

## Office of the President

### TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES ON LONG RANGE PLANNING AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY:

#### DISCUSSION ITEM

*For Meeting of March 24, 2010*

#### **ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY SUB-REPORT ON THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENTS**

This initial Annual Accountability Sub-Report on Undergraduate Admissions and Enrollment is part of the series of reports that the Committee on Long Range Planning has established in order to:

- review key areas of the accountability framework in more detail;
- discuss strategic choices that need to be made by UC in those areas;
- inform the Board's deliberations about important policy and budget questions; and
- achieve a richer understanding of UC as a system and of campus distinctiveness.

This report is just one aspect of the efforts the Office of the President makes to inform the Regents about the admission and enrollment of undergraduates. Other efforts include:

- Mailings every January, April, and June of counts of preliminary freshman and transfer applications, admissions, and Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs), respectively, for the following fall term;
- A presentation to the Committee on Educational Policy in July of each year, profiling the incoming freshman and transfer classes (based on preliminary SIR data);
- Periodic reports to the Board from the Academic Senate dealing with matters related to undergraduate admission policy. (For example, the Board has recently received the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) report on admissions tests, and later this spring will receive a written report on the implementation of the University's comprehensive review policy.)

This report focuses on freshman admission; a similar report on transfer admission will be brought to the Committee in March 2011.

## **INTRODUCTION TO FRESHMAN ADMISSION**

The process by which students prepare themselves for UC, apply, and are admitted occurs in several stages, briefly described below.

### ***Eligibility***

High school students prepare for UC and make themselves eligible for admission by completing at least 15 required UC approved courses in subject areas known as “a-g” and earning at least a B (3.0) average in those courses; taking either the ACT or SAT Reasoning Test and (for 2010 and 2011) two SAT subject examinations; and achieving scores on those tests that, when combined with their grade point average (GPA), qualify them on UC’s “Eligibility Index” (a sliding scale on which higher grades can balance lower test scores and vice versa). Students can also qualify as eligible by achieving a GPA that places them among the top four percent of students from their high school (Eligibility in the Local Context, or ELC) or by achieving very high scores on their admissions tests.

At present, all students who meet these requirements and apply to UC are guaranteed a place somewhere in the UC system, although not necessarily at the campus or in the major of their choice. For fall 2010, UC Merced is expected to admit all eligible applicants who are not admitted elsewhere; UC Riverside expects to admit some, but not all. The group of applicants who are not admitted to any of the campuses to which they applied, but are nonetheless guaranteed admission, is known as the “referral pool.”

These eligibility requirements will change in 2012, when the University’s new eligibility policy, adopted by the Regents in February 2009, takes effect. The new policy eliminates the requirement that students take two subject examinations, expands ELC to the top nine percent of graduates from each high school, narrows the pool of students who are guaranteed admission based on the Eligibility Index, and creates slightly a broader group of potential applicants who are eligible to apply but not guaranteed admission.

### ***Application***

High school seniors apply for admission in November of their senior year. Applicants complete a single, systemwide on-line application on which they indicate the campuses for which they would like to be considered. The application incorporates personal and demographic information; information on courses taken and grades received in high school; information on honors, achievements, activities, and employment; and short personal statements written by the applicants. For fall 2010, UC received applications from a total of 100,320 freshman applicants, 81,991 of whom were California residents. Students apply to an average of 3.5 campuses, meaning that the total number of (duplicated) applications received by our nine undergraduate campuses is around 350,000. Applications to individual campuses range from 57,578 at UCLA to 10,594 at UC Merced.

***Admission***

Admission (also known as Selection) decisions are made by the campuses, using a process known as Comprehensive Review. Each campus reviews the applications of all applicants who indicated they wished to be considered by that campus (i.e., applicants who apply to multiple campuses are considered separately at every campus to which they apply). This process takes place from December through March, with admission decisions announced as early as February by some campuses. Consistent with the admissions calendar adhered to nationally by colleges and universities, all admission decisions for freshman applicants who applied on time must be completed and communicated to applicants no later than March 31. The University of California does not offer Early Admission or Early Decision programs.

The University's comprehensive review policy (adopted by the Board in 2001) specifies that students should be evaluated individually and on a broad range of criteria (also incorporated in Regents policy), but does not dictate the form that review takes or the weights assigned to different criteria. Campus processes differ significantly. UC Berkeley and UCLA use a process called "holistic review" that considers each student's entire record without assigning points or sub-scores to any specific criteria or factors. Each student receives a single score that reflects the admission reader's judgment of the applicant's full set of qualifications. Four campuses (Davis, Riverside, San Diego, and Santa Cruz) use point-based systems in which scores are assigned for different weighted criteria and added together to produce a total score for each applicant; some of these points are assigned by machine when data is available electronically (e.g., test scores), while others are assigned based on reading all or part of the application. Irvine and Santa Barbara use systems that combine elements of these approaches. (Because Merced currently admits all UC-eligible applicants it is still in the process of developing its comprehensive review process.) All campuses employ multiple readers of the same application and various other quality control processes to ensure consistency and reliability in admissions evaluations. (Note that the BOARS Report on Comprehensive Review, which the Board will receive later this year, will contain additional descriptive and evaluative information on campus-level comprehensive review practices.)

Because not all applicants accept their admission offers, campuses admit more students than they will actually enroll. For fall 2009, UC as a system admitted a total of 76,705 freshman applicants. Fall 2009 admissions at the campus level ranged from 10,269 at UC Berkeley to 26,795 at UC Riverside. Applicants may be admitted at multiple campuses and most applicants to UC are admitted to some campuses and denied at others. As noted above, UC-eligible California applicants who are not admitted on any of the campuses where they applied will receive an offer from UC Merced. This part of the admissions process is known as referral and students in this category are known collectively as the referral pool.

***Acceptance of the Admission Offer***

Consistent with national practice for four-year colleges and universities, admitted applicants have until May 1 to accept an offer from one of the UC campuses. They do so by submitting a Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) and a small deposit that will be applied to their fees. The percentage of admitted applicants who accept an offer of admission is known as the yield rate.

For fall 2009, 36,481 admitted students accepted their admission offer — a systemwide yield rate of 47.6 percent. At the campus level, SIRs ranged from 4,957 at UC Santa Barbara to 1,358 at UC Merced. Among the campuses that receive applications from more students than they can accommodate, yield ranged from 42.8 percent at UC Berkeley to 20.3 percent at UC Santa Cruz. Yield at UC Merced and UC Riverside is lower because they admit referral pool students who did not apply to their campuses and are unlikely to accept the admission offer.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY GOALS AND PRINCIPLES RELATED TO UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION**

The key principles that shape accountability for undergraduate admission are found in the Organic Act that created the University, the Master Plan for Higher Education, and the UC Regents Policy on Undergraduate Admission. Each of these three documents articulates two fundamental goals: access and quality.

- The Organic Act (1868) specified that students should be well enough prepared to be likely to succeed and that admissions spaces should be apportioned so that “all portions of the State shall enjoy equal privilege.”
- The Master Plan (1960) instructed the University to “draw from” the “top one-eighth” of high school graduates and was amended to provide that all students who meet these requirements should be guaranteed admission on at least one UC campus.
- UC’s Policy on Undergraduate Admissions, adopted by the Regents in 1988, states in part, “Mindful of its mission as a public institution, the University ... seeks to enroll on each of its campuses a student body that ... demonstrates high academic qualifications or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of cultural, racial, geographic, and socio-economic backgrounds characteristic of California.”

