# ELIGIBILITY OF CALIFORNIA'S 1996 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR ADMISSION TO THE STATE'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

DECEMBER 1997 COMMISSION REPORT 97-9

# Summary

The 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education in California established separate missions and functions for the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California Significant among the differences was delineation of distinct pools of California's college-going population to be served by each public postsecondary system The Master Plan encouraged both the California State University and the University of California to set its freshman admission criteria such that the top one-third and the top one-eighth of the public high school graduating class, respectively, would be eligible These basic admission guidelines were reaffirmed in 1976 and 1987 when the Master Plan was reviewed

Periodically, the California Postsecondary Education Commission has reviewed the congruence between the pools of public high school graduates eligible for the State University and the University under current eligibility criteria and these guidelines This study of the 1996 public high school graduates is the eighth such study and the fifth completed by the Commission This report includes a discussion of the origins and importance of eligibility studies, a description of the demographic characteristics and academic preparation indicators for the Class of 1996, the scope and methods used in the study, analyses of the eligibility of the 1996 public high school graduates for the California State University, and analyses of the eligibility of the 1996 public high school graduates for the University of California The Commission is planning several additional efforts with respect to the implications of the study's results

The 1996 public high school graduating class was the largest in almost 20 years and the most diverse set of students to complete public high school in California Compared to the 1990 counterparts, these graduates were more likely to (1) complete an university preparatory curriculum, (2) take Advanced Placement tests, and, (3) take college admission examinations

The study results show that under more stringent admission requirements, the estimated eligibility rates of 1996 public high school graduates for freshman admission at both the California State University and the University of California were lower than these rates for the Class of 1990 Moreover, the rates were below the Master Plan guidelines for each system 29 6 percent for the State University and 11 1 percent for the University of California For the State University, eligibility rates declined for both men and women and for all four major racial-ethnic groups -- Asian, Black, Latino, and White graduates While the eligibility rates of graduates for the State University in all 11 geographic regions decreased, the declines were largest in the major urban areas of Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay, and Orange County and smallest in the San Diego Imperial region, the Central Valley, and the San Bernardino/Riverside county region For the University, eligibility rates declined for both men and women and for Asian and Black graduates The eligibility of graduates for the University actually increased in several regions, including the Riverside/San Bernardino county region, the Central Valley, and the San Diego/Imperial region The sharpest declines occurred in the South Coast region (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties) and Northern California Investigation of the implication of these and other findings

The Commission adopted this report at its meeting on December 15, 1997 Additional copies of the report may be obtained from the Commission Publication Office at (916) 322-8024 Questions about the substance of the report may be directed to Jeanne Suhr Ludwig of the Commission at by telephone at (916) 322-8001, or by e-mail at jludwig@cpec ca gov

# ELIGIBILITY OF CALIFORNIA'S 1996 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR ADMISSION TO THE STATE'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

*A Report of the California Postsecondary Education Commission*

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION
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# Executive Summary of the 1996 Eligibility Study

**What is an eligibility study and why are they important?**

An Eligibility Study is a review of the academic preparation of public high school graduates in light of the current freshman admission requirements at the State's public universities The Master Plan for Higher Education urged the California State University to establish its freshman admission requirements such that the top one-third, or 33 3 percent, of the public high school graduates would be eligible Similarly, it urged the University of California to set its freshman admission requirements such that the top one-eighth, or 12 5 percent, of these graduates would be eligible for the University Periodically, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, in collaboration with the State's public university systems and with the cooperation of the public high schools, conducts an eligibility study to determine the congruence between these guidelines and the actual proportions of public high school graduates eligible for freshman admission at each system This is the eighth such study since the development of the Master Plan

The 1996 Eligibility Study closely replicates the design of the eligibility studies conducted on the graduating classes of 1983, 1986, and 1990 This permits the comparison of the estimated statewide eligibility rate for each system with its Master Plan guideline, but also provides an adequate sample of graduates' academic records to analyze differences in eligibility among men and women, among graduates from four major racial-ethnic groups -- Asian, Black, Latino and White graduates -- and among graduates from 11 geographic regions of the state In addition, the current study also includes information about differences in eligibility of graduates of rural, suburban, and urban public high schools

In short, eligibility is the complex interaction of the courses completed, grades earned, and college admission tests taken The eligibility rates presented in this report are the average eligibility of all public high school graduates as represented by the sample of graduates' transcripts analyzed These analyses provide a rich information source about high school students' academic preparation for college

**Who are the 1996 public high school graduates?**

The 1996 public high school graduating class entered high school in 1992 -- a time when

- University admission requirements were becoming increasingly more rigorous,
- The California economy was in the depth of the worst recession since the 1930s,
- Public high school counseling and other support services were diminishing,

- The cost of attending public universities in California was skyrocketing,
- The size and diversity of the student population was expanding, and
- Accessibility to college courses was perceived as shrinking

Information available about the 1996 public high school graduates included many positive trends

- An increasing proportion of public high school students were staying in school and graduating -- the drop-out rate in 1996 -- 3 9 percent -- was much lower than for the 1990 class when it was 5 2 percent,
- An increasing proportion of public high school graduates were completing a high school curriculum that was consistent with the freshman admission course requirements of the State's public universities -- 37 9 percent of 1996 graduates completed this curriculum compared to 32 6 percent in 1990,
- An increasing proportion of high school graduates took college admission examinations -- on the SAT I, participation increased from 46 5 percent to 51 2 percent and on the ACT test, participation increased from 7 4 percent to 12 2 percent between 1990 and 1996 Scores for Californians were generally comparable, and
- A larger proportion of public high school seniors were participating in Advanced Placement examinations -- 10 percent in 1990 to 13 2 percent in 1996

**Overview of study findings**

In summary, a larger proportion of public high school graduates enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum required for university admission in 1996 than in 1990 while the proportion of graduates whose academic experiences during high school was essentially unrelated to college preparation diminished The proportion of graduates who only needed to take the college admission tests required by the University of California in order to be eligible also expanded substantially *The proportion of public high school students who aspired to attend the university and prepared themselves for that postsecondary experience grew faster than the proportion of these graduates who had been completely successful in achieving eligibility* As a result of the expanding admission requirements at the State's public universities, a smaller proportion of graduates were fully eligible for these institutions in 1996 than in 1990 However, the trend is very clear

> More of the State's public high school graduates are preparing themselves for college, even with more rigorous admission requirements With more time and support, more graduates will be eligible for our universities

**What are the eligibility rates for the California State University?**

In considering the finding of this study for the State University, it is important to recognize that the 1996 freshman admission requirements at the California State University were substantially more stringent than those in place in 1990 In 1990, a public high school graduate in California must have completed at least 12 of the 15 required college preparatory courses and those 12 courses must have included at least five of the seven required courses in English and mathematics to be considered eligible By 1996, a graduate must have completed all 15 required courses, including all seven of the required courses in English and mathematics

*Statewide* Of 1996 public high school graduates, an estimated 29 6 percent were eligible for freshman admission at the California State University This rate was 3 7 percentage points below the Master Plan guideline of 33 3 percent for this system and 5 0 percentage points below the 1990 eligibility rate for this system of 34 6 percent Over the last ten years, an increasing proportion of California public high school graduates enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum, however, the proportion who were successful in completing that curriculum at an achievement level sufficient to be eligible for the State University has not yet expanded enough to reach the Master Plan guideline Missing one or more of the required courses is the most prevalent cause of ineligibility

*What are some of the differences in eligibility across groups?*

*Men and women* Consistent with the statewide trend, the eligibility rates of both men and women decreased Women continued to be significantly more likely to be eligible for the State University, were more likely to have completed the required courses, and earned higher grades Men were more likely to be missing courses and test scores and were more likely to have completed high school with GPAs below 2 0

*Four racial-ethnic groups (Asian, Black, Latino, and White):* While the eligibility rates decreased for all groups, the rate of decline was steepest for Black and Latino graduates Most of the decrease in the pools of eligible graduates for all groups occurred among those graduates with GPAs between 2 0 and 3 0 Among graduates with GPAs within this range who had completed the required course work, Black and, to some extent Latino, graduates were somewhat less likely to earn college admission tests scores that were sufficient to qualify them on the State University's Eligibility Index However, across all groups, the most common cause of ineligibility was missing one or more of the required courses

*Regional differences.* The eligibility rate of graduates for freshman admission at the California State University declined in all geographic regions of the State In 1996 for the first time, the San Francisco Bay region surpassed Orange County in the proportions of its graduates eligible for the State University While the San Francisco Bay region and Orange County experienced some of the largest declines in the proportions of their graduates who were eligible for the State University, the eligibility rates for these two regions remained significantly above aver-

age The San Diego/Imperial county region, now second only to the Bay Area in proportion of eligible graduates, saw only a very small decrease in their graduates' eligibility rate Other good news is that some of the regions that historically have had the lowest eligibility rates -- the Central Valley and the Riverside/San Bernardino county region -- had relatively small decreases in their pools of eligible graduates Other bad news is that the largest region of the State -- Los Angeles County -- experienced an above average decline in the proportion of their graduates eligible for the State University The net effect of these changes has been a narrowing of the range of eligibility rates across the State

*Area differences* Only slightly more than one-fourth of all rural and urban public high school graduates were eligible for the State University while about one-third of the suburban high school graduates were eligible One out of every five rural high school graduates and one out of every six suburban and urban high school graduates were ineligible because they had not completed the full set of required courses In addition, particularly in rural and urban high schools, student participation and performance on college admission tests played a key role in determining these graduates' eligibility

**What are the eligibility rates for the University of California?**

Two changes occurred in the freshman admission requirements at the University of California between 1990 and 1996

1 In 1992, the minimum grade-point average considered increased from 2 79 to 2 82, and

2 In 1994, the University specified that student's required courses must include two year-long courses in Laboratory Science and two year-long courses in history with the additional year focusing on World History and Geography This change reduced the number of required electives from four to two

*Statewide* Of 1996 public high school graduates, 11 1 percent were fully eligible for freshman admission at the University of California This rate is 1 4 percentage points below the Master Plan guideline of 12 5 percent for this system and 1 2 percentage points below their 1990 eligibility rate of 12 3 percent

Over the last ten years, a domino effect appears to have been operating in terms of the academic preparation of high school students for the University The proportion of public high school graduates whose curricular experiences during high school were substantially unrelated to the University's required pattern of college preparatory courses declined, while the proportion who were ineligible for the University because of minor deficiencies in courses or achievement expanded Also growing was the proportion of graduates who completed all of the required course work with sufficiently high grades but were determined ineligible because they were missing one or more of the required college admission tests -- the "potentially" eligible pool While admission requirements have increased, students have increased

their level of participation in college preparatory activities -- courses and tests -- but these improvements have not yet expanded the fully eligible pool

*What are the differences across student groups?*

*For men and women.* While the eligibility rates for both men and women declined, women continued to expand their relative academic competitive advantage for freshman admission at the University of California The decline in the eligibility pool was much steeper for men Concomitantly, the growth in the pool of "potentially" eligible graduates was much larger for women While the decrease in the pool of men with major academic deficiencies as they relate to the University's admission requirements was roughly the same as the increase in the pool of men with minor academic deficiencies, the decrease in the pool of women with major deficiencies expanded both the pool of women with minor academic deficiencies and the pool of "potentially" eligible women

*For four racial-ethnic groups* The decline in the University's eligibility pool reflected decreases in the proportions of Asian and Black graduates fully eligible for the University The eligibility rates for Latino and White graduates were essentially the same in 1996 as they had been in 1990 However, every major racial-ethnic group showed some improvement in their academic preparation for the University The pool of "potentially" eligible graduates expanded for all four groups of graduates in 1996 Proportionally fewer Black, Latino, and White graduates completed high school with major course and performance deficiencies relative to the freshman admission requirements at the University As a consequence, there was growth either in the proportions of graduates from all four racial-ethnic groups who were "potentially" eligible or were ineligible because of only minor academic deficiencies

*Regional differences* In 1996 for the first time, the San Francisco Bay region surpassed Orange County in terms of the proportion of its graduates who were fully eligible for freshman admission at the University of California While both these regions experienced a decline in the proportion of their graduates who were fully eligible for the University, the eligibility rates remained significantly above average In contrast to the statewide decrease in eligibility, the eligibility rates in several regions of the State actually increased -- notably, the San Diego/Imperial county region, the Riverside/San Bernardino county region, and the Central Valley The sharpest declines in regional eligibility rates for the University occurred in the South Coast region (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties) and in Northern California The decline in the eligibility rate for Los Angeles County graduates was very similar to the statewide decline while the greater Sacramento region had a very slight decline in the eligibility rate of its graduates between 1990 and 1996

*Area differences* The eligibility rate of suburban public high school graduates for freshman admission at the University of California -- 13 0 percent -- was nearly twice the eligibility rate of rural public high school graduates -- 7 1 percent The

eligibility rate of graduates of urban high schools -- 10 3 percent -- fell between that of rural and suburban schools Among rural high school graduates, ineligibility arose from not completing the full pattern of University required courses and not taking the required college admission examinations Among urban high school graduates, these two conditions contributed to their ineligibility as well as being somewhat less likely than graduates in other areas to earn college admission test scores that were high enough to qualify them on the University's Eligibility Index

**Conclusions** Some of these findings raise more questions than they provide answers All of the systems of public education in California are committed to an ongoing research effort to better understand the implications of the results of this study However, the study findings make perfectly clear that California is on the right path to increasing the preparation for college of its public high school students of all backgrounds, circumstances, and geographic regions To make further progress, more students need to enroll in and complete the full sequence of courses required for admission to the State's public universities Students also need to be encouraged to complete the college admission examinations required for admission at the university system of their choice In addition, while some of the variation in eligibility rates has been reduced -- for example, among geographic regions of the State -- there remain persistent and consistent differences, particularly among various racial-ethnic groups, some geographic regions, and types of schools, these differences must be addressed if all Californians are to have a prosperous future It is a challenge and a responsibility that we must all work on together

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# 1 What Are Eligibility Studies and Why Are They Important?

THIS CHAPTER provides an historical context for the 1996 Eligibility Study by describing previous eligibility studies and their findings Furthermore, it discusses the importance of understanding the academic background of California's high school graduates as an essential ingredient in planning the future of higher education in the State because approximately 95 percent of all freshmen in the State's public university are California high schools graduates Their preparation for, and choices among, California postsecondary institutions have broad implications not only for higher education but also the economic and social development of the state

**The origin of eligibility studies**

Eligibility studies have been an important component in higher education planning since before the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education In 1955, the Committee for the Restudy of the Needs of California in Higher Education conducted a study of the eligibility of high school graduates for freshman admission at the state colleges and the University of California The results of that study showed that 44 percent of public high school graduates were eligible for the state colleges and 15 percent for the University of California

The Master Plan Survey Team, as part of its development of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education in California, conducted a review of higher education enrollments between 1948 and 1958 From this ten-year overview, the Survey Team developed a "status quo" pattern of higher education attendance and applied this pattern to the Department of Finance's projections for high school graduates through 1975 According to these projections, a disproportionate share of the lower-division enrollment growth over the next 15 years would, given the "status quo" pattern, be absorbed by the state colleges and the University of California In the opinion of the Survey Team, this expansion of the two systems was not in the best interest of the State for two reasons (1) the cost of expanding their facilities, and, (2) excessive growth in their lower-division enrollments might interfere with their abilities to meet their upper-division and graduate level instructional responsibilities The Survey Team proposed that the percent of eligible public high school graduates should be reduced to the top one-third for the state colleges and the top one-eighth for the University of California -- guidelines that continue to be in effect today Students whose academic preparation did not qualify them for either of these systems could attend community colleges as a first step in their postsecondary education

In 1961, the Master Plan's Technical Committee on Selection and Retention of Students analyzed the academic records of 15,600 public high school graduates from the class of 1961 The Committee found that 43 4 percent were eligible for

freshman admission to the state colleges and 14 8 percent were eligible for the University Both systems implemented adjustments in their existing freshman admission criteria in an effort to comply more closely with the Master Plan's recommended eligibility pools.

Over the last 35 years, the Commission and its predecessor -- the Higher Education Coordinating Council -- have repeated this analysis through a series of eligibility studies The results of these studies are summarized in Display 1 In addition to determining the congruence between the Master Plan guidelines and the actual proportions of public high school graduates eligible for each system under their current admission requirements, these studies have provided a valuable analytic basis for assessing alternative admission policies

**Historical parallels**

Some interesting parallels exist between the early analyses described above and the Commission's activities in this area over the last six years The Commission, in conjunction with the California State University and the University of California, evaluated the eligibility of 1990 public high school graduates for freshman admission at each public university system that fall As a result of the analyses of 13,641 transcripts of these public high school graduates, the Commission estimated that 34 6 percent of these graduates were eligible for the California State University and for the University of California, 18 8 percent were eligible under the historical

*DISPLAY 1 1960 Master Plan Freshman Admission Guidelines and Estimated Eligibility Rates for the California State University and the University of California, 1955 to 1990*

| Responsible Agency | Year | California State University | University of California |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1960 Master Plan Guidelines | | 33 3 | 12 5 |
| Committee for the Restudy of the Needs of California in Higher Education | 1955 | 44 0 | 15 0 |
| Master Plan Survey Team | 1961 | 43 4 | 14 8 |
| Coordinating Council for Higher Education | 1966 | 35 2 | 14 6 |
| California Postsecondary Education Commission | 1975 | 35 0 | 14 8 |
| California Postsecondary Education Commission | 1983 | 29 6 | 13 2 |
| California Postsecondary Education Commission | 1986 | 27 5 | 14 1 |
| California Postsecondary Education Commission | 1990 | 34 6 | 18 8* |

*This rate is historically consistent with the definition of UC eligibility rates used in previous studies These rates included some graduates who had completed all of the eligibility requirements except taking all the required admissions tests The proportion of 1990 graduates who were "fully" eligible for UC in Fall 1990 by completing all of the admission requirements, including taking all required admissions tests was 12 3%

definition of eligibility However, only 12 3 percent of high school graduates were "fully" eligible for the University which is defined as those students who have completed the necessary courses, earned the required grades, and submitted scores on **all** of the required college admission tests at the requisite level Thus, given this latter definition, the eligibility pools for both systems were very close to their Master Plan guidelines in the 1990 study

Shortly after publication of the 1990 Eligibility Study report, the Commission issued a Higher Education Update entitled *Preparing for the Coming Surge of Students Eligible to Attend California's Public Universities (UP/92-3)* Using a simplistic status quo projection model, the Commission estimated that the eligible pool for the California State University would increase to 112,990 public high school graduates by 2000 and the eligible pool for the University of California would grow to 40,590 graduates Applying a constant enrollment rate to these figures, the potential freshman class in 2000 at the State University would include 9,245 additional freshmen and 7,025 more freshmen at the University These results, and the critical examinations they provoked, prompted the Commission to invest considerable staff time and effort into developing more sophisticated and comprehensive enrollment projections for the next decade

In 1996, the Commission published *A Capacity for Growth* A central component of this report was a comprehensively reviewed set of enrollment projections for California higher education By 2005, according to the Commission's model, demand for public higher education would increase by 455,000 students This potential enrollment demand model included certain assumptions about changes in the eligibility rates of public high school graduates for freshman admission The 1996 Eligibility Study will provide a realistic test of the validity of those assumptions and a new basis for computing enrollment demand into the next century

**Overview of existing eligibility studies**

Presenting the findings of eligibility studies conducted over the last 36 years in Display 1 may be somewhat misleading While each of these studies had the same objective -- to estimate the proportion of public high school graduates who were eligible for freshman admission at the California's public universities -- the admissions criteria were far from constant over time The governing boards of both systems have sought to improve the academic preparation of their entering freshmen by increasing the number and rigor of courses required for admission and by making adjustments to their other requirements so as to ensure continued adherence to Master Plan guidelines Both the grades and test scores required to be eligible for admission have also changed over time This section will summarize the findings of previous eligibility studies by highlighting variations in admission requirements in effect at the time of each study

*The 1955 Study*

*The California State University* The freshman admission requirements in effect for the state colleges at the time of the 1955 study of the eligibility of public high school graduates were as follows

Freshman applicants were admitted if they had completed five Carnegie units (ten semester units or grades) of "A" or "B" work in the last three years of high school, or if they have attained a score at the 20th percentile or better on a college entrance test (Strayer Committee Report, 1948)

Under these requirements, 44 percent of the public high school graduates were eligible for freshman admission in 1955

*University of California* Since 1933, the University of California has required that high school graduates complete a core college preparatory curriculum -- known as "A- F" subject requirements At the time of the 1955 study, five alternative means of qualifying for University freshman admission existed

- Plan 1 Graduates must have completed ten of the required units with a "B" average, at least eight units with a grade of "B" or better, in their last three years of high school to be eligible -- approximately 88 percent of all applicants who qualified for freshman admission did so under this pattern
- Plan 2 Graduates with a scholarship rank in the highest tenth of their graduating class, assuming "substantial academic preparation," were eligible
- Plan 3 Graduates with 12 high school units with grades of "B" or better and no more than two "A-F" subject deficiencies were eligible
- Plan 4 Graduates must have completed at least 12 high school units with no grade lower than a "C" -- exclusive of religion, physical education, military science or ROTC -- and have six units with grades of "B" or better in the third and fourth year of "A-F" courses
- Plan 5 Graduates must earn a score of 500 on both parts of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and three assigned achievement tests administered by the College Entrance Examination Board

In 1955, 15 percent of public high school graduates were eligible for the University of California by these various alternatives

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*The 1961 Study*

*The California State University* Following the results of the 1955 study, the State Board of Education, the governing board for the state colleges at that time, adopted new standards for freshman admission Two primary patterns of eligibility criteria were adopted

- Plan 1 Graduates completing seven Carnegie units (14 semester units or grades) with a "B" or better, excluding physical education or military science, were eligible
- Plan 2 Graduates completing five Carnegie units with a grade of "B" or better <u>and</u> earning a score at or above the 20th percentile on a national standardized college admission test were eligible

Under these adjusted requirements, 43 4 percent of 1961 public high school graduates were eligible for freshman admission at the state colleges

*University of California* Prior to this study, the primary criteria for students to achieve eligibility for the University of California -- Plan 1 -- was unchanged, but the University's governing board modified each of the four alternative means for achieving eligibility as follows

- Plan 2 "Substantial academic preparation" was defined as "not less than ten units of courses designated by the high school principal as college preparatory in nature and chosen from the fields of English, mathematics, science, foreign language, and social science "
- Plan 3 To be eligible under this alternative, graduates not only needed 12 high school units with grades of "B" or better and no more than two "A-F" subject deficiencies but "in addition must receive in the "A-F" subjects attempted no grades lower than "C" and an average of at least "B "
- Plan 4 This alternative was amended such that eligible graduates not only needed to complete at least 12 high school units with no grade lower than a "C," but, in "A-F" courses completed in their last three years, they must have (1) no grade lower than "C," and (2) no more than a 1/2 unit below the "B" average "
- Plan 5 Admission by examination changed to an average score of 500 on the two parts of the aptitude tests and no score below 500 on the achievement tests, if "A-F" subjects were not completed with grades of "C" or better

