

An Analysis of the Effects of Proposition 209 Upon the University of California

A Working (draft) Paper
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There has been growing pressure on both the University of California and the state legislature to find some way around the prohibition on racial admissions preferences created by Prop 209. Yet there has been no institutional effort by either the state or the university to assess, in any objective, factual way, the actual impact Prop 209 has had upon racial minorities. For the past three years, I have been leading an effort to conduct such an assessment, and there is now a team of social scientists who have obtained access to comprehensive data and are preparing a series of studies on the impact of Prop 209. Although much of this work is still in progress, the findings to date suggest that Prop 209 has had an overwhelmingly positive effect on the education blacks and Hispanics receive at the University of California.

Consider the following changes:

1) Freshman enrollment. In 1997, the last year before Prop 209 went into effect at the University of California, 917 blacks enrolled as freshmen across the university. By the fall of 2008, this number had risen to 1,427 – a 56% increase. In 1997, 3,131 Hispanics enrolled as UC freshmen; by 2008, this number had risen to 6,826 – a 118% increase. During the same period, aggregate UC freshmen matriculants of all other races have increased by 50%. In other words, black and Hispanic freshman enrollment at UC has grown *faster* than that of other groups since Prop 209.

2) Transfer enrollment. The number of non-URM California college students transferring into the UC system rose 49% from 1997 to 2008. The number of black transfers rose faster – by 60% -- and the number of Hispanic transfers rose fastest of all – by 114%.

3) Applications and yield. The increases in URM enrollment have been propelled by rapid increases in applications from URMs since the passage of Prop 209. Research I have conducted with Dr. Antonovics, a labor economist at UCSD, suggest that blacks and Hispanics became more likely to accept offers of admission from UC colleges after Prop 209 passed. In other words, we have found strong evidence that Prop 209 created a “warming effect” on minority attitudes towards UC, rather than the “chilling effect” often suggested.

Why have blacks and Hispanics become more interested in attending UC colleges since Prop 209? Two reasons seem intuitively obvious. First, minority applicants realize that a college degree is more valuable when employers believe a student did not receive any preference into the school granting a degree. The absence of preferences removes a stigma associated with being a beneficiary of affirmative action. Second, minority applicants realize that, without affirmative action, there is less chance that they will be “mismatched” – i.e., placed into a college where their credentials are so far below those of their classmates that they are at a great academic disadvantage, and are less likely to survive in a difficult major or even graduate.

We are still researching the extent of these phenomena, but the broad trends in the UC system are strong evidence of their importance.