In reviewing the University’s record with respect to undergraduate admissions, we ask two fundamental questions:

- Is the University admitting a well-qualified and academically prepared freshman class that represents the most promising young people of the state of California?
- Is the University ensuring that students from a broad variety of backgrounds have the opportunity to attend each UC campus?

### **FRESHMAN ADMISSION TREND DATA**

The data tables appended to this item and those that will be presented to the Committee examine the University’s performance in these areas:

- Figure 1, which is reproduced from the May 2009 Annual Accountability Report and updated to include 2009 data, shows trend data on the total number of California freshman applicants to UC and those that are subsequently admitted and enroll. Figure

1A shows applicants, admits, and enrolled freshman, broken out by California residents and nonresidents.

- Figure 2 displays freshman applicants, admits, and enrolled freshmen from California high schools as a proportion of total California public high school graduates. These tables provide a measure of UC's adherence to the Master Plan provision that we draw from the top 12.5 percent of high school graduates: in recent years, UC has admitted between 12 and 15 percent of high school graduates and enrolled between six and eight percent.
- Figures 3-5 present systemwide trend data on the academic preparation of UC applicants, admitted students, and enrolled freshmen, including high school GPA (weighted with bonus points for honors-level courses) (Figure 3), numbers and types of courses completed in high school (Figure 4), and performance on standardized tests (Figure 5). These data show that the average academic quality of students at UC well exceeds our minimum eligibility requirements and has remained remarkably stable, even as the number and proportion of high school graduates who apply has increased substantially.
- Figures 6-10 display characteristics of our applicants, admitted students, and enrolled freshmen (systemwide) that allow the Regents to measure performance with respect to inclusiveness. These measures include family income (Figure 6); school Academic Performance Index (API) (Figure 7); race and ethnicity (Figure 8); parental education levels (Figure 9); and California geographic region (Figure 10). These data show that generally UC has improved slightly with respect to inclusivity. The proportion of low-income students has increased slightly in recent years (although it remains lower than in the late 1990s), as has the proportion whose parents have no college education. The proportion of Caucasian students, those whose parents have graduate degrees, and those from the highest performing schools has declined. With respect to underrepresented students, UC has shown substantial growth for Latino students, while representation of African American and Native American students remains low and has not shown growth. With the exception of moderate growth for students from the San Joaquin Valley and Inland Empire, geographic representation has remained quite stable. UC continues to draw most of its students from the urban and suburban areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties and the San Francisco Bay Area.

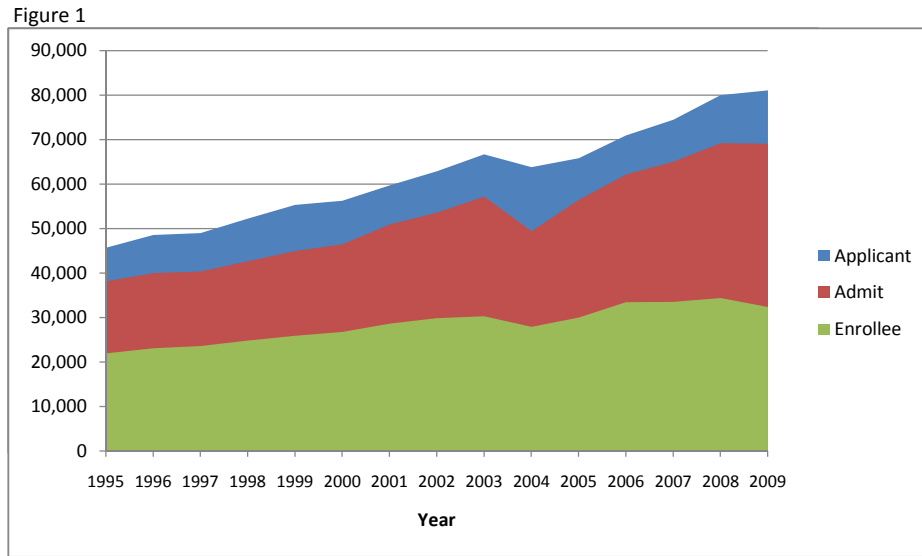
During the presentation to the Committee, Vice President Sakaki will review a sample of data tables in detail and will also present campus-level detail to illustrate how these data can be used to evaluate critical questions, such as:

- What do UC application rates tell us about how Californians view the University?
- How do application rates from different kinds of students affect the composition of our student body?
- What do we learn from differences in the applications to individual campuses?
- How do policy decisions and external circumstances (e.g., budget problems, enrollment reductions, fee increases) affect applications, admissions, and enrollment?
- How can we expect applications to change after implementation of the University's new eligibility policy?

- What is the effect, over time, of increasing selectivity (declining admission rates) at the campus level?
- What do trends in the rates at which admitted students accept offers from individual campuses tell us about how those campuses are perceived?

(Attachments)

**Figure 1. Total Growth: California Resident Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**



**Figure 1A. Total Growth: Freshman Applicants, Admits, and Enrollees by Residency Status, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 1A.1