In 1961, 14 8 percent of public high school graduates were eligible for freshman admission to the University of California It appears that the reduction in the proportion of graduates who qualified under Plans 2 through 5 was almost entirely compensated for by increases in the proportion who qualified under Plan 1

*The 1966 Study*

*The California State University* By fall 1965, the state colleges had become the California State Colleges and Universities That year, its Board of Trustees established an eligibility index that specified the combination of high school grades and college admission test scores necessary to be eligible for admission to the system Applying these new standards to the transcripts of some 21,000 high school graduates in 1966, the system reported an eligibility rate of 35 2 percent -- a substantial tightening of its eligibility pool but still slightly above the Master Plan guidelines

*University of California* Similarly, the University of California increased its freshman admission standards by eliminating three of the alternative means of achieving eligibility and extending the provision that all required courses, including those taken in ninth grade, must be completed with a "C" grade or better Thus, by 1966, the University had raised its admission criteria by reducing the means of achieving eligibility to two paths -- completion of a college preparatory curriculum with adequate grades and test scores to qualify on its eligibility index (Plan 1) and eligibility by examination (previously noted as Plan 5) In fall 1966, 14 6 percent of

the high school graduates were determined to be eligible for freshman admission at the University of California

*Eligibility studies conducted by the Commission*

For the last 20 years, the Commission has conducted the State's eligibility studies Display 2 presents the freshman admission requirements for the California State University and Display 3 shows those for the University of California at the time of each study The following section summarizes the major changes in requirements and results of the eligibility studies during this period

*The California State University* Between the eligibility studies conducted in 1976 and 1983, the California State University implemented no adjustments to their freshman admission criteria and yet the number of graduates determined to be eligible dropped from 35 percent to 29 6 percent Efforts to reduce and reverse grade inflation in the public schools in the late 1970s were believed to account for this change in the size of its eligibility pool

*DISPLAY 2 Freshman Admission Requirements for California Residents at the California State University, Fall 1976 to Fall 1996*

| | California State University | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Admission Requirements | 1976 | 1983 | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 |
| High School Diploma | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Subject Area Requirements (Year courses with Grade of C or better) | None specified | Same | 6 | 15* | 15 ** |
| a History | | | ~0~ | 1 | 1 |
| b English | | | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| c Mathematics | | | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| d Laboratory Science | | | ~0~ | 1 | 1 |
| e Foreign Language | | | ~0~ | 2 | 2 |
| f Visual/Performing Arts | | | ~0~ | 1 | 1 |
| g Advanced Course/Electives | | | ~0~ | | 3 |
| *Incremental phase-in between 1988 and 1992, see page 7 | | | | | **May be met by completing UC "A-F" |
| Scholarship Requirement - Min grade-point average (GPA) | 2 0 overall | Same | Same | Same | Same |
| Examination Requirement | No SAT/ACT required if GPA is above 3 20 | Same | No SAT/ACT required if GPA is 3 1 or better | No SAT/ACT required if GPA is 3 0 or better | Same |
| Scholarship/Exam Requirement | GPA between 2 0 and 3 20 with qualifying test scores on State University s Eligibility Index | Same | GPA between 2 0 and 3 10 with qualifying test scores on State University's Eligibility Index | GPA between 2 0 and 2 99 with qualifying test scores on State University's Eligibility Index | Same |
| Entrance by Examination | None | None | None | None | None |

*DISPLAY 3 Freshman Admission Requirements for California Residents at the University of California, Fall 1976 and Fall 1996*

| | University of California | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Admission Requirements | 1976 | 1983 | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 |
| High School Diploma | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Subject Area Requirements (Year course with Grade of C or better) | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| A History | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| B English | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| C Mathematics | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| D Laboratory Science | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| E Foreign Language | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| F Advanced Course/Electives | 1 or more | Same | 4 | 4 | 2** |
| ** Some Visual and Performing Arts courses are approved electives | | | | | |
| Scholarship Requirement - Min grade-point average (GPA) | 3.0 in A-F courses | 2.78 in 'A-F' courses | Same | Same | 2.82 in "A-F" courses |
| Examination Requirement | SAT and 3 CB Achievement Tests | SAT/ACT and 3 CB Achievement Tests | Same | Same | SAT I/ACT and 3 SAT II Subject Tests |
| Scholarship/Exam Requirement | GPA between 3.0 and 3.09 total test score must be at least 2500 | GPA between 2.78 and 3.29 with qualifying test scores on the University's Eligibility Index | Same | Same | GPA between 2.82 and 3.29 with qualifying test scores on the University's Eligibility Index |
| Entrance by Examination | SAT total of 1100 and 3 Achievement tests totalling 1650 minimum of 500 on each | SAT total of 1100 or ACT Comp of 26 and 3 Achievement tests totalling 1650, minimum of 500 on each | Same | Same | SAT I total of 1300 (prior to 4/95) or 1400 or ACT Comp of 31 and 3 SAT II Subject Tests totalling 1650 with 500 minimun on each (prior to 5/95) or 1760 with 530 minimum (after 5/95) |

The most significant change in admission requirements for the California State University over the last 20 years was the addition of specific college preparatory course requirements Beginning in 1984, these course requirements gradually expanded from four years of college preparatory English and two years of college preparatory mathematics to a full pattern of 15 year-long courses These courses corresponded to the subject areas required by the University in its "A-F" subject requirement and also included at least one year of visual and/or performing arts

The Board of Trustees adopted this 15-unit college preparatory pattern required for admission to the State University in November 1985 To mitigate the negative impact of this change on student access, a phase-in schedule was adopted that gradually increased subject requirements from 10 units in 1988 to 12 units in 1989, 13 units in 1991, and to the full 15 units in 1992 During the phase-in period, students were required to complete at least three years of English and two years of mathematics

This system has also adjusted its eligibility index to align its pool of eligible graduates with the Master Plan guidelines While these course requirements were phased in, the eligibility pool for the State University changed from 27 5 percent in 1986 to 34 6 percent in 1990

*University of California* The most substantial change in the freshman admission requirements for the University of California occurred just prior to the 1976 study The University added the requirement that all freshman must take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (as it was named then) and the three achievement tests to be eligible Because the testing requirement had not been a historical component of defining the University's eligibility pool, eligibility rates prior to 1990 included those graduates who were otherwise eligible but whose records lacked one or more of the required admission tests Over the last 20 years, the University introduced an eligibility index, and then recalibrated the index, to increase the minimum GPA required and subsequently to accommodate recentered SAT scores It also expanded the number of specific courses required as part of its "A-F" subject requirement

The large expansion in the proportion of public high school graduates completing a full college preparatory curriculum contributed to substantial increases in eligibility rates in 1990 The eligibility rate for the University in 1990 computed under the historical definition of eligibility -- 18 8 percent -- was well above the 1960 Master Plan guidelines To more closely align the University's eligibility pool with these guidelines, as well as with actual University admission practices, the definition of eligibility became restricted to include only those graduates who were "fully" eligible for admission by virtue of completing all of the required admission tests This "fully" eligible pool for the University of California in 1990 was 12 3 percent -- a figure quite close to its Master Plan guideline

*The Commission* The Commission has also made enhancements to its eligibility studies over this period Beginning with the 1983 study, the Commission not only generated valid statewide eligibility rates but also valid estimates for men and women, for graduates from four racial-ethnic groups -- Asian, Black, Latino, and White -- and for 11 geographic regions of the state The 1996 study will also estimate eligibility rates for graduates from three types of high schools -- those located in rural, suburban, and urban areas

**Eligibility of student subgroups**

In 1976, the University of California undertook a follow-up to the 1975 Eligibility Study that attempted to estimate the eligibility rates of students from various racial-ethnic backgrounds Because this objective was not built into the original

study design, the estimates generated by this study, *The 1976-77 Expanded Eligibility Survey*, were somewhat imprecise However, the study did suggest that broad differences in the eligibility rates of students across subgroups existed

While statewide eligibility rates are important benchmarks for the overall student population, information about differences in the eligibility rates of students in various subgroups also has important policy implications Recognizing the necessity of more detailed and specific information about the preparation of students and their eligibility for the State's public universities formed the foundation of the design for the eligibility studies implemented by the Commission

**Impetus for the 1996 study**

Over the next ten years, public school enrollment is expected to increase by nearly a million students -- an 18 percent increase The number of high school graduates is projected to increase by nearly 27 percent Participation in postsecondary education is also expected to increase by 455,000 students by 2005 Concomitantly, the shift in the racial-ethnic composition of these graduating classes toward an increasingly diverse group continues An increasing proportion of these students has been raised in homes in which English is not the dominant language Providing postsecondary educational opportunities for these students is essential to the maintenance of an informed, productive, and socially stable citizenry fundamental to an economically viable and culturally vibrant society

The results of eligibility studies have occasionally spurred adjustments in the admission requirements of the California State University and the University of California In addition, these institutions have implemented changes in their eligibility criteria independent of these studies based on other educational policy imperatives The primary purpose of this study, like its predecessors, is to provide the most current information available about the eligibility of students for the State's two university systems In so doing, the Commission will place the study results both in a historical context and use it as a guide to inform educational planning for the rest of this decade and the next century

The 1996 Eligibility Study provides a detailed analysis of the academic characteristics of California's 1996 public high school graduating class in light of current freshman admission requirements in effect for Fall 1996 at the California State University and the University of California The information available from this study provides the state's educational policy makers a valuable tool in assessing the likely impact of alternative educational policies related to admissions and enrollments at the freshman level in light of the burgeoning college-age population and its changing demographic characteristics This information will also play a fundamental role in a wide variety of policy analyses undertaken by the Commission, particularly in the areas of equity, growth, and assessment of outreach programs

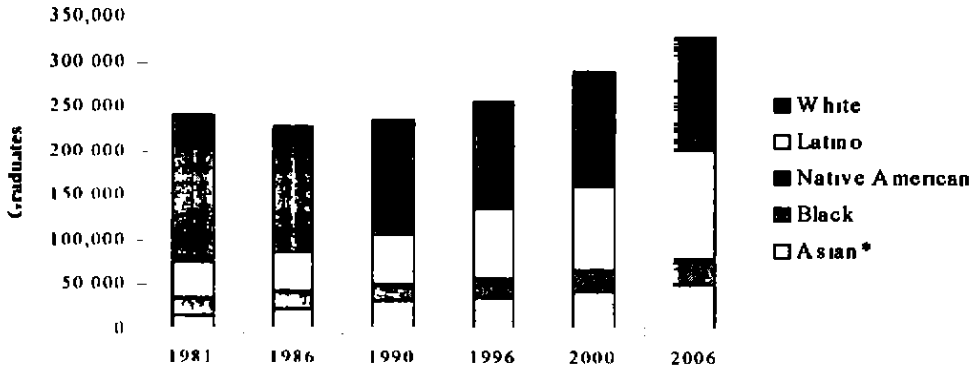
# 2 An Introduction to the 1996 Graduates of California's Public High Schools

WHILE THE 1996 ELIGIBILITY STUDY provides detailed information about the academic preparation of the Class of 1996, much was already known about these graduates They were the largest class to graduate from the state's public high schools since 1979 They were the most diverse set of students to ever complete their secondary education in California Not only is information about the characteristics of these graduates an important context for understanding the results of this eligibility study, it provides a springboard for projecting trends in student characteristics into the next century As a consequence, this section of the report describes the class of 1996 and notes its similarities and differences from those who graduated before and those who will probably graduate after it

**Demographic characteristics**

As noted above, this is the largest group of public high school graduates in nearly 20 years and the most diverse However, this class is but a preview of the future growth expected in both the size and diversity of the state's public school graduates, as Display 4 illustrates

*DISPLAY 4 Racial-ethnic Composition of the Public High School Graduating Classes, 1981, 1986, 1990, 1996, 2000, and 2006*




*Includes Filipinos and Pacific Islanders

*Growth and projected growth in size and diversity*

Overall, the public high school graduating class increased by approximately 9 5 percent between 1990 and 1996, however, this rate of growth was not evenly distributed across student subgroups While the number of White public high school graduates decreased by six percent, the number of Latino graduates increased by

42 percent, Native American graduates grew by 21 percent, Asian graduates expanded by 14 percent, and Black graduates increased by 11 percent

Since 1981, the number and representation of Asian students among public high school graduates has more than doubled, by 2000, it will have tripled Asian students now comprise 14 4 percent of the public high school graduating class and they are expected to comprise 15 9 percent by 2006 Similarly, the number of Latino public high school graduates has doubled, they now account for 30 3 percent of all 1996 graduates and are expected to comprise 37 2 percent of the class of 2006 The number of Black public high school graduates has declined somewhat since 1981, their representation in the graduating class has also dropped from 8 5 percent to 7 5 percent, but they are expected to rebound somewhat such that they will represent 7 9 percent of graduates by 2006 A similar pattern has occurred among White public school graduates whose numbers have decreased from 165,370 in 1981 to 121,292 in 1996 -- a reduction in representation from 68 3 percent to 46 8 percent of public high school graduates While the number of White public high school graduates is expected to grow somewhat in the future, this growth will not keep pace with growth among other student subgroups so that they will comprise about 38 1 percent of public high school graduates in 2006

This dramatic change in the racial-ethnic composition of California's public school population also brings an expansion of instructional challenges, as a growing percentage of students come from homes in which English is not the primary language Since 1990, the proportion of limited English proficient students in grades 9 to 12 of the public schools increased from 12 9 percent to 16 0 percent in 1996 -- a 24 percent increase As the proportion of these students in kindergarten through grade 3 was already 32 2 percent in 1996, the proportion of high school students who have limited English proficiency is likely to continue to increase into the next century

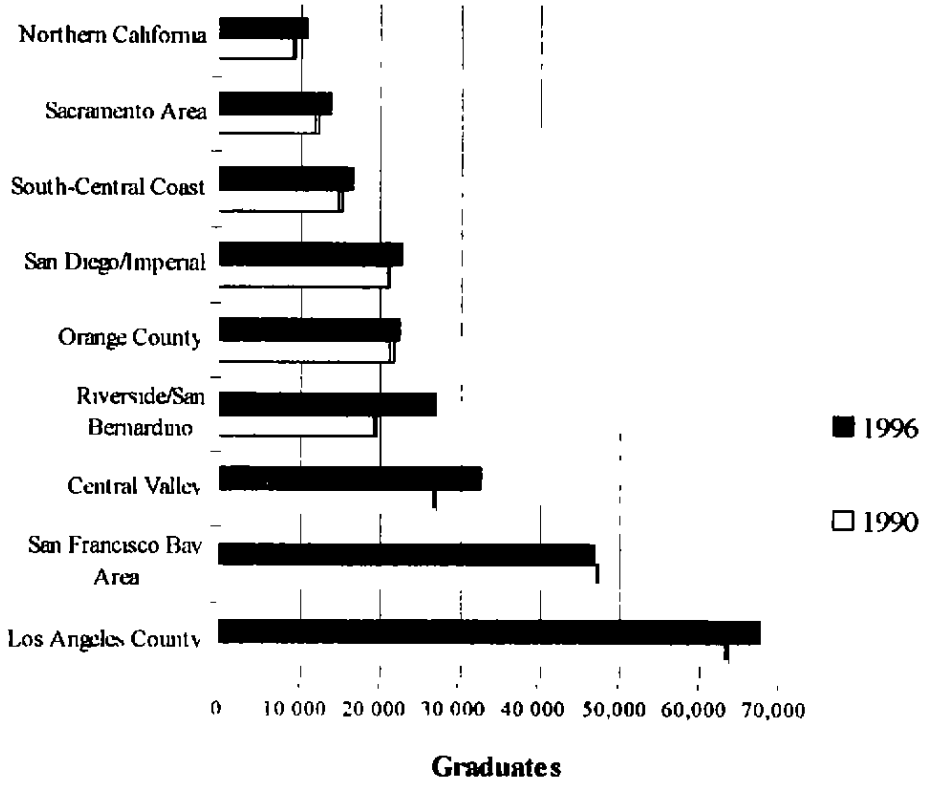
*Geographic distribution*

With the exception of the San Francisco Bay area, all regions of the state experienced some increase in the number of public high school graduates in 1996 compared to 1990, but this growth varied substantially among the regions, as Display 5 illustrates Los Angeles County had the largest numerical growth in public high school graduates in that there were nearly 3,900 more graduates in 1996 than 1990, but its rate of growth -- six percent -- was less than the statewide growth rate Proportionally, the largest growth in public high school graduates occurred in the Inland Empire -- the Riverside/San Bernardino county region -- which experienced a 38 percent increase and in the Central Valley region, with a rate of growth of 21 percent The other regions to experience above average growth in their numbers of public high school graduates were the greater Sacramento region and the rural counties of Northern California

**Academic preparation of the 1996 graduates**

Educational policy makers in California have sought to improve the quality of public school instruction and the academic performance of students over the last 15 years Beginning in 1983 with the passage of SB 813 and reinforced through other

*DISPLAY 5 Public High School Graduates by Major Geographic Region, 1990 and 1996*




legislation since that time, these efforts have included strengthening high school graduation requirements, lengthening the school day and school year, increasing teachers' salaries, improving school and district accountability, enhancing the availability of information about preparation for college, and encouraging participation in more rigorous courses and on standardized college admission examinations

Information available from the California Department of Education and the college admission testing companies indicates that these efforts have, indeed, had an impact on the academic preparation of high school graduates The remainder of this chapter presents evidence from a number of indicators of the academic preparation of graduates, including completion of a college preparatory curriculum as defined by the University of California's "A-F" course requirements, participation in Advanced Placement examinations as seniors, participation and performance on college admission examinations, and changes in grade-point averages of graduates that were estimated from previous eligibility studies Because eligibility is a summative measure of the scholastic achievement of graduates, evidence based on the components that comprise this measure for the Class of 1996 may provide a preview of the likely direction of change in eligibility rates that will be presented and discussed at the next Commission meeting

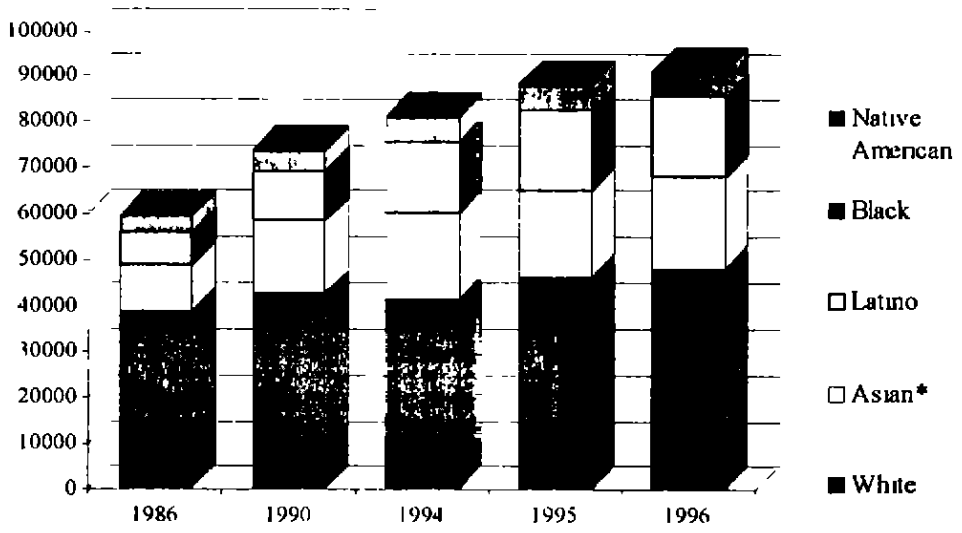
*College preparatory course completion*

The public high schools report the proportion of graduates who completed a college preparatory curriculum, as prescribed by the University's freshman admission A-F course requirement Since 1994-95, graduates are included in this count only if they completed the required courses with grades of "C" or better Thus, current information is not precisely comparable to 1990 information While student participation in college preparatory courses improved between 1990 and 1996, the increase was somewhat smaller than that which occurred between 1986 and 1990 This trend was particularly true with respect to improvement for students from some student subgroups, as Display 6 illustrates

The proportion of men and of women completing a full university preparatory curriculum has grown over the last ten years, however, the rate of increase for women has been substantially greater than that for men A somewhat larger proportion of women than men were so prepared in 1986, but the difference between the rates for men and women has grown over time While the proportion of women exceeded that of men by a little over one percentage point in 1986, this difference had grown to more than five percentage points by 1996 In 1996, 37 9 percent of women who graduated from the state's public high schools had completed a university preparatory curriculum while only 32 7 percent of the men graduating had that level of academic preparation

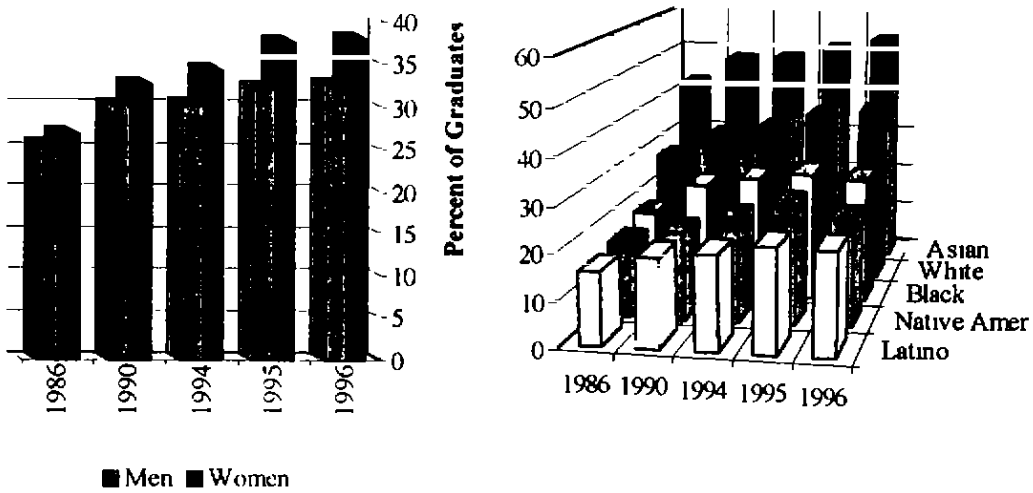
Over half -- 53 6 percent -- of all Asian 1996 public high school graduates completed an university preparatory curriculum compared to 51 3 percent in 1995, this is the highest proportion of any racial-ethnic group to complete this course pattern, as shown in Display 7 The proportion of Black graduates completing such a curriculum increased from 25 4 percent in 1990 to 27 9 percent in 1996, how-

*DISPLAY 6 California Public High School Graduates Completing University Preparatory Curriculum, 1986, 1990, and 1994 to 1996*




*Includes Filipinos and Pacific Islanders

*DISPLAY 7 Participation of California Public High School Graduates in University Preparatory Curriculum, by Gender and Racial-ethnic Group, 1986, 1990, and 1994 to 1996*




