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## **HOW CALIFORNIA DETERMINED ADMISSIONS POOLS: LOWER AND UPPER DIVISION STUDENT TARGETS AND THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

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*This brief was developed at the request of University of California President Richard Atkinson as a background paper for the deliberations by the UC Board of Regents regarding potential changes in admissions policy.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education made a number of recommendations in the area of admissions. Key was a proposed target of at least 60% of all undergraduate students being at the upper division level at the University of California and what became the California State University system. At the time, approximately 51 percent of the instruction at both UC and the State Colleges (CSU) were at the upper division. It was assumed that there was a high correlation between upper division instruction and the status of undergraduates as Juniors and Seniors. The plan, subsequent actions by the Board of Regents, and amendments to the California Education Code, reinforce the general concept that the 40/60 ratio is a minimum target, with the 40 percent a ceiling, and the 60 percent upper division a floor. This paper was developed at the request of the UC Office of the President and outlines the development of this policy and its key role in setting current UC and CSU admissions pools.

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**A. Summary:**

The 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education made a number of recommendations in the area of admissions. Key was a proposed target of at least 60% of all undergraduate students being at the upper division level at UC and what became CSU. At the time, approximately 51 percent of the instruction at both UC and the State Colleges (CSU) were at the upper division. It was assumed that there was a high correlation between upper division instruction and the status of undergraduates as Juniors and Seniors.

The plan, subsequent actions by the Board of Regents, and amendments to the California Education Code, reinforce the general concept that the 40/60 ratio is a minimum target, with the 40 percent a ceiling, and the 60 percent upper division a floor.

**B. The 1960 Master Plan and the Purpose of the 40/60 Target:**

The target of 40/60 lower to upper division was set for three interrelated reasons:

1. To provide a mechanism and guide to raising admissions standards at both UC and the State Colleges. For UC this resulted in changing its freshman eligibility pool from the top 15 percent of high school graduates, to the top 12.5 percent.
2. To create a formal mechanism to increase transfer rates to UC and CSU at the junior level largely from California's Community Colleges and private institutions.
3. To then allow for a significant redirection of high school graduates to the Community Colleges with lower operating costs (they projected about 50,000 students by 1975), and a greater focus by both UC and CSU on transfer rates and on upper division courses. The goal was to reduce costs while maintaining socio-economic mobility and enhancing the already vibrant transfer function.

Hence, the 40/60 target drove the rationale for our present day high school graduate eligibility pools for UC and CSU.

The origin of the target goes back to three earlier post-World War II planning studies that called for increases in upper division students. During the Master Plan negotiations, Glenn Dumke (President of San Francisco State) made the proposal to set a distinct target for upper division students, and to then redefine the eligibility pool for both UC and the State Colleges. (See Appendix 1.)

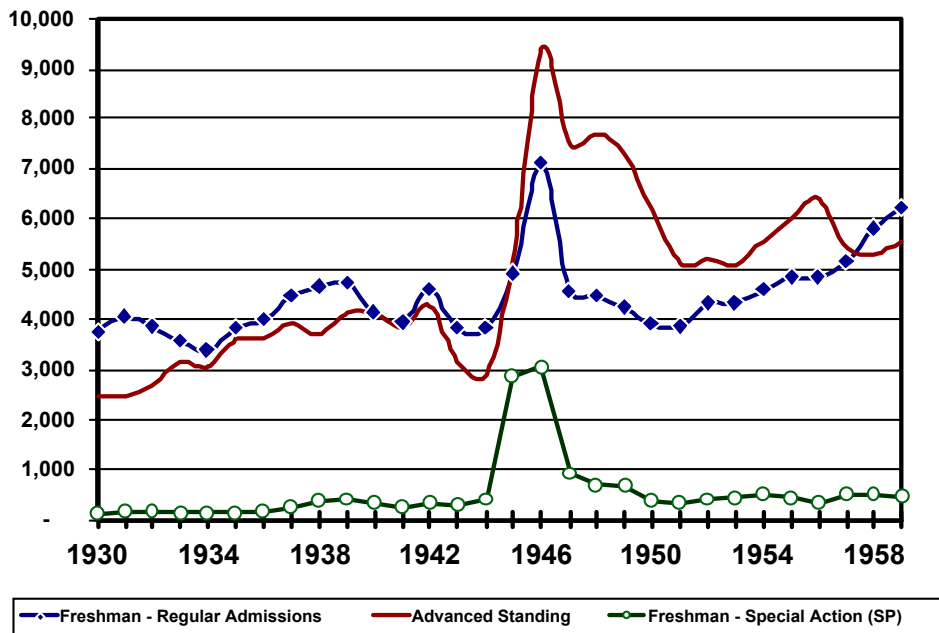
According to 1960 Master Plan, the 40/60 target was to be accomplished gradually by 1975. Further, it was intended to be a target for the entire UC and CSU system, in recognition of the varying programs and regional draw of individual campuses. For example, within the UC system, both UCLA and Berkeley had extremely high junior year level transfers rates throughout the post-World War II years, and really beginning in the 1930s. As new campuses were established in the UC system, they tended to focus on freshman admission.