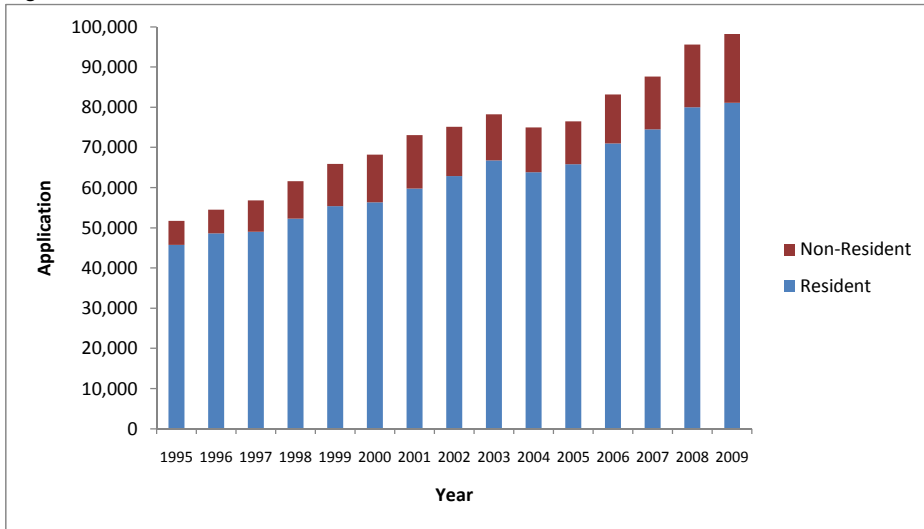


Figure 1A.2

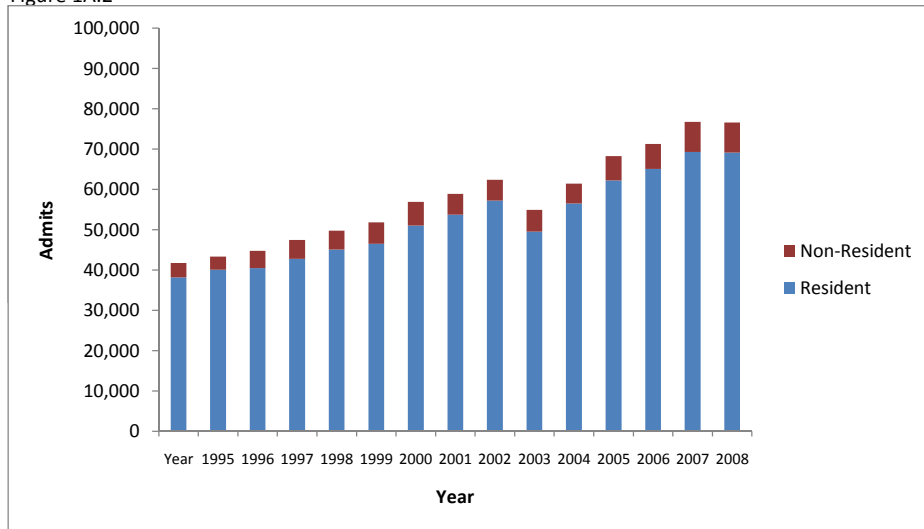
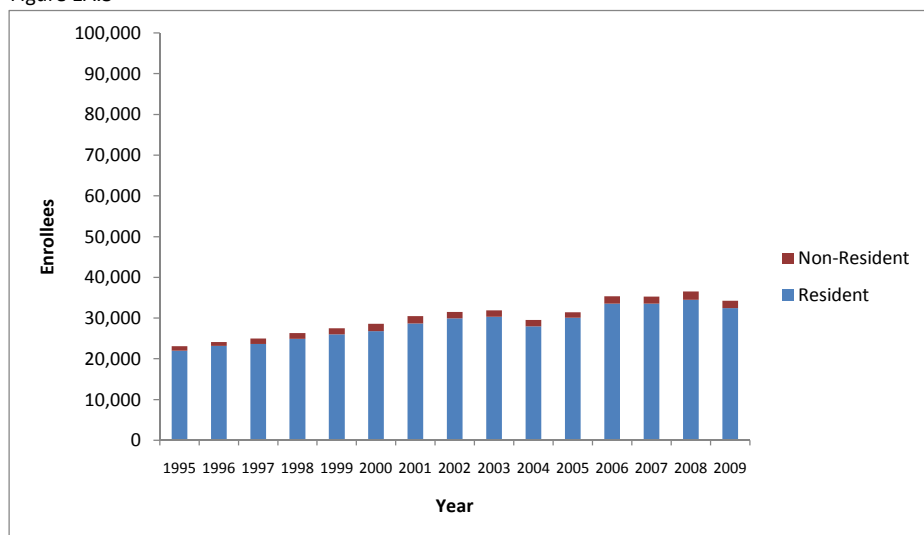


Figure 1A.3





**Figure 2. Application Rates: California Resident Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen From Public High Schools as a Proportion of California Public High School Graduates, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 2.1

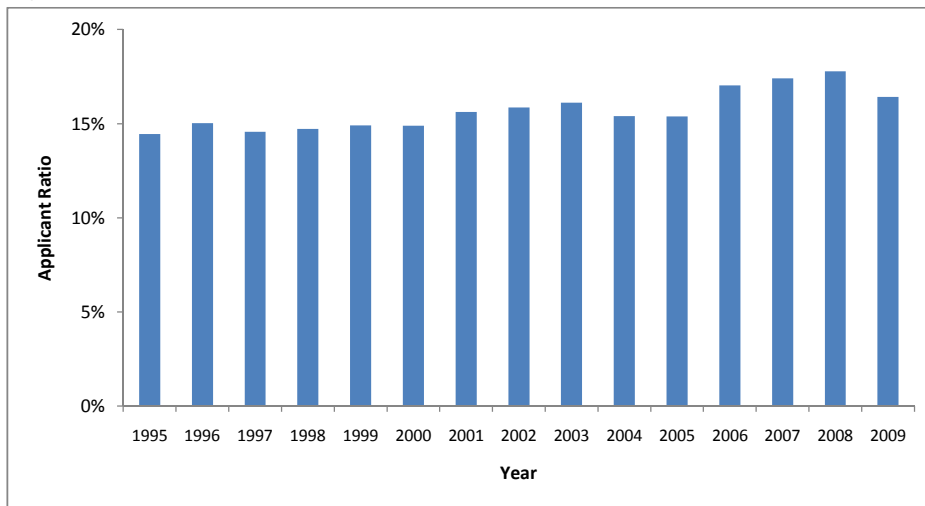


Figure 2.2

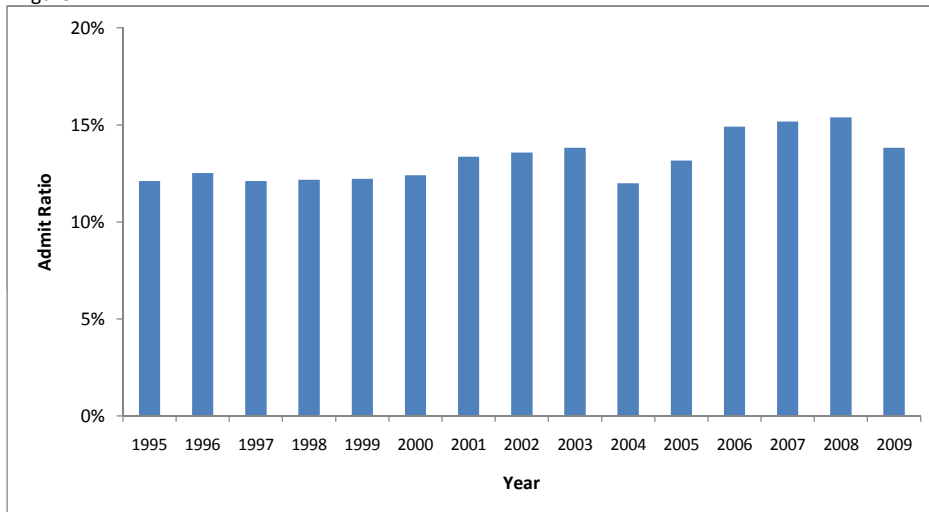
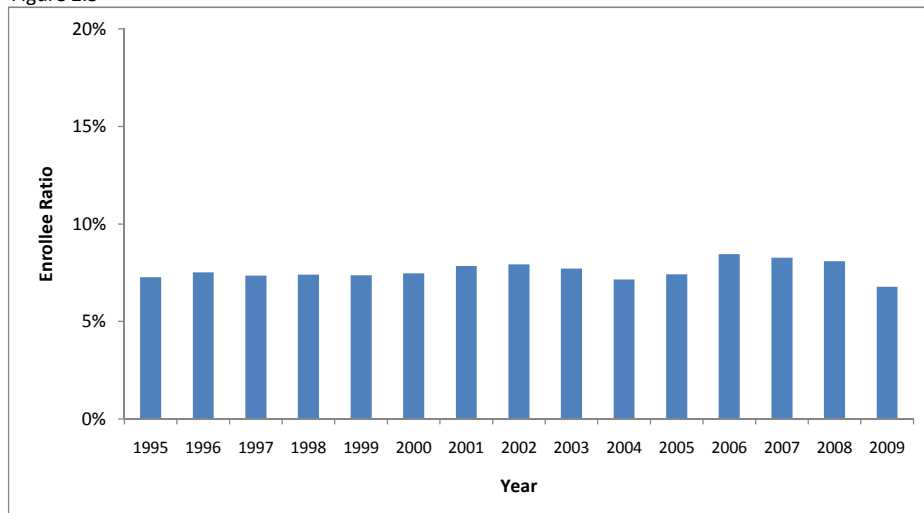


Figure 2.3



**Figure 3. Academic Preparation: High School Weighted, Capped GPA of California Resident Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 3.1