*Includes Filipinos and Pacific Islanders

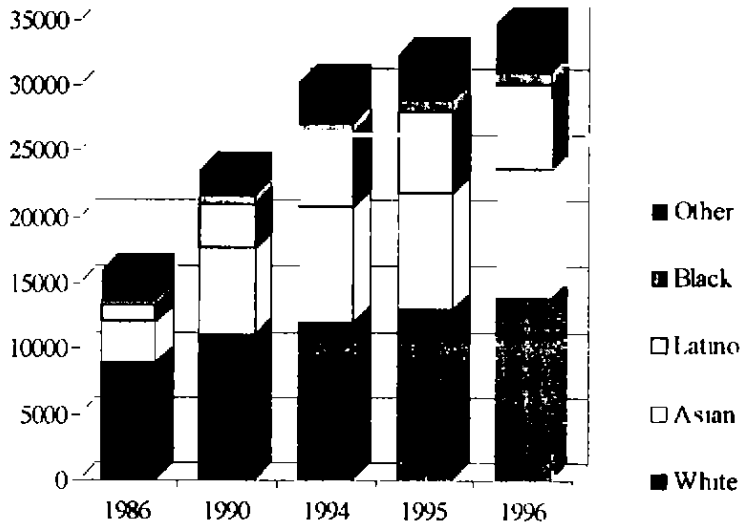
ever, the current year's proportion is somewhat smaller than the 1995 proportion of 28 9 percent A similar pattern exists for Latino graduates While the 1996 proportion of Latino graduates completing an university preparatory curriculum -- 22 3 percent -- was greater than the 1990 proportion of 19 4 percent, it was slightly below the 1995 proportion of 22 5 percent While the number of Latino graduates completing such a curriculum increased slightly, it did not keep pace with increases in the number of Latino graduates Some of the largest proportional gains in participation in "A-F" curricula have occurred among Native American students -- from 16 5 percent in 1986 to 19 5 percent in 1990 to 24 0 percent in 1996, however, their participation also dropped substantially from that of 1995 when it was 26 7 percent The proportion of White graduates completing an university curriculum increased from 33 1 percent in 1990 to 39 7 percent in 1996 Native American and White graduates were the only two groups of graduates whose college preparatory course participation improved as much between 1990 and 1996 as it had between 1986 and 1990

*Advanced Placement (AP) examination participation*

According to the College Board, the participation of California high school students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses is at an all-time high AP course enrollment counts as an honors course in high school and earns students additional grade points for those courses in which they earn a "C" or better Thus, an "A" in an AP course earns 5 grade points instead of the usual 4 and a "C" earns 3 grade points instead of 2 These grade point enhancements improve students' grade-point averages which, in turn, enhance their likelihood of qualifying for university admission

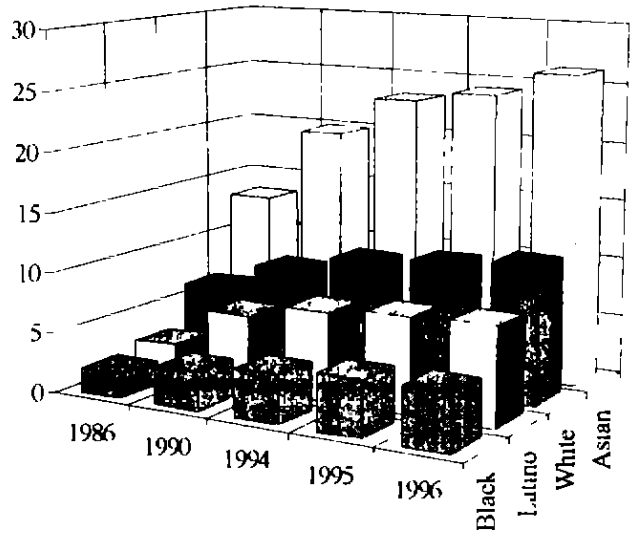
Of California's 1995-96 public high school twelfth graders, 34,837 took AP examinations -- an increase of 48 percent over the 23,533 students who sat for these tests in 1990 This increase is comparable to that which occurred between 1986 and 1990, as Display 8 illustrates Students from all racial-ethnic groups contributed to this increase The largest proportional growth occurred among Black and Latino twelfth graders, increasing by 63 percent and 88 percent, respectively A 51 percent expansion occurred among Asian students, which was above the average for the state While the proportion of White twelfth graders taking AP tests only increased by 25 percent, they contributed the largest number to the statewide increase

*DISPLAY 8 California Public High School Twelfth Graders Taking Advanced Placement Exams, 1986, 1990, and 1994 to 1996*




While there was a substantial increase in the number and proportion of Black and Latino students who took AP examinations, their overall participation levels continued to lag behind those of Asian and White students, as Display 9 indicates Approximately, 26 percent of Asian graduates and 11 5 percent of White graduates took AP examinations during their senior year compared to 4 8 percent of Black graduates and 8 1 percent of Latino graduates While Asian graduates comprised 14 4 percent of the 1996 graduates, they accounted for 45 percent of the seniors who took the Calculus AP tests Only on the Spanish Language AP test did Latino seniors constitute a proportion comparable to their presence among public high school graduates, they were 30 percent of graduates and 30 percent of the twelfth graders taking the AP Spanish Language examination

*DISPLAY 9 Participation of California Twelfth Graders in Advanced Placement Exams, by Racial-ethnic Group, 1986, 1990, and 1994 to 1996*




### *College admission test participation and performance*

Another facet of the behavior of California high school students that bears

on their eligibility for university admission is their participation in, and performance on, college admission examinations -- the SAT I and SAT II and the ACT examinations Participation and performance information about these tests are reported for all California high school graduates but does not differentiate between public and private high school graduates

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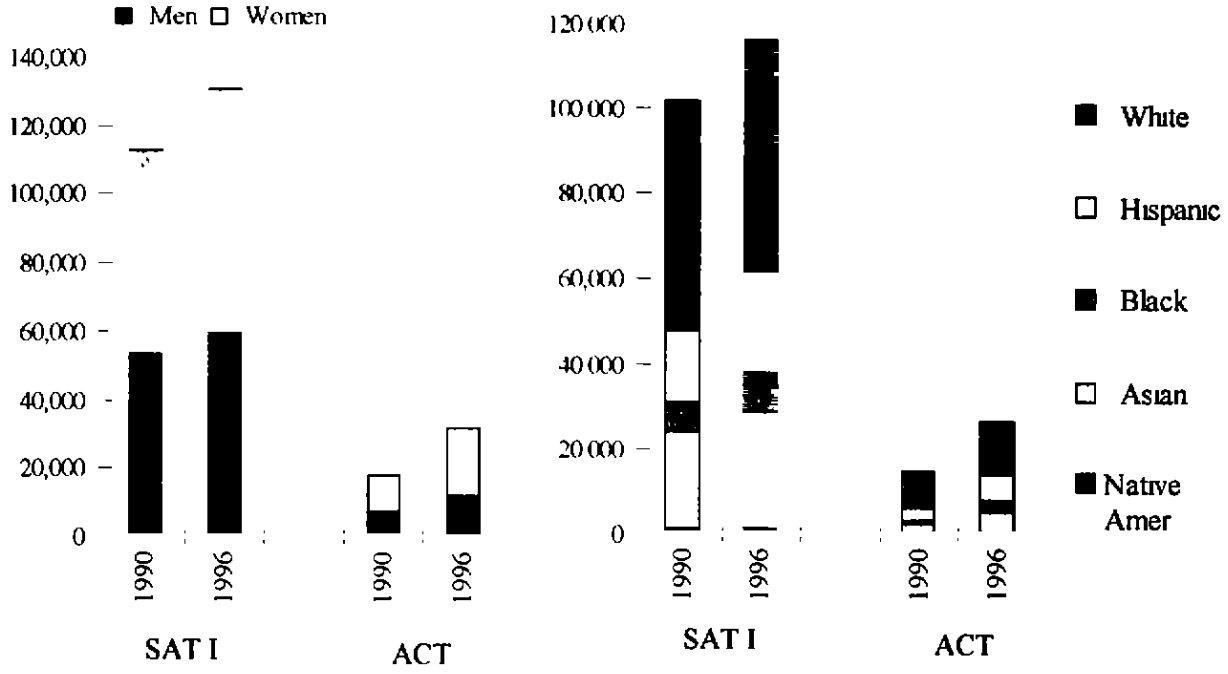
*Performance on the SAT I*

While the number of public high school graduates increased 9 5 percent between 1990 and 1996, the number of graduates taking the SAT I examination increased by approximately 18 percent -- from 112,577 to 132,711-- as Display 10 illustrates Once again, growth in participation was not evenly distributed across student subgroups The number of women taking the SAT I grew by 20 percent while the number of men grew 12 percent Asian students taking the test grew by 20 percent, 29 percent more Black students took the test, the number of Latino students taking the test increased by 42 percent, 15 percent more Native American students took the test, and 1 5 percent more White students sat for this examination

*DISPLAY 10 California Students Taking the SAT I and ACT Exams in 1990 and 1996*



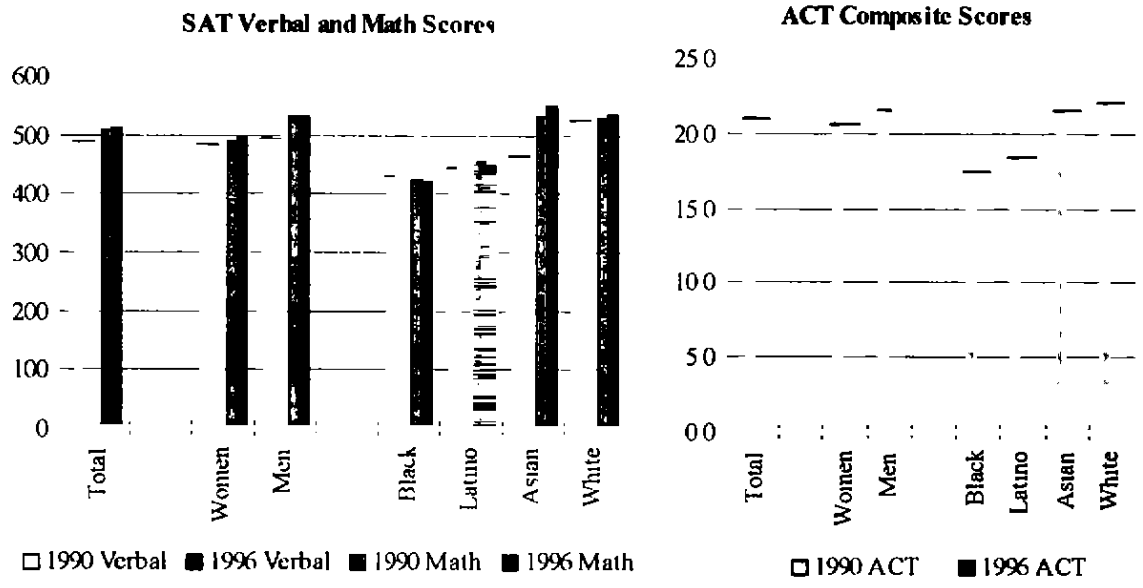

Recent information published by the California Department of Education delineates the changes in participation of public high school graduates on the SAT I examination between 1990 and 1996 The proportion of public high school graduates taking the SAT I grew from 38 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 1996 The proportion of men participating increased 1 7 percentage points while the propor-

tion of women grew by 3 4 percentage points Among Asian graduates, the proportion taking the SAT I rose by three percentage points, the proportion of Black graduates taking the test increased by 6 5 percentage points The proportion of Latino graduates who took the SAT I grew by one percentage point, while the proportion taking the test increased by 2 5 percentage points among White graduates

Overall, the average scores for California public high school seniors taking the SAT I Math and Verbal tests changed slightly between 1990 and 1996, with the average Math score improving one point, as Display 11 illustrates However, change did not occur uniformly across student subgroups Among men, the average Verbal SAT I score was unchanged while the Math scores improved slightly For women taking the test, their average Verbal score rose slightly while their average Math score was up four points Both Verbal and Math scores of Asian and White students taking the SAT I improved, these scores for Black and Latino students declined between 1990 and 1996

Comparisons of SAT I scores between 1990 and 1996 are complicated by two factors (1) In 1994, the nature and contents of the SAT I Verbal and Math tests changed somewhat, (2) In 1995, the College Board, in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service, re-centered the national average score on each test to 500 The 1990 SAT I scores on Display 11 were converted to the re-centered scale in order to determine their comparability to scores reported for 1996

*DISPLAY 11 Average Verbal and Math SAT I Scores and Average ACT Composite Scores for Californians in 1990 and 1996*



*Performance on the ACT*

Even more dramatic growth occurred relative to the ACT examination in which the number of California seniors taking that test increased by 77 percent between 1990 and 1996 -- from 17,938 to 31,663 While these are relatively small numbers compared to SAT I participants, they do reflect a substantial expansion in the set of students taking the tests needed for university admission Again, growth was differential across subgroups The number of women taking the ACT increased by 20 percent while the number of men grew by 12 percent While the number of Asian students taking the ACT increased by 129 percent and the number of Black and Latino students who sat for this test increased by 143 percent, the number of White students rose by 40 percent

Despite this relatively large increase in the number of students taking the ACT in California, the statewide average score was the same in 1996 as it was in 1990 -- 21 0 on a scale of 1 to 36 The average score for men declined slightly, while that of women increased slightly The average scores for Asian test takers and for Black test takers were unchanged, 21 6 and 17 5, respectively, while the average score for Latino students increased from 18 4 to 18 6 and the average score for White students rose from 22 1 to 22 7

*Statewide student grade-point averages*

No population data are available for the scholastic achievement of high school graduates, as measured by their average grades However, each of the last three eligibility studies estimated statewide grade-point averages based on each study's sample populations Between 1983 and 1990, the scholastic achievement of public high school graduates, as measured by their grade-point averages, has improved for all student subgroups, as shown in Display 12 below Once the 1996 study is completed, the chart will be modified to include information about the estimated grade-point averages for the public high school class of 1996

*DISPLAY 12 Estimated Statewide Grade-Point Averages for Public High School Graduates, 1983, 1986, and 1990*

| | 1983 | 1986 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Graduates statewide | 2 62 | 2 60 | 2 68 |
| Asian Graduates | 2 96 | 2 96 | 3 11 |
| Black Graduates | 2 26 | 2 29 | 2 33 |
| Latino Graduates | 2 42 | 2 44 | 2 44 |
| White Graduates | 2 69 | 2 65 | 2 74 |

# 3 How Are The 1996 Eligibility Rates Developed?

CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION is facing multiple challenges as the State enters the twenty-first century Many of these challenges were identified in the Commission's recent planning document *The Challenge of the Century* The Commission's workplan that flowed from this major planning document placed the implementation of a current study of the eligibility of public high school graduates as its highest priority The Commission, in concert with and through the support of the California State University and the University of California and with the cooperation of the California Department of Education and the State's public high schools, has conducted an examination of the eligibility of the public high school class of 1996 for freshman admission to the California State University and the University of California in light of the admission requirements that were in place in Fall 1996 This chapter describes the scope and methods of the 1996 Eligibility Study

**Scope of the study**

The 1996 Eligibility Study provides reliable estimates of the proportions of public high school graduates who met the freshman admission criteria for Fall 1996 at the California State University and the University of California Like its three most recent predecessors in 1983, 1986, and 1990, this study also includes analyses of variations in eligibility rates across several groups of students -- between men and women, among four major racial-ethnic groups of students, and among students from various geographic regions or across areas characterized by levels of urbanization

Because the current study's design replicates the scope of these earlier studies, it allows for analyses of changes in student eligibility over time It also contains sufficiently detailed information about the academic achievement of high school students to allow analyses of changes in college preparatory course completion, grade-point averages, and college admission test results

While ensuring that adequate information is available for the purpose of historical comparison, the 1996 study design has enhancements that will allow for new analyses New to this study is an examination of the extent to which eligibility differs among students from rural, suburban, and urban high schools

The 1996 study has occurred at a particularly crucial time in California history, when sufficient State resources are unlikely to be available to accommodate the increased demand by students for admission to the State's public universities This study provides detailed information about the academic preparation of high school graduates differentiated by student characteristics and geographic regions This

information then becomes an excellent tool for understanding changes occurring both in these characteristics and in the actual enrollment patterns of eligible graduates

**Methods of the study**

The 1996 eligibility rates presented in this report are the estimated percentages of California public high school graduates in the academic year 1995-96 who were eligible for freshman admission to the California State University and the University of California in Fall 1996 These are termed estimated percentages because they are based on information about a sample of 1996 graduates -- a 5 9 percent sample In order to be included in this study, a student must have completed the graduation requirements specified by the school district or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE) and been designated as a graduate The 1996 study requested a sample from every public comprehensive, alternative, and continuation high school in the state

In May 1996, the Commission sent high school principals and school district superintendents a letter co-signed by the Commission's Executive Director and the Superintendent of Public Instruction announcing the implementation of the 1996 Eligibility Study In August, the Commission staff sent a packet of instructions and forms to the high schools The packets contained detailed directions on the method by which high school personnel should select the random sample of transcripts from their 1996 graduates The sampling rates varied from school to school based on the size, location, and racial-ethnic composition of its graduating class Larger than average samples were drawn from very small schools, rural schools, and schools with large proportions of Black graduates This procedure ensured adequate size samples of transcripts for graduates from each student subgroup of interest in order that reliable eligibility estimates could be computed for each group It also limited the size of the overall sample to an adequate and affordable level

In calculating eligibility estimates, the Commission used standard statistical techniques to ensure that the information for each graduate and each high school accurately reflected its actual weight in the entire high school graduating class The sampling design for the 1996 study was independently reviewed by two statistical experts unaffiliated with the Commission or the State's public universities Both reviewers concluded that the proposed sampling design would yield an unbiased sample for the development of reliable and historically comparable eligibility estimates

The Commission provided the schools with a "Supplemental Student Information Form" to be completed for each transcript to ensure that essential information about the students was collected These data included the student's gender, racial-ethnic category as recorded by the high school, and any available results of college admission examinations taken by the student The Commission asked the schools to return the list of graduates used to identify the sample so that Commission staff could verify that the sample had been selected in accordance with its instructions

Usable samples of transcripts were received from 90 3 percent of the public high schools These schools enrolled 96 9 percent of the 1996 public high school graduates Display 13 presents the final school participation rates for this study These rates are comparable to those for the previous three studies

*DISPLAY 13 Number of Schools and Graduates Represented in the 1996 Eligibility Study, by Type of School*

| **Schools** | | | | **Student Transcripts** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of School | Total Number | Number Responding | Percent Responding | Transcripts Requested | Transcripts Received | Percent Received |
| Public Comprehensive | 811 | 782 | 96 4% | 14,414 | 13,950 | 96 8% |
| Public Alternative and Continuation | 549 | 446 | 81 2% | 1,445 | 1,402 | 97 0% |
| TOTAL | 1,360 | 1,228 | 90 3% | 15,859 | 15,352 | 96 9% |

*Analysis of transcripts*

The 1,228 responding schools submitted to the Commission 15,352 transcripts randomly selected to assure an unbiased sample After removing all personally identifying information from the transcripts and making a file copy of all transcripts, the Commission staff sent the transcripts to a central processing point for electronic scanning and copying This central processing center was within the Admissions Office of one campus of the California State University Once the electronic processing was completed, the transcripts were ready for evaluation by admissions evaluators from each system to determine if the student was eligible for admission to its system These evaluators submitted the transcripts to the same admission evaluation as if these students had actually applied as a first-time freshmen for Fall 1996 Based on these analyses, the systems classified each transcript in the sample as "eligible" or "ineligible" for regular freshman admission to each system based on the specific regular eligibility criteria in effect in Fall 1996 Display 14 presents these criteria in comparison to those in effect in Fall 1990 for the State University and University

As this display illustrates, high school graduates may achieve eligibility for freshman admission to the California State University and the University of California through a variety of means, including (1) taking the required courses and earning specific grades, (2) taking the required courses and performing at specific levels on selected combinations of grades and college admission test scores, and, (3) in the case of the University, performing at specific levels on college admission tests The eligibility coding employed by each system clearly delineated the means by which a student was eligible, or ineligible, for freshman admission

*DISPLAY 14 Freshman Eligibility Criteria for California Residents at the California State University and the University of California, 1990 and 1996*

| Admission Requirements | California State University 1990 | California State University 1996 | University of California 1990 | University of California 1996 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High School Diploma | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Subject Area Requirements (Year course with Grade of C or better) | | * | | |
| a History | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| b English | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| c Mathematics | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| d Laboratory Science | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| e Foreign Language | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| f Visual/Performing Arts | 1 | 1 | ** | ** |
| g Advanced Course/Electives | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| | (5 of 7 English & Math 12 of 15 courses required) | *May be met by completing UC a-f | **Some Visual and Performing Arts courses are approved electives | |
| Scholarship Requirement -- Minimum grade-point average (GPA) | 2 0 overall | Same | 2 78 in "a-f" courses | 2 82 in "a-f" courses |
| Examination Requirement | No SAT I/ACT required if GPA is 3 0 or better | Same | SAT/ACT and 3 CB Achievement Tests | SAT I/ACT and three SAT II tests |
| Scholarship/Examination Requirement | GPA between 2 0 and 2 99 with qualifying test score on State University Eligibility Index | Same | GPA between 2 78 and 3 29 with qualifying test score on University's Eligibility Index | GPA between 2 82 and 3 29 with qualifying test score on University's Eligibility Index |
| Entrance by Examination | None | None | SAT total of 1100 or ACT composite of 27 and Achievement test scores totaling 1650, minimum of 500 on each | SAT I total of 1300 (prior to 4/95) or 1400 (after 5/95) or ACT composite of 31 and SAT II total of 1650, 500 minimun on each (prior to 5/95) or 1760 with 530 minimum (after 5/95) |

For the purposes of this study, the Commission and the systems implemented a policy of "demonstrable eligibility" in arriving at eligibility determinations for each transcript Under this policy, only those graduates whose high school transcripts indicated that they satisfied all applicable requirements -- completion of course pattern, scholastic (grades) performance, and college admission test performance -- were deemed eligible for admission

For most high school graduates who took a college admissions test, the results of these tests appeared on the student's transcript or were entered on the supplement information forms However, a student's scores may have been missing from the high school record for one of several reasons (1) tests were taken following graduation, (2) some students did not provide their high schools with their scores, and, (3) some high schools did not maintain test results files on their graduates As in the previous three studies, to ensure more accurate estimates of eligibility, the Commission staff contacted the College Board, the Educational Testing Service, and the American College Test Program for assistance in locating the test scores of students in the sample who had taken either the SAT tests or the ACT With their assistance and using procedures that protected the confidentiality of individual students, the Commission was able to obtain test results for graduates in the sample whose scores were needed to determine their eligibility statuses

If a transcript did **not** contain all of the information needed to demonstrate a graduate's eligibility, the graduate was judged to be ineligible, except in the following two types of cases

1 *Admissions test scores missing for some graduates* The University of California requires all freshman applicants to take a set of national college admissions examinations -- the SAT I or ACT and three SAT II exams The University and the Commission deemed those graduates in the sample who had grade-point averages of 3 3 or greater but were missing some or all of these test results as potentially eligible for the University, if they met all other admission requirements Similarly deemed potentially eligible were graduates who had the required grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29 in the required "A-F" courses and whose SAT I or ACT test scores qualified them for admission but who were missing one or more of their SAT II results Including these graduates as part of the pool of graduates eligible for the University was an Eligibility Study policy prior to the 1990 study To maintain historical comparability, the 1990 study reported on three classifications of graduates with respect to the University of California (1) fully eligible, (2) potentially eligible, and (3) ineligible This new policy continues in the 1996 study

