

American applicants offered admission to UC-Berkeley's law school enrolled in 1997, UCLA and UC-Davis actually admitted more minority students to their medical and life sciences programs in 1997 than they did in 1996.

Several reasons have been proposed for the varied impact of the affirmative action ban on minority admissions. First, decreases in minority admissions to Texas's publicly funded institutions have been uniformly greater than at California's state universities because the statutory nature of Texas's ban prevented officials from following California's lead in using federal research training funds, which carry affirmative action requirements, to blunt the ban's impact. Also, officials in programs where minority admissions dropped have cited their inability to consider factors other than test scores (a measure on which white males consistently out-perform all other groups) before making decisions over whom to select for on-campus interviews and other later, more subjective consideration.

Perhaps the greatest reason underlying reported declines in admissions of black and Hispanic students is the steady decline in the numbers of applicants from these groups. Perhaps discouraged by recent anti-affirmative action policy decisions and court rulings, fewer minority students applied to all surveyed schools in 1997 than did so in 1996.

Officials at UCLA, one of only two surveyed schools which reported increases in minority admissions, attributed its surprising success in attracting black and Hispanic students to "the strong pull the campus has for minorities because it is in an urban center with a high minority population." While not enjoying UCLA's proposed geographic advantage, UC-Davis also admitted more

minority students in 1997 than in 1996 because the small size of its graduate programs allowed officials to evaluate each applicant more thoroughly and subjectively than officials at institutions with larger programs.

While the impact affirmative action bans will have on minority applications or admissions to graduate programs is not yet clear, officials at all surveyed schools have already developed and implemented recruiting programs designed to attract minority applicants. Notable among

these are several schools' efforts to target historically black colleges while recruiting students, and the combined, cooperative B.S./M.D. program Baylor University sponsors with the University of Houston and University of Texas-Pan America.

1. Data on numbers of applicants and admission were obtained from UC-Berkeley, UC-Los Angeles, UC-Davis, UC-San Diego, UC-Irvine, UT-Austin, UT-Southwestern Medical School, and Baylor College of Medicine.

### Washington Insider

- Federal agencies are making their statistical data more accessible and easy to use by putting them on the Internet. Peter Syverson, in an analysis published in the September 1997 issue of the *CGS Communicator*, gives high marks to the Bureau of the Census (<http://www.census.gov/>), National Center for Education Statistics (<http://www.ed.gov/NCES/>), and National Science Foundation (<http://www.nsf.gov/>) for their efforts to provide full and productive access to their databases. Other federal statistics can be accessed at the Fedstats web site (<http://www.fedstats.gov/>).
- On November 9, 1997, the Senate voted unanimously to confirm Bill Ferris as the next Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Ferris, who holds a Ph. D. in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently the director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, was confirmed without a hearing because there was no opposition to his appointment.
- Senators Phil Gramm (R-TX) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) are co-sponsors of the National Research Investment Act (S. 1305), which calls for a doubling of the federal government's investment in research over the next ten years. Current spending on nondefense research accounts for 1.9% of the federal budget, down from 5.7% of the federal budget in 1965. The bill received the endorsement of 106 scientific societies, who issued a statement titled "A Decade of Investment" calling specifically for more support of transportation and sustainable energy research. According to statistics reported in the December 1997 issue of *Science and Technology in Congress Update*, federal expenditures on nondefense R&D will increase by 5.4% in FY 1998.
- The House Science Committee, chaired by F. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), launched a year-long review of the federal government's long-range science and technology policy in October 1997. The last such review was conducted twelve years ago, before the end of the Cold War, the recent decline in federal research funding, and the growth of the Internet.