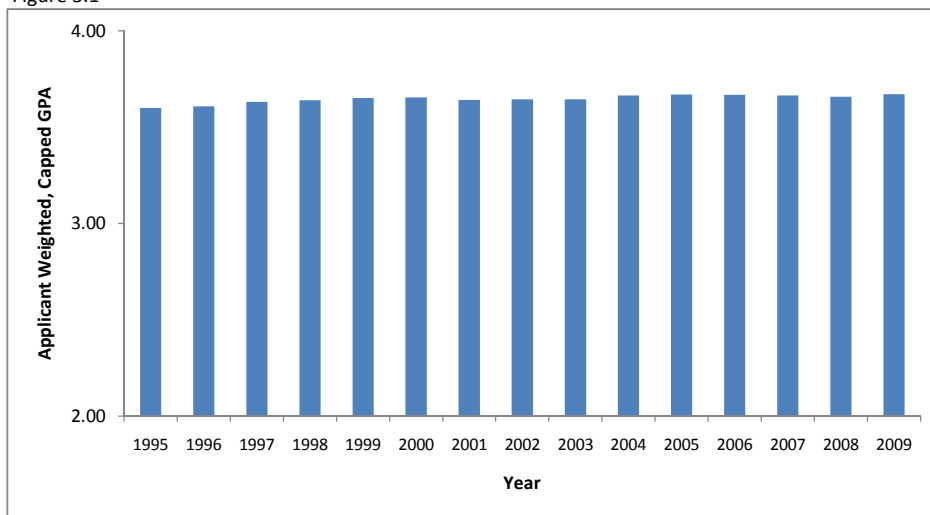


Figure 3.2

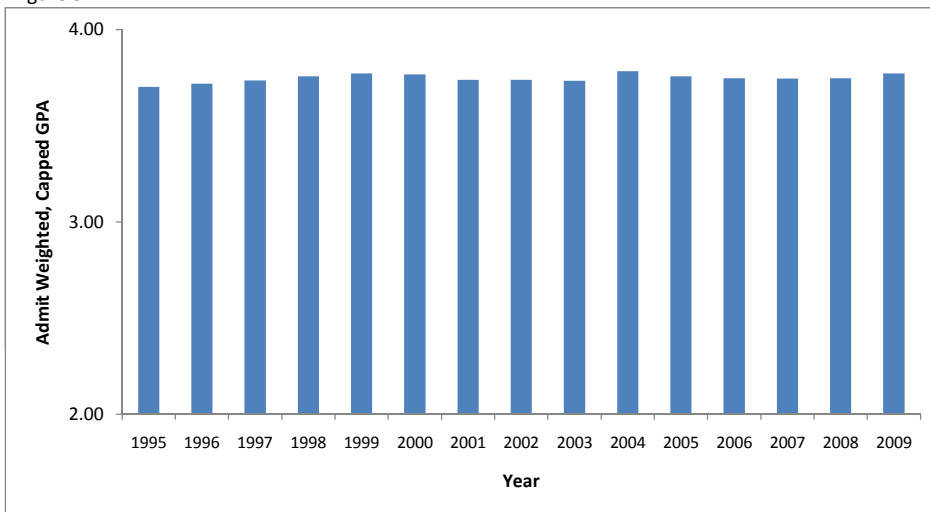
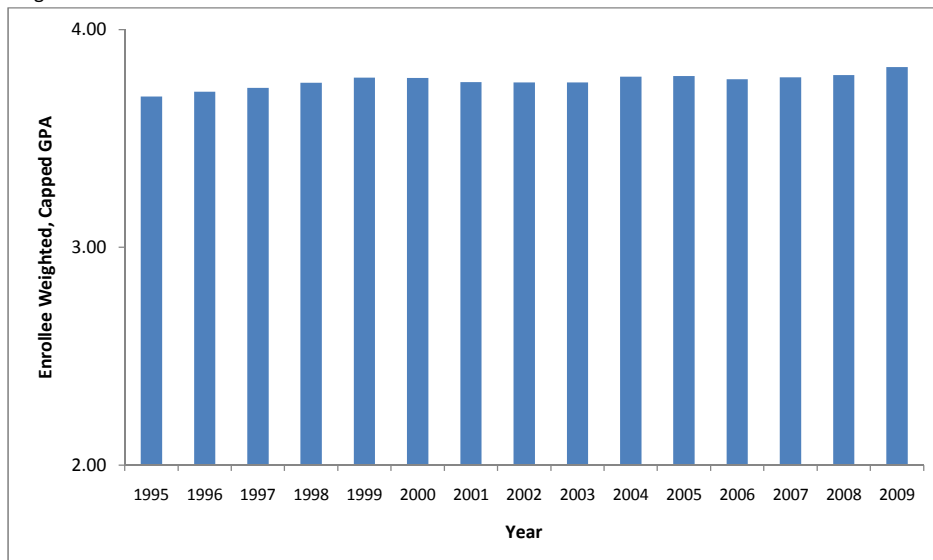


Figure 3.3



**Figure 4. Academic Preparation: Numbers and Types of High School Courses Completed by California Resident Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 2002 to Fall 2009**