In all areas of admissions, the 1960 Master Plan proposed significant interpretive flexibility by the respective governing boards of UC and CSU. The intent was to allow for adjustments to fiscal conditions and the social needs of the state.

For example, in proposing new admission standards at the freshmen level, the Master Plan recommended that UC and CSU:

- "Select from" and "typically admit" freshman from their high school graduate eligibility pools.
- "Define" their eligibility pools.

### Regular, Advanced Standing (Junior-Year Transfers), and Special Action Admissions at UC Berkeley and UCLA, 1930-1960



Source: Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools. Representative Assembly Minutes, October 25, 1960.

- Investigate alternative forms of admissions outside the eligibility pool should be used at the discretion of the segments (e.g., special admissions, sometime also referred to as special action).

There is no formal statement within the 1960 Master Plan whether the 40/60 target is simply a goal, a fixed target, or a floor. However, the debate over this issue during the negotiation of the plan suggests the following:

The 40/60 target was intended to be a floor required to maintain healthy transfer rates, but with the ability of the respective governing boards to increase the percentage of upper division students and/or courses beyond this floor.

It is also important to note that any additional expansion at the upper division level should not come at the cost of the eligibility pool of 12.5% for UC and 33.3% for CSU. This was the general sentiment of the Master Plan Survey Team and subsequent reviews of transfer rates. (See Appendix 2 for excerpts of the 1960 Master Plan related to admissions).

#### C. Subsequent Interpretation of the 40/60 Target:

Subsequent Master Plan reviews and related legislation have reiterated the idea of the 60% upper division level as a policy floor – in essence, a minimal standard for assuring a healthy transfer function deemed essentially to California's public tripartite higher education system.

It is important to note that the 1960 Master Plan only provided recommendations to the Board of Regents, the State Board of Education, and the California Legislature. The two boards "approved in principle" the negotiated plan and took a number of actions to establish new policies.

In the area of admissions, the two boards (and the subsequent Trustees of what became CSU) agreed to the revised eligibility pools for each segment, and to meet the 40/60 target. UC also reduced special action admissions from a systemwide average of about 10 percent to a mere 2 percent (later raising it to 4 and then 6 percent by 1972).

*Master Plan Reviews:*

In regard to formal state sanctioned reviews of the Master Plan, there have been three major studies. Each has provided recommendations and statements regarding Community College transfer rates. The 1972 review “The California Master Plan for Higher Education in the Seventies and Beyond,” chaired by Joseph Platt and under the auspices of the Coordinating Council for California Higher Education, made the following recommendation:

Each public senior segment of California higher education shall determine the appropriate mix of lower division/upper division students, but such mix shall provide adequate spaces for all eligible transfer students from the California Community Colleges and shall not provide less than 30 nor more than 40 percent of total undergraduates in lower division.

The subsequent 1973 report of the joint legislative committee chaired by State Assemblyman John Vascencellos provided the following recommendation:

The University of California and California State University and Colleges shall continue to maintain a ceiling of 40% lower division students (we intend this to be a ceiling, not a floor; a campus may fall below 40% or even eliminate the lower division if circumstances justify).

The 1987 review “The Master Plan Renewed,” and chaired by J. Gary Shansby, provided a report to the legislature and governor that assumed a decline in enrollment demand. Under the subject of “Achievement and maintenance of 40 percent ceiling on lower-division enrollment as a percentage of total undergraduate enrollment at UC and CSU,” the report stated that:

If lower-division students who would otherwise enroll at a UC campus choose instead to enroll first in a Community College, there will be a reduction in total UC enrollment and a corresponding reduction in state cost equivalent to the differences in UC and Community College lower-division costs. If, however, UC increases its enrollment of upper-division (transfer) students to compensate for the decline in lower-division enrollment, UC support costs will not change, and state costs will actually increase with the increase in Community College enrollment. In the long run, however, implementation of this recommendation should result in significant savings to the state by reducing UC lower-division enrollment growth and encouraging many more students to obtain their lower-division instruction at a Community College.

Appendices 3, 4 and 5 provide relevant excerpts from these three studies.

*Legislative Action:*

In regard to legislative action, admissions policy has largely been left to the discretion of the segments – in part in deference to the segments and their need to manage enrollment and buttressed by the proactive detail of the Master Plan; and in part because of the constitutional autonomy of the UC Board of Regents.