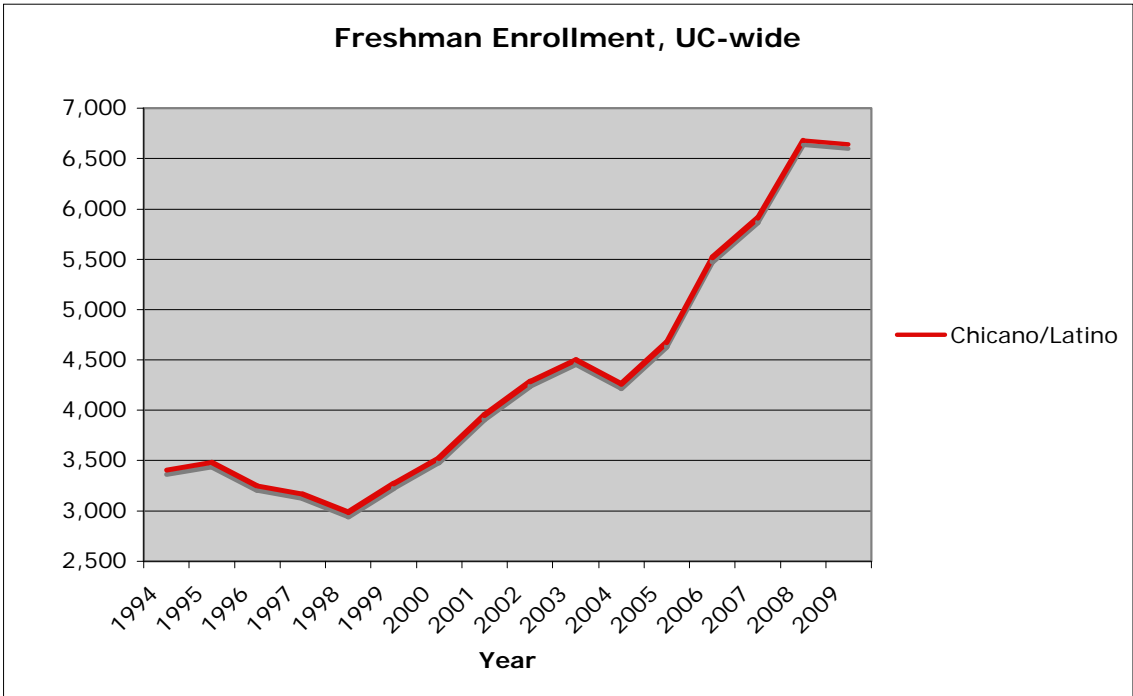
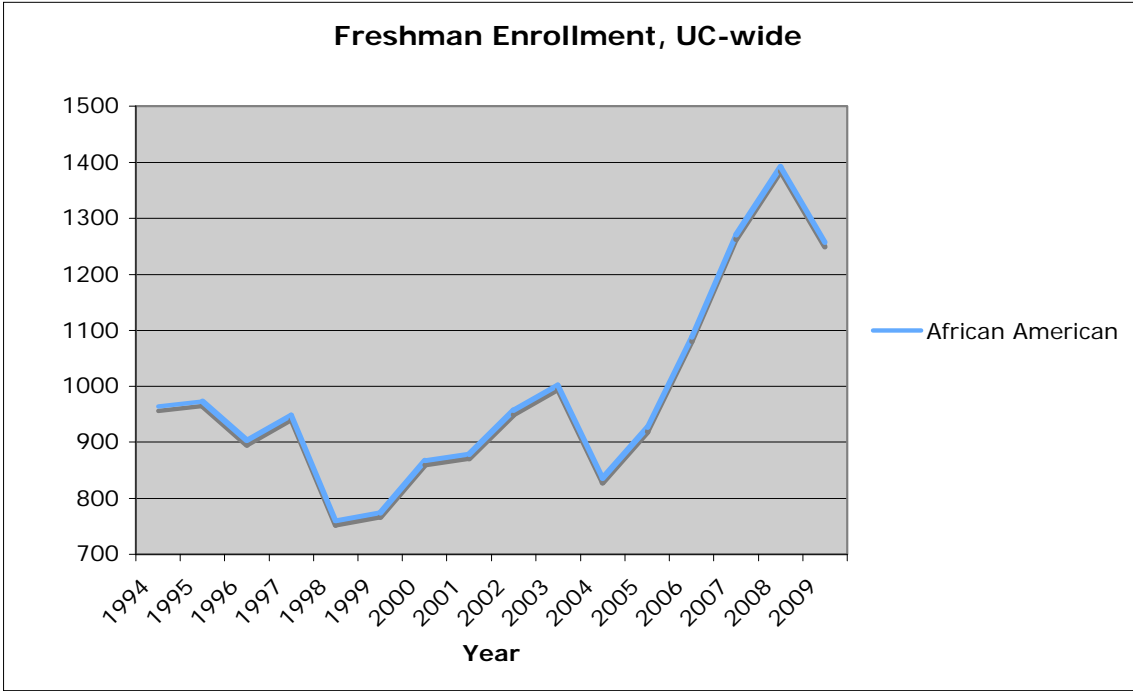
4) Graduation trends. URM graduation rates have improved sharply since Prop 209 went into effect. For the six cohorts of black freshmen who started at UC campuses before Prop 209 went into effect (the matriculating years of 1992 through 1997), the average 4-year graduation rate was only 22.2%. For the years since 1998 (matriculating years 1998 through 2005), the black 4-year graduation rate across the UC system is 39.4% -- a near doubling. For Hispanics the 4-year graduation numbers are 27.2% for 1992-97, and 41.8% for 1998-2005. Six-year graduation rates have risen as well, though less dramatically. Combined with the matriculation trends described above, the number of black and Hispanics graduating from the UC system has been rising steadily and remarkably. For example, the number of black students who matriculated at UC campuses in 2005 and graduated in 2009 was over *two-and-a-half times* higher than the number of blacks who earned 4-year degrees annually in the early 1990s.

