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# Berkeley and UCLA See Sharp Drops in Admission of Black and Hispanic Applicants

BY JAMES RAMAGE

**T**HE University of California's campuses at Berkeley and Los Angeles said last week that the number of black and Hispanic applicants admitted to the freshman classes on both campuses next fall had dropped significantly compared with last year.

The classes are the first admitted under a policy, established by the University of California's Board of Regents in July 1995, that bars the use of racial or gender preferences in admissions. That policy became law in November 1996, when California voters approved a statewide referendum that banned state and local agencies, including public colleges, from using preferences based on race or gender.

Most of the other University of California campuses released their admissions data in the middle of March, and the picture was mixed, with two of the six campuses reporting increases in the number of underrepresented minority students they admitted (*The Chronicle*, March 27).

College officials had been waiting, however, for the numbers from the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses, which are the most selective in the nine-campus system. Although the numbers are preliminary, and may be imprecise because many students declined to identify themselves by race, the news appeared to be bad for advocates for minority students.

"My own emotions are a mixture of disappointment, anger, frustration, hope, and resolve," said Robert M. Berdahl, chancellor at Berkeley.

## EXTRA CONSIDERATION

Critics of affirmative action said the big drop in the number of minority students admitted showed just how much the California campuses had previously depended on racial preferences. Officials at Berkeley and Los Angeles had sought to offset the loss of affirmative action by giving extra consideration in admissions to applicants from low-income backgrounds and to those who were the first in their families to attend college. But those changes helped many low-income white and Asian-American students, too, officials said.

On Mr. Berdahl's campus, black, Hispanic, and American Indian applicants made up 10.4 per cent of the students admitted for fall 1998, down from 23.1 per cent last fall. Among those groups:

- 191 black applicants were accepted for this fall, down from 562 in fall 1997, a decline of 66 per cent.

- 600 Hispanic applicants were admitted, down from 1,266 last year, a decline of 52.6 per cent.

- 27 American Indian applicants were admitted, down from 69 a year ago, a decline of 60.9 per cent.

The proportions of white and Asian-American students admitted to Berkeley rose, although the actual number of white students ad-

mitted fell slightly. Berkeley admitted 2,998 Asian-American students, compared with 2,925 a year ago, and 2,674 white students, down from 2,725 last year.

At Berkeley, 1,237 of the admitted students did not specify their race or ethnicity on their applications, up 162 per cent from the number who similarly refused last year.

The outcome for minority students was not quite as bad at U.C.L.A. as it was at Berkeley. The Los Angeles campus experienced a 35.8-per-cent decline in the number of blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians. The university admitted 1,327 students from those groups, compared with 2,066 a year ago. Among them:

- 280 black students were ac-

cepted, down from 488 a year ago, a decline of 42.6 per cent.

- 1,001 Hispanic applicants were admitted, down from 1,497, a decrease of 33.1 per cent.

- 46 American Indian applicants were accepted, down from 81, a decline of 43.2 per cent.

The number of Asian-American applicants remained essentially flat at U.C.L.A., moving from 4,154 to

4,187. The number of white students admitted declined 5 per cent.

That figure may be misleading, however, because the number of admitted students who declined to state their race or ethnicity rose sharply on the Los Angeles campus, from 569 in 1997 to 1,463 for 1998. That could skew the overall admissions statistics, campus officials said.