest decrease occurred in the years following the elimination of race-based affirmative action, the resulting chilly climate may be the reason for the disparity between eligibility and entry rates for these students. However, it is unclear where the “drop off” occurs – at the point of application with some eligible students not

applying to UC due to lack of information, resources or perceptions of UC as unwelcoming and unattainable or at the point of admissions with the admit rates of underrepresented students declining, especially at UC flagship campuses.

The data in Table 2 shows, however, that the majority of underrepresented minority students (as well as white students) who successfully complete the A-G coursework series **do not** apply to UC. In Fall 2003, an estimated 38 percent of the 31,812 underrepresented minority graduates who completed the A-G coursework series applied to UC.<sup>5</sup> There are many possible explanations for this disparity. Many of these students who complete the A-G coursework series may not have known they could have applied to UC and, instead, had set their sights on a local CSU campus. Some students may not have had the grades and SAT scores to meet the UC scholarship requirement and they were advised not to bother with a UC application.<sup>6</sup> However, it is quite discouraging to see this application rate disparity exist even among students who successfully navigate their high school curriculums and graduate having completed the A-G coursework series.

In the sections that follow, I describe how public high schools in California are experiencing the ELC program in relation to the number of UC applications they eventually facilitate. In so doing, I also explore the extent to which there is inequality in access to the UC application process *within* schools for URM students who successfully complete the A-G coursework series. My data, however, do not allow me to explain why this is so.

Studying within-school outcomes is important because students, especially disadvantaged students who come from families with low levels of parental education, experience college preparation opportunities at the school level. Schools that participate in the ELC program are essentially “forced” to identify the top 12.5 percent of their junior class as college-bound and submit their transcripts to UCOP for review but whether these students eventually apply to UC is unknown. Also, although a large literature has demonstrated that racial-ethnic differences in course and track placement disappear when controlling for social class and “ability”, these studies have generally been based on nationally representative samples. In contrast, research focused on schools or sets of schools within districts have found racial-ethnic effects after holding prior achievement and socioeconomic status constant. Gamoran (1992) examined Honors English

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<sup>5</sup> This is an estimate insofar that I assume that the applicants are, indeed, a subset of the A-G graduates. That is, I assume that the vast majority of the applicants had completed the A-G coursework series.

<sup>6</sup> Students who complete the A-G coursework series with a GPA of 3.0 or higher are automatically eligible for CSU regardless of test scores. However, impacted campuses and majors also consider supplemental criteria.



<b>Table 2: 2003 California Public High School Graduates, A-G Graduates, Fall 2003 UC Applications and Application Rate</b>				
	2003 Graduates	2003 A-G Graduates	Fall 203 UC Applications <sup>1</sup>	<b>Application Rate For A-G Graduates</b>
URM	144,699	31,812	12,206	<b>38%</b>
Asian	37,750	20,436	15,352	<b>75%</b>
White	144,664	56,425	19,014	<b>34%</b>
<sup>1</sup> Freshmen Applicants from California Public High Schools Source: California Department of Education; UCOP Fall 2005 Application Tables				

placement across five school districts in the Midwest and found that African-American and Latino students were less likely to be placed in Honors English as ninth graders holding previous test scores and grades constant. Oakes (1995) examined eighth grade math course placement among students attending the San Jose Unified School District and found that Latino students with average scores were three times less likely than comparably scoring white students to be placed in the accelerated math course. Likewise, only 56 percent of Latinos with high scores were placed in these courses compared with 93 and 97 percent of white and Asian students, respectively. This literature suggests that when opportunities within schools are limited, be they access to counselors and accurate information about college opportunities, Latino and African-American students are likely to lose out.

The research is guided by the following questions:

- To what extent are high schools sending UC applications that equal or surpass the number of estimated ELC students for their high school?
- To what extent are URM students experiencing inequity among UC applications in comparison to their representation among all A-G graduates at their high schools?

### **Data and Methods**

The analyses are based on several sources of high school-level data. UCOP provided two data files. The first file contained data on the total number of fall 2003 California resident freshmen applicants as well as the total number of URM applicants for each high school.<sup>7</sup> The second file contained data, by high school, on the expected number of fall 2003 ELC students as determined by multiplying four percent by the expected size of the senior class. California public high school characteristic data were retrieved from several public-use data files at the

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<sup>7</sup> In order to preserve confidentiality, UCOP redacted some of the cells in the data file but the vast majority of applicants are accounted for in the data file.