The 1960 Donahoe Act provided almost exclusively a statement on the mission and governance of the public tripartite higher education system. It made no reference to new admissions policies. Subsequent legislation, including revisions to the Education Code, make no statement regarding eligibility pools – a little known fact.

Not until 1991 was the 40/60 target incorporated as a “goal” into an amendment to the Education Code. This came action followed a decline in transfer rates to the University of California. CSU had quickly met its target by the late-1960s or so. Similarly, UC met the target by 1973. However, transfer rates to UC began to decline by the late 1970s. Upper division students reached a low of 53 percent by the mid- and

late-1980s. The ratio at UC increased by the early 1990s to approximately 60 percent, and following the addition of two new provisions in the Education Code in 1991:

66201.5. It is the intent of the Legislature that both the University of California and the California State University shall seek to maintain an undergraduate student population composed of a ratio of lower division to upper division students of 40 to 60 percent. Consistent with Section 66201, it is the intent of the Legislature that the University of California and the California State University reach and maintain this goal by instituting programs and policies that seek to increase the number of transfer students rather than by denying places to eligible freshmen applicants.

66730. a.2. Commencing in the 1991-92 academic year, the University of California shall progressively increase the percentage that upper division enrollment systemwide is of total undergraduate enrollment through the 1995 -96 academic year until that percentage reaches approximately 60 percent. This shall be accomplished through increases in the numbers of community college transfer students admitted to upper division standing at the university without denying eligible freshmen applicants. Planning documents shall reflect these expected increases.

#### Sources:

CSHE Master Plan Webservice (prototype):

[http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/uchistory/archives\\_exhibits/masterplan/index.html](http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/uchistory/archives_exhibits/masterplan/index.html)

John Aubrey Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education, 1850 to the 1960 Master Plan* (Stanford University Press, 2000)

John A. Douglass, "Anatomy of Conflict: The Making and Unmaking of Affirmative Action at the University of California," chapter in David Skrentny (ed.) *Color Lines: Affirmative Action, Immigration and Civil Rights Options for America* (University of Chicago Press, 2001).

A Report of a Survey of the Needs of California in Higher Education, 1948

Restudy of the Needs of California in Higher Education, 1955

A Study of the Need for Additional Centers of Public Higher Education in California, 1957

A Master Plan for Higher Education in California, 1960-1975

The 1967-69 Joint Committee Legislative Committee on Higher Education

The California Master Plan for Higher Education in the Seventies and Beyond, 1972

Report of the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education, 1973

The Master Plan Renewed: Unity, Equity, Quality, and Efficiency in California Postsecondary Education, 1987

1991 Amendment to the California State Education Code: Chapter 1188

1991 Amendment to the California State Education Code: Chapter 1198

## Appendix 1.

### *The California Idea and American Higher Education*

By John Aubrey Douglass

pp. 282-284

#### **Excerpt Related to the Establishment of the 40/60 Target**

Browne initially argued that the university should reduce its admission pool, while the state colleges should enlarge theirs. But it was not long before Dumke noted his concern that the state colleges should, along with the university, reduce their own admission pool. He now distanced himself from Browne's projections and offered this as a formal proposal. The raising of university and state college admissions standards would both reduce costs to the state and increase the overall quality of students attending the state colleges. It would shift prospective students to the junior colleges with the promise that they could matriculate onto either the university or the state colleges. McHenry and university officials agreed with Dumke's proposal. Despite the difficult opening discussion on eligibility, a general agreement was in the making. Two questions remained: what should be the revised admission pool for the university and the state colleges; and how might the state support the subsequent expansion of the junior colleges to accommodate more students. The answer would have a tremendous impact on the flow of students through California's higher education system, and the personal lives of thousands of Californians.

The benefits of diverting more lower-division students to the junior colleges appeared substantial to the survey team. It would certainly make the final Master Plan recommendations more politically attractive. "The probability is that capital outlay for the junior colleges will be much lower than for the other segments," explained McHenry, and "even if instructional costs should prove equal, this fact plus the saving to parents and students through living at home would argue for considerable cost savings to the state and its residents . . . Further, junior colleges are better able to screen and do remedial work and counseling than are the other segments."<sup>1</sup> In light of the strong sense of competition between the state colleges and the university, Dumke, McHenry and Coons agreed that the shift of students needed to be equitable, and at the same time not overburden the junior colleges. To make the plan work, the survey team concluded that state government would need to compensate local districts by providing additional funds for junior college operations and capital costs.