Figure 4.1

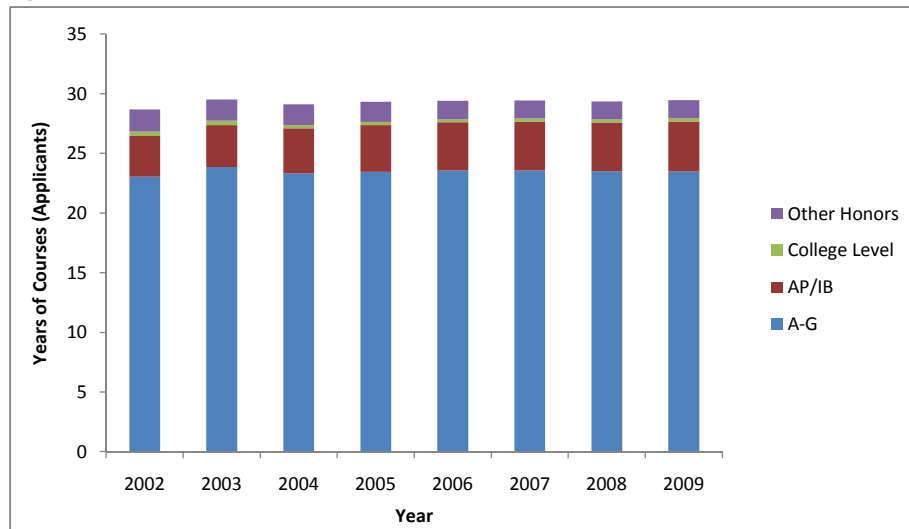


Figure 4.2

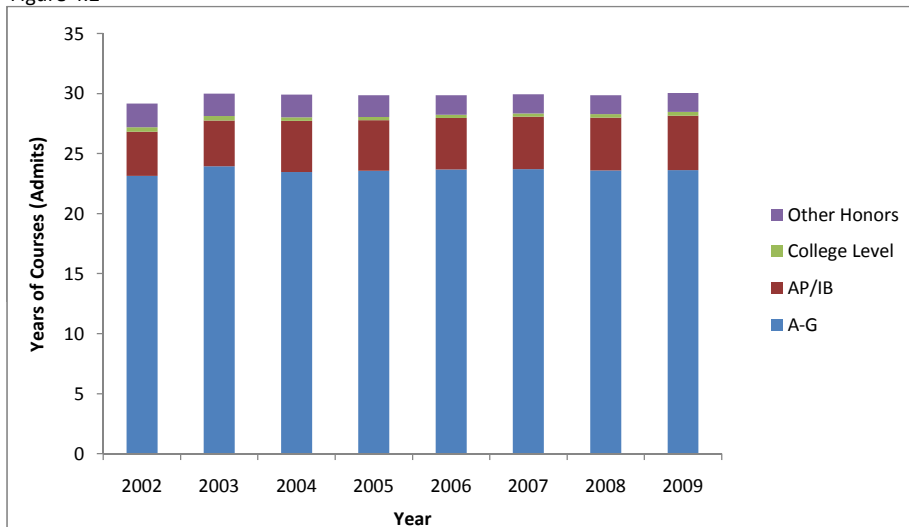
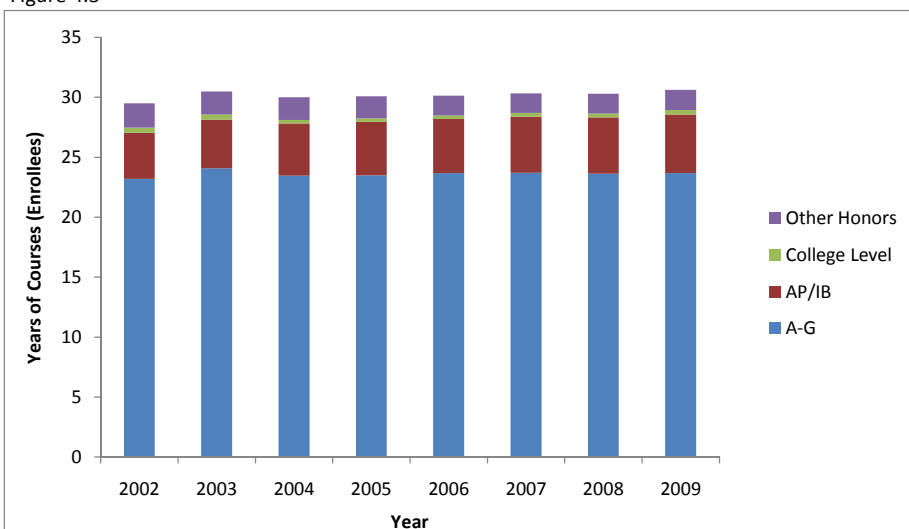


Figure 4.3



**Figure 5. Academic Preparation: Performance on Standardized Tests of California Resident Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 5.1

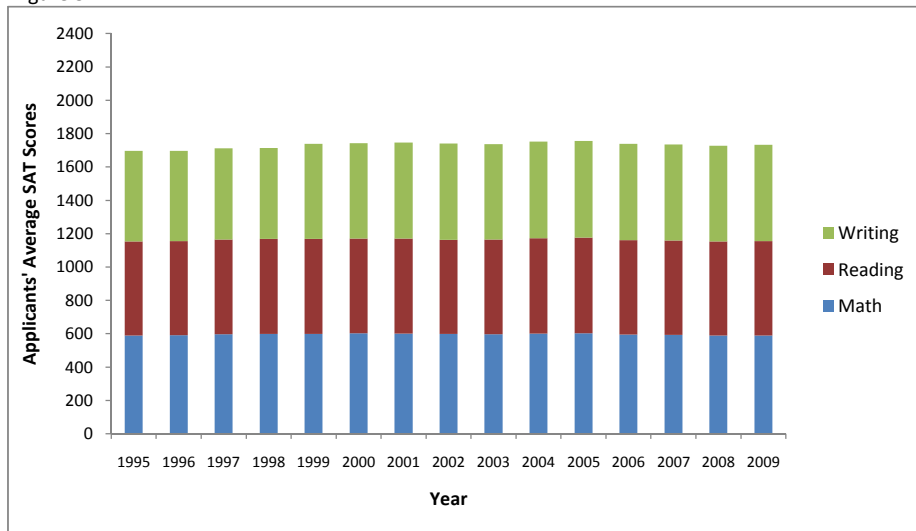


Figure 5.2

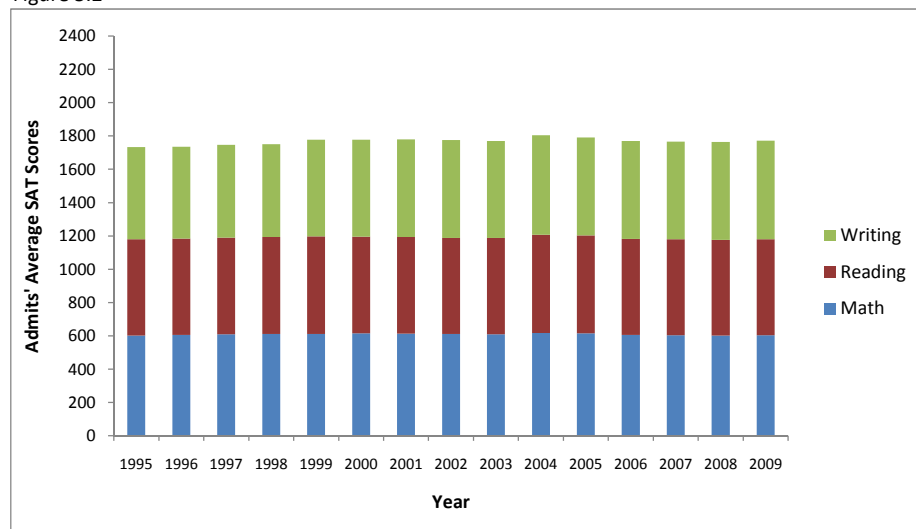
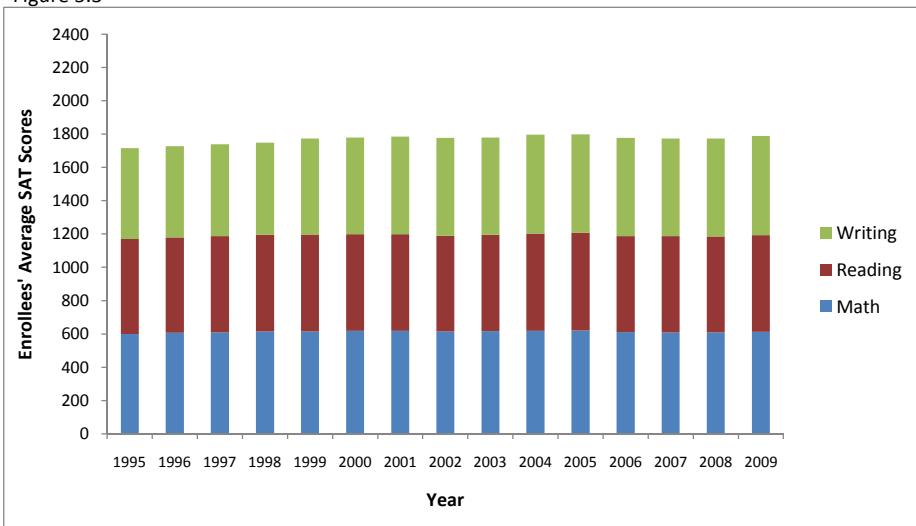


Figure 5.3



**Figure 6. Characteristics of Applicants: Family Income (2001 constant dollars) for California Resident Applicants, Admits and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1997 to Fall 2009**