2 *Transcripts with missing or illegible course information* In a few instances, the academic records of students were improperly copied such that some course information -- most typically twelfth grade information -- was not legible or available In those cases where the available information was sufficient to determine the student's eligibility or project the likely nature of the missing information, system evaluators completed the evaluation If the missing information was critical to the determination of the student's eligibility and available information was insufficient, the transcript was deleted from the study

**Observations and caveats about interpreting the estimates**

The Commission urges readers of the 1996 Eligibility Study to keep the following issues in mind when reviewing its results

*Eligibility rates are estimated from sample data* The eligibility estimates presented are based on information obtained from a stratified random sample of transcripts of the 1995-96 graduates of California's public high schools, as described above To compute an actual statewide eligibility rate, the eligibility status of each of the 259,071 graduates would need to be included in the computation While this analysis is not realistic, fortunately, the use of standard sampling procedures provides a means for developing reliable estimates of the actual eligibility rate from a sample of transcripts However, because the estimate is based on a sample, it is not precisely accurate

Standard statistical procedures include a means of computing the level of precision of each estimate The precision level provides an upper and lower boundary within which the true eligibility rate probably occurs For example in the 1990 eligibility study, the estimated statewide eligibility rate for the California State University was 34 6 percent, with a precision level of 0 8 percent, at the 95 percent confidence level That is, there was a 95 percent probability that the true eligibility rate for the State University in 1990 was between 33 8 percent (34 6 - 0 8) and 35 4 (34 6 + 0 8) percent The eligibility rates presented in this report were estimated using the standard statistical procedure for a stratified random sample Use of alternative estimating procedures would generate slightly different estimates but these would be within the probable range reported

*Precision levels vary by sample group size* The magnitude of a precision level depends on the sample size, variation within the sample, and the level of confidence determined to be appropriate All eligibility estimates in the last three studies and in the current study have confidence levels of 95 percent However, each eligibility estimate has a different precision level depending on the sample size A variety of statistical formulas exist for computing the precision of a sample estimate that are dependent on assumptions about the nature of the sample For this study, the Commission staff applied the standard formula for a stratified random sample

In addition to the overall statewide rate for each system, separate rates were calculated for men and women, for Asian, Black, Latino, and White students, and for graduates from each of eleven geographic regions of the state Also, separate rates were computed for graduates of schools that were classified as rural, suburban, and urban institutions -- a new analysis in the 1996 study The study was designed to ensure that the standard error of the statewide estimate was one percentage point or less For the subgroup analyses, estimates were considered sufficiently reliable if they had a standard error of estimate of three percentage points or less

*Estimates for smaller subgroup have larger precision levels* Because of smaller sample sizes for subgroup estimates, the eligibility estimates for these subgroups involve larger precision levels than that for the statewide estimate Any subgroup

estimate with a precision level greater than three percentage points was considered unreliable and was not included in this report

*Rates for some racial-ethnic groups are not reported.* Reliable eligibility estimates for public high school graduates were generated separately for Asian, Black, Latino, and White graduates Insufficient numbers of Filipino, Pacific Islander, and Native American graduates appeared in the sample to allow the computation of reliable estimates for these groups However, students from these groups were included in the calculation of the statewide, gender, and geographic regional estimates Small sample sizes of men and women within each racial-ethnic group also precluded generating reliable estimates for these smaller groups

*Nonresponding schools are not included in the estimated rates.* The Commission staff applies various statistical adjustment procedures to the sample obtained from the high schools prior to computing the eligibility estimates These procedures conform with accepted statistical standards and were undertaken in order to (a) verify the integrity of the sample of graduates, and, (b) adjust for differences in the sampling rates for those schools that did participate Nonetheless, while the eligibility rates computed represent very reliable statewide estimates developed on the basis of standard statistical methods, they are based only on the information provided by responding high schools As such, they probably differ slightly from estimates that would have been obtained if all high schools had participated

*Care is required in generalized use of the study's findings* The 1996 sample of the State's public high school graduates yields findings with sufficient accuracy and reliability for use in state-level and systemwide planning But these same findings may not be sufficiently reliable for regional, district, or local campus planning -- particularly where such planning involves small subsets of the statewide student population Institutional policy makers should consider the applicability of the findings carefully before employing them in institutional policy analysis and development The guidelines and caveats mentioned here should be taken into that consideration

*Care is needed in interpreting rate changes over time* The design of the 1996 study purposefully replicates that of the three previous studies in order to facilitate comparisons across time of the effects of changing admission requirements and changes in student preparation on student eligibility However, the samples for the studies are unique The differing characteristics of the sample, the student populations, and admission requirements across studies must be considered carefully when discussing changes over time

# 4 What Are The Eligibility Rates of 1996 Public High School Graduates for the California State University?

THIS CHAPTER of the report presents the major findings of the 1996 Eligibility Study with respect to the California State University The chapter is organized as follows

- The relationship between eligibility and the freshman admission requirements at the California State University in Fall 1996,
- The statewide eligibility rates of the 1996 public high school graduates for freshman admission at the State University in 1996 and the comparison of these rates with the eligibility rates in 1986 and 1990,
- The eligibility rates for men and women, separately, and for graduates from four major racial-ethnic groups -- Asian, Black, Latino, and White graduates, and,
- The 1996 eligibility rates for graduates in eleven geographic regions of the State as well as the eligibility rates for graduates from urban, suburban, and rural high schools are presented

In contrast to the organization of previous eligibility studies, this chapter views each student group -- overall, by gender, by racial-ethnic background, by geographic region, and by high school type -- across the entire range of academic performance in order to enhance understanding of specific issues with respect to student preparation

**1996 Admissions requirements for the California State University**

The Master Plan for Higher Education in California recommends that the State University establish its freshman eligibility criteria such that the top one-third of the public high school graduating class is eligible to enroll as freshmen In Fall 1996, California's high school graduates could achieve eligibility for freshman admission at the State University by completing 15 college preparatory courses that fulfill either

1 The State University's pattern of required courses that include one year of Visual and/or Performing Arts, or

2 The University of California's pattern of required courses, known as the "A-F" course requirement

Then, graduates could achieve eligibility by either of the following two means

1 By earning an overall grade-point average of 3 0 or greater in their tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade courses, excluding physical education and military science, or,

2 By earning an overall grade-point average between 2 0 and 2 99 and having college admission test scores -- SAT I or ACT -- that qualified on the State University's Eligibility Index (The Index is a weighted ranking of grade-point averages and college admission examination scores such that the lower the student's grade-point average, the higher they must score on an admission test to be eligible )

Display 14 in the previous chapter summarizes the eligibility requirements in place in Fall 1996 in comparison to those in effect in Fall 1990, the year of the Commission's last eligibility study

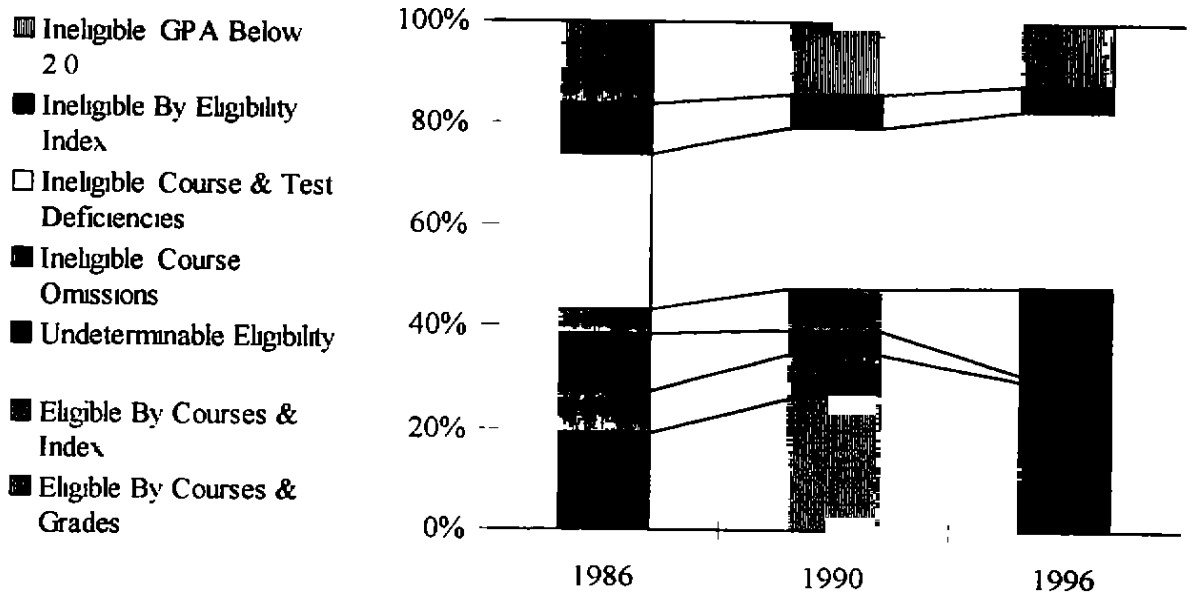
Over the last ten years, the California State University has been systematically increasing their freshman admission requirements through a transition to a required pattern of 15 college preparatory courses The course requirements in 1986 were four years of English and two years of mathematics However, up to one year of coursework in English or mathematics could be waived as part of the phase-in transition In 1990, a minimum of 12 of 15 college preparatory courses were required Of the 12 courses, at least three years of English and two years of mathematics were prescribed for regular admission By 1996, the State University had moved to full implementation of its course requirements -- high school graduates must have completed all 15 of the required courses, including all seven of the required courses in English and mathematics, to be eligible Minimum grade-point averages required and the State University's Eligibility Index did not change between 1990 and 1996 At the time of the 1996 Eligibility Study, the California State University had a temporary provision in its admission requirements that specified that any graduate completing the University of California's pattern of required courses was eligible for the State University provided that their overall grade-point average and test scores qualified them for admission or the basis of the State University's Eligibility Index

**Eligibility of 1996 high school graduates for admission to the California State University**

Eligibility is the complex interaction of courses completed, grades earned, and when necessary, college admission test scores earned This section of the report describes the eligibility of the 1996 public high school graduating class as determined by their academic achievements in light of the freshman admission requirements at the California State University in 1996

As Display 15 shows, the estimated percentage of 1996 public high school graduates who were eligible for freshman admission at the California State University in

*DISPLAY 15 Percent of Public High School Graduates by Category of Eligibility for the California State University, 1986, 1990, and 1996*




| | Statewide | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eligibility Status | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 |
| Eligible By Courses and Grades | 19 2 | 26 2 | 25 8 |
| Eligible By Courses and Index | 8 3 | 8 4 | 3 8 |
| **Eligibility Pool** | **27.5** | **34.6** | **29.6** |
| *Precision* | 0 69 | 0 82 | 0 76 |
| *Range of Estimate* | 26 81 to 28 19 | 33 76 to 35 44 | 28 84 to 30 36 |
| Undeterminable Eligibility | 11 3 | 4 9 | 1 1 |
| Ineligible Course Omissions | 4 3 | 8 1 | 17 3 |
| Ineligible Course & Test Deficient | 30 8 | 31 7 | 34 6 |
| Ineligible By Eligibility Index | 9 8 | 6 3 | 5 2 |
| Ineligible GPA Below 2 0 | 16 3 | 14 4 | 12 2 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission

Fall 1996 was 29 6 percent -- 3 7 percentage points below the Master Plan guidelines for this sytem of 33 3 percent This estimate is a 5 0 percentage point decrease from the eligibility rate of the 1990 graduates of 34 6 percent -- a 14 5 percent decrease However, the 1996 rate was a 2 1 percentage point increase over the 1986 rate of 27 5 percent, despite the fact that the 1996 admission requirements were substantially more stringent Because the 1983 study predated

the inclusion of course requirements in the admission process at the State University, this report does not include findings for that study

This 1996 estimate is based on 15,352 usable student academic records -- 5 9 percent of the 1996 public high school graduating class The precision of this estimate is 0 76 percent, which is consistent with the precision levels achieved in the last three eligibility studies This precision level generates a probable range for the eligibility estimate of 28 84 to 30 36 percent The estimated 1996 eligibility pool for the State University of 29 6 percent is sufficiently different from its Master Plan guideline of 33 3 percent to be statistically significant at the 95 percent level

As the State University has raised its freshman admission requirements, public high school graduates have expanded their participation in college preparatory courses However, the substantial increase in courses required between 1990 and 1996 appears to have exceeded the growth in student academic preparation

The next section of this chapter examines in more detail the patterns of academic preparation among 1996 graduates as it relates to the State University's freshman admission requirements Examination of changes in the academic characteristics of both eligible and ineligible high school graduates over the last ten years may reveal the specific factors related to the change in the estimated eligibility rate for the State University

*Eligible graduates*

As Display 15 illustrated, 87 percent of all eligible public high school graduates in 1996 -- as contrasted with 76 percent in 1990 -- achieved eligibility for the State University as a result of earning average grades of 3 0 or better The remaining 13 percent qualified on the basis of the State University's Eligibility Index While the overall eligibility pool for the State University declined five percentage points, the pool of graduates who were eligible on the basis of grades alone decreased by less than one-half of a percentage point Thus, the decrease in the eligibility pool stemmed almost exclusively from a decline in the pool of graduates whose grade-point averages were between 2 0 and 3 0 and whose college admission test scores qualified them on the State University's Eligibility Index

*Undeterminable eligibility*

The eligibility of some graduates for the California State University could not be determined because, while they completed all of the 15 required college preparatory courses and had grade-point averages above the minimum 2 0, they did not take a college admission test -- the SAT I or the ACT -- needed to determine their eligibility status on the State University's Eligibility Index As course requirements became an increasingly important factor in determining graduate's eligibility, the proportion of graduates whose eligibility could not be determined declined substantially Statewide, the proportion of graduates for whom eligibility could not be determined dropped from 11 3 percent in 1986 to 4 9 percent in 1990 to 1 1

percent in 1996 High school graduates who had completed all of the college preparatory courses required for freshman admission at the State University and who had grade-point averages between 2 0 and 3 0 almost invariably took the college admission tests needed to determine their eligibility Clearly, growth in the participation of California students in college admission examinations noted in Chapter 2 contributed to an increase in the proportion of graduates for whom eligibility could be determined

*Ineligible graduates*

Examination of the academic characteristics of those California public high school graduates who were ineligible for the California State University is fundamental to a clearer understanding of changes in the academic preparation of all graduates Graduates ineligible for the State University fell into four categories based on their academic characteristics

1 Those who had the grades alone or the grades with test scores that would have qualified them for the State University but were missing one or more of the required college preparatory courses,

2 Those who were missing one or more of the required college preparatory courses <u>and</u> were missing or had college admission test scores that were insufficient to be eligible,

3 Those whose college admission test scores were insufficient to qualify on the State University's Eligibility Index, and,

4 Those with grade-point averages below the minimum of 2 0

Consistent with the decline in the size of the pool of graduates eligible for the State University, the pool of ineligible graduates increased statewide by 8 8 percentage points -- a 14 5 percent increase, as Display 15 illustrates This increase in the pool of ineligible graduates did not occur uniformly across the four categories of ineligibility In fact, the proportions of graduates in two of these categories actually decreased

- Most of the increase in the ineligible pool of graduates was attributable to the expansion of the number of graduates who were missing one or more of the required courses This pool of ineligible graduates more than doubled, growing from 8 1 percent in 1990 to 17 3 percent in 1996
- The only other pool of ineligible graduates to increase over this period was the set of graduates who had both course omissions and test score deficiencies This pool expanded from 31 7 to 34 6 percent -- a nine percent increase
- The proportion of graduates who were ineligible for freshman admission because their college admission test scores were too low to qualify on the State University's Eligibility Index decreased from 6 3 to 5 2 percent -- a 17 percent decrease Most of these graduates -- 4 8 percent -- also had course omissions

- The proportion of public high school graduates with grade-point averages below 2 0 also dropped from 14 4 to 12 2 percent -- a 15 percent decline

*General trends in eligibility*

A larger proportion than ever of California public high school graduates enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum while in high school, however, the proportion of them who were successful in completing that curriculum at an achievement level sufficient to be eligible for the State University was below the statewide guideline for that system Among those graduates who had fulfilled the course requirement, failure to take a required college admission examination has become an insignificant issue Further, the proportion of graduates who had completed the required course work but were ineligible because their test scores failed to qualify them on the State University's Eligibility Index was also at an all time low Clearly, improvement in the eligibility rate for the California State University will occur only if a larger proportion of public high school students complete the full college preparatory curriculum required to maximize both their preparation, choices, and opportunities

**Eligibility rates by gender**

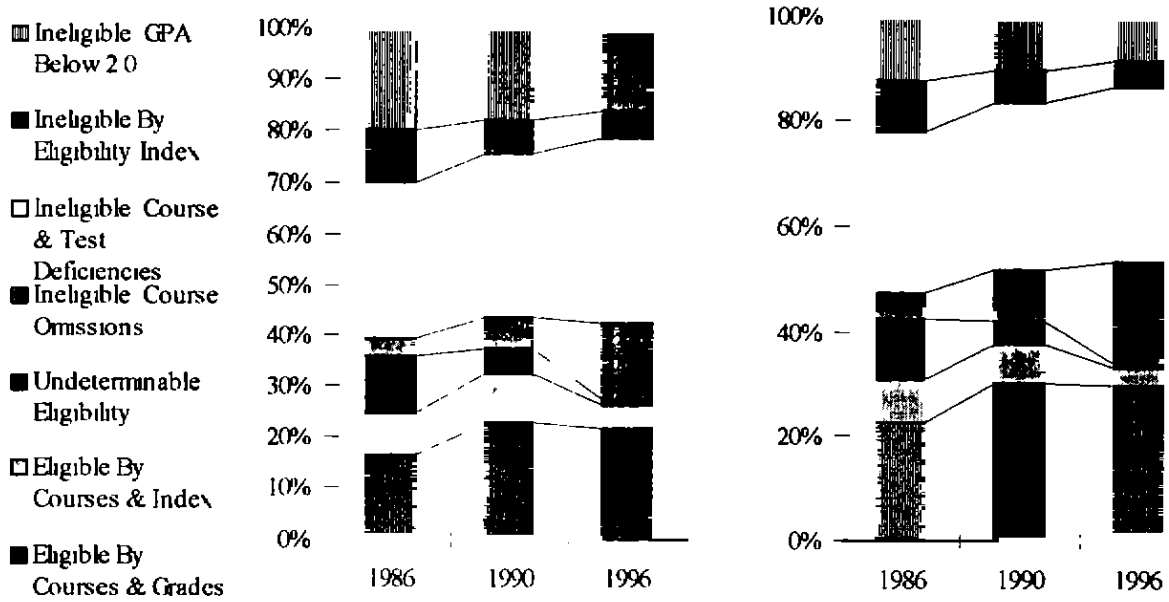
As in previous eligibility studies conducted by the Commission, differences in eligibility rates of men and women graduating from the State's public high schools were analyzed This section of the report presents these findings for 1996 in contrast to the 1990 study

*Eligible men and women*

Consistent with the findings for the last three eligibility studies, men and women graduating from the State's public high schools in 1996 achieved eligibility for the State University at significantly different rates -- 26 3 percent of men and 32 9 percent of women were eligible, as presented in Display 16 Congruent with the statewide decline in the eligibility pool, the proportions of both men and women who were eligible decreased However, the rate of decrease was substantially steeper for men than women The size of the eligible pool of men graduating from the State's public high school declined by 6 1 percentage points from 32 4 percent in 1990 -- an 18 8 percent decrease -- while the pool of eligible women declined by 4 7 percentage points from 37 6 percent in 1990 -- a 12 5 percent decrease The 1996 eligibility rates of men and women were each about two percentage points larger than their 1986 rates

The 1996 estimate for men was based on a sample of 7,320 records, or 5 9 percent of the male public high school graduates Similarly, the estimate for women was based on a sample of 8,032 records, or 6 0 percent of all female public high school graduates in 1996 The precision level for the men's estimate was 1 06, yielding a probable range for their estimate of 25 24 to 27 36 percent For the women's estimate, the precision level was 1 08, generating a probably range for their estimate of 31 82 to 33 98 percent

*DISPLAY 16 Percent of Men and Women Graduating from California Public High School by Category of Eligibility for the California State University, 1986, 1990, and 1996*




| | Men | | | Women | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Eligibility Status | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 |
| Eligible By Courses and Grades | 16 2 | 22 9 | 21 8 | 22 4 | 30 0 | 29 7 |
| Eligible By Courses and Index | 8 6 | 9 5 | 4 5 | 8 4 | 7 6 | 3 2 |
| **Eligibility Pool** | 24 8 | 32 4 | 26 3 | 30 8 | 37 6 | 32 9 |
| *Precision* | 1 00 | 1 14 | 1 06 | 1 02 | 1 13 | 1 08 |
| *Range of Estimate* | 23 80 to 25 80 | 31 26 to 33 54 | 25 24 to 27 36 | 29 78 to 31 82 | 36 47 to 38 73 | 31 82 to 33 98 |
| Undeterminable Eligibility | 11 1 | 5 1 | 1 2 | 11 6 | 4 6 | 1 1 |
| Ineligible Course Omissions | 3 5 | 6 3 | 14 9 | 5 0 | 9 6 | 19 5 |
| Ineligible Course & Test Deficient | 30 6 | 31 4 | 35 8 | 30 5 | 31 5 | 33 1 |
| Ineligible Eligibility Index | 10 0 | 6 7 | 5 7 | 9 7 | 6 0 | 4 8 |
| Ineligible GPA Below 2 0 | 20 0 | 18 1 | 16 1 | 12 4 | 10 7 | 8 6 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

A somewhat smaller proportion of the eligible men than the eligible women -- 83 percent and 90 percent, respectively -- qualified for freshman admission at the State University on the basis of grades alone The proportion of men who were eligible in 1996 by grades alone was a full percentage point below the proportion of men eligible on this basis in 1990 -- 21 8 percent compared to 22 9 percent In

addition, the proportion of men who achieved eligibility on the basis of the State University's Eligibility Index in 1996 -- 4 5 percent -- was less than half the 1990 rate of 9 5 percent The pattern of achievement among eligible women graduates in 1996 was somewhat different While the proportion of women who were eligible by grades alone only decreased by 0 3 percentage point -- 30 0 to 29 7 percent -- between 1990 and 1996, the proportion of women eligible by the Index dropped by more than half -- from 7 6 to 3 2 percent

*Undeterminable eligibility*

Very little variation across student subgroups occurred in the proportion of graduates who had completed all of the required courses with grade-point averages between 2 0 and 3 0 but for whom eligibility could not be determined because required college admission test scores were missing For example, while the proportion of men for whom eligibility could not be determined was 1 2 percent, the proportion of women otherwise eligible who were missing needed test scores was 1 1 percent

*Ineligible men and women*

Consistent with the drop in the pool of eligible men, the pool of ineligible men increased from 62 5 to 72 5 percent between 1990 and 1996 -- a 16 percent increase, also shown in Display 16 The sources of this increase paralleled the statewide findings The proportion of men ineligible because of course omissions increased from 6 3 percent to 14 9 percent -- more than doubling the size of this pool of ineligible graduates In addition, the proportion of men who were ineligible because of course omissions and test score deficiencies grew from 31 4 to 35 8 percent -- a 13 percent increase Also paralleling the statewide trends, the proportion of men ineligible on the State University's Index dropped one percentage point -- from 6 7 to 5 7 percent -- and the pool of men graduating with grade-point averages below 2 0 decreased from 18 1 to 16 1 percent