California Department of Education website. Summary data on high school graduates include: total 2003 graduates, total URM graduates, total A-G graduates, total URM A-G Graduates. Summary variables on the entire school include: total 2002-2003 enrollment, total 2002-2003 URM enrollment, 2003 parental education, 2003 free/reduced lunch participation, and 2003 API state rank.<sup>8</sup> All files were merged together using the 7-digit school code. There were instances when the number of URM applicants from a given school exceeded the number of URM A-G graduates reported by their high schools. In these instances, the variable “URM A-G Graduates” was recorded to equal those of the number of URM UC applicants. The same was done for non-URM data and the “Total A-G graduates” was adjusted accordingly.

Analyses were conducted using the original and modified variables and the difference in results was negligible. Our analysis is limited to all California public regular high schools (as defined by the California Department of Education) that graduated at least 10 students in 2003.<sup>9</sup> Charter schools are also excluded. This results in a working data file of 861 high schools.

### **Analytical Strategy**

First, the total number of applicants is compared to the number of students the ELC expected. In so doing, I create a composite variable that measures the extent to which schools sent applicants in excess of the number of students expected by the ELC program.

Next, the analysis considers the extent to which URM students experience equity in representation among UC applicants from their high school in comparison to their representation among students who graduated having completed the A-G coursework series with a grade of “C” or better. I do so using the *Equity Index Ratio*, following researchers at USC who use a mathematical formula to compare the representation of groups of students on an indicator of interest to their representation among a population (Bensimon et al 2005). The Equity Index Ratio indicator is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Equity Index Ratio: } \frac{(\text{Target Group Indicator/Total in Indicator})}{(\text{Target Group in Population/Total in Population})}$$

In this case, I compare URM representation among all UC applicants by school with URM representation among A-G Graduates at that school. The formula to compares applications to A-G graduates looks like this:

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<sup>8</sup> The later three variables were pulled from the API data files. A small percentage of the high schools were missing 2003 API state rank data and 2002 data was used instead.

<sup>9</sup> In 2003, a total of 1,835 public schools graduated at least one student and 50 percent were comprehensive schools that graduated at least 10 students, accounting for 90 percent of all graduates.

**UC Application-to-A-G Graduates Ratio:**  $\frac{(\# \text{ URM UC Applicants} / \# \text{ Total UC Applicants})}{(\# \text{ URM A-G Graduates} / \# \text{ Total A-G Graduates})}$

The ratio was calculated for each high school in the working data file. Equity is achieved the Equity Index Ratio is equal to 1. Schools with equity ratios less than .8 were identified as schools where URM students experienced inequity while schools with equity ratios between .8 and .99 were considered to be “Approaching Equity”.

## RESULTS

Individual high schools’ “ELC estimate” is related to school size. The average number of ELC estimated students across all schools is 14 with the minimum equal to one (1) and the maximum equal to 38. The school with the ELC student estimate of 38 had nearly 1000 graduates that year. Schools with ELC estimates of 1 were small schools with an average of 24 graduates (the ELC estimate is always rounded “up” when estimating students based on four percent of the expected graduating class). Summary statistics on schools aggregated by the number of estimated ELC students is in table 3. The ELC program estimated that nearly half (48.7 percent) of the schools had between 10 and 19 ELC students and another 23 percent of the schools would generate over 20 ELC students each. URM students represented approximately 44 percent of all high school students and this was relatively constant throughout the three categories of estimated ELC students. The relationship between the number of estimated ELC students and the average number of actual Fall 2003 applications (who were not necessarily part of the ELC pool) is linear.

Table 4 compares the number of estimated ELC students with the actual number of applications sent to UC for each high school. Schools were aggregated into four categories that describe this ratio. The vast majority of schools met or exceeded the number of expected students by the ELC program. Only 3 percent of schools did not submit the minimum number of UC applications estimated by the ELC program. On average, these 28 schools were “short” just three applicants. Over one third (35 percent) of the high schools facilitated more than four times what the ELC program expected and, on average, they were higher performing schools with fewer URM and low-SES students among their student populations. It is interesting to note, however, that these schools are not completely racially segregated -- on average URM students represented a third of the student bodies. What is particularly striking is that, on average, nearly one half of the students come from families with highly educated parents (parents with college degrees or higher).