Figure 6.1

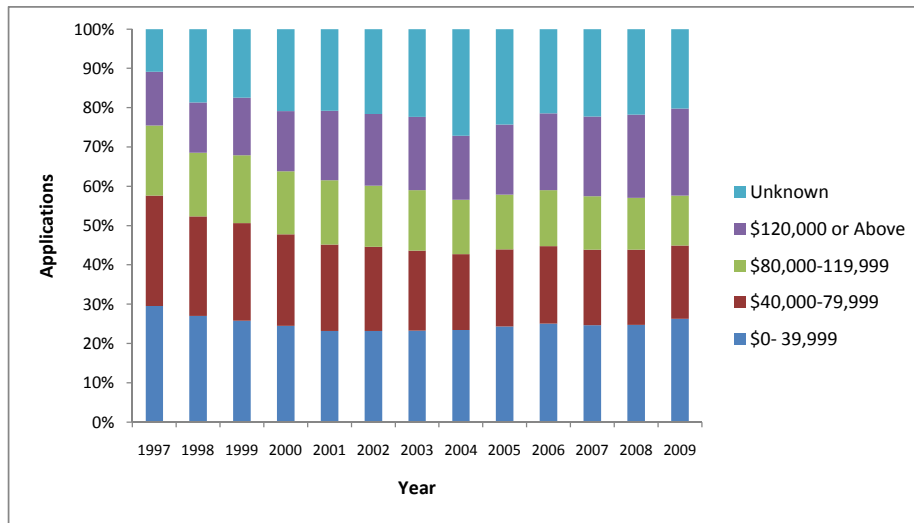


Figure 6.2

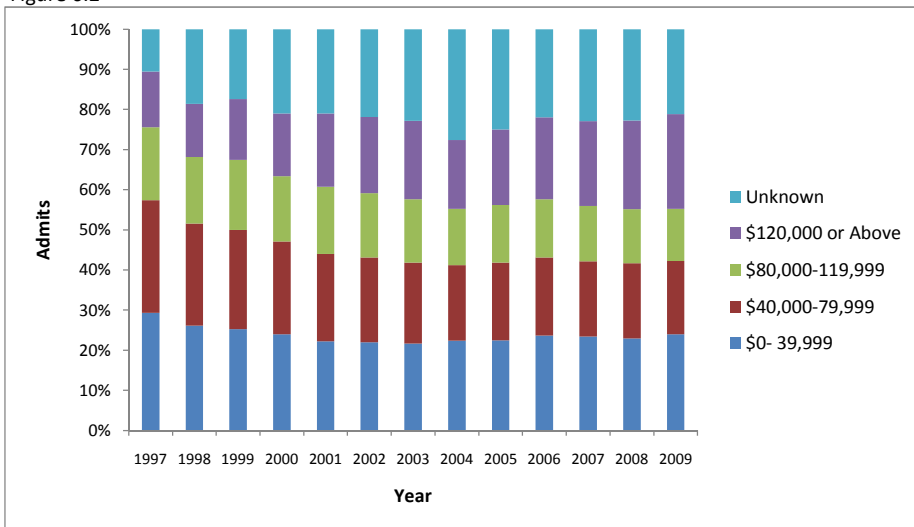
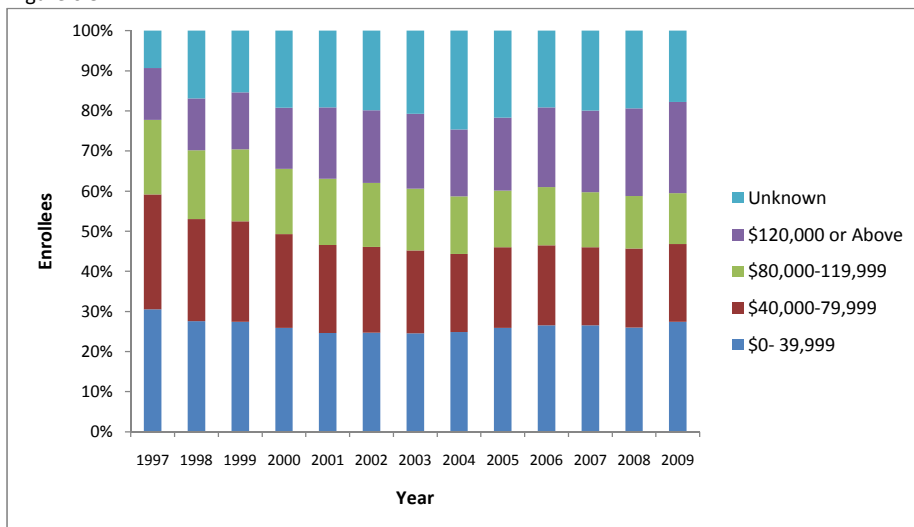


Figure 6.3



**Figure 7. Characteristics of Applicants: School Academic Performance Index (API) for California Resident Applicant, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 2000 to Fall 2009**