The pattern of academic achievement among ineligible women was only slightly different Their overall pool of ineligible graduates increased from 57 8 to 66 0 percent -- a 14 2 percent increase For women, the source of this increase was the same as for men, although the shifts were somewhat smaller The pool of women ineligible because of course omissions increased from 9 6 to 19 5 percent and those ineligible because of course omissions and test score deficiencies grew from 31 5 to 33 1 percent -- only a 5 percent increase In addition, the decrease in the proportion of women ineligible on the basis of the Eligibility Index was larger than that for men, the proportion of men dropped one percentage point while the proportion of women declined by 1 2 percentage points -- from 6 0 to 4 8 percent The pool of women graduating from high school with grade-point averages below 2 0 also declined about two percentage points -- from 10 7 to 8 6 percent -- and this pool for women is about one-half that for men graduating in 1996

*Trends in eligibility of men and women*

While the eligibility of men and women decreased, women continued to be significantly more likely than men to be eligible for freshman admission at the California State University Women earned higher grades and were more likely to complete the required courses Among ineligible graduates, women were more likely to be disqualified because of course omissions while a larger proportion of men were ineligible because they had both course and admission test deficiencies Men were also almost twice as likely to have high school grade-point averages below 2 0

**Eligibility of graduates from major racial-ethnic groups**

In each of the Commission's eligibility studies since 1983, the Commission has reported on the eligibility rates for several student subgroups In addition to the separate rates for men and women reported above, the studies have generated reliable estimates for four major racial-ethnic groups -- Asian, Black, Latino, and White public high school graduates The current study replicates these analyses and places them in historical perspective with the results of the 1986 and 1990 studies, as illustrated in Display 17

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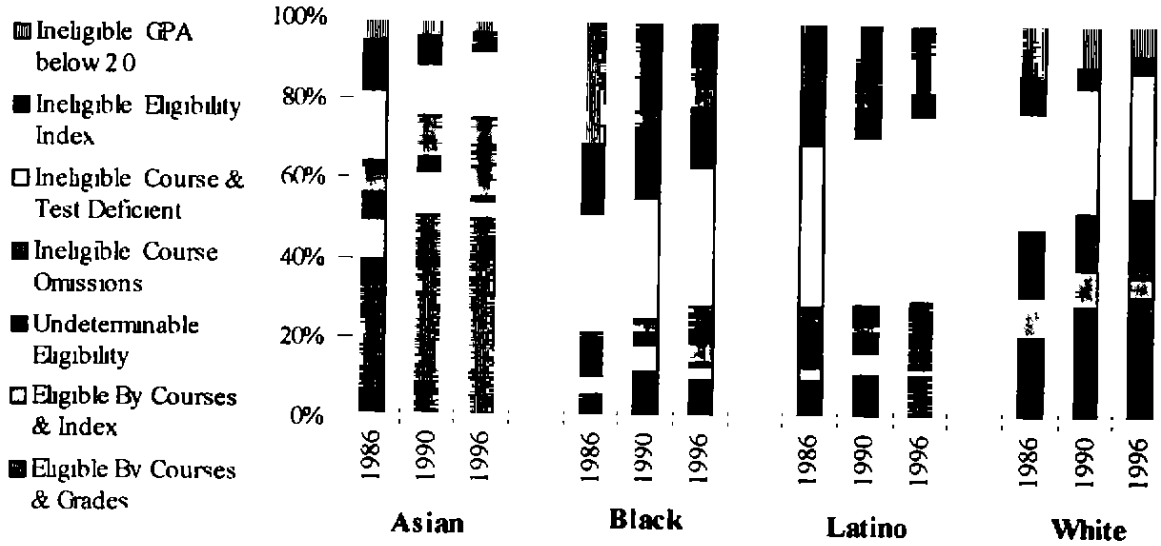
*Eligible graduates*

The pattern of differential eligibility rates among the major racial-ethnic groups noted in the Commission's previous eligibility studies persisted in 1996 The proportion of Asian graduates achieving eligibility for the State University continued to be greater than for any other group, with 54 4 percent of all Asian public high school graduates so qualified The estimated eligibility rate of White graduates in 1996 of 36 3 percent was also considerably above the statewide average of 29 6 percent The estimated eligibility rates of Black and Latino graduates of 13 2 percent and 13 4 percent, respectively, continued to be less than half the average rate for the State

Consistent with the decline in the statewide rate, the eligibility rates of graduates from the four major racial-ethnic groups also decreased Unfortunately, the rates of decline were considerably steeper for those groups that historically have had the lowest eligibility rates

- While Asian public high school graduates continued to have the largest eligibility rate of any racial-ethnic group, their rate of 54 4 percent was 7 1 percentage points below their 1990 rate of 61 5 percent -- an 11 5 percent drop However, their 1996 rate was 4 4 percentage points larger than their 1986 rate of 50 0 percent
- Black public high school graduates experienced the steepest decline in eligibility of the four racial-ethnic groups, dropping from 18 6 percent in 1990 to their 1996 level of 13 2 This 5 4 percentage point decrease was a 29 percent drop However, their 1996 rate was 2 4 percentage points above their 1986 rate of 10 8 percent

*DISPLAY 17 Percent of Public High School Graduates from the Major Racial-ethnic by Category of Eligibility at the California State University, 1986, 1990, and 1996*




| | Asian | | | Black | | | Latino | | | White | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 |
| Eligible By Courses and Grades | 39 3 | 50 7 | 49 9 | 5 7 | 11 8 | 9 7 | 10 0 | 11 4 | 11 1 | 21 4 | 29 2 | 31 7 |
| Eligible By Courses and Grades | 10 7 | 10 8 | 4 5 | 5 1 | 6 8 | 3 5 | 3 3 | 5 9 | 2 3 | 10 2 | 9 0 | 4 6 |
| **Eligibility Pool** | 50 0 | 61 5 | 54 4 | 10 8 | 18 6 | 13 2 | 13 3 | 17 3 | 13 4 | 31 6 | 38 2 | 36 3 |
| *Precision* | 2 65 | 2 27 | 2 24 | 1 52 | 2 51 | 1 85 | 1 11 | 1 20 | 1 04 | 0 94 | 1 14 | 1 13 |
| *Range of Estimate* | 47 35-52 65 | 59 23-63 77 | 52 16-56 64 | 9 28-12 32 | 16 09-21 11 | 11 35-15 05 | 12 19-14 41 | 16 10-18 50 | 12 36-14 44 | 30 66-32 54 | 37 06-39 34 | 35 17-37 43 |
| Undeterminable | 6 3 | 3 3 | 1 0 | 9 4 | 2 9 | 1 0 | 11 1 | 4 8 | 1 0 | 12 1 | 5 6 | 1 3 |
| By Course Omissions | 7 9 | 10 5 | 19 6 | 1 4 | 3 4 | 14 3 | 4 1 | 7 2 | 15 6 | 4 2 | 8 4 | 18 8 |
| By Course & Test Deficiencies | 17 7 | 12 9 | 16 4 | 29 4 | 30 4 | 34 6 | 40 3 | 41 6 | 46 6 | 29 6 | 31 6 | 31 4 |
| By Eligibility Index | 12 3 | 7 0 | 4 7 | 17 4 | 16 6 | 14 5 | 8 9 | 7 0 | 5 4 | 8 4 | 4 7 | 3 9 |
| GPA below 2 0 | 5 8 | 4 7 | 3 9 | 31 6 | 28 1 | 22 4 | 22 3 | 22 1 | 18 0 | 14 1 | 11 5 | 8 3 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

- Of 1996 Latino graduates, 13 4 percent were eligible -- a 3 9 percentage point decrease from their 1990 rate of 17 3 percent, a 22 5 percent decline Their 1996 rate was virtually the same as their eligibility rate in 1986 of 13 3 percent
- The estimated eligibility rate of White public high school graduates -- 36 3 percent -- showed the smallest drop among the four racial-ethnic groups, dipping 1 9

percentage points from their 1990 rate of 38 2 percent -- a 5 2 percent decrease Their 1996 rate was 4 7 percentage points larger than their 1986 rate of 31 6 percent

Differences in sample sizes for graduates from each racial-ethnic group affected the precision of these eligibility rates Given this variation in sample size and precision, the probable range for the Asian eligibility rate was 52 16 to 56 64 percent, the Black eligibility rate was 11 35 to 15 05 percent, the Latino eligibility rate was 12 36 to 14 44 percent, and the White eligibility rate was 35 17 to 37 43 percent

A larger proportion of eligible Asian graduates qualified for the State University on the basis of grades alone -- 92 percent -- than eligible graduates from any of the other three racial-ethnic groups The proportion of Asian graduates who were eligible on the basis of grades alone only decreased by 0 8 percentage point -- from 50 7 to 49 9 percent -- between 1990 and 1996 while the proportion eligible by the State University's Eligibility Index dropped from 10 8 to 4 5 percent, less than half as many Asian graduates qualified by this means in 1996 than in 1990 About three-quarters of the Black eligible graduates qualified for freshman admission at the State University on the basis of grades alone and this pool of graduates decreased by more than 2 percentage points -- from 11 8 percent in 1990 to 9 7 percent in 1996 In addition, the pool of Black graduates eligible by the State University's Index declined by approximately half -- from 6 8 to 3 5 percent -- between 1990 and 1996 Among eligible Latino public high school graduates, 83 percent were eligible on the basis of grades alone The pool of Latino graduates who were eligible by this means showed the smallest decrease -- 0 3 percentage point -- of any group of graduates between 1990 and 1996, dipping from 11 4 to 11 1 percent However, the pool of Latino graduates who were eligible on the basis of the Index had the largest proportional drop -- from 5 9 to 2 3 percent -- for any racial-ethnic group About 87 percent of eligible White graduates qualified for the State University on the basis of grades alone Contrary to the overall trend, the pool of White graduates eligible by grades alone actually increased between 1990 and 1996 -- from 29 2 to 31 7 percent White graduates also had the smallest relative decrease in the proportion eligible on the basis of the State University's Eligibility Index -- a decline from 9 0 to 4 6 between 1990 and 1996

*Undeterminable eligibility*

Very little variation across student subgroups occurred in the proportion of graduates who had completed all of the required courses with grade-point averages between 2 0 and 3 0 but for whom eligibility could not be determined because required college admission test scores were missing Among graduates from the major racial-ethnic groups, approximately 1 0 percent of Asian, Black, and Latino graduates were missing the required test scores, while the eligibility of 1 3 percent of White graduates could not be determined because of missing test scores

*Ineligible graduates from the major racial-ethnic groups*

Having a clearer understanding of the differences in the academic background of graduates determined ineligible for the State University is also critically important This section of the report examines the differences in the academic characteristics of ineligible graduates from the four major racial-ethnic groups

Consistent with the variations in the pool of eligible graduates from the four major racial-ethnic groups, the proportions of ineligible graduates from these groups also varied substantially Asian graduates whose ineligible pool was the smallest of the four racial-ethnic groups had the largest increase in that pool overall -- growing from 35 1 to 44 6 percent -- a 27 percent increase between 1990 and 1996 The ineligible pools of Black and Latino graduates, which historically have been very similar, continued to be so with the Black ineligible pool increasing from 78 5 to 85 8 percent and the Latino pool growing from 77 9 to 85 6 percent -- an approximate nine percent increase in each pool The proportion of White graduates who were ineligible also increased -- from 56 2 to 62 4 percent -- an 11 percent expansion

In the following sections, the changes in the academic characteristics of these sets of ineligible graduates are examined in more detail

1 *Missing required courses* Between 1990 and 1996, the number of college preparatory courses required for freshman admission at the California State University increased from 12 to 15 and the number of required English and mathematics courses expanded from five to seven required courses Most of the increase in the pools of ineligible graduates occurred among those graduates who were missing one or more of the required courses The increase in this pool of ineligible graduates more than accounted for the decrease in the State University's eligibility pool Among Asian graduates, the proportion ineligible due to course omissions increased from 10 5 to 19 6 percent Changes in the proportions of Black and Latino graduates determined ineligible due to missing courses was even more dramatic This pool of Black graduates increased from 3 4 to 14 3 percent and the pool of Latino graduates grew from 7 2 to 15 6 percent The proportion of White graduates who were ineligible on this basis also more than doubled -- from 8 4 to 18 8 percent -- between 1990 and 1996

2 *Missing courses and test scores* The proportion of graduates ineligible because they were missing one or more of the required courses and they were missing test scores or had insufficient test scores to qualify on the State University's Eligibility Index also increased for most groups The proportion of Asian graduates ineligible because of course and test deficiencies increased from 12 9 to 16 4 percent while the proportion of Black graduates disqualified on this basis increased from 30 4 to 34 6 percent Among Latino graduates, those ineligible because of course and test deficiencies expanded from 41 6 to 46 6 percent while the proportion of White graduates disqualified by this means was relatively unchanged -- 31 6 to 31 4 percent between 1990 and 1996

3 *Ineligible on the State University's Eligibility Index* Consistent with the overall trend, the proportions of graduates who were ineligible because their college admission tests scores were insufficient to qualify on the State University's Eligibility Index decreased for graduates from all four major racial-ethnic groups Most of these graduates also had course omissions Between 1990 and 1996, the proportion of Asian graduates disqualified on this basis dropped from 7 0 to 4 7 percent while the proportion of Black graduates ineligible on the Index decreased from 16 6 to 14 5 percent The proportion of Latino graduates who were determined ineligible on the basis of the Eligibility Index declined from 7 0 to 5 4 percent, among White graduates, the proportion who did not qualify because of low test scores decreased from 4 7 to 3 9 percent over this period

4. *Grade-point averages below 2 0* Graduates from all four major racial-ethnic groups contributed to the statewide decrease in the proportion of graduates with grade-point averages below 2 0 The student group with the smallest pool of graduates with grade-point averages below 2 0 continued to be Asian graduates, their pool diminished by the smallest amount dropping from 4 7 to 3 9 percent The pool of Black graduates with average grades below 2 0 declined the most -- from 28 1 to 22 4 percent while the pool of Latino graduates with such grades dropped from 22 1 to 18 0 percent The proportion of White graduates completing high school with grade-point averages below 2 0 also decreased from 11 5 to 8 3 percent

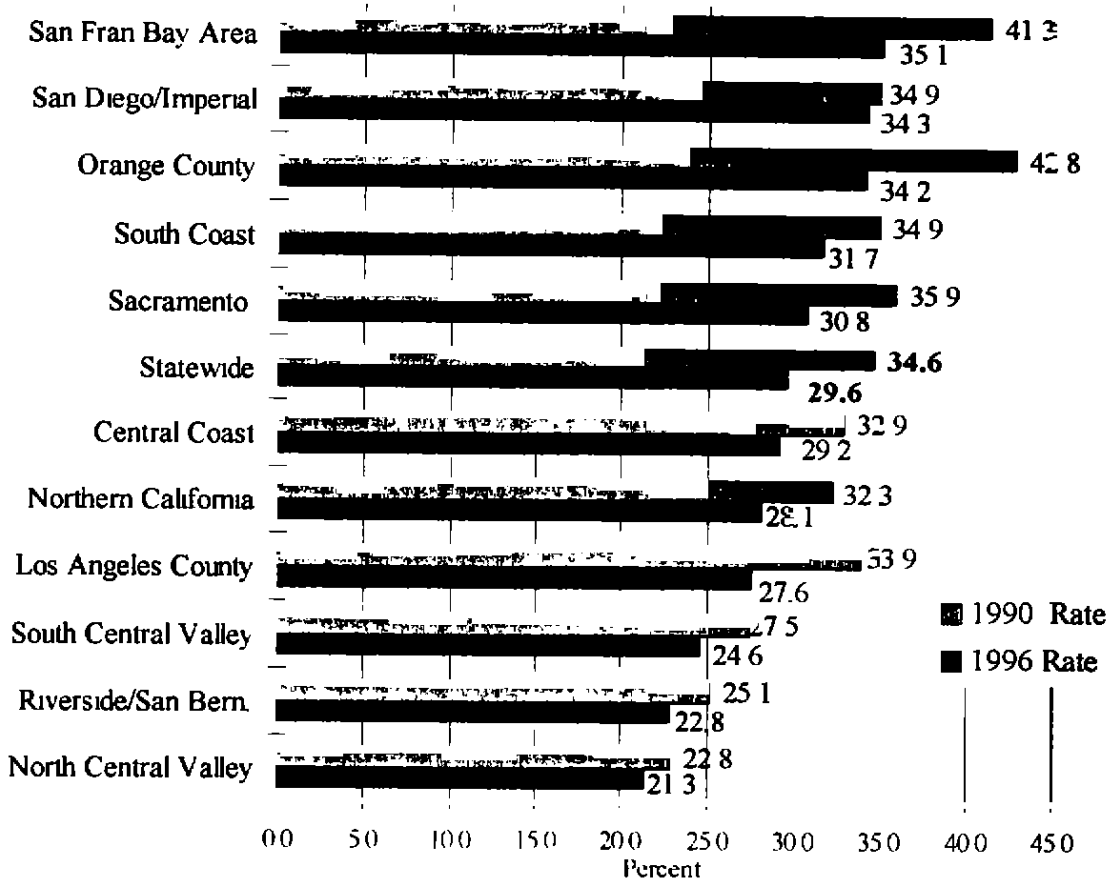
*Trends in eligibility of graduates from different racial-ethnic groups*

Most of the decrease in the pools of eligible graduates in all four major racial-ethnic groups occurred among those graduates with average grades between 2 0 and 3 0 Most of the increase in the proportions of ineligible graduates, regardless of racial-ethnic group, occurred because graduates were missing one or more of the required courses Among Asian, Black, and Latino graduates, the proportions ineligible due to both course and admission test score deficiencies also increased On the other hand, the proportions of graduates determined ineligible on the State University's Eligibility Index or because their average high school grades were below 2 0 decreased in each of the four groups Among those graduates who needed college admission test scores to be eligible for the State University, Black graduates and, to a certain extent, Latino graduates continued to be less likely than Asian and White graduates to have scores sufficiently high to qualify on the State University's Eligibility Index

**Regional difference in State University eligibility rates**

Eligibility varies not only among graduates of different genders and from different racial-ethnic groups but also by the geographic region in which graduates live As in previous eligibility studies, the Commission examined eligibility rates among public high school graduates who live in different regions of the State The definition of these regions was consistent between 1990 and 1996 Consequently, Display 18 presents the estimated eligibility rates for 1996 graduates in each of eleven

*DISPLAY 18 Percent of Public High School Graduates Eligible for the California State University, by Geographic Region, 1990 and 1996*




Source California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1997

regions in contrast to these rates in 1990 The statewide eligibility estimates are presented in this display for comparative purposes

By 1996, the San Francisco Bay area surpassed Orange County in the proportion of its graduates who were eligible for the State University The proportion of eligible graduates in the Bay Area and Orange County -- 35 1 percent and 34 2 percent, respectively -- continued to be significantly larger than the statewide average, however, the eligibility rates in both regions declined to a greater degree than occurred statewide In addition, Los Angeles County also had an above average decrease -- 18 6 percent -- in the proportion of its graduates eligible for the State University, declining from 33 9 to 27 6 percent Its eligibility rate remained about two percentage points below the statewide average

While all geographic regions experienced some decrease in the proportion of their graduates who qualified for freshman admission to the State University, the rates of decline in some regions were substantially less than occurred statewide While

the statewide rate dropped 14 5 percent, the proportion of eligible graduates in San Diego/Imperial counties decreased only 1 7 percent -- from 34 9 to 34 3 percent. In 1996, the San Diego/Imperial region was second only to the San Francisco Bay area in the eligibility rate of its graduates In the North Central Valley, the proportion of their eligible graduates dipped by only 6 6 percent -- from 22 8 percent to 21 3 percent The Riverside/San Bernardino county region saw a 9 2 percent decline in eligible graduates -- from 25 1 to 22 8 percent -- while the eligibility rate of graduates in the South Central Valley dipped 10 5 percent -- from 27 5 to 24 6 percent While these three regions continued to have the lowest eligibility rates in the State, the more modest declines in their rates over the last six years resulted in the narrowing of the gap between their rates and the statewide average

Other regions in which the decline in eligible graduates was below the statewide average included the South Coast region (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties) where the proportion of graduates eligible for freshman admission at the State University decreased 9 2 percent -- from 34 9 to 31 7 percent This smaller than average change maintained this region's eligibility rate at well above the statewide rate While the eligibility rates for both the Central Coast region and Northern California continued to be somewhat below average -- 29 2 percent and 28 1 percent, respectively -- the drop in the proportions of their graduates eligible for the State University were also below average, bringing these rates closer to the statewide average In 1996, these two regions moved in front of Los Angeles County in the proportion of their graduates who were eligible for the State University The greater Sacramento region (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo counties) experienced a decline in its eligibility rate of 14 2 percent -- a decrease comparable to the statewide change As a result, this region's eligibility rate -- 30 8 percent in 1996 -- remained at just above the statewide average

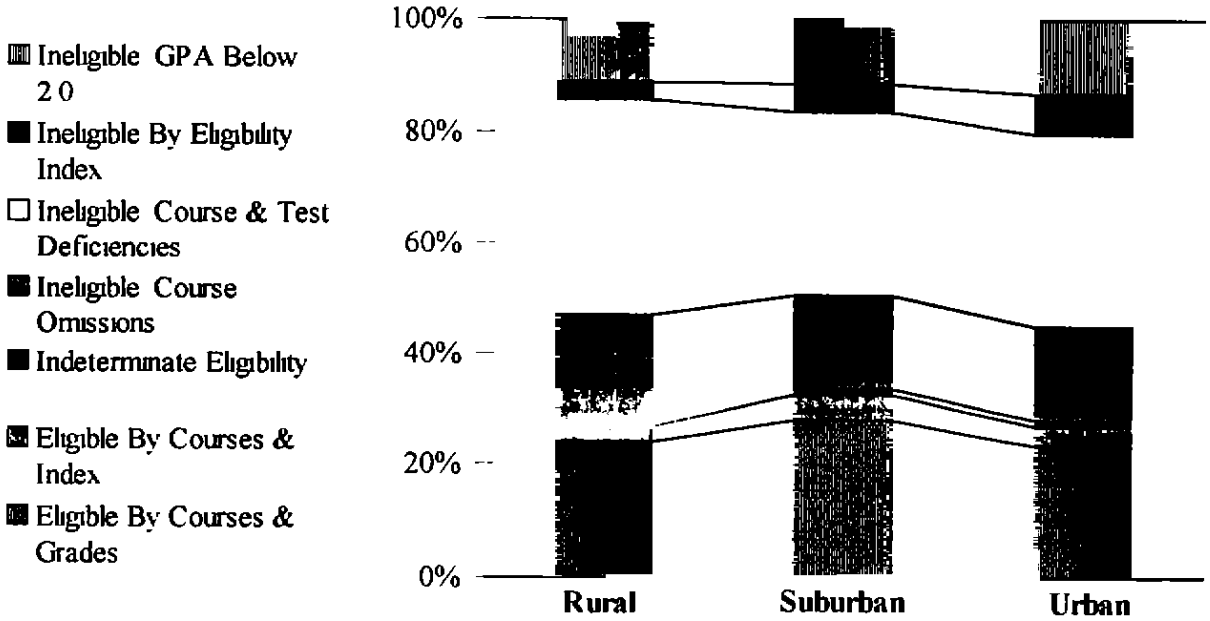
**Eligibility rates of graduates from rural, suburban, and urban high schools**

