

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY:**ACTION ITEM***For Meeting of November 17, 2004***MULTI-ETHNIC “MULTIRACIAL” DESIGNATION ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS APPLICATION**

Regent Connerly recommends that the Committee on Educational Policy recommend to The Regents that the President, in consultation with the General Counsel, be directed to ~~appeal the current federal paradigm for self-reporting racial or ethnic identity in order to include the option of “multi-racial” or “multi-ethnic” as a category at the University~~ request that the federal Office of Management and Budget revise its OMB Statistical Policy Directive 15, *Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity* (last revised in 1997) to permit the University of California to adopt a “multiracial” category if the University concludes that such action is warranted.

BACKGROUND

As a recipient of federal funds, the University of California is required to follow the federal reporting requirements of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. IPEDS’ reporting requirements are guided by OMB Statistical Policy Directive 15, *Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, which was last revised in 1997.

In its report announcing the revision to Directive 15, the OMB recommended that data on multiple races or ethnicities should be collected and specified that:

- *When self-identification is used, a method for reporting more than one race should be adopted.*
- *The method for respondents to report more than one race should take the form of multiple responses to a single question and **not** [OMB emphasis] a multi-racial category.*
- *When a list of races is provided to respondents, the list should not contain a multi-racial category.*

Although OMB Directive 15 was implemented on January 1, 2003, the federal government has yet to issue guidelines for educational institutions regarding the aggregation of individuals reporting more than one race or ethnicity. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education has asked OMB to provide more guidance to the federal statistical community in order to achieve agreement across agencies. In the meantime, NCES has published guidance to education institutions strongly recommending that institutions “do nothing at this time to change their current race and ethnicity reporting systems and formats.”

November 17, 2004

UC data on students' race and ethnicity are collected on the undergraduate application, which lists 13 racial or ethnic categories, one of which is "other." Reporting of race or ethnicity is entirely voluntary. Information from the application is processed by the outside contractor who processes all application data, is entered into admissions data bases, and becomes a part of a student's record if that student is admitted and enrolls. For the purposes of reporting to IPEDS, and consistent with OMB guidelines, these 13 categories are aggregated into five: African American/Black, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and White. Students who report "other" or who decline to state their ethnicity are reported to IPEDS in its "Unknown" category and are retained as a separate category in most UC reports.

Since 1990, UC has offered undergraduate admission applicants the option of reporting more than one race or ethnicity. The instruction reads, "Indicate your ethnic identity by checking the appropriate boxes." However, because IPEDS has not yet provided direction to institutions on the reporting of more than one race or ethnicity and has asked institutions not to change their data reporting formats, UC has continued to assign a single racial or ethnic category to applicants who check more than one box.

At present, data on multiple racial or ethnic identities that applicants report on the paper application are not retained in electronic form. As a result, the number of UC undergraduate applicants reporting more than one race or ethnicity is not known with any degree of accuracy. The electronic application, PATHWAYS, does allow UC to retain data for applicants who report more than one race or ethnicity.

Coincident with the implementation of an all-electronic application which will allow the University to capture all of the ethnicity data that applicants provide, the Office of the President plans to add to its current non-federal reports the total number of applicants who indicate multiple ethnicities. Thus UC would *report* data on the number of students who are "multi-racial" but would continue to *collect* the data from applicants in a manner consistent with OMB Directive 15. The University is also asking the National Center for Education Statistics for a resolution of the unresolved question of how multiple race information should be tabulated.

Regent Connerly suggests that UC should *collect* data from potential students using a "multi-racial" or "multi-ethnic" check box and that the President should request that the OMB revise its guidelines to permit this.