Figure 7.1

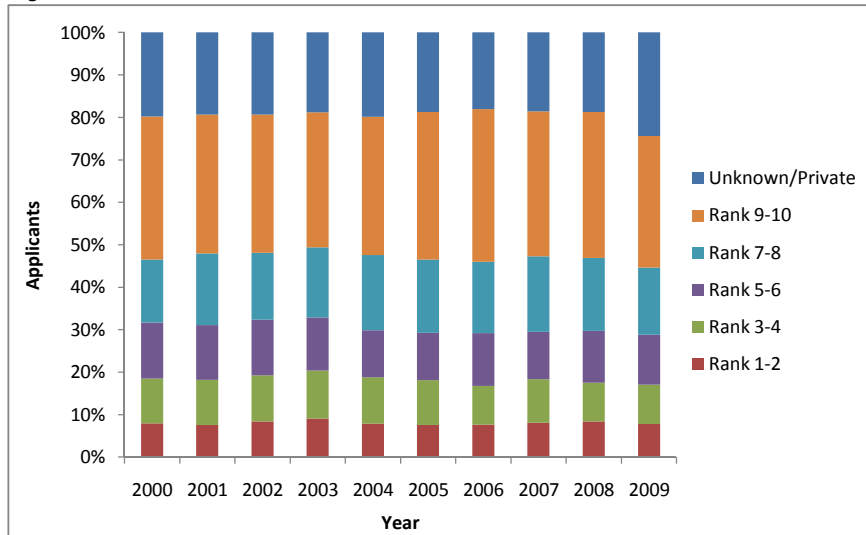


Figure 7.2

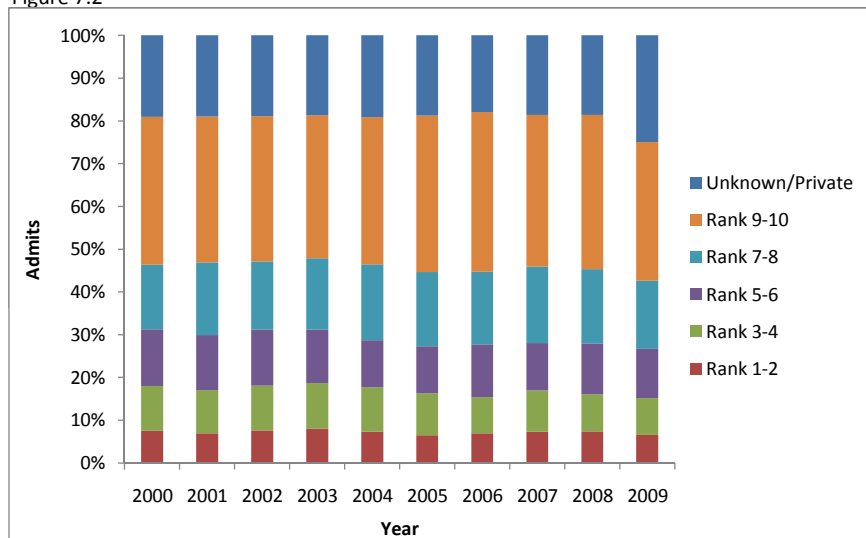
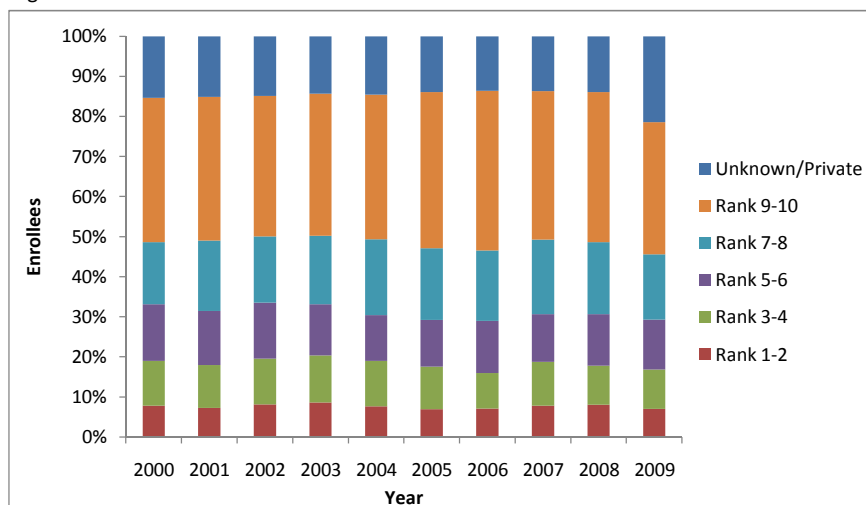


Figure 7.3



**Figure 8. Characteristics of Applicants: Race and Ethnicity of California Resident Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 8.1

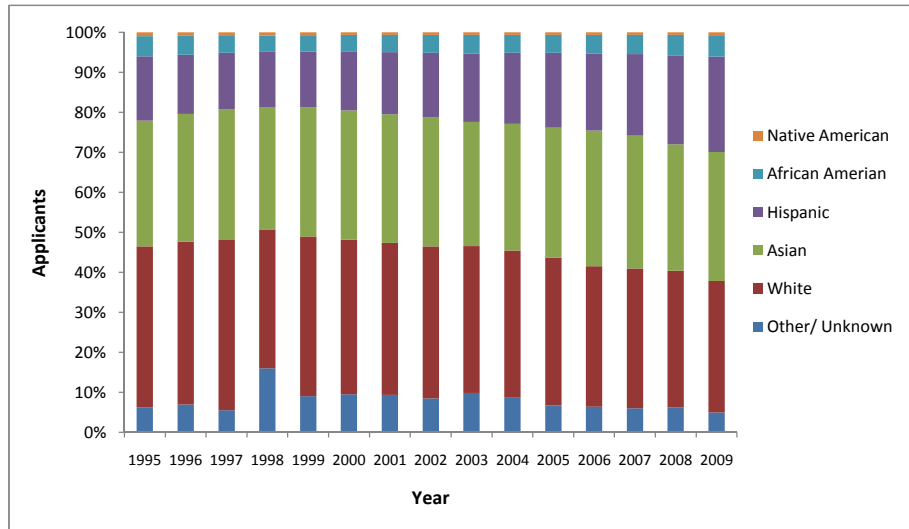


Figure 8.2

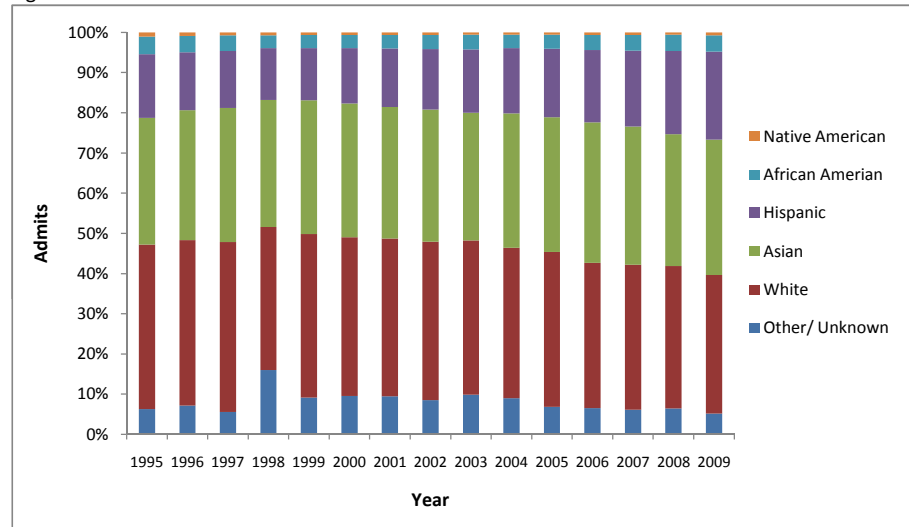
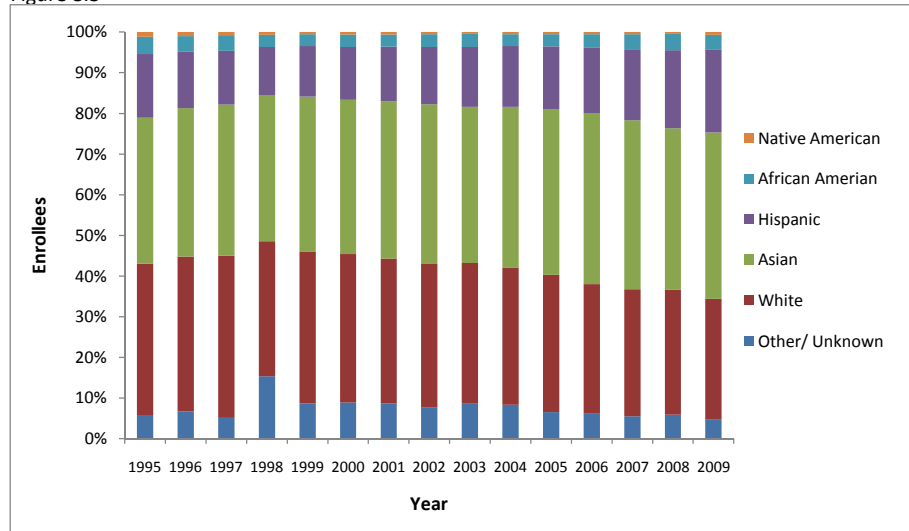


Figure 8.3



**Figure 9. Characteristics of Applicants: Parental Education Levels of California Resident Applicants, Admits and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 9.1