Regional eligibility rates reported above are averages of the eligibility among all students in a region Participation of students in those activities required to be eligible for the State University undoubtedly varies as much within a region as it does among regions In an effort to better understand the dynamics of eligibility, this section describes differences in eligibility rates for graduates of rural, suburban, and urban public high schools Display 19 summarizes the academic achievement of the 1996 graduates of public high schools in each of these locations as it relates to the freshman admission requirements at the California State University

*Eligible graduates*

For rural public high schools, 26 7 percent of their graduates were eligible for the State University in 1996 Of these eligible graduates, 90 percent qualified on the basis of grades alone by earning average grades of 3 0 or better and taking the full pattern of required courses The remaining 10 percent of these eligible graduates had completed the full pattern of required courses and had overall grade-point

*DISPLAY 19 Percent of 1996 Graduates of Rural, Suburban, and Urban Public High Schools by Category of Eligibility for the California State University*




| Eligibility Status | Rural | Suburban | Urban |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eligible By Courses and Grades | 24 0 | 28 0 | 23 2 |
| Eligible By Courses and Index | 2 7 | 4 4 | 3 5 |
| **Eligibility Pool** | **26.7** | **32.4** | **26.7** |
| Undeterminable Eligibility | 1 0 | 1 2 | 1 1 |
| Ineligible Course Omissions | 19 4 | 16 8 | 16 9 |
| Ineligible Course & Test Deficient | 38 4 | 33 1 | 34 9 |
| Ineligible Eligibility Index | 3 2 | 4 7 | 7 1 |
| Ineligible GPA Below 2 0 | 11 3 | 11 8 | 13 3 |
| Number of Graduates | 44 433 | 127,044 | 85,864 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

averages of 2 0 to 3 0 with college admission tests scores that qualified them on the State University's Eligibility Index

Among suburban public high school graduates, 32 4 percent were eligible for the State University in 1996 This eligibility rate was 21 percent larger than that at rural high schools Of suburban eligible graduates, 86 percent qualified on the basis of grades alone and 14 percent qualified on the State University's Index

The eligibility rate of graduates from the State's urban high schools was the same as that of graduates from the State's rural high schools -- 26 7 percent However, the proportion of urban graduates qualifying on the basis of grades alone -- 23 2 percent -- was somewhat smaller than at rural high schools where the proportion qualifying on this basis was 24 0 percent The proportion of urban graduates qualifying on the basis of the system's Eligibility Index was 3 5 percent -- somewhat larger than the rural rate of 2 7 percent Thus, 87 percent of urban graduates qualified on the basis of grades and 13 percent were eligible on the Eligibility Index

*Undeterminable eligibility*

Consistent with statewide findings, the eligibility status of only a small proportion of graduates from schools in any of the three locations could not be determined Only 1 percent of graduates from rural high schools, who had completed the required courses with grade-point averages between 2 0 and 3 0, did not have the college admission test results necessary to determine their eligibility on the State University's Eligibility Index The proportion of such graduates of suburban and urban high schools was only slightly larger -- 1 2 percent and 1 1 percent, respectively

*Ineligible graduates*

The pools of ineligible graduates of rural and urban public high schools were nearly identical in size -- approximately 72 percent However, the academic characteristics of the graduates in these pools differed substantially Given its larger pool of eligible graduates, suburban high schools had a substantially smaller pool of ineligible graduates -- 66 4 percent

*Ineligible by course omissions* Rural high school had the largest proportion of graduates -- 19 4 percent -- who were ineligible for the State University on the basis of course omissions The proportion of suburban and urban high school graduates ineligible on this basis were almost identical -- 16 8 percent and 16 9 percent, respectively

*Ineligible by course omissions and test deficiencies* Rural high schools also had the largest proportion of graduates who were missing required courses and were either missing college admission test scores or their scores were insufficient to qualify on the system's Index -- 38 4 percent Suburban high schools had the smallest proportion of graduates in this category -- 33 1 percent -- while the proportion of urban high school graduates with this academic background was 34 9 percent

*Ineligible by the Eligibility Index* Rural high schools, on the other hand, had the smallest proportion of graduates ineligible for admission to the State University because their college admission test scores were insufficient to qualify on the system's Eligibility Index -- 3 2 percent This small percentage was primarily the function of the smaller than average proportion of rural high school graduates completing the full set of required courses Among suburban high school gradu-

ates, 4 7 percent were ineligible on the basis of the Eligibility Index A substantially larger proportion of urban high school graduates -- 7 1 percent -- were ineligible on this basis While 3 5 percent of urban high school graduates were eligible on the basis of the Index, twice that proportion failed to qualify on the Eligibility Index because their test scores were too low

*Ineligible because overall GPA was below 2 0.* Once again, rural schools had the smallest proportion of graduates in this category of ineligibility -- 11 3 percent The proportion of suburban high school graduates with such grades was only slightly larger at 11 8 percent, while 13 3 percent of urban high school graduates were ineligible because their high school grade-point averages were below 2 0

*Trends in eligibility by school area*

Only slightly more than one-fourth of all rural and urban public high school graduates were eligible for the State University while about one-third of suburban high school graduates were eligible One out of every five graduates of rural high schools and one out of every six suburban and urban graduates were ineligible because they did not complete the full set of required courses Expanding the proportion of graduates who complete a full university preparatory curriculum holds the greatest promise for increasing these eligibility pools This objective requires that these students have both the opportunity and the preparation necessary to participate successfully in such a curriculum

In addition, particularly in rural and urban schools, efforts to enhance student participation and performance on college admission tests could yield improvements in eligibility Improving the rigor of required courses and providing opportunities to practice taking such examinations would be beneficial

# 5 What Are The Eligibility Rates of 1996 Public High School Graduates for the University of California?

THIS CHAPTER presents the major findings of the 1996 Eligibility Study with respect to the University of California The chapter is organized as follows

- The relationship between eligibility and the University's 1996 freshman admissions requirements,
- The overall eligibility rates of 1996 public high school graduates for freshman admission to the University of California and the comparison of these rates with those from the 1990 Eligibility Study,
- Eligibility rates separately by gender and by the major racial-ethnic groups of Asian, Black, Latino, and White high school graduates, and,
- Eligibility rates for graduates from eleven geographic regions of California as well as separate eligibility rates for graduates from urban, suburban, and rural public high schools in the state

In contrast to the organization of previous eligibility studies, this chapter views each student group -- overall, by gender, by racial-ethnic background, by geographic region, and by high school type -- across the entire range of academic performance in order to enhance understanding of specific issues with respect to student preparation

**1996 Admissions requirements for the University of California**

The Master Plan for Higher Education in California recommends that the University of California establish its freshman admissions requirements such that the top one-eighth of the public high school graduating class will be eligible This study analyzed the eligibility of the 1996 public high school graduating class for freshman admission to the University of California

California high school graduates can achieve eligibility for the University in three ways

1 By earning a grade-point average of 3 3 or better in the 15 required college preparatory courses, commonly known as the "A-F" course pattern, taking the SAT I or the ACT college admission examination, and taking three SAT II Subject examinations (The scores on SAT II tests have no influence on a graduate's eligibility for admission )

2 By earning a grade-point average between 2 82 and 3 29 in the required courses and scoring at a level on a college admissions test -- the SAT I or ACT -- that qualifies the student on the University's Eligibility Index and taking three SAT II Subject examinations, although scores on the SAT II tests have no bearing on a graduate's eligibility

3 By scoring a total of 1,400 on SAT I or 31 on the ACT and scoring a combined 1,760 on three SAT II Subject tests with a minimum score of 530 on each

A graduate whose academic performance during high school was such that he or she qualified under one of these three methods was deemed to be fully eligible for freshman admission to the University

The only changes in the University's admissions requirements since the 1990 study were

- In 1994, the University added a second year of Laboratory Science and a second year of history that focused on World History and Geography to its specific course requirements, as illustrated on Display 14 in the previous chapter This change reduced the number of required college preparatory electives from four to two courses
- In 1992, the minimum grade-point average required in order to be eligible for the University increased slightly from 2 78 to 2 82

**Eligibility of 1996 high school graduates for admission to the University of California**

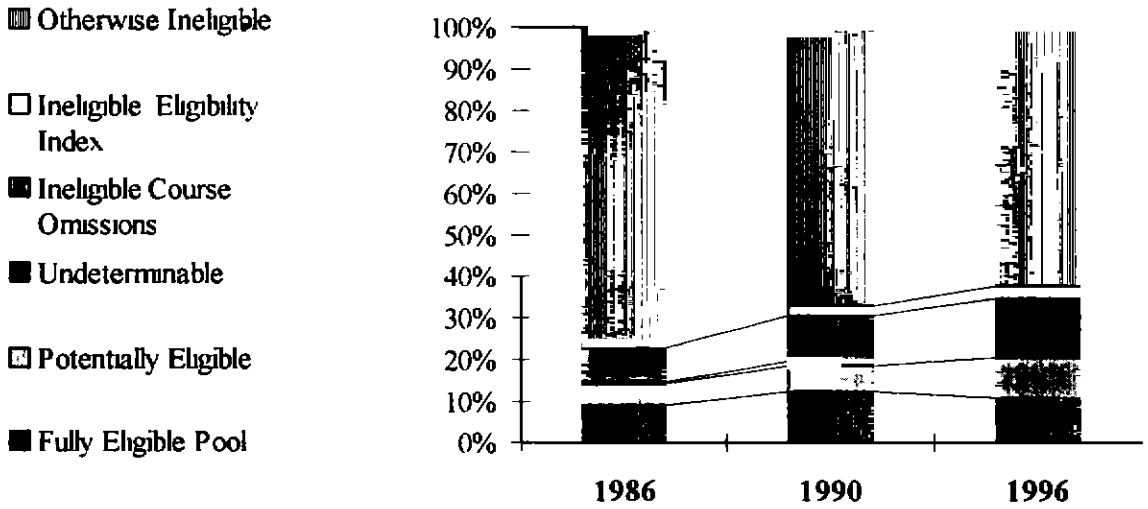
Eligibility is the complex interaction of courses completed, grades earned, and college admission test scores earned This section of the report describes the eligibility of the 1996 public high school graduating class as determined by their academic achievements in light of the freshman admission requirements in place at the time for the University of California

*Full eligibility*

As shown in Display 20, the estimated percentage of the 1996 public high school graduating class who fully met the University of California requirements in one of the three ways described above was 11 1 percent The precision of the estimate was 0 68 percent, which was consistent with levels achieved in previous eligibility studies This precision level generated a probable range for the statewide estimate of 10 42 to 11 78 percent This eligibility rate was 1 2 percentage points lower than the University's 1990 eligibility rate of 12 3 percent, a decline of 9 8 percent The 1996 rate of 11 1 percent was sufficiently below the Master Plan guideline of 12 5 percent for the University of California to be statistically significant

Among public high school graduates who were fully eligible for freshman admission to the University of California in 1996, 92 percent achieved eligibility by completing all the required courses with grade-point averages of 3 3 or better and taking all of the required college admission examinations Another 7 7 percent of the fully eligible pool of these graduates had grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29

*DISPLAY 20 Academic Preparation of the Public High School Graduating Class for Freshman Admission to the University of California, 1990 and 1996*




| Status | 1986 | 1990 | 1996 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fully Eligible Pool** | 9 1 | 12 3 | 11 1 |
| *Precision* | 0 54 | 0 71 | 0 68 |
| *Range of Estimate* | 8 56 to 9 64 | 11 59 to 13 01 | 10 42 to 11 78 |
| Potentially Eligible | 5 0 | 6 5 | 9 4 |
| Undeterminable | 0 5 | 0 9 | 0 7 |
| Ineligible Course Omissions | 8 2 | 10 8 | 13 7 |
| Ineligible Eligibility Index | 1 1 | 2 5 | 2 5 |
| Otherwise Ineligible | 76 1 | 67 0 | 62 6 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

in their college preparatory courses and their SAT I or ACT scores were sufficiently high that they qualified on the University's Eligibility Index Less than one-half of one percent of fully eligible graduates qualified for freshman admission at the University on the basis of college admission test scores alone

*Potential eligibility*

At the time of the 1983 Eligibility Study, the Commission concurred with the University of California that its eligibility pool should include two additional groups of public high school graduates These two sets of graduates are currently described as follows

1 Graduates who had grade-point averages of 3 3 or better in the full set of required college preparatory courses but who had not taken all the required college admission tests, and,

2 Those graduates with grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29 who had scored sufficiently high on the SAT I or ACT tests to be eligible on the University's Eligibility Index but who did not have reported scores for all three of the required SAT II tests

Because no specific levels of performance on the missing examinations were required for graduates in these two categories -- these graduates simply needed to take these tests -- the Commission agreed with the University that the composite of these "potentially" eligible graduates and those graduates who had fully met all of the University's admission requirements should be regarded as the University's pool of eligible graduates in 1983 and 1986

In 1990, the Commission recognized that the appropriate pool of graduates from which the University should be drawing its freshmen was the fully eligible pool This remains true today However, to preserve historical comparability, the Commission decided that the 1990 Eligibility Study and subsequent Eligibility Study reports will include an "historical" eligibility rate for the University -- the summation of the "fully" eligible and "potentially" eligible pools

As Display 20 clearly shows, the estimated proportion of public high school graduates who were potentially eligible increased substantially between 1990 and 1996 The pool of "potentially" eligible graduates increased from 6 5 percent in 1990 to 9 4 percent in 1996 -- nearly three percentage points This 45 percent increase in the "potentially" eligible rate resulted in a "historical" eligibility rate of 20 5 percent in 1996 as contrasted with the 1990 historical rate of 18 8 percent

Consistent with the composition of the fully eligible pool, 89 percent of "potentially" eligible graduates earned average grades of 3 3 or better in the required courses On the other hand, 11 percent of potentially eligible public high school graduates earned grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29 and sufficiently high SAT I or ACT test scores to qualify on the University's Eligibility Index, however, they were missing one or more SAT II tests

*Undeterminable eligibility*

For a small group of public high school graduates, their eligibility for the University could not be determined While they had earned grade-point averages equal to or above the minimum 2 82 in the full set of college preparatory courses required by the University, they had not taken either the SAT I or ACT -- the results of which were needed to determine their eligibility on the University's Eligibility Index Historically, this set of graduates has included less than one percent of the public high school graduates In 1996, the eligibility of approximately 0 7 percent of the public high school graduating class could not be determined due to these missing tests

*Ineligibility* Two major categories of ineligibility exist for the University of California

1 Ineligibility because of subject or scholarship (grades) deficiencies in the required college preparatory courses This category includes graduates who completed all or most of the required college preparatory courses but were ineligible for one of the following reasons

- They were missing only a few of the required courses,
- They earned grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29, but their college admission test scores were insufficient for them to qualify on the University's Eligibility Index, or,
- They completed less than seven of the required courses in their last two years of high school

2 Ineligibility because of major deficiencies This category includes graduates who had major course omissions, scholarship (grades) deficiencies, or were graduates of schools that did not have a college preparatory curriculum approved by the University

*Ineligibility because of minor deficiencies* The proportion of graduates with minor scholastic or course deficiencies has risen over the last three eligibility studies from 9 3 percent in 1986 to 13 3 percent in 1990 to 16 2 percent in 1996, as Display 20 shows The two major reasons for ineligibility due to minor deficiencies are

1 Ineligibility because of course deficiencies In 1996, most of the graduates in this category -- 13 7 percent -- were ineligible because they were missing a few (three or less) of the required courses While the coding schema used by the University for course deficiencies changed between 1990 and 1996, an estimated 10 8 percent of the 1990 graduates were ineligible on this same basis

2 Ineligibility because of test scores The proportion of public high school graduates who completed all of the required courses with grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29 but who were ineligible because their scores on college admission tests were insufficient to qualify on the University's Eligibility Index was the same in 1990 and 1996 -- 2 5 percent

*Ineligibility because of major deficiencies* An encouraging shift occurred in the proportions of graduates among these two general categories of ineligibility -- categories characterized by minor and major deficiencies Since 1986, the proportion of public high school graduates whose high school curricular patterns were not related to University preparation has declined from 76 1 percent in 1986 to 67 0 percent in 1990 to 62 6 percent in 1996

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*General trends in eligibility* A "domino effect" was evident as high school graduates improved their preparation for college over the last 10 years As the proportion of graduates whose

course enrollments were totally unrelated to the University's required pattern of college preparatory courses declined, the proportion of graduates who were ineligible for the University because of minor deficiencies expanded Also growing was the proportion of graduates who completed all of the required courses at a sufficiently high level to be eligible but who had not taken one or more of the required college admission tests -- the potentially eligible pool While this pattern of improvement has not yet expanded the pool of fully eligible public high school graduates, the growth in the pool of graduates attempting an university preparation curriculum from less than one-quarter of all graduates to substantially more than one-third holds great potential for ultimate expansion of the fully eligible pool Moreover, this same trend will be evident throughout the analyses of most of the subgroups of students presented below

**Eligibility rates by gender**

Changes in the academic preparation of men and women graduating from California's public high schools relative to the admission requirements at the University of California were consistent with the statewide trends However, the rates of change varied between men and women, as Display 21 illustrates

*Full Eligibility*

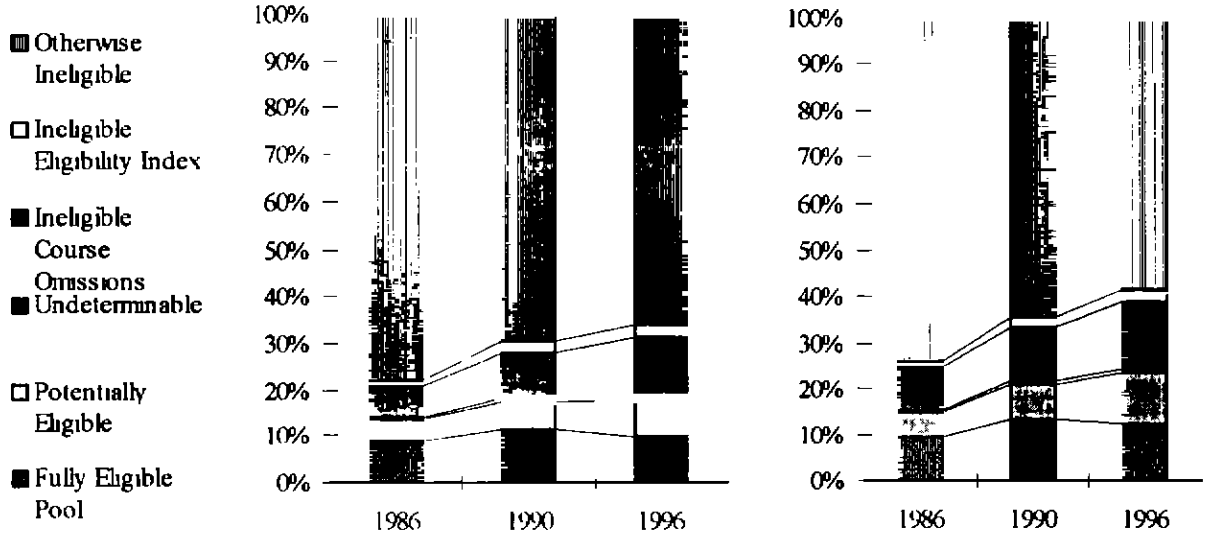
The estimated proportion of men graduating from the State's public high schools in 1996 who were fully eligible for the University of California was 9 7 percent -- a 1 9 percentage point decline from their 1990 rate of 11 6 percent The estimated proportion of fully eligible women graduates in 1996 was 12 6 percent -- a 0 7 percentage point decrease from 13 3 percent Changes in the eligibility rates of men and women between 1990 and 1996 were consistent with the change in the overall rate, but the decline in the pool of eligible women was substantially smaller than that for men While the overall rate decreased by 9 8 percent, the eligibility rate for men declined 16 7 percent and the rate for women declined 5 3 percent

With respect to the means by which men and women achieved full eligibility, a slightly larger proportion of fully eligible women than men -- 93 percent compared to 90 percent -- attained eligibility by virtue of earning average grades of 3 3 or better in the required courses Another 9 5 percent of the fully eligible men qualified for the University through their placement on the Eligibility Index, 6 7 percent of the eligible women qualified in this way Men were slightly more likely than women to be eligible for the University on the basis of test scores alone, with 0 5 percent of men and 0 3 percent of women achieving eligibility by this means

*Potential Eligibility*

Consistent with the statewide trends, the pool of potentially eligible men and potentially eligible women expanded significantly, as Display 21 illustrates The proportion of men graduating from the State's public high school who had completed the required courses with the requisite grades but who were missing one or more test scores grew from 5 6 percent in 1990 to 8 1 percent in 1996, a 2 5 percentage point increase This 45 percent increase in the potentially eligible pool of men brought the historical eligibility rate for these graduates to 17 8 percent in 1996 -- a 0 6 percentage point increase above the 1990 rate of 17 2 percent

*DISPLAY 21 Academic Preparation of Public High School Graduates for Freshman Admission to the University of California, by Gender, 1990 and 1996*




| | Men | | | Women | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Status** | **1986** | **1990** | **1996** | **1986** | **1990** | **1996** |
| **Fully Eligible Pool** | 8 9 | 11 6 | 9 7 | 9 5 | 13 3 | 12 6 |
| *Precision* | 0 78 | 1 03 | 0 92 | 0 80 | 0 99 | 0 97 |
| *Range of Estimate* | 8 12 to 9 68 | 10 57 to 12 63 | 8 78 to 10 62 | 8 70 to 10 30 | 12 31 to 14 29 | 11 63 to 13 57 |
| Potentially Eligible | 4 5 | 5 6 | 8 1 | 5 6 | 7 5 | 10 8 |
| Undeterminable | 0 4 | 0 9 | 0 5 | 0 3 | 0 9 | 0 8 |
| Ineligible Course Omissions | 7 0 | 9 8 | 13 1 | 9 4 | 11 5 | 14 5 |
| Ineligible Eligibility Index | 1 0 | 2 6 | 2 4 | 1 2 | 2 4 | 2 7 |
| Otherwise Ineligible | 78 2 | 69 5 | 66 2 | 74 0 | 64 4 | 58 6 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

The change in the pool of potentially eligible women paralleled those of men The proportion of potentially eligible women rose from 7 5 percent in 1990 to 10 8 percent in 1996, a 3 3 percentage point increase This 44 percent increase in the potentially eligible pool of women graduates created a historical eligibility pool for these graduates of 23 4 percent in 1996 compared to 20 8 percent in 1990

The pattern of academic achievement noted among fully eligible men and women graduates also existed among these two groups of potentially eligible graduates A larger proportion of women graduates than men in the potentially eligible pool had grade-point averages of 3 3 or better -- 91 percent as contrasted to 85 percent Thus, the pools of potentially eligible men and women with average grades

between 2 82 and 3 29 -- 15 percent and 9 percent, respectively -- are relatively larger than the pools of fully eligible men and women with these grades