The survey team looked to their technical committee on "Selection and Retention of Students," chaired by Herman A. Spindt, for recommendations on how to accomplish an equitable shift in students to the junior colleges. Dumke proposed that Spindt consider establishing a mandated ratio for both the university and the state colleges of approximately one lower to two upper division students within both the university and the state colleges. They discussed the figures of approximately 33 percent lower division to 66 percent upper division. By establishing this mandate for each campus, it would insure that state college and the university focus on upper division courses and students. Spindt's committee, however, returned several weeks later with an unexpected answer. There "should be no attempt to control the size of the lower division in the university and the state colleges on the basis of the 'floor' type of admissions procedure," stated Spindt. The desired enrollment shift could be achieved, he insisted, on a voluntary basis, by having "all public four-year colleges participate whole-heartedly in a 'persuasive guidance' program aimed at increasing the proportion of freshmen and sophomores attending the junior colleges." The survey team rejected this innocuous recommendation. There needed to be a clear stated policy on admissions, and a set percentage of lower to upper division students, they concluded. It offered the best method to insure a shift in students.<sup>2</sup>

In November, less than two months before the Master Plan was due before the legislature, an agreement was reached on admissions that would have far reaching implications for California's higher education system. The survey team met on the Occidental College campus and proceeded to adopt Dumke's

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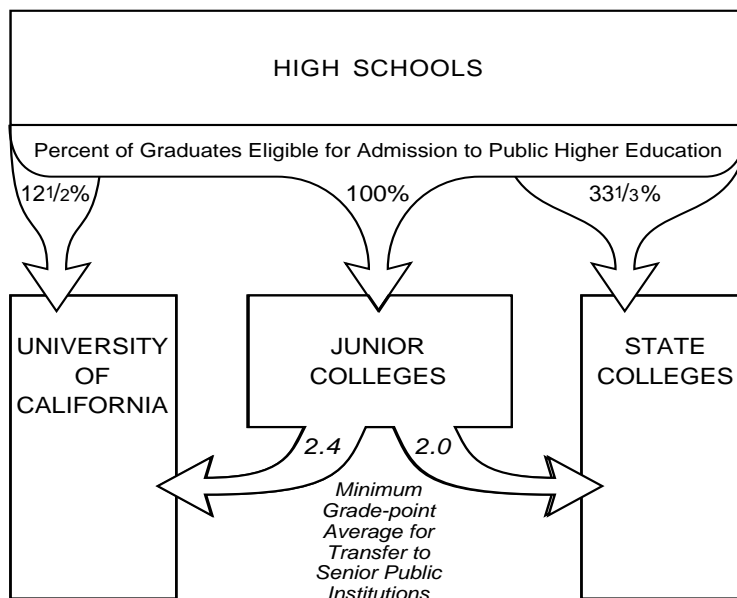
<sup>1</sup> Master Plan Survey Team Minutes, July 29-30, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> "Major Recommendations of the Technical Committee on Selection and Retention of Students, With Comments by the Master Plan Team," as presented to the Liaison Committee, October 14, 1959.

approach. They first determined the current ratio of lower- to upper-division students within state colleges and the university. Taken together California's public institutions enrolled approximately 180,000 full-time students. Of these students, 88,000 (72,000 undergraduates and 16,000 graduate students) attended the state colleges and the university. In both segments, lower-division students represented approximately 51 percent of the undergraduate population. The survey team agreed that "the percentage of undergraduates in the lower division of each segment [be] reduced to approximately ten percentage points below that [projected] in 1960." This eventually boiled down to a stated policy that would drive new admissions standards and shift students to the junior colleges: the university and the state colleges would have 40 percent lower-division students (freshman and sophomores), and 60 percent upper division (juniors and seniors).

Based on this shift in ratios for the year 1960, Carl Frisen of the Department of Finance determined that the university would no longer be able to draw from the top 15 percent of California high school graduates, but from the top 12.5 percent. Similarly, the state colleges would need to shift from approximately the top 40 percent to the top 33.3 percent.<sup>3</sup> Here was the basis for California's contemporary policy on admission to the state's four-year public institutions – a choice heavily conditioned by the need to reduce costs to taxpayers, yet to also maintain educational opportunity.

Figure 10.C.  
**Master Plan Agreement on Student Admissions**



<sup>3</sup> Master Plan Survey Team Minutes, Occidental College, November 2-4, 1959; *Idem*, University Club, Los Angeles, November 16-18, 1959; *Idem*, Occidental College, November 23-24, 1959.