**Table 3: Summary Statistics of California Public High Schools**

Fall 2003 Expected Number of ELC Students	N	%	Average Size of School	Fall 2003 UC Applications*			
				Average % URM	Average	Min	Max
1 – 9	245	28.5	693	42.5	18	0	154
10 – 19	419	48.7	1,996	44.0	63	9	283
20+	197	22.9	3,006	46.9	111	17	526
Total	861	100.0	1,856	44.2	61	0	526

\* California Resident Freshmen only

**Table 4: Graduates, A-G Graduates and UC Applicant Distribution Across Categories Of Ratio of UC Applicants to ELC Expected for Fall 2002**

	Ratio of UC Applications Expected by the ELC To Actual Fall 2003 UC Applications				Total
	Fewer than Expected	1-2x more than Expected	3-4x more Than Expected	4x more than Expected	
Total High Schools	28	193	339	301	861
% of High Schools	3.3	22.4	39.4	35.0	100.0
Average API Rank	3	4	5	7	3
Average % Highly Educated Parents	20.4	22.5	29.3	49.8	34.4
Average % URM	53.2	48.8	51.4	32.3	44.2
Average % Poverty URM	43.9	45.0	37.5	21.7	33.9
Graduates	2.2	18.9	50.8	28.1	100.0
A-G Graduates	1.3	15.5	49.7	33.4	100.0
<b>UC Applicants</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<u>Non-URM<sup>1</sup></u>					
Graduates	1.0	12.5	35.9	50.5	100.0
A-G Graduates	0.7	8.9	30.8	59.7	100.0
<b>UC Applicants</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* California Resident Freshmen only

<sup>1</sup> These students include all students who were not URM students.

What is cause for concern is the fact that 22 percent of the high schools (N=193) only submitted 1 to 2 times the number of applications expected by the ELC program, estimates that are somewhat small to begin with. These schools tend to be lower performing schools as well as schools with higher than average URM student enrollment and students participating in the free and reduced lunch program. Moreover, 16 percent of all URM A-G graduates attended these

schools compared with only 9 percent of non-URM A-G graduates. The implication of this is that more URM students who successfully complete the A-G coursework series are attending low feeder schools than non-URM students.

**Equity Analysis**

Figure 1 describes the percent of public high schools where URM students experienced inequality in UC applications in comparison to their representation among all UC applications at their high schools. At nearly one quarter (24%) of the state’s public high schools, URM representation among all UC applicants was less than their representation among the school’s A-G graduates. In contrast, non-URM students experience inequality in UC applications in relation to their representation among their schools’ total A-G graduates at only 6 percent of high schools (data not shown).

**Figure 1: Percent of Public High Schools Where URM Experience Inequality of UC Applications**

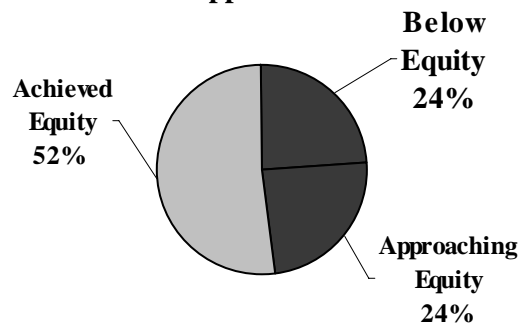


Figure 2 displays how URM students fare in equality of access to the UC application process across schools categorized by the ratio of their expected ELC students to the actual UC applications. URM students experience inequality at 31 percent of the schools that sent UC applications equal to more than four times the amount of estimated ELC students.

