



## For Immediate Release

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## California Students Facing Tougher Admissions Standards and Competition when Applying to California Public Universities, Study Finds

*A fundamental mismatch between student and workforce demand and space at California's public universities means more students without a spot at UC or CSU*

**Los Angeles (November 30, 2015)** – Today, as thousands of talented and hopeful California students work to meet the November 30<sup>th</sup> application deadline for the University of California (UC) and select California State University (CSU) campuses, the Campaign for College Opportunity released, “**Access Denied: Rising Selectivity at California’s Public Universities,**” that finds many of those students will be without a spot across both systems.

“**Access Denied: Rising Selectivity at California’s Public Universities**” is an in-depth review of admissions standards, capacity challenges, qualifications of admitted students, and the role of state funding and policies over time at the UC and CSU. The report highlights the significant impact rising competition and standards have on students today and the state’s ability to meet workforce demands.

Today more California students are preparing for college and want to go, more employers are demanding better skilled workers yet California’s public universities cannot accommodate all eligible students. The report finds that insufficient state funding for enrollment at the UC and CSU is a primary factor in the state’s ability to meet the demands of students and employers.

State spending on public higher education per student remains near its lowest point in more than 30 years. In 2014, the UC system served approximately 7,000 California resident students which were unfunded by the state and has increasingly turned to out-of-state and international enrollment to boost revenue. Funding shortfalls have prompted the CSU to turn away as many as 28,000 eligible students per year since the onset of the Great Recession. Students and their families are also being asked to shoulder a larger percentage of the cost of a public university education than the state of California.

As more students are applying to the UC, many will find it more difficult to get in. The average grade point average (GPA) of admitted students to six of the nine UC campuses in 2014 was over a 4.0 and the median SAT score of admitted students to UCLA, UC Berkeley, and UC San Diego was less than 400 points away from a perfect score. The gap between the number of UC applicants and those admitted has more than doubled between 1996 and 2013.

“It is a shame that hard-working, talented California students need to be virtually perfect to get a spot at the University of California. It should not be more difficult for a student to enroll directly in a four-year university than it was for previous generations,” said Michele Siqueiros, president of the Campaign for College Opportunity.

Students applying to the CSU system find a similar challenge of rising admissions standards. Six of the 23 campuses now require a higher GPA and/or SAT score than the CSU baseline eligibility requirements. Within the CSU campuses, impacted majors that require a higher GPA and/or SAT score have increased by 135 percent since 2004.

“CSU denying 30,000 eligible students last year is heartbreaking for all the talented students whose only opportunity to succeed professionally relies on their ability to access a high quality and affordable university education,” said Ivna Gusmao, a recently retired college counselor from Reseda High School who has been serving students in the Los Angeles public schools for over 30 years. “Getting into the UC for students today is more like playing the lottery. College counselors can no longer tell students with any accuracy where they are likely to get in even if they had a 5.0 GPA,” she lamented.

One of the greatest strengths of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education was its ability to adapt to California’s rapid population growth. And while capping university enrollment to the top third of high school graduates might have been visionary for those times, the caps are inappropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Increasing the number of Californians able to attend the UC and CSU is what the state needs to ensure that it prepares the educated workforce for today and tomorrow’s economy. Heightened selectivity at UC and CSU has put California 49<sup>th</sup> amongst all states in the percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in a four-year university.

The report recommends that a long-overdue strategic vision for public higher education be prioritized and adopted for the state and calls for the expansion of the number of California students sent directly into the state’s public four-year universities. The current university system is simply too small to meet both student and economic demands. The report calls on the Governor and legislature to fully fund the UC and CSU systems today so that they can serve all eligible students and that the UC and CSU review admissions practices in order to expand admissions at high demand campuses and offer real opportunities for eligible students to enroll in a local campus.

“Increased competition for limited spots in college is not a win-win situation – there are winners and losers at the precise time we need more educated Californians to maintain a thriving economy. Just like California’s drought threatens our future and calls for immediate solutions, so too does the shortage of a college-educated populace,” concluded Siqueiros.

**The full report and infographic is available at**

<http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/>

***About The Campaign for College Opportunity:***

*The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit research and advocacy organization focused on a single mission: to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy and democracy. For more information, visit [www.CollegeCampaign.org