## Appendix 2.

### 1960 Master Plan

#### Excerpt Related to Admissions Policies for UC and the State Colleges

#### Distribution of Lower Division Students

It is recommended that:

1. In order to implement more fully the action of The Regents of the University of California and the State Board of Education in 1955, "the University of California emphasize policies leading to the reduction of lower division enrollments in relation to those of the upper and graduate divisions, and the state colleges pursue policies which will have a similar effect," the percentage of undergraduates in the lower division of both the state colleges and the University be gradually decreased ten percentage points below that existing in 1960 (estimated to be 51 per cent in both segments) by 1975. It is further recommended that the determination of the means by which this recommendation can best be carried out, be the responsibility of the governing boards.<sup>4</sup>

This influx of population is expected to show net gains of 300,000 or more annually in the years ahead. According to current estimates of the State Department of Finance California's population was 15,280,000 on July 1, 1959, and is expected to increase to over 25,000,000 by 1975.<sup>2</sup> By the year 2020, this state is expected to contain 58,000,000 persons, nearly four times its present population. . . .

The Survey Team has received the general impression that insufficient attention is given to the selection and orientation of transfer students in both the state colleges and the University. Both systems should be asked regularly how their transfer students are doing and whether the standards of 2.0 for the state colleges and 2.4 for the University are high enough for a transfer student who was deficient in high school grades.

1. As a freshman: No graduate from an accredited high school.
2. To upper division work: (a) Students who fail to achieve a "C" average in lower division work; (b) Junior college students who fail to achieve the minimum grade-point average in 56 units of work.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. In order to raise materially standards for admission to the lower division, the state colleges select first-time freshmen from the top one-third<sup>2</sup> (33 1/3 per cent) and the University from the top one-eighth<sup>3</sup> (12 1/2 per cent) of all graduates of California public high schools with the following provisions:
  - a. Continuation of existing special programs and curricula involving exceptions to this rule subject to approval by the respective boards, and these to be kept to a minimum, and those that are continued to be reported annually to the co-ordinating agency. Any new special programs and curricula involving such exceptions to be approved by the co-ordinating agency.
  - b. Graduates of private and out-of-state secondary schools to be held to equivalent levels.

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<sup>4</sup> It is estimated that this recommendation would result in the transfer of some 40,000 lower division students to the junior colleges by 1975. It is expected that the recommendation to select state college students from the upper 33 1/3 per cent of all public high school graduates and the University from the upper 12 1/2 per cent, together with the recommendation that all "limited" students be required to meet regular admission requirements, will make up another 10,000.



- c. Implementation of Recommendation 1 be left to the two systems with the following provisions:
  - d. Each to have the new requirements in force for students admitted for Fall, 1962
  - e. Inasmuch as the Survey Team favors acceptance in both systems of a requirement that all, or almost all, of the recommending units for admission shall be in college preparatory courses, that the application of such a requirement be carefully studied during 1960, and this principle be applied as fully as possible throughout both systems
3. For both the state colleges and the University, freshman admissions through special procedures outside the basic requirements of recommending units of high school work or aptitude tests or both (such as specials and exceptions to the rules) be limited to 2 per cent of all freshman admissions in each system for a given year. Furthermore, that all "limited" students be required to meet regular admission standards.<sup>4</sup>
4. Junior college functions now carried by state colleges and non-degree lower division programs at any state college or University campus (other than extension) be subject to the following rule: The equivalent of junior college out-of-district tuition be charged beginning in Fall, 1960, against the counties of residence of all lower division students who are ineligible to admission by regular standards, and the funds collected paid to the General Fund of the state. Furthermore, that such junior college functions now carried by state colleges at state expense be terminated not later than July 1, 1964, all admittees thereafter being required to meet standard entrance requirements
5. The state colleges and the University require a minimum of at least 56 units of acceptable advanced standing credit before considering the admission of applicants ineligible to admission as freshmen because of inadequate grades in high school, except for curricula that require earlier transfer, 5 and except also that each state college and campus of the University, through special procedures developed by each, be permitted to accept for earlier transfer not more than 2 per cent of all students who make application for advanced standing in any year
6. Undergraduate applicants to the state colleges and the University who are legally resident in other states be required to meet higher entrance requirements than are required of residents of California, such out-of-state applicants to stand in the upper half of those ordinarily eligible. Furthermore, that there be developed and applied a common definition of legal residence for these public segments.
7. A study of the transfer procedures to both the University and the state colleges be undertaken through the co-ordinating agency during 1960 with the view of tightening them. Evidence available to the Master Plan Survey Team indicates the need for such action.
8. A continuing committee on selection, admission, and retention as a part of the co-ordinating agency be established, to make further studies in these fields (see Recommendations 1 and 2 on pages 73 and 74) and to report annually to the appropriate agencies and persons on:
- a. Transfer procedures as indicated in Recommendation
  - b. State college and University procedures in admission to the graduate division
  - e. The desirability of differing standards of admission for the varying programs within each segment of publicly supported institutions
9. Private institutions of higher education in California in the approaching period of heavy enrollments strive for increased excellence by adopting rigorous admission and retention standards.

## Admission Policies

The junior colleges will:

Admit all graduates of California high schools who desire to continue their education and others whose maturity indicates potential success in post-high-school education.

