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U. of Calif. Regents Adopt Admissions Plan

For the second time in two years, the University of California's Board of Regents overwhelmingly approved a major change to the system's admissions policy in July.

The so-called dual-admissions plan, approved by a 14-to-3 vote, guarantees a spot to students between the top 4 percent and 12.5 percent of every high-school graduating class in the state if they complete two years at a community college first. The university already automatically admits as freshmen students in the top 4 percent of every high-school graduating class, under a plan adopted last year.

The dual-admissions policy was

seen by many campus leaders and professors as yet another way for the nine-campus system to increase the representation of minority students in the wake of a ban on affirmative action that voters approved in 1996. It comes in advance of a well-publicized plan to drop the SAT as a requirement for admissions, a step the regents are expected to consider next year.

Under the dual-admissions plan, students who rank between 4 percent and 12.5 percent in their high-school classes, but lack the high grade-point averages and standardized-test scores needed for traditional admissions, will be offered provisional admission to a specific University of California campus. Such students will be required to complete an approved two-year course of study and maintain at

least a 2.4 G.P.A. at a California community college before they may transfer to a university.

The change will take effect with the new freshman class in 2003. It is expected to initially add 1,000 students to the 9,000 transfers that U.C. already enrolls annually, and to eventually produce 3,500 additional transfer students a year. Although university leaders deny that the dual-admissions idea was proposed as an alternative to affirmative action, officials estimated that black, Hispanic, and American Indian students would make up about 36 percent of those admitted under the plan, compared with 18.6 percent of those admitted for this fall.

Some regents expressed concern over how the dual-admissions policy would influence the quality of the university system when cou-

pled with the new top-4-percent plan and the possible rescinding of the SAT requirement.

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