*Undeterminable eligibility*

Among graduates with grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29, a somewhat larger proportion of women than men were missing the SAT I or ACT test scores needed to determine their eligibility The proportion of women graduates for whom eligibility could not be determined was 0 8 percent, while the proportion for men was 0 5 percent

*Ineligibility*

*Ineligibility because of minor deficiencies.* The pools of men and women who were ineligible because of minor -- rather than major deficiencies -- in their course preparation grew substantially over the last ten years

Ineligible because of "A-F" course deficiencies While the proportion of men determined ineligible for the University due to a few deficiencies in their required courses increased from 9 8 percent in 1990 to 13 1 percent in 1996, this improvement was somewhat larger than the increase in the pool that occurred between 1986 and 1990 when it grew from 7 0 to 9 8 percent The expansion in the proportion of women with minor course deficiencies between 1990 and 1996 from 11 5 percent to 14 5 percent was somewhat larger than the growth that occurred in this proportion between 1986 and 1990 when it grew from 9 4 percent to 11 5

Ineligible because of test scores The proportions of men and women graduates in 1996 who were ineligible because of test scores remained relatively the same -- 2 4 percent and 2 7 percent, respectively -- and these proportions were not statistically different from those estimated for men and women who graduated in 1990

*Ineligibility because of major deficiencies* Over the last ten years, the proportions of men and women graduating from the State's public high schools who were ineligible for the University of California because of major subject and achievement deficiencies declined The pool of men with major academic deficiencies dropped from 78 2 percent in 1986 to 69 5 percent in 1990 to 66 2 percent in 1996 Similarly, the pool of women with such major academic deficiencies declined from 74 0 percent to 64 4 percent to 58 6 percent between 1986 and 1996 While these changes indicate substantial improvements in the academic experiences of students of the two genders, both the proportion and rate of increase for women who took an university preparatory curriculum during high school exceeded that for men

*Trends in eligibility among men and women*

Women continued to increase their relative academic competitive advantage over men for freshman admission at the University of California The decline in the full eligibility pool was much steeper for men than for women Concomitantly, the growth in the potentially eligible pool was much larger for women than men In addition, the relative increase in the pool of men with minor course deficiencies

was roughly equal to the decrease in the pool of men with major deficiencies in their academic preparation as it relates to University freshman admission However, the pool of women with major academic deficiencies decreased by 5 8 percentage points while the increase in the pool of those with minor deficiencies increased by roughly 3 3 percentage points As such, nearly 2 5 percent of the women in the 1996 public high school graduating class who historically had been part of the ineligible set of graduates were now among those who were at least potentially eligible for University admission -- a further illustration of the "domino effect" discussed earlier with respect to the academic preparation of students statewide

**Eligibility rates by major racial-ethnic group**

In each of the Commission's eligibility studies since 1983, the Commission has reported on the eligibility rates of several student subgroups In addition to the separate rates reported for men and women, the studies have generated reliable estimates for four major racial-ethnic groups -- Asian, Black, Latino, and White high school graduates The academic records gathered for the 1996 Eligibility Study provided a sound basis for replicating this analysis for estimating the proportions of Asian, Black, Latino, and White public high school graduates in 1996 who fell into each category of preparation for the University of California Display 22 presents the results for these groups in contrast with their eligibility rates in 1990

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*Full eligibility*

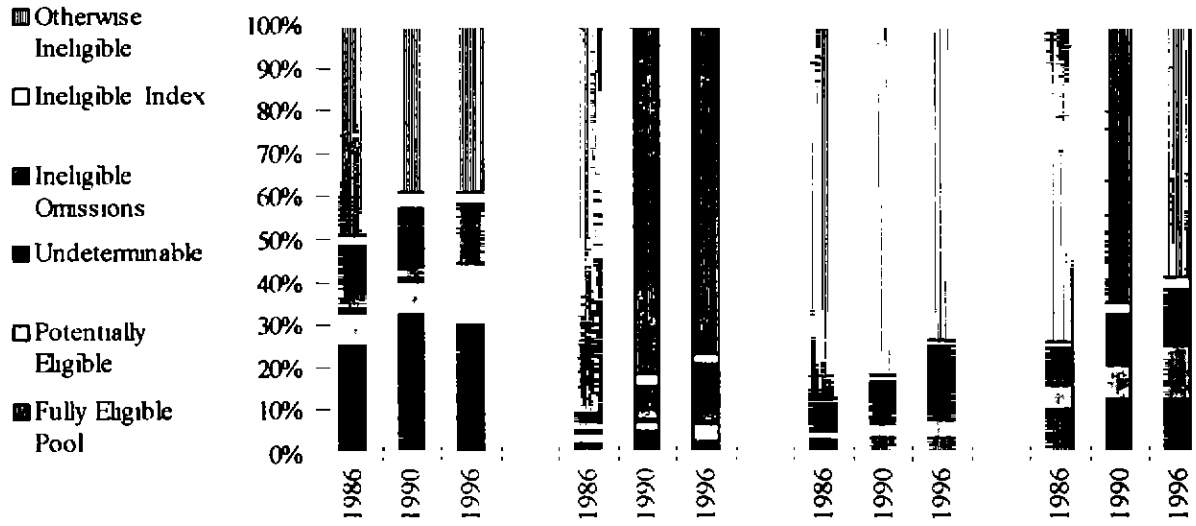
Consistent with the change in the overall rate, the estimated eligibility rates of graduates from three of four racial-ethnic groups declined from 1990

- In 1996, 30 0 percent of Asian students graduating from the State's public high schools were fully eligible for the University of California, a 6 8 percent decline from their 1990 eligibility rate of 32 2 percent This decrease in the proportion of eligible graduates was smaller than the overall statewide decline of 9 8 percent
- The steepest drop in eligible graduates occurred among Black graduates, whose fully eligible rate of 2 8 percent was 45 percent below their 1990 rate of 5 1 percent
- The fully eligible rate of Latino graduates of 3 8 percent changed only slightly from their 1990 rate of 3 9 percent This change in estimated rates for Latino public high school graduates was not statistically significant
- The proportion of White public high school graduates who were fully eligible for the University of California in 1996 -- 12 7 percent -- was the same as in 1990

Despite these changes in the eligibility rates within each racial-ethnic group over the last six years, the relationship among the eligibility rates of these groups remained relatively unchanged

- Asian graduates continued to be almost three times as likely to achieve eligibility for the University of California as their classmates statewide

*DISPLAY 22 Academic Preparation of Public High School Graduates for Freshman Admission to the University of California, by Major Racial-Ethnic Group, 1990 and 1996*




| Status | Asian 1986 | Asian 1990 | Asian 1996 | Black 1986 | Black 1990 | Black 1996 | Latino 1986 | Latino 1990 | Latino 1996 | White 1986 | White 1990 | White 1996 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fully Eligible Pool | 24 9 | 32 2 | 30 0 | 2 3 | 5 1 | 2 8 | 3 1 | 3 9 | 3 8 | 10 1 | 12 7 | 12 7 |
| *Precision* | 2 58 | 2 44 | 2 36 | 1 12 | 1 69 | 1 14 | 0 72 | 0 80 | 0 77 | 0 74 | 0 95 | 1 00 |
| *Range of Estimate* | 22 32-27 48 | 29 76-34 64 | 27 64-32 36 | 1 18-3 42 | 3 41-6 79 | 1 66-3 94 | 2 38-3 82 | 3 10-4 70 | 3 03-4 57 | 9 36-10 84 | 11 75-13 65 | 11 70-13 70 |
| Potentially Eligible | 7 9 | 8 1 | 14 4 | 2 3 | 2 4 | 4 0 | 1 9 | 2 9 | 4 0 | 5 7 | 7 8 | 12 5 |
| Undeterminable | 0 9 | 1 1 | 0 2 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 4 | 0 2 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 4 | 1 1 | 1 0 |
| Ineligible Omissions | 14 8 | 16 1 | 13 7 | 4 0 | 8 1 | 13 6 | 6 4 | 9 6 | 16 8 | 8 5 | 10 8 | 12 0 |
| Ineligible Index | 2 5 | 3 5 | 2 7 | 0 5 | 2 7 | 2 2 | 0 7 | 1 5 | 1 5 | 1 1 | 2 7 | 3 1 |
| Otherwise Ineligible | 49 0 | 39 0 | 39 0 | 90 6 | 81 4 | 77 0 | 87 7 | 81 8 | 73 6 | 74 2 | 64 9 | 58 7 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1997

- White graduates were most comparable to their statewide counterparts
- Latino students were one-third as likely as students throughout California to be fully eligible for the University
- Black students were one-fourth as likely as graduates in the state to achieve full eligibility for the University

Some variation existed in the manner by which students from various racial-ethnic groups achieved University eligibility About 93 percent of Asian graduates and 91 percent of White graduates were eligible on the basis of their grades in required courses Among fully eligible Latino graduates, 88 percent had met University

freshman admission requirements in this manner while 81 percent of Black eligible graduates qualified by this means

On the other hand, a smaller proportion of Asian and White fully eligible graduates -- 5 8 percent and 8 1 percent, respectively -- achieved eligibility on the basis of their placement on the Eligibility Index, while 14 6 percent of the fully eligible Black graduates and 12 percent of such Latino graduates qualified by this means Among fully eligible high school graduates, Black graduates were somewhat more likely to achieve eligibility solely through their scores on college admissions tests than were White or Asian graduates No Latino graduates were found to qualify for freshman admission on this basis

*Potential eligibility*

Graduates from all racial-ethnic groups contributed to the expansion of the "potentially eligible" pool of public high school graduates in 1996, as Display 22 shows The changes in these pools of graduates varied considerably among the four major racial-ethnic groups for which reliable estimates were developed

- The proportion of Asian public high school graduates who had completed the required courses with sufficiently high grade-point averages but who were missing one or more test scores grew from 8 1 percent in 1990 to 14 4 percent in 1996, a 6 3 percentage point increase This 78 percent increase in the potentially eligible pool of Asian graduates increased the historical eligibility rate for these graduates from 40 3 percent in 1990 to 44 4 percent in 1996 Of those potentially eligible Asian graduates, 93 percent earned grade-point averages of 3 3 percent or better
- The pool of potentially eligible Black public high school graduates also increased from 2 4 percent in 1990 to 4 0 percent in 1996, a 1 6 percentage point increase This 67 percent expansion in the pool of potentially eligible Black graduates pushed the historical eligibility rate for these graduates to 6 8 in 1996 -- somewhat less than their 1990 rate of 7 5 percent Among this pool of potentially eligible Black graduates, 88 percent had grade-point averages of 3 3 or better
- Similarly, the proportion of Latino graduates who were potentially eligible for the University rose from 2 9 percent in 1990 to 4 0 percent in 1996, a 1 1 percentage point expansion This 38 percent growth in the potentially eligible pool of Latino public high school graduates increased their historical eligibility rate from 6 8 percent in 1990 to 7 8 percent in 1996 Of potentially eligible Latino graduates, 89 percent earned average grades of 3 3 or better
- The pool of potentially eligible White public high school graduates also increased between 1990 and 1996, when the proportion of these graduates grew from 7 8 percent to 12 5 percent -- a 4 7 percentage point increase This 60 percent increase in the pool of potentially eligible White graduates caused the historical eligibility pool of these graduates to rise from 20 5 to 25 2 percent between 1990 and 1996 The proportion of potentially eligible White graduates with grade-point averages of 3 3 or better was 86 percent

*Undeterminable eligibility* Among graduates from different racial-ethnic groups, the group with the smallest proportion of graduates for whom eligibility could not be determined was Asian graduates -- 0 2 percent -- followed by Latino graduates and Black graduates whose proportions were 0 3 percent and 0 4 percent, respectively The eligibility of a full one percent of White public high school graduates could not be determined due to missing college admission test scores

*Ineligibility* Consistent with the major differences in the proportions of graduates from the major racial-ethnic groups who were eligible for freshman admission at the University of California, the pool of graduates who were ineligible because of minor deficiencies varied substantially among the four racial-ethnic groups, as Display 22 shows

*Ineligibility because of minor deficiencies* The proportions of Black, Latino, and White graduates ineligible due to minor academic deficiencies increased while the portion of Asian graduates with this level of academic achievement decreased The following section describes these differences

- The proportion of Asian graduates who were ineligible due to minor course deficiencies decreased from 16 1 percent to 13 7 percent between 1990 and 1996, while the portion that was ineligible because of insufficient test scores decreased from 3 5 percent in 1990 to 2 7 percent in 1996 This decrease reflects a substantial shift of Asian graduates that expanded the pool of those "potentially eligible" graduates in 1996
- The proportion of Black graduates with minor deficiencies in course requirements grew from 8 1 percent to 13 6 percent over this time period At the same time, a small decline from 2 7 percent to 2 2 percent was evident in the proportion of Black graduates whose college admission test scores were insufficient for them to qualify on the University's Eligibility Index
- The pool of Latino graduates with minor subject deficiencies jumped from 9 6 percent in 1990 to 16 8 percent in 1996 The proportion of Latino graduates ineligible due to insufficient college admission test scores was unchanged at 1 5 percent
- Small increases occurred in the proportion of White graduates who were ineligible because of minor course deficiencies -- from 10 8 percent to 12 0 percent -- and those with insufficient test scores -- from 2 7 percent to 3 1 percent

*Ineligibility because of major deficiencies* The proportion of each racial-ethnic group, except Asian graduates, who were ineligible by virtue of major deficiencies in course requirements or academic performance declined in 1996

- The proportion of Asian graduates ineligible because of major deficiencies in the academic preparation in 1996 -- 39 0 percent -- was the same as in 1990

- The proportion of Black graduates with major subject and scholarship deficiencies decreased from 81 4 percent in 1990 to 77 0 percent in 1996
- The proportion of Latino graduates with major academic deficiencies relative to University admission requirements dropped substantially from 81 8 percent to 73 6 percent
- Those White graduates with major academic deficiencies declined from 64 9 percent to 58 7 percent

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*Trends in eligibility among graduates of different racial-ethnic groups*

In summary, for each major racial-ethnic group, some degree of improvement in their academic preparation for the University was evident While only White and Latino graduates attained full eligibility for the University in the same proportion as in 1990, the potentially eligible pools of graduates from all groups expanded Proportionally fewer Black, Latino, and White students graduated from high school with major course or performance deficiencies in 1996 than six years previously As a consequence, there was growth in the proportions of each racial-ethnic group who were either potentially eligible or had minor deficiencies -- another glance at the "domino effect" evident in the results of the 1996 Eligibility Study

**Regional differences in University eligibility rates**

Eligibility varies not only as a function of a graduate's gender and ethnicity, but also by the geographic region in which he or she lives As in the 1990 Eligibility Study, the Commission examined eligibility rates among public high school graduates from 11 different regions of the State Display 23 compares the proportion of fully eligible graduates in each region in 1996 to that rate in 1990

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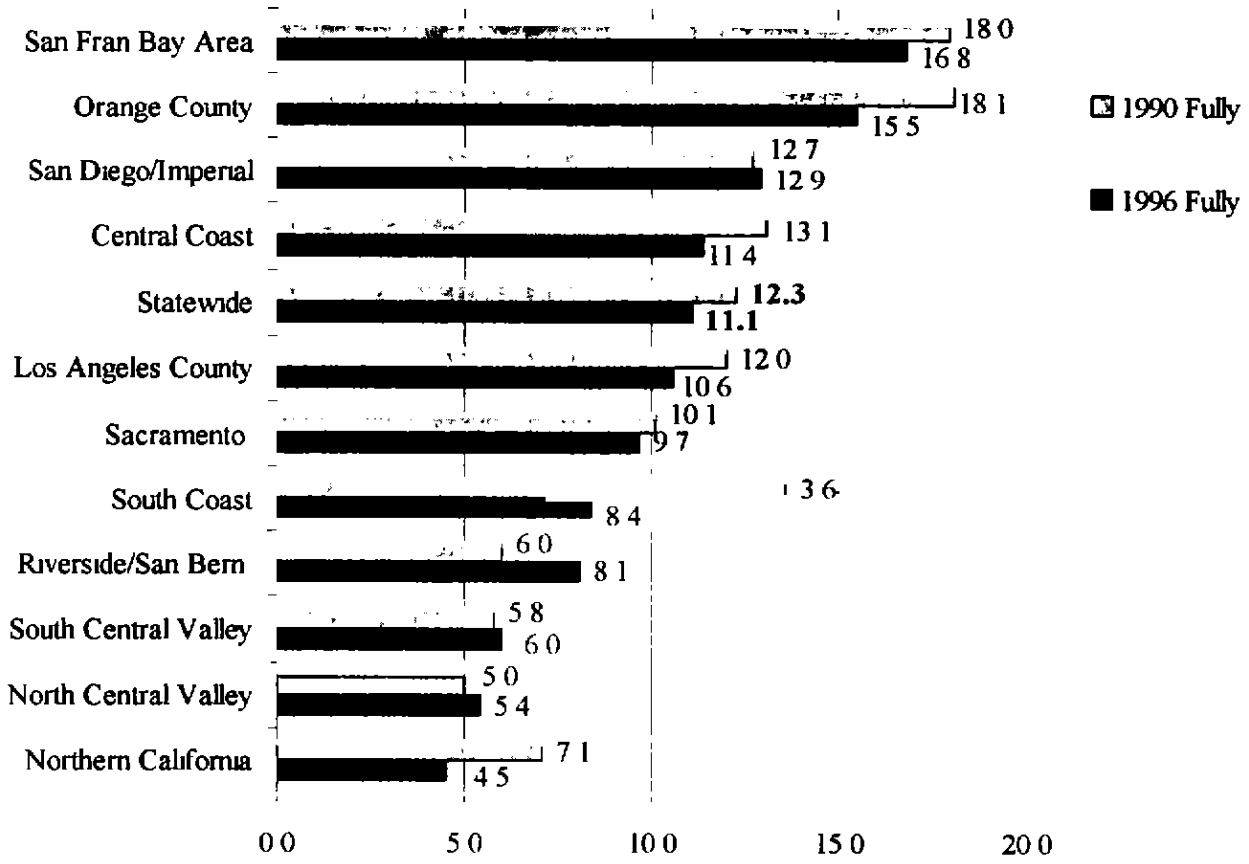
*Fully eligible rates by region*

By 1996, the San Francisco Bay Area surpassed Orange County as the region with the largest proportion of public high school graduates who were eligible for the University of California Both of these regions continued to have significantly larger than average proportions of fully eligible graduates, 16 8 percent and 15 5 percent, respectively While the fully eligible rate for graduates in the San Francisco Bay area declined 6 7 percent -- somewhat below the statewide average decline of 9 8 percent -- the eligibility rate of graduates in Orange County dropped 14 4 percent

Despite the statewide decline in eligibility, the eligibility rates in some regions actually increased, particularly in some of the regions with historically low eligibility rates The proportion of eligible graduates in the Riverside/San Bernardino county region increased from 6 0 percent to 8 1 percent -- a growth of 35 percent The eligibility rates of graduates in the Central Valley and in the San Diego/Imperial region also improved but less dramatically The rate in the South Central Valley grew from 5 8 percent to 6 0 percent, in the North Central Valley, the rate rose from 5 0 percent to 5 4 percent, and, in San Diego/Imperial counties, the eligibility rate rose from 12 7 percent to 12 9 percent

*DISPLAY 23 Percent of Public High School Graduates Fully Eligible for Freshman Admission at the University of California, by Geographic Region, 1990 and 1996*



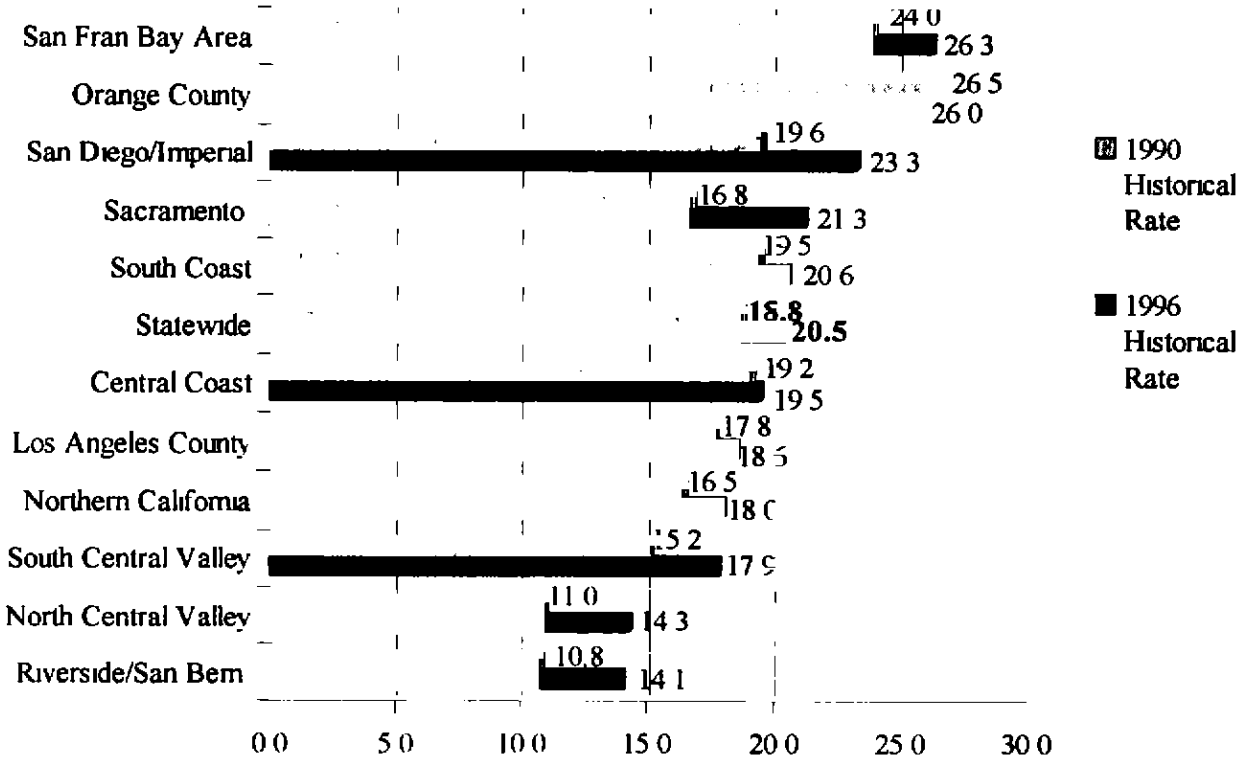

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1997

The sharpest declines in the proportions of public high school graduates fully eligible for the University of California occurred in Northern California where the rate dropped from 7 1 percent to 4 5 percent and in the South Coast region (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties) where the rate decreased from 13 6 percent to 8 4 percent The eligibility for graduates in Los Angeles County and in the greater Sacramento region declined consistent with statewide trends

*Historical eligibility rates by region*

Analysis of the historical eligibility rates (fully and potentially eligible public high school graduates) for the University of California paints a much different picture, as Display 24 illustrates The statewide historical eligibility rate increased from 18 8 percent to 20 5 percent -- a 9 percent increase The historical eligibility rates improved in all regions except Orange County, where the rate declined slightly from 26 5 percent to 26 0 percent -- not a statistically significant change Thus, the increase in the proportion of Orange County graduates who had completed all