The state colleges will:

1. Admit students who typically rank in the upper 33 1/3 per cent<sup>3</sup> of all graduates of public high schools in California
2. Admit qualified transfer students
3. Admit to graduate study qualified graduates of institutions of higher learning
4. Expand upper division and graduate enrollments faster than the lower division enrollments

The University of California will:

1. Admit students who typically rank in the upper 12 1/2 per cent<sup>4</sup> of all graduates of public high schools in California
2. Admit qualified transfer students
3. Admit to graduate study qualified graduates of institutions of higher learning
4. Expand upper division and graduate enrollments faster than the lower division enrollments

In addition all three segments will:

Meet the special needs of superior students by co-operating with high schools in admitting certain gifted high school seniors to college courses while they are completing their high school work. Already sanctioned by law in the case of the junior colleges and followed by some campuses of the University, the practice should be authorized for the state colleges also.

The Technical Committee suggested the following four common measures of validity:

1. Scholastic success in the first semester or year
2. Continuance in college
3. Rate of dismissal for poor scholastic performance
4. Comparative standing on objective tests

The Technical Committee regards scholastic success as the best single measure of validity. The Survey Team agrees, but prefers the use of several criteria in combination.

## Applying Validity Criteria

The data made available to the Survey Team by the three public segments fall far short of the completeness desired for judging the validity of admissions requirements. Junior college statistics are inadequate as grounds for support of, or opposition to, the existing "open-door" policy that admits students from all levels of ability. State college data cover too short a period and are insufficiently comprehensive. The University figures, while more complete, are weak on testing.

## Scholastic Success

Data from seven state colleges, for 1958-59 (see Technical Committee report), shows that 55 per cent of the freshmen admitted with five recommending units and 54 per cent of those admitted with six failed to make a C average in their first year. The records of those with seven recommending units (47 per cent below C) and with eight (44 per cent below C) indicate marginal validity that should be reinforced by a high score on a standard aptitude test.

Among the alternative University admission plans in use during 1957-58, judging from data in the Technical Committee report, the following are of doubtful validity: six A or B grades in last two years, "exceptions to rules," 12 A or B grades in last three years, and "highest 10 per cent of class."

**Appendix 3.****The California Master Plan for  
Higher Education in the  
Seventies and Beyond, 1972****Excerpts Related to 40/60 Target**

The current Master Plan provides that the two senior segments achieve an internal distribution of undergraduate students systemwide that results in approximately 40 percent of the undergraduates in the lower division (freshman-sophomore) and approximately 60 percent in the upper division (junior-senior) of each segment by 1975. While this provision is not necessary at present to accomplish the original purpose of "diverting" students to the Community Colleges, it is consistent with the Master Plan's emphasis on effective articulation. Both senior segments should give high priority to retaining spaces at the junior level to accommodate all eligible transfers from the Community Colleges. While it may appear to be artificial to establish specific percentage quotas for the two levels of instruction, it is important to reaffirm the policy of accommodating all qualified transfer students if the open door aspect of the system is to be maintained. It is also important that the senior segments' responsibility for lower division instruction within the current Master Plan be reaffirmed so as to avoid an unplanned transition to upper division campuses.

2e. Each public senior segment of California higher education shall determine the appropriate mix of lower division/upper division students, but such mix shall provide adequate spaces for all eligible transfer students from the California Community Colleges and shall not provide less than 30 nor more than 40 percent of total undergraduates in lower division.

## Appendix 4.

### Report of the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education, 1973

#### Excerpts Related to 40/60 Target

The Master Plan specified that relative high school academic achievement, as defined by each segment, would determine access to the University of California (top 12 1/2%) and the California State Colleges (top 33 1/3%). Prior to the Master Plan, the University accepted its students from about the top 15% and the state colleges from approximately the top 50%. The Master Plan recommended 2% exceptions per year in freshman admissions. This was raised to 4% in 1968, with at least half the exceptions reserved for disadvantaged students.

The Master Plan also specified that community colleges should continue to admit any high school graduate or other person over eighteen years of age capable of profiting from the instruction offered. The Master Plan Survey Team decided that:

so long as any high school graduate can be admitted to a junior college, it will not reduce opportunity for students willing and able to meet the requirements for transfer to the upper division in the state colleges and the University of California.<sup>1</sup>

The intent of the authors of the Master Plan was to raise admissions standards in the four-year institutions and thereby divert 50,000 students to the community colleges. They believed this would raise the quality (apparently equated with selectivity) of the four-year colleges and universities.