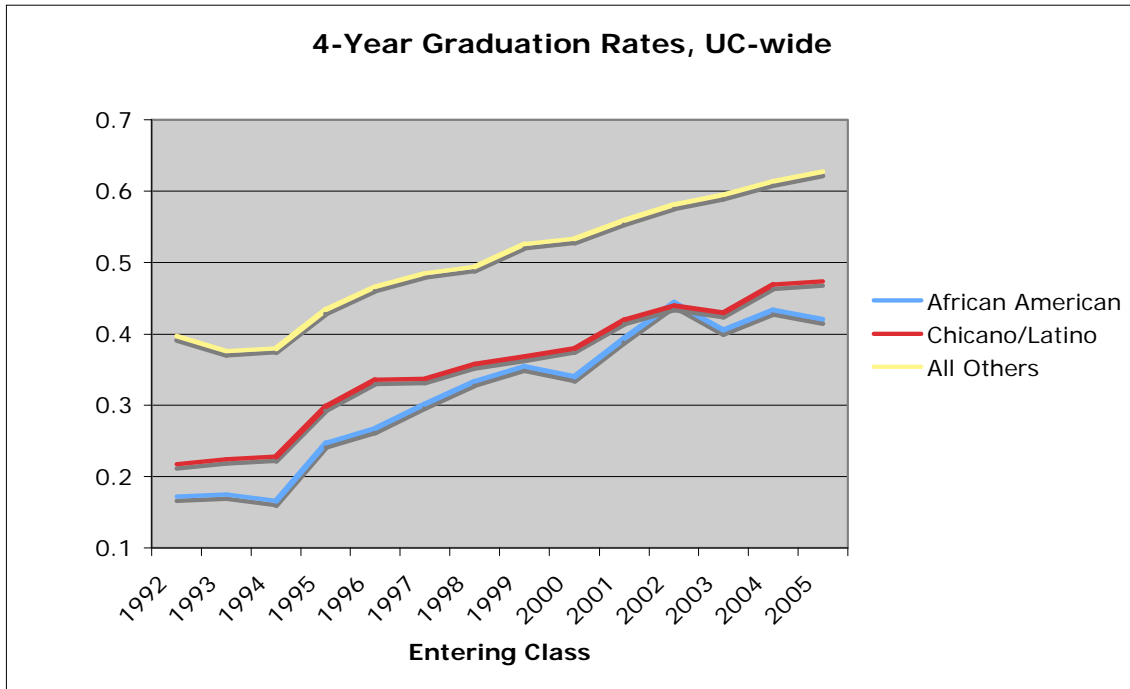
5) GPA trends. Reducing the use of preferences has directly contributed to a decline in GPA gaps between URM students and their white and Asian peers. At many campuses, the GPA gap between blacks and whites has fallen by more than 40% since the implementation of Prop 209. The decline is smaller but still substantial for Hispanics.

6) Science and engineering majors. Rising GPAs for black and Hispanic undergraduates at UC is linked, in turn, to rising numbers of students concentrating in the sciences. In the 1990s, poor academic performance often led URM science majors to switch to less competitive majors or to drop out of college altogether. Those changes are substantially less common now. The number of Hispanic graduates in science and engineering rose by more than 25% in the years after Prop 209; the proportion of graduating blacks with science and engineering majors has risen as well. This trend continues to build; *over one-third of all Hispanics who enrolled as UC freshmen in 2008 intended to major in science or engineering*.

