

September 20, 2000

ACADEMIC COUNCIL CHAIR COWAN

Dear Michael:

I am writing to ask the Academic Council to consider a major change in the University of California's approach to eligibility and admission. I propose establishing an alternative path, to be called the "dual admission program," to supplement our current admission process. This new program is designed to strengthen our relations with the California Community Colleges (CCC), and, in turn, better prepare students transferring to UC from community colleges. Most important, it would send a clear signal to high-achieving students in low-performing high schools, many of whom are underrepresented minorities, that they have a clear path to a UC degree.

At present, UC policy enables students to become UC-eligible in two ways, either by ranking in the top 12½ percent of all California high school graduates (statewide eligibility) or by ranking in the top 4 percent of the graduates from their individual high schools. All eligible students are guaranteed admission to a UC campus. Under the dual admission plan, students who fall between the top 4 percent and the top 12½ percent of their high school class, but are not statewide-eligible, would be admitted simultaneously to a community college and a UC campus. After satisfactorily fulfilling their freshman and sophomore requirements at a community college, they would complete their upper-division studies at the UC campus to which they were admitted earlier. The dual admission plan would not expand the freshman eligibility pool beyond the established 12.5 percent Master Plan level. It would, however, create a closer link between UC and the community college system and ensure a more effective transfer process as envisioned by the Master Plan.

No student would be disadvantaged under this plan; those students who qualify under current UC-eligibility criteria would continue to be guaranteed admission to a UC campus. The principal beneficiaries would be high-achieving students at low-performing high schools. This plan would help the State do more to assist these students--all of whom excel in their high schools--to complete their academic careers.

The dual admission plan would result in other benefits to the State:

- There is a high concentration of underrepresented minorities in low-performing high schools. Consequently, significantly more African American, Hispanic and Native American students would be given the opportunity to earn a UC degree.
- UC outreach staff would work with high school students to help them take advantage of the dual admission plan. Community college and UC staff would develop joint outreach programs to provide dual admission students with ongoing academic advising and career counseling.

- The CCC and UC would develop an integrated financial aid system which ensures that needy students take full advantage of the Cal Grant program and other sources of financial support to which they are entitled.

Implementation of this proposal would present challenges in the areas of enrollment planning, admissions management, curriculum development, and coordination of student services. For example, the proposal envisions a significant new commitment by community college and UC faculty to collaborate on strengthening and overseeing core lower-division curricula. The potential benefits of the plan, however, justify shouldering these burdens. The plan would enable UC to meet the enrollment goals set forth in its Partnership Agreement with the State to increase the number of community college transfers to 15,300 students by 2005-06. It would also ensure that these students have the academic preparation, financial aid, and counseling necessary to succeed at CCC and UC. Most important, its adoption would send a strong signal to students who have excelled academically in disadvantaged high schools that they have a real opportunity to attend UC and earn a UC degree.

I have asked staff to begin analyses of specific issues that the dual admission plan raises. I will share with you these analyses as they become available.

I respectfully request that the Academic Council refer this proposal to BOARS for its consideration. Provost King and I are scheduled to meet with BOARS on October 11 and look forward to discussing this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Atkinson
President

cc: Provost King