

## FACULTY RESPONSE TO DAILY BRUIN HOLISTIC REVIEW EDITORIALS

We, the undersigned faculty, strongly support "A Day Without an Educated Student of Color Rally and Action." This action was prompted by two October 23 *Daily Bruin* editorials about the legality of our freshmen admissions process that are both misleading and irresponsible. The editorials are misleading because they miss the forest for the trees when it comes to the statistical and other evidence about the inner-workings of UCLA's admissions process; they are irresponsible because they recklessly cast doubt on whether a large portion of the African American and Latino students currently enrolled at UCLA really deserve to be here.

The core charge in the editorials is an old one that should have been put to rest long ago. The editorials claim that UCLA's "holistic review" process may violate California Proposition 209's ban on the use of racial preferences because a disproportionate number of underrepresented minority applicants are referred to "supplemental review" (a follow-up to the basic holistic review process that involves the consideration of additional information about grades, talents, and challenges) and that these students are more likely to be admitted than are other students with similar holistic scores. The editorials casually dismiss the reasonable explanation provided by UCLA admissions officials, that any supplemental review outcomes are more likely due to the unique challenges faced by these applicants and to the special talents they bring to the table than to their race per se. One of the editorials even characterizes supplemental review as merely a "smokescreen" for the use of racial preferences.

But an extensive, independent analysis of UCLA's holistic review process recently concluded that it works as intended by our faculty, which approved its adoption starting with the fall 2007 freshman class. More importantly vis-à-vis the editorials' claims, the report found no signs of race-based reader bias in the awarding of applicant holistic scores. We should also note that the report's

basic findings mirror those from a 2005 study that validated UC Berkeley's holistic admissions process, the process on which UCLA's is modeled. Indeed, confidence in holistic review has grown such that campuses throughout the UC system have adopted it in recent years as the fairest and most effective way of identifying diverse and excellent freshman classes, given the constraints imposed by Proposition 209.

The reality is that race has not been used as a factor in UCLA's admissions since 1997. However, this fact evidently hasn't gotten in the way of those who seem singularly focused on further reducing the number of underrepresented minority students on this campus — a number that has fallen rather dramatically in the aftermath of Proposition 209's implementation in 1998. It's important to consider that the editorials' call for (another) review of UCLA's holistic review process is fueled by the writings of Richard Sander, a UCLA law professor who in recent years has labored to argue that a “mismatch” exists between the skills of underrepresented minority students at elite institutions like UCLA and the skills required to excel at these universities. Unfortunately for Professor Sander's thesis (and a growing literature exposes other problems with his thesis), underrepresented minority students do extremely well at UCLA, graduating at rates exceeding those of underrepresented minorities at other comparable institutions and not considerably lower than those of other UCLA students. And these latter small differences, the literature suggests, are probably due more to finances than to ability. The idea of "mismatch" becomes even more ludicrous within the UCLA context when we consider the stellar GPAs and other academic achievements presented by the underrepresented minority students admitted to our campus through holistic review.

In the final analysis, by ignoring what the evidence shows is the bigger picture about holistic review, the *Daily Bruin* editorials effectively pander to a political

agenda masquerading as scientific research. In the process, the newspaper has impugned the qualifications of meritorious students on this campus and owes these students an apology.

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Walter Allen, Education  
Eric Avila, Chicana/o Studies  
Cesar Ayala, Sociology  
Eraka Bath, Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences  
Charlene Villasenor Black, Art History  
Scot Brown, History  
Devon Carbado, Law  
Robert Cooper, Education  
Kimberle Crenshaw, Law  
Travis Dixon, Communication Studies  
Jaqueline DjeDje, Ethnomusicology  
Leobardo Estrada, Public Affairs  
Aisha Finch, Gender Studies  
Lorrie Frasure, Political Science  
Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Chicana/o Studies and English  
Franklin Gilliam, Public Affairs  
Phillip Goff, Psychology  
Yogita Goyal, English  
Sandra Graham, Education  
Sarah Haley, Gender Studies  
Cheryl Harris, Law  
Christian Head, Head and Neck Surgery  
Tyrone Howard, Education  
Darnell Hunt, Sociology  
Alfreda Iglehart, Social Welfare  
Edmond Keller, Political Science  
Robin Kelley, History  
Cheryl Keyes, Ethnomusicology  
Arthur Little, English  
Steven Loza, Ethnomusicology  
Reynaldo Macias, Chicana/o Studies  
Vickie Mays, Psychology  
Muriel McClendon, History  
Kathleen McHugh, English  
Uri McMillan, English  
Norweeta Milburn, Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences  
Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, Anthropology  
Mignon Moore, Sociology  
Hector Myers, Psychology

Steven Nelson, Art History  
Chon Noriega, Film and Television  
Alex Ortega, Public Health  
Michael Rodriguez, Family Medicine  
Vilma Ortiz, Sociology  
Rafael Perez-Torres, English  
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Mark Sawyer, Political Science  
Jenny Sharpe, English  
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Brenda Stevenson, History  
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Gail Wyatt, Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences  
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