*DISPLAY 24 Percent of Public High School Graduates Historically Eligible for Freshman Admission at the University of California, by Geographic Region, 1990 and 1996*




Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

the freshman admission requirements, except one or more of the college admissions examinations, was greater than the decrease in the fully eligible rate

In several regions, the historical eligibility rates of graduates expanded substantially more than the statewide rate In the Riverside/San Bernardino county region, the historical eligibility pool increased from 10 8 percent in 1990 to 14 1 percent in 1996 -- a 30 6 percent growth --while the North Central Valley's pool expanded from 11 0 percent to 14 3 percent -- a 30 percent increase Other regions with above average improvements in their historical eligibility pools were the greater Sacramento region where the historical pool grew from 16 8 percent to 21 3 percent, the San Diego/Imperial county region with an increase from 19 6 percent to 23 3 percent, and the South Central Valley where the pool of historically eligible graduates jumped from 15 2 percent to 17 9 percent

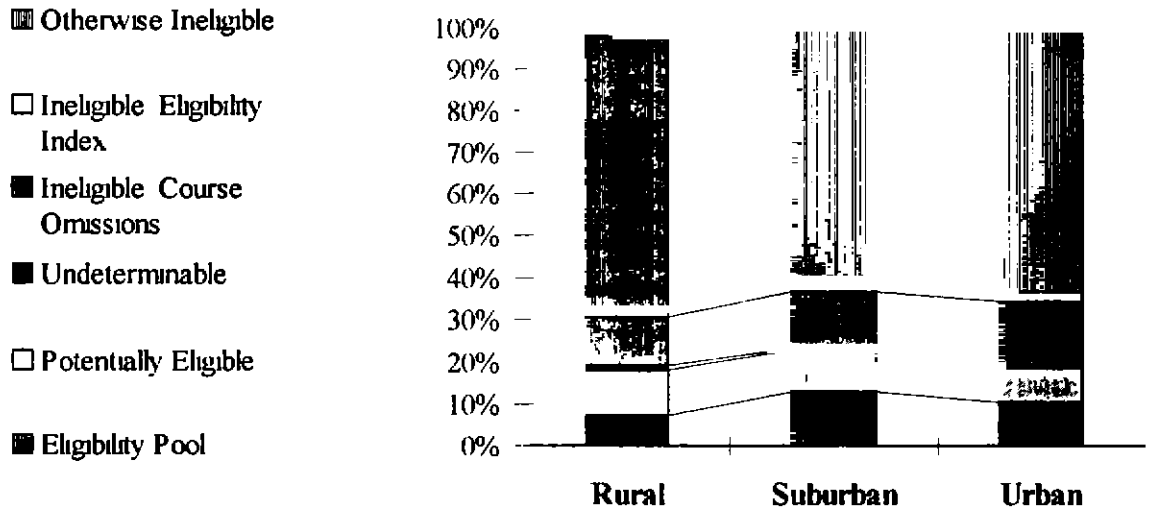
In Northern California and the San Francisco Bay regions, the pools of historically eligible graduates expanded at the same rate as the statewide pool, with the proportion of these graduates growing from 16 5 percent to 18 0 percent in Northern

California and from 24 0 percent to 26 3 percent in the Bay region The remaining three regions experienced only small improvements in their historical eligibility rates, in the South Coast region, the rate grew from 19 5 percent to 20 6 percent, in Los Angeles County, the rate rose from 17 8 percent to 18 6 percent, and in the Central Coast region, the rate inched up from 19 2 percent to 19 5 percent

**Eligibility rates of graduates from rural, suburban, and urban high schools**

Regional eligibility rates reported above are averages of the eligibility of all students in a region The participation of students in those activities required to be eligible for the University undoubtedly varies as much within a region as it does between regions In an effort to better understand the dynamics of eligibility, this section describes differences in eligibility rates for graduates of rural, suburban, and urban public high schools The area of the school is designated by the school administration in light of Department of Education guidelines Display 25 summarizes the academic achievement of 1996 graduates of public schools in each of

*DISPLAY 25 Eligibility Rates 1996 of Graduates From Rural, Suburban, and Urban Public High Schools by Category of Eligibility for the University of California*




| Status | Rural | Suburban | Urban |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eligibility Pool** | **7.1** | **13.0** | **10.3** |
| Potentially Eligible | 11 1 | 9 7 | 8 3 |
| Undeterminable | 0 9 | 0 7 | 0 5 |
| Ineligible Course Omissions | 11 3 | 13 5 | 15 3 |
| Ineligible Eligibility Index | 2 0 | 2 8 | 2 2 |
| Otherwise Ineligible | 67 6 | 60 3 | 63 4 |
| Number of Graduates | 44,433 | 127,044 | 85,864 |

Source California Postsecondary Education Commission 1997

these types of areas as it relates to the freshman admission requirements at the University of California

*Full eligibility*

In public high schools that identified their area as rural, 7 1 percent of their graduates were fully eligible for freshman admission at the University Of these eligible rural graduates, 92 percent were eligible because they had grade-point averages of 3 3 or better in the required college preparatory curriculum and all of the required college admission test scores The other eight percent had grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29 and had test scores that qualified them on the University's Eligibility Index

The eligibility rate of graduates of suburban high schools -- 13 0 percent -- was nearly twice that of graduates of rural schools Among eligible suburban high school graduates, 93 percent qualified on the basis of their average grades of 3 3 or above, while 7 percent qualified on the University's Eligibility Index

The eligibility rate of graduates of urban high schools -- 10 3 percent -- fell between the rates for graduates of rural and suburban high schools Approximately 91 percent of the fully eligible graduates of urban high schools qualified based on their average grades and slightly less than 9 percent qualified on the basis of grades and test scores

*Potential eligibility*

Among graduates of rural public high schools, 11 1 percent were potentially eligible for the University because they completed all the required courses at the necessary level of scholastic (grades) achievement but were missing one or more of the required college admission test scores Rural schools had the largest proportion of potentially eligible graduates of the three school locations Of these eligible rural graduates, 90 percent had earned grade-point averages of 3 3 or better

Suburban public high schools had the second largest proportion of potentially eligible graduates -- 9 7 percent Of these potentially eligible graduates, 87 percent had grade-point averages of 3 3 or better while 13 percent had average grades of 2 82 to 3 29 This distribution of scholastic achievement among these graduates was substantially different than among the fully eligible graduates of suburban high schools, over 93 percent of suburban students had average grades of 3 3 or better

The potentially eligible pool of urban public high school graduates was 8 3 percent -- the smallest such pool for any of the three school locations Of these graduates, 90 percent had grade-point averages of 3 3 or better, while 10 percent had average grades between 2 82 and 3 29 This distribution of scholastic achievement was very similar to that found among fully eligible graduates of urban schools

In 1996, the combined pool of fully eligible and potentially eligible urban high school graduates -- the historical eligibility pool for the University -- was 18 6 percent -- almost the same size as the historical eligibility pool of rural high school

graduates at 18 2 percent The combined pool of fully and potentially eligible suburban public high school graduates was 22 7 percent

*Undeterminable eligibility*

The eligibility of only a very small proportion of graduates from any of the three types of areas could not be determined because they were missing college admission test scores necessary to determine their eligibility on the University's Eligibility Index In rural high schools, only 0 9 percent of the graduates had completed the required courses with grade-point averages between 2 82 and 3 29 and were missing SAT I or ACT test scores needed to compute their eligibility on the Index While the eligibility of 0 7 percent of suburban high school graduates could not be determined, 0 5 percent of urban high school graduates had this academic achievement level but not the required test scores

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*Ineligibility*

*Ineligible because of minor deficiencies* This eligibility status includes those graduates who were missing one or more of the required college preparatory courses or those whose college admission test scores were insufficient for the graduate to be determined eligible on the University's Eligibility Index Rural high schools had the smallest proportion of graduates with this status -- 13 3 percent Approximately 11 3 percent were ineligible due to course deficiencies, while about 2 percent were ineligible on the University's Eligiblity Index

Among suburban public high school graduates, 16 3 percent were ineligible because of minor academic deficiencies This group included 13 5 percent of graduates who were ineligible because they were missing one or more of the required courses and 2 8 percent were ineligible on the University's Index These schools had the largest proportion of graduates who were ineligible because of their failure to qualify on the University Eligibility Index of any of the three types of areas

Urban public high schools had the largest proportion of graduates who were ineligible because of minor academic deficiencies -- 17 5 percent Similarly, they had the largest proportion of graduates who were ineligible on the basis of course omissions -- 15 3 percent However, their proportion of graduates determined ineligible on the Eligibility Index was only 2 2 percent -- considerably less than that of suburban high schools rate of 2 8 percent

*Ineligible because of major deficiencies* The proportion of rural public high school graduates with major academic deficiencies relative to the University's freshman admission requirements -- 67 6 percent -- was the largest among the three types of areas This finding was consistent with the fact that rural graduates had the smallest fully eligible rate and the smallest proportion of graduates with minor academic deficiencies

Suburban public high schools had the smallest proportion of graduates with major academic deficiencies -- 60 3 percent This difference was the result of both a

larger proportion of fully eligible graduates and of ineligible graduates with minor academic deficiencies in suburban schools

The pool of urban public high school graduates with major academic deficiencies -- 63 4 percent -- was somewhat larger than that of suburban high schools due primary to their smaller pools of fully and potentially eligible graduates However, this pool was smaller than that at rural high schools because urban schools had both a larger pool of fully eligible graduates and a larger proportion of graduates with minor academic deficiencies

*Trends in eligibility by school area*

Only about 10 out of every 30 graduates of the State's rural high schools had attempted an University preparatory curriculum and only about two of every 30 graduates completed that curriculum with scholastic performances and, when necessary, college admission test scores sufficiently high to be fully eligible for the University The ratios for urban schools were slightly better About 11 out of every 30 graduates of urban schools attempted an University preparatory curriculum and about three out of every 30 graduates were fully eligible for the University In suburban high schools, 12 out of every 30 graduates participated in an University preparatory curriculum with four out of every 30 eligible for freshman admission at the University of California

# Glossary

**Attendance Area Served by School.** The type of community most characteristic of the area served by the school as defined as

*Rural* Community with a population of less than 100,000 and not part of a more populated area

*Suburban* Community with population of more than 5,000 but less than 100,000 near or part of a more populated areas

*Urban.* Community with a population of 100,000 or more

**Completion of Courses Required for UC/CSU Entrance.** The number of 1995-96 public high school graduates, by sex and ethnicity, who completed all of the subject requirements for admission at the California State University and/or the University of California with grades of "C" or better as a percent of all graduates, by sex and ethnicity

**Eligibility Index** An eligibility index is a combination of grade-point average and college admission test scores, either SAT I or ACT, needed for eligibility for freshman admission to the State's public universities as follows

*California State University* High school graduates with overall grade-point averages between 2 0 and 2 99 must take an ACT or SAT I test to qualify for admission The following table shows the test scores required for eligibility given any grade-point average in this range

**Eligibility Index Table for California High School Graduates or Residents of California**

| GPA | ACT Score | SAT I Score | GPA | ACT Score | SAT I Score | GPA | ACT Score | SAT I Score | GPA | ACT Score | SAT I Score | GPA | ACT Score | SAT I Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 00 and above qualifies with any score | | | 2 80 | 14 | 660 | 2 59 | 18 | 830 | 2 38 | 22 | 1000 | 2 17 | 26 | 1170 |
| | | | 2 79 | 14 | 670 | 2 58 | 18 | 840 | 2 37 | 22 | 1010 | 2 16 | 27 | 1180 |
| 2 99 | 10 | 510 | 2 78 | 14 | 680 | 2 57 | 18 | 850 | 2 36 | 23 | 1020 | 2 15 | 27 | 1180 |
| 2 98 | 10 | 520 | 2 77 | 14 | 690 | 2 56 | 19 | 860 | 2 35 | 23 | 1020 | 2 14 | 27 | 1190 |
| 2 97 | 10 | 530 | 2 76 | 15 | 700 | 2 55 | 19 | 860 | 2 34 | 23 | 1030 | 2 13 | 27 | 1200 |
| 2 96 | 11 | 540 | 2 75 | 15 | 700 | 2 54 | 19 | 870 | 2 33 | 23 | 1040 | 2 12 | 27 | 1210 |
| 2 95 | 11 | 540 | 2 74 | 15 | 710 | 2 53 | 19 | 880 | 2 32 | 23 | 1050 | 2 11 | 28 | 1220 |
| 2 94 | 11 | 550 | 2 73 | 15 | 720 | 2 52 | 19 | 890 | 2 31 | 24 | 1060 | 2 10 | 28 | 1220 |
| 2 93 | 11 | 560 | 2 72 | 15 | 730 | 2 51 | 20 | 900 | 2 30 | 24 | 1060 | 2 09 | 28 | 1230 |
| 2 92 | 11 | 570 | 2 71 | 16 | 740 | 2 50 | 20 | 900 | 2 29 | 24 | 1070 | 2 08 | 28 | 1240 |
| 2 91 | 12 | 580 | 2 70 | 16 | 740 | 2 49 | 20 | 910 | 2 28 | 24 | 1080 | 2 07 | 28 | 1250 |
| 2 90 | 12 | 580 | 2 69 | 16 | 750 | 2 48 | 20 | 920 | 2 27 | 24 | 1090 | 2 06 | 29 | 1260 |
| 2 89 | 12 | 590 | 2 68 | 16 | 760 | 2 47 | 20 | 930 | 2 26 | 25 | 1100 | 2 05 | 29 | 1260 |
| 2 88 | 12 | 600 | 2 67 | 16 | 770 | 2 46 | 21 | 940 | 2 25 | 25 | 1100 | 2 04 | 29 | 1270 |
| 2 87 | 12 | 610 | 2 66 | 17 | 780 | 2 45 | 21 | 940 | 2 24 | 25 | 1110 | 2 03 | 29 | 1280 |
| 2 86 | 13 | 620 | 2 65 | 17 | 780 | 2 44 | 21 | 950 | 2 23 | 25 | 1120 | 2 02 | 29 | 1290 |
| 2 85 | 13 | 620 | 2 64 | 17 | 790 | 2 43 | 21 | 960 | 2 22 | 25 | 1130 | 2 01 | 30 | 1300 |
| 2 84 | 13 | 630 | 2 63 | 17 | 800 | 2 42 | 21 | 970 | 2 21 | 26 | 1140 | 2 00 | 30 | 1300 |
| 2 83 | 13 | 640 | 2 62 | 17 | 810 | 2 41 | 22 | 980 | 2 20 | 26 | 1140 | | | |
| 2 82 | 13 | 650 | 2 61 | 18 | 820 | 2 40 | 22 | 980 | 2 19 | 26 | 1150 | Below 2 00 does not qualify for regular admission | | |
| 2 81 | 14 | 660 | 2 60 | 18 | 820 | 2 39 | 22 | 990 | 2 18 | 26 | 1160 | | | |

**Eligibility Index** (cont )

*University of California.* High school graduates with grade-point averages in their "A-F" courses between 2 82 and 3 29 must earn qualifying scores on an ACT or SAT I test to be eligible for admission The following table shows the test scores required for eligibility for any "A-F" grade-point average in this range

University of California Eligibility Index

| "a-f" GPA | ACT[1] | SAT I Total[2] | "a-f" GPA | ACT[1] | SAT I Total[2] | a-f GPA | ACT[1] | SAT I Total[2] | "a-f" GPA | ACT[1] | SAT I Total[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 82 | 36 | 1590/1600 | 2 94 | 31 | 1310/1400 | 3 06 | 25 | 1030/1150 | 3 18 | 18 | 750/900 |
| 2 83 | 36 | 1570/1590 | 2 95 | 31 | 1290/1370 | 3 07 | 24 | 1010/1130 | 3 19 | 18 | 730/870 |
| 2 84 | 35 | 1540/1580 | 2 96 | 30 | 1260/1350 | 3 08 | 23 | 990/1110 | 3 20 | 17 | 700/840 |
| 2 85 | 35 | 1520/1570 | 2 97 | 30 | 1240/1330 | 3 09 | 23 | 960/1090 | 3 21 | 17 | 680/810 |
| 2 86 | 35 | 1500/1560 | 2 98 | 29 | 1220/1310 | 3 10 | 22 | 940/1070 | 3 22 | 16 | 660/780 |
| 2 87 | 34 | 1470/1550 | 2 99 | 28 | 1190/1290 | 3 11 | 22 | 910/1050 | 3 23 | 16 | 630/750 |
| 2 88 | 34 | 1450/1530 | 3 00 | 28 | 1170/1270 | 3 12 | 21 | 890/1030 | 3.24 | 15 | 610/720 |
| 2 89 | 33 | 1430/1510 | 3 01 | 27 | 1150/1250 | 3 13 | 21 | 870/1010 | 3 25 | 15 | 590/690 |
| 2 90 | 33 | 1400/1490 | 3 02 | 27 | 1120/1230 | 3 14 | 20 | 840/980 | 3 26 | 14 | 560/660 |
| 2 91 | 33 | 1380/1470 | 3 03 | 26 | 1100/1210 | 3 15 | 20 | 820/960 | 3 27 | 14 | 540/630 |
| 2 92 | 32 | 1360/1450 | 3 04 | 26 | 1080/1190 | 3 16 | 19 | 800/940 | 3 28 | 13 | 520/600 |
| 2 93 | 31 | 1330/1430 | 3 05 | 25 | 1050/1170 | 3 17 | 19 | 770/920 | 3 29 | 12 | 490/570 |

1 ACT composite scored in intervals of 1 point from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 36

2 SAT I total scored in intervals of 10 points from a minimum of 400 to a maximum of 1600 Use the first score listed if you take the test prior to April 1995 Use the second score if you take the test April 1995 or later

**Geographic Region.** The counties included in each of the eleven geographic regions are listed below

*Northern California*
Butte
Colusa
Del Norte
Glenn
Humboldt
Lake
Lassen
Mendocino
Modoc
Nevada
Plumas
Shasta
Sierra
Siskiyou
Sutter
Tehama
Trinity
Yuba

*Sacramento Area*
El Dorado
Placer
Sacramento
Yolo

*San Francisco Bay Area*
Alameda
Contra Costa
Marin
Napa
San Francisco
San Mateo
Santa Clara
Solano
Sonoma

*Northern Central Valley*
Alpine
Amador
Calaveras
Madera
Mariposa
Merced
Mono
San Joaquin
Stanislaus
Tuolomne

*Southern Central Valley*
Fresno
Inyo
Kern
Kings
Tulare

*Central Coast*
Monterey
San Benito
Santa Cruz

*South Coast*
San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara
Ventura

*Los Angeles County*

*Orange County*

*San Bernardino/ Riverside*

*San Diego/Imperial*

# CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

THE California Postsecondary Education Commission is a citizen board established in 1974 by the Legislature and Governor to coordinate the efforts of California's colleges and universities and to provide independent, non-partisan policy analysis and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature

## Members of the Commission

The Commission consists of 17 members Nine represent the general public, with three each appointed for six-year terms by the Governor, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Speaker of the Assembly Six others represent the major segments of postsecondary education in California Two student members are appointed by the Governor

As of December 1997, the Commissioners representing the general public are

Jeff Marston, San Diego, *Chair*
Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr , San Francisco, *Vice Chair*
Mim Andelson, Los Angeles
Alan S Arkatov, Los Angeles
Henry Der, San Francisco
Lance Izumi, San Francisco
Kyo "Paul" Jhin, Malibu
Bernard Luskin, Encino
Melinda G Wilson, Torrance

Representatives of the segments are

Kyhl Smeby, Pasadena, appointed by the Governor to represent the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities,

Joe Dolphin, San Diego, appointed by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges,

Gerti Thomas, Albany, appointed by the California State Board of Education,

Ralph Pesqueira, San Diego, appointed by the Trustees of the California State University,

Frank R Martinez, San Luis Obispo, appointed by the Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education, and

David S Lee, Santa Clara, appointed by the Regents of the University of California

The two student representatives are

Stephen R McShane, San Luis Obispo
John E Stratman, Jr , Orange

## Functions of the Commission

The Commission is charged by the Legislature and Governor to "assure the effective utilization of public postsecondary education resources, thereby eliminating waste and unnecessary duplication, and to promote diversity, innovation, and responsiveness to student and societal needs "

To this end, the Commission conducts independent reviews of matters affecting the 2,600 institutions of postsecondary education in California, including community colleges, four-year colleges, universities, and professional and occupational schools

As an advisory body to the Legislature and Governor, the Commission does not govern or administer any institutions, nor does it approve, authorize, or accredit any of them Instead, it performs its specific duties of planning, evaluation, and coordination by cooperating with other State agencies and non-governmental groups that perform those other governing, administrative, and assessment functions

## Operation of the Commission

The Commission holds regular meetings throughout the year at which it discusses and takes action on staff studies and takes positions on proposed legislation affecting education beyond the high school in California By law, its meetings are open to the public Requests to speak at a meeting may be made by writing the Commission in advance or by submitting a request before the start of the meeting

The Commission's day-to-day work is carried out by its staff in Sacramento, under the guidance of Executive Director Warren Halsey Fox, Ph D , who is appointed by the Commission

Further information about the Commission and its publications may be obtained from the Commission offices at 1303 J Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, California 98514-2938, telephone (916) 445-7933

# ELIGIBILITY OF CALIFORNIA'S 1996 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR ADMISSION TO THE STATE'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

## Commission Report 97-9

ONE of a series of reports published by the California Postsecondary Education Commission as part of its planning and coordinating responsibilities Summaries of these reports are available on the Internet at http //www cpec ca gov Single copies may be obtained without charge from the Commission at 1303 J Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, California 95814-2938 Recent reports include

1996

**96-11** *Progress Report on the Effectiveness of Collaborative Student Academic Development Programs: A Report of the California Postsecondary Education Commission* (December 1996)

1997

**97-1** *Coming of [Information] Age in California Higher Education A Survey of Technology Initiatives and Policy Issues* (February 1997)

**97-2** *Faculty Salaries at California's Public Universities, 1997-98 A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to Senate Concurrent Resolution No 51 (1965)* (April 1997)

**97-3** *A Review of the Proposed Watsonville Center -- An Educational Center of the Cabrillo Community College District A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to a Request from the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges* (June 1997)

**97-4** *A Review of the Proposed Academy of Entertainment and Technology -- An Educational Center of the Santa Monica Community College District A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to a Request from the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges* (June 1997)

**97-5** *A Review of the Proposed North County Center in Paso Robles -- An Educational Center of the San Luis Obispo County Community College District A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to a Request from the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges* (June 1997)

**97-6** *California Postsecondary Education Commission Workplan, 1996 Through 2000 (1997 Update)* (June 1997)

**97-7** *Student Profiles, 1997 The Latest in a Series of Annual Factbooks About Student Participation in California Higher Education* (August 1997)

**97-8** *Fiscal Profiles, 1997 The Seventh in a Series of Factbooks About the Financing of California Higher Education* (October 1997)

**97-9** *Eligibility of California's 1996 High School Graduates for Admission to the State's Public Universities A Report of the California Postsecondary Education Commission* (December 1997)

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