7) Integration. Despite oft-heard complaints that Prop 209 "reseggregated" UC colleges, the actual effect was just the opposite. Black and Hispanic students are more evenly spread across the various UC campuses now than was the case before Prop 209. The index of dissimilarity for blacks and non-blacks across the (then) eight UC undergraduate campuses fell from about .21 to about .18 after Prop 209.

In terms of any substantive outcome one can identify, blacks and Hispanics are faring better now in the UC system than they were before Prop 209. It is obviously vital for state legislators to understand the facts on the ground in California higher education before making policy changes that could do much more harm than good. I would be happy to work with the Committee or any it designates to develop a careful, fact-based assessment of the impact Prop 209's preference ban has had on higher education in California.

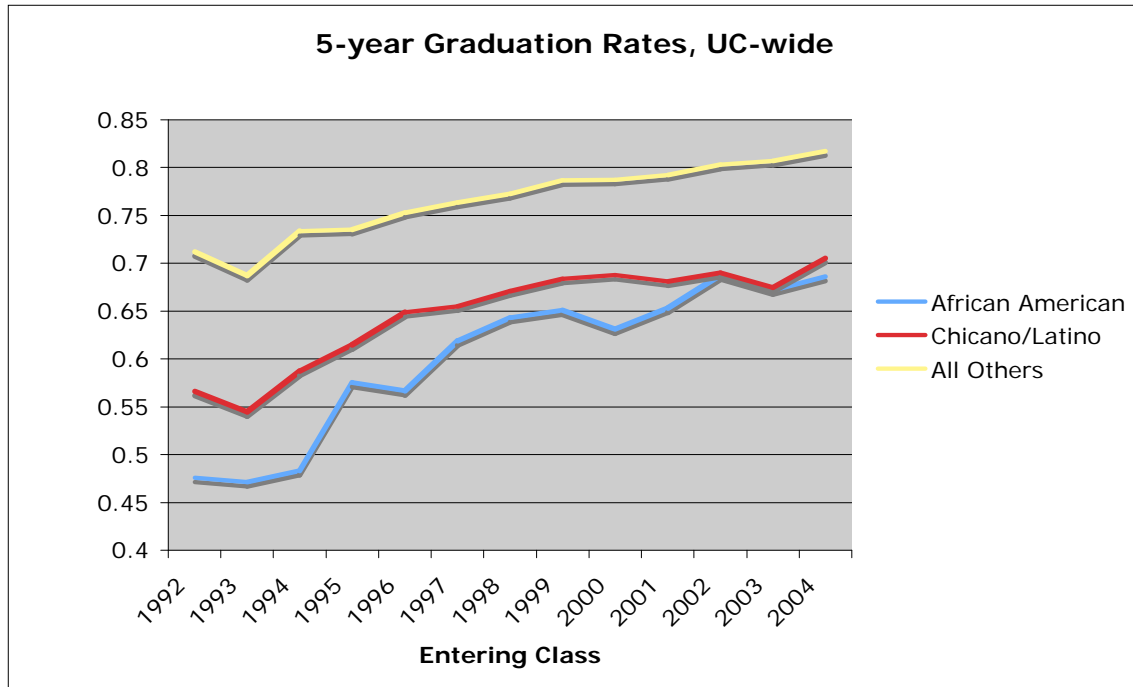




4-year Graduation Rates			
Year	African American	Chicano/Latino	All Others*
1992	17.2	21.7	39.7
1993	17.5	22.4	37.5
1994	16.6	22.8	38.0
1995	24.7	29.8	43.5
1996	26.7	33.5	46.6
1997	30.1	33.7	48.5
1998	33.3	35.7	49.5
1999	35.4	36.8	52.6
2000	34	38	53.3
2001	39.4	42	55.9
2002	44.4	44	58.1
2003	40.6	43	59.5
2004	43.4	46.9	61.4
2005	42.1	47.4	62.8

