
Office of the Chancellor

Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Dear Bruin Community:

We write to share with you the below [message from University of California leadership](#) regarding the defeat of Proposition 16 in California. We know this result is painful to many in our community.

The University of California Regents had endorsed Prop. 16, which would have overturned 1996's Prop. 209 and thus restored the UC system's ability to use affirmative action as a tool to combat persistent race and gender inequality. As disheartening as this defeat is to many, we remain determined to do all we can within the confines of the law to bring together people from a diverse array of backgrounds to learn, live and work at our institution. On the admissions side, we've seen success through the use of holistic application reviews, support for diversity programs, and partnerships with high schools and community groups serving underrepresented students. We will expand these and other efforts.

Even as we endeavor to build a diverse community at UCLA, we acknowledge that such a community can be sustained only if we maintain a healthy campus climate in which all students, staff and faculty are able to thrive.

For UCLA to meet its public mandate, it must be a place that welcomes those from a wide range of backgrounds and supports each member of the Bruin family. Despite the defeat of Prop. 16, we will work hard to ensure our institution does exactly that.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block

Chancellor

Emily A. Carter

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

UC to continue to champion diverse student body despite rejection of Proposition 16

UC Office of the President

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

The University of California is disappointed that Proposition 16, the state ballot measure and constitutional amendment that would have repealed Proposition 209, did not pass in this election. Proposition 16 would have helped reverse the detrimental and far-reaching initiative that banned the consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in admissions across public higher education, and other arenas, almost a quarter-century ago.

“UC remains steadfast in its commitment to attract and support a student body that reflects California’s dynamism and diversity, despite this setback,” said UC President Michael V. Drake, M.D. “We will continue our unwavering efforts to expand underrepresented groups’ access to a UC education.”

The UC Board of Regents [supported the passage of ACA 5](#), which became Proposition 16, a move that acknowledged the serious need to address systemic inequities in public higher education. By repealing Proposition 209, Proposition 16 would have ended the prohibition on granting preferential treatment to (or discriminating against) any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education or public contracting. The rejection of this ballot measure is an unfortunate continuation of the status quo.

“The University of California’s efforts to address racial inequities were greatly hindered by Proposition 209,” said UC Regents Chair John A. Pérez. “The failure of Proposition 16 means barriers will remain in place to the detriment of many students, families and California at large. We will not accept inequality on our campuses and will continue addressing the inescapable effects of racial and gender inequity.”

UC has a longstanding commitment to enrolling a diverse student body, one that reflects California’s flourishing cultural, racial, geographic and socioeconomic heterogeneity. After the implementation of Proposition 209, the University saw a sharp decline in the admission and enrollment of students from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. On every UC campus, the percentage of new California-resident, underrepresented freshmen decreased. While racial and ethnic diversity have improved in the past two decades, much of that growth is attributable to systemwide enrollment growth. UC still does not reflect the diversity of California’s population. Another negative impact: The percentage of students from underrepresented groups enrolled in UC’s outreach programs dropped from 90 percent before Proposition 209 to 75 percent thereafter.

Despite the failure of Proposition 16, the University will continue to look for innovative and creative approaches to further improve the diversity of its student body through outreach to underserved groups, schools and communities; support for college preparation; and efforts to close equity gaps among students attaining a UC education.

To uphold its commitment to diversity, UC will continue comprehensive review in admissions. The holistic method is used by most campuses and seeks to fully understand and evaluate each applicant through multiple dimensions. However, excluding race and gender from that consideration continues to be a tall barrier to women and students from underrepresented groups. UC will also explore opportunities to further encourage underrepresented groups to apply for and join UC’s outstanding student body. It will utilize and refine the many race-neutral alternatives developed following Proposition 209 for both outreach and admissions.