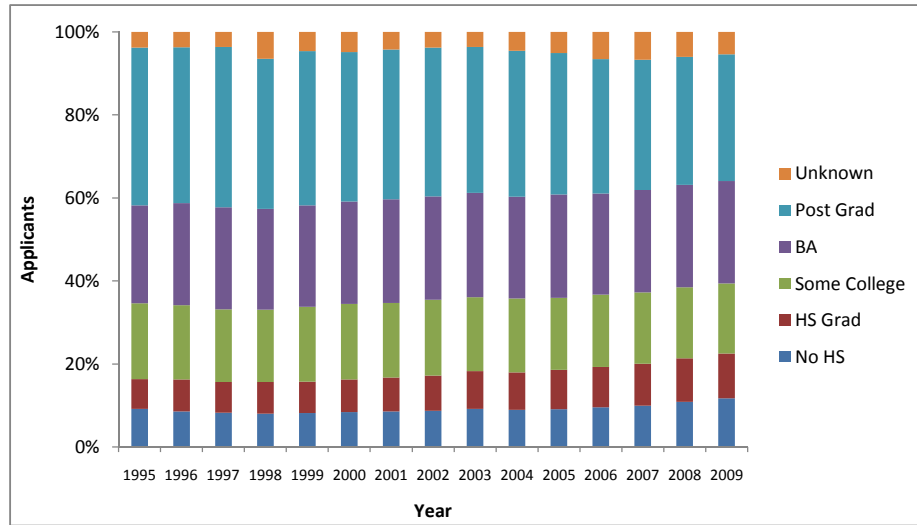


Figure 9.2

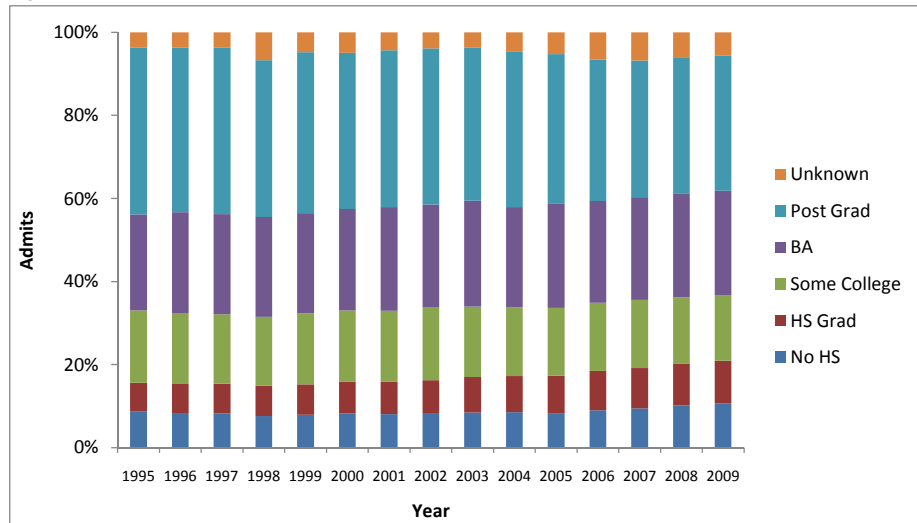
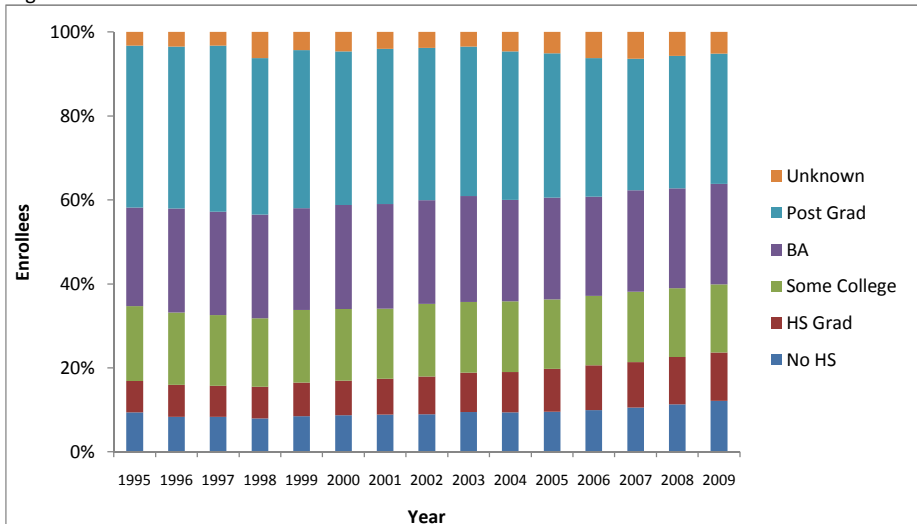


Figure 9.3





**Figure 10. Characteristics of Applicants: California Geographic Region of Applicants, Admits and Enrolled Freshmen, Fall 1995 to Fall 2009**

Figure 10.1

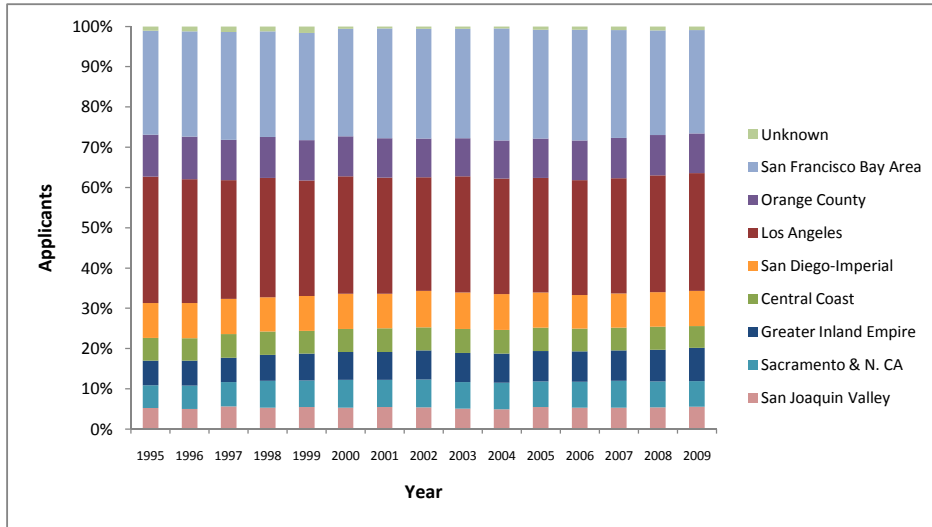


Figure 10.2

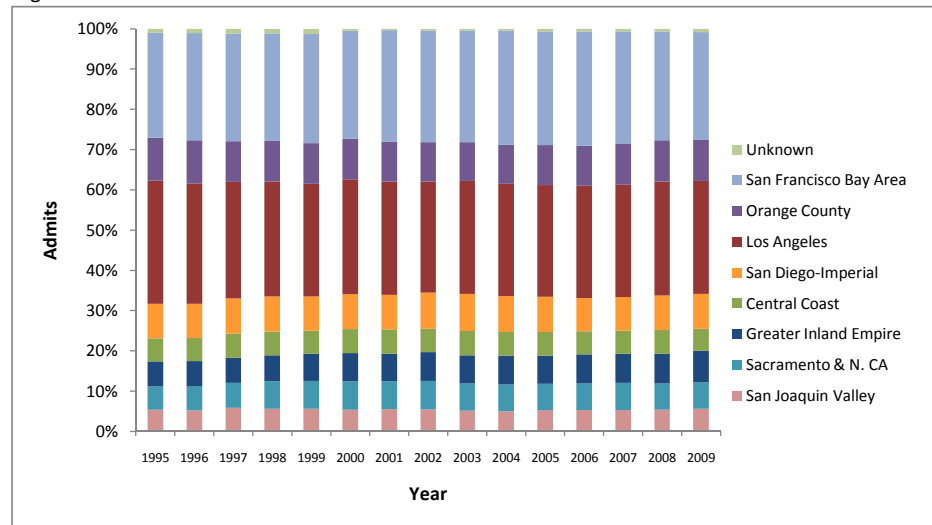


Figure 10.3