The Master Plan Survey Team left no comprehensive record of the assumptions underlying its admissions quotas. However, our analysis of the Master Plan and supporting documents suggests the following assumptions were implicit:

- institutional aspirations for greater selectivity should be encouraged the specific quotas 12 1/2% and 33 1/3% could be justified by matching institutional and fiscal resources with projected demands (though rigorous evidence was lacking)
- efficiency in education could best be realized by separating students on the basis of academic ability as conventionally defined (high school grades, class standing and test scores)
- the quality of an educational institution is highly correlated with the quality (again measured by conventional standards) of the students admitted
- the "best" students should have the greatest range of educational options and should receive the "best" education (in terms of dollars spent per student and prestige of the institution)
- segregation of students by ability would minimize dropout rates in the four-year, more expensive institutions
- students begin college immediately upon completion of high school.

Several of these assumptions are at least questionable today. The most serious criticism is that the assumptions were dictated by institutional aspirations rather than by individual needs or any well articulated educational philosophy.

In addition, there is a growing body of educational research which indicates that the most selective colleges have the least effect on students. Highly selective institutions make only a slight difference in the student's college achievements (academic and extracurricular), academic ability, likelihood of completing college, level of education achieved and choice of career. There is almost no empirical basis for the contention that segregating students by ability, as measured by high school achievement, is educationally more effective than other approaches. Neither is there evidence that the standard instruments for predicting college success (grades and standardized tests) are the best possible measures of academic potential. Additionally, the success of specially admitted students raises serious questions about exclusive reliance upon conventional predictive criteria.

In short, we have much to learn about how to match students with institutions which meet their educational needs and capabilities. The most critical element is probably motivation, which is also the most difficult quality to measure. As a spokesman for the California State University and Colleges put it: "Studies involving the predictive power of various preadmissions indices show that in general there has been little improvement made over the past 50 years."<sup>2</sup> We do know that the criteria currently in effect are very highly correlated with ethnic and economic background.

Finally, we note the trend towards defining and utilizing educational outcomes as a basis for evaluation (and financing) of higher education. This makes it questionable whether institutions which accept and graduate the students most likely to succeed (and spend more dollars per student) should be regarded as the "best." As one educational researcher recently put it, ". . . the best way to graduate a bright class is to admit a bright class."<sup>3</sup> But what does this say for the impact of the institution?

In the past, high status has too readily and simply been accorded the institutions which admitted only the "best qualified" learners. Perhaps in the future, the quality of education will be measured instead in terms of "value added." This would emphasize the process of education and take into account what happens to the student between entrance and graduation.

### **Integrated Admissions Policies**

Any alteration of admissions criteria by one institution or segment will impact on the entire system of postsecondary education. These decisions, therefore, should not be made autonomously. It is necessary to establish some central regulation over these policies to assure overall patterns of equal access and to prevent unbridled competition for students. Therefore, we propose that the Legislature initially define the undergraduate eligibility pools for all public segments and that changes in the pools be subject to approval by the Postsecondary Education Commission.

### **Recommendation #23.**

The following admissions criteria shall be adopted:

- A. The California Community Colleges shall accept all applicants who are high school graduates and all adults who can benefit from the instruction offered.
- B. The California State University and Colleges shall select first-time freshmen from among the 33 1/3% of high school graduates most capable of benefiting from the instruction offered.
- C. The University of California shall select first-time freshmen from among the 12 1/2% of high school graduates most capable of benefiting from the instruction offered.
- D. Both the California State University and Colleges and the University of California shall have the flexibility to utilize nontraditional criteria for accepting up to 12 1/2% of their lower division students.

- 1) to meet the objective specified in Recommendation #24

- 2) to conduct controlled experiments designed to identify those students who are most capable of profiting from their instructional programs
- E. Each segment shall report annually to the Legislature through the Postsecondary Education Commission on the use of nontraditional admissions criteria.
  - F. The criteria set forth in this recommendation shall not necessarily be applied to innovative programs designed to serve adults beyond the normal age of college attendance.
  - G. The segments and/or institutions of higher education may with the approval of the Postsecondary Education Commission alter the eligibility pools established in B, and C, and the flexibility level in D above. The conditions which might justify alteration include:
    - 1) new knowledge based upon controlled experiments, carried out within the segments, which might provide a new basis for targeting students most likely to profit from instruction offered
    - 2) capacities of segments and institutions
    - 3) the needs of a geographic area
    - 4) the programs of a specific institution.
  - H. Admissions policies within the parameters specified in these recommendations need not be applied uniformly within each segment. The criteria are sufficiently flexible to allow for and encourage diversity of student mix within multicampus systems.

### **Barriers to College Attendance**

Our achievements in extending equal access have not met our promises. Though we have made considerable progress in the 1960's and 1970's, equality of opportunity in postsecondary education is still a goal rather than a reality. Economic and social conditions and early schooling must be significantly improved before equal opportunity can be realized. But there is much that can be done by and through higher education.