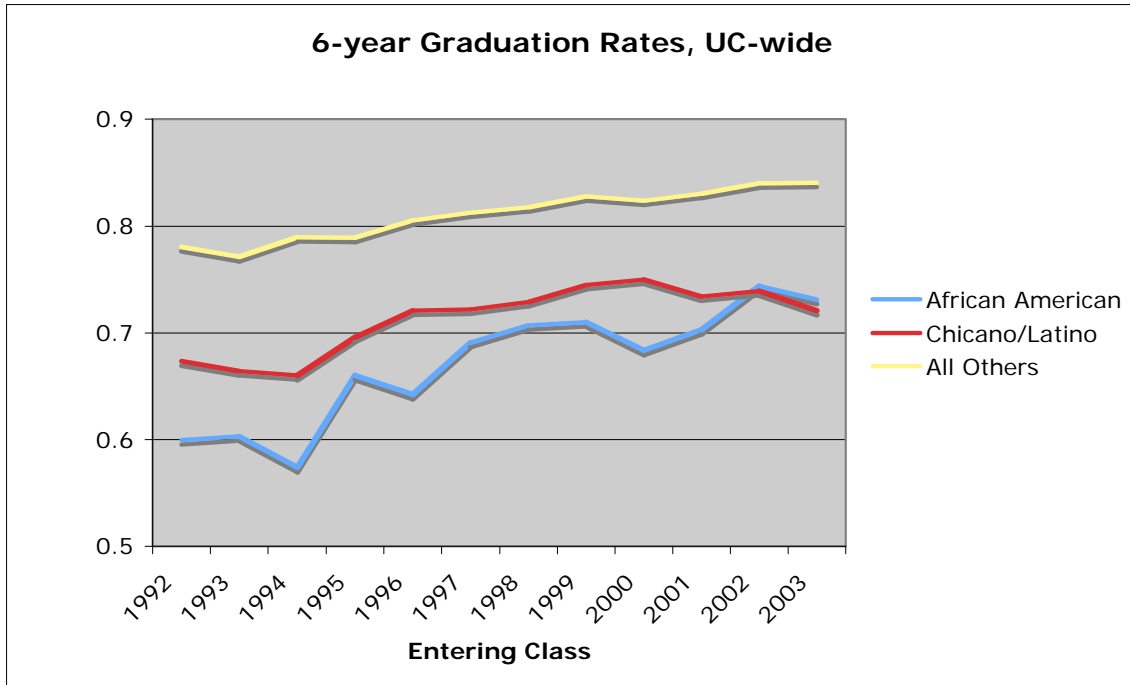
*All Others excludes foreign students.

Mean 4-year Graduation Rates			
Years	African American	Chicano/Latino	All Others*
1992-1997	0.22	0.27	0.42
1998-2005	0.39	0.42	0.56
Total	0.17	0.15	0.14



5-year Graduation Rates			
Year	African American	Chicano/Latino	All Others
1992	47.6	56.6	71.2
1993	47.1	54.5	68.7
1994	48.3	58.7	73.4
1995	57.5	61.5	73.5
1996	56.7	64.9	75.3
1997	61.9	65.5	76.3
1998	64.3	67.1	77.3
1999	65.1	68.4	78.7
2000	63.1	68.8	78.7
2001	65.3	68.1	79.2
2002	68.8	69	80.3
2003	67.2	67.5	80.7
2004	68.6	70.5	81.7

*All Others excludes foreign students.



6-year Graduation Rates			
Year	African American	Chicano/Latino	All Others
1992	59.9	67.3	78.0
1993	60.3	66.4	77.1
1994	57.4	66	78.9
1995	66	69.6	78.9
1996	64.2	72.1	80.5
1997	69.1	72.2	81.2
1998	70.7	72.9	81.8
1999	71	74.5	82.8
2000	68.3	75	82.4
2001	70.3	73.4	83.0
2002	74.4	73.9	84.0
2003	73.1	72.1	84.1

*All Others excludes foreign students.