**Figure 2 -- Percent of Schools Where URM Students Experience Inequality in UC Applications**

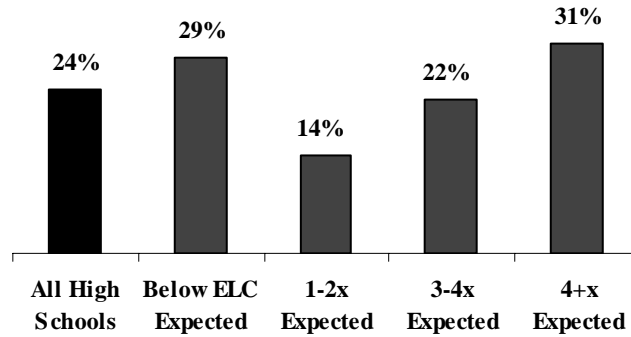
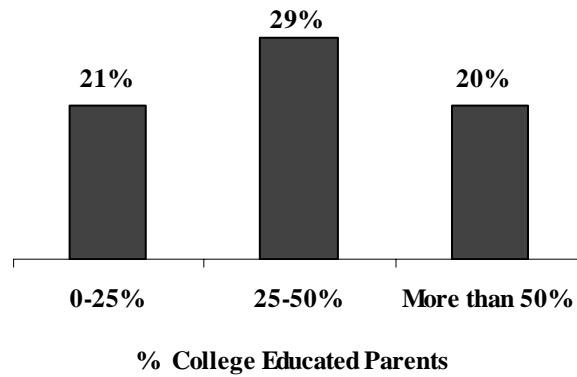
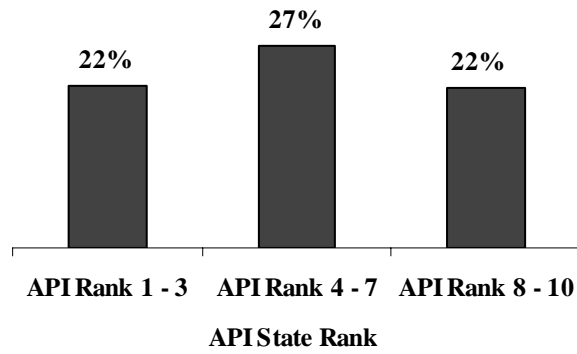
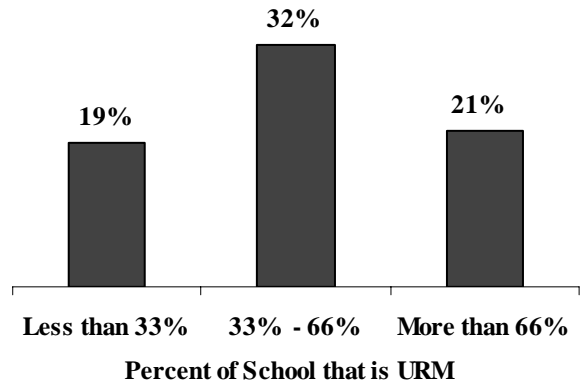


Figure 3 shows how inequality experienced by URM students is associated with school characteristics but not in the expected manner. Looking across schools of racial composition, API state rank and parental education status, the data show that the relationship is not linear. Instead, schools that are integrated both racially and socio-economically are the locations where URM students are more likely to experience inequality of UC applications relative to their representation among these schools' A-G graduates. Underrepresented students experience inequality at nearly one-third of the public schools where 33 to 66 percent of their student bodies are underrepresented minority students. Likewise, URM students experience inequality at 27 percent of public schools ranked 4 through 7 on the state's Academic Performance Index. Finally, URM students experience inequality at 29 percent of the schools where there are, on average, moderate amounts of students with highly educated parents.

**Figure 3: Percent of Schools Where URM Students Experience Inequality in UC Applications by School Characteristics**



## **Conclusion**

Proponents of race-conscious admissions policies who are critics of the ELC program have argued that four percent is too small a proportion to have an impact on reaching disadvantaged students throughout California. Indeed, the results here show that, on average, only 16 students per high school can potentially become UC eligible through the ELC program. Likewise, at nearly 50 percent of state's schools, only 10 to 19 students can potentially become UC eligible through the ELC program. The analysis also showed that a full 75 percent of the high schools already send three or more times the UC applicants than the number of students estimated by the ELC program. Only comparison data can show whether this was the case before the ELC program was in place but it likely to be so. Still, the fact that a full 22 percent of schools barely meet their estimated ELC student number should be cause for concern.

Completing the A-G coursework series is one of the first steps on the road to UC and it is well known that URM students who graduate from the state's public schools are less likely to have completed this coursework series in comparison to Asian and white students. Low rates of A-G completion explain much of the variation in overall racial-ethnic UC application rates, no doubt. However, the analysis presented here demonstrated that disparities in applications persist among students who complete the A-G coursework series attending the same schools. That is, in nearly one quarter of the state's schools, URM students' representation among their school's UC applications is less than their representation among their school's A-G graduates. This inequity is particularly acute at high feeder schools, middle performing schools and schools that are racially and socio-economically integrated.

The latter results are particularly disturbing but hardly surprising. Despite efforts to promote college going cultures throughout high schools along with a movement toward de-tracking in general, schools are stratified (see Lucas 1999). As Oakes and Guiton (1995) pointed more than 10 years ago "schools treat a fairly fixed fraction of their students as college bound" and this mindset is hard to change. Given the tendency for URM students to come from families with lower levels of parental education, it is easy to see how URM students would be left standing at the bottom of the UC-opportunity ladder when they attend integrated high schools, even if they have completed the A-G coursework series. For example, the lower than average parental education of Latino families, for example, results in Latino students virtually dependent on their schools for information on UC requirements and application. The UC entry-rate for Latinos statewide is 3.4 despite their UC eligibility rate having increased to 6.5 percent (CPEC



2005). Perhaps many of these missing Latino students attended CSU instead. In conclusion, California has a long way to go to remove racial-ethnic disparities in UC-entry rates both among and within high schools.

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