National studies indicate that socioeconomic status is more important than intelligence in determining college attendance. A 1968 study of 10,000 high school graduates in the lowest 40% ability distribution showed that if the student had a father of high level occupation, there was a 57% chance he would attend college, if the student had a father of low level occupation, there was a 20% chance he would attend college.<sup>4</sup> Socioeconomic status was found to be particularly important in determining college attendance patterns for women.

In California, persons from low income families are significantly underrepresented in public higher education.

As indicated in Table III, there is a clear correlation between family income and the segment of California higher education a student attends. The average family income for a University of California student is \$15,160 (nearly the family income for the average student attending a private institution); for a California State University and Colleges student, \$12,330; and a California Community Colleges student, \$11,420.

A similar underrepresentation is evident with ethnic minorities. Blacks, Mexican-Americans and Native Americans represent 22.9% of the state's population. However, they comprise only 17.5% of the day enrollment in the California Community Colleges, 11.9% in the California State University and Colleges and 10.6% in the University of California (See Table IV).

### **Recommendation #24.**

Each segment of California public higher education shall strive to approximate by 1980 the general ethnic, sexual and economic composition of the recent California high school graduates.

- A. This goal shall be achieved by provision of additional student spaces and not by the rejection of any qualified student; the Legislature shall commit the resources necessary to implement this policy.
- B. The institutions and segments shall consider the following methods for fulfilling this policy:
- 1) affirmative efforts to search out and connect with qualified students
  - 2) experimentation to discover alternate means of evaluating student potential
  - 3) augmented student financial assistance programs
  - 4) improved counseling for disadvantaged students
- C. Each segment shall prepare a plan for achieving this objective and report annually to the Postsecondary Education Commission on its progress, including specification as to what obstacles stand in the way of further implementation. The Commission shall integrate and transmit the reports to the Legislature with evaluations and recommendations.

Geography also poses barriers. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has observed that:

- young people who live in suburban areas are more likely to attend college than those
- living in inner cities or in non-metropolitan areas, and that those living in the poverty
- portions of large metropolitan areas are especially unlikely to attend college.<sup>5</sup>

Access problems also exist in rural areas. A recent study which encompassed thirteen northeastern California counties revealed significant unmet desire and demand for postsecondary education services.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, there are barriers related to age. Most educational planning, including projections of financial aids needs, is based upon assumptions about a "college age" population, usually between eighteen and the mid-twenties. Such assumptions create impressions among young people that they should be in postsecondary education whether or not they have need and motivation; older persons are led to believe there is no place for them in postsecondary education. Yet the decision about when to attend postsecondary education should be highly individual. Some people may be ready to benefit from postsecondary education at the age of 17, others would be better served at 45. The Department of Labor estimates that before long the average person will be changing careers three times in a lifetime. This suggests a need for retraining at several ages.

### **Recommendation #28.**

To facilitate the transfer of qualified students from two-year to four-year colleges and universities:

- A. The University of California and California State University and Colleges shall continue to maintain a ceiling of 40% lower division students (we intend this to be a ceiling, not a floor; a campus may fall below 40% or even eliminate the lower division if circumstances justify).
- B. Transfer students who were eligible for admission as freshmen to a four-year segment and who have maintained satisfactory academic standing shall continue to be eligible for admission at any undergraduate level to that segment.
- C. Each campus within the four-year segments of public higher education shall implement measures to insure that upper division transfer students receive parity in admissions and course enrollments with previously enrolled students.
- D. The Postsecondary Education Commission shall assume responsibility for coordinating transfer procedures among the public segments of California higher education.



## **Appendix 5.**

### **The Master Plan Renewed: Unity, Equity, Quality, and Efficiency in California Postsecondary Education, 1987**

#### **Excerpts Related to 40/60 Target**

##### **Recommendation No. 3**

Subject: Achievement and maintenance of 40 percent ceiling on lower-division enrollment as a percentage of total undergraduate enrollment at UC and CSU.

Estimated Savings: Indeterminable.

Assumptions: If lower-division students who would otherwise enroll at a UC campus choose instead to enroll first in a Community College, there will be a reduction in total UC enrollment and a corresponding reduction in state cost equivalent to the differences in UC and Community College lower-division costs. If, however, UC increases its enrollment of upper-division (transfer) students to compensate for the decline in lower-division enrollment, UC support costs will not change, and state costs will actually increase with the increase in Community College enrollment. In the long run, however, implementation of this recommendation should result in significant savings to the state by reducing UC lower-division enrollment growth and encouraging many more students to obtain their lower-division instruction at a Community College.

Data Source: Commission staff estimate based upon UC undergraduate enrollment projection (October 1986) and marginal cost data prepared by the Legislative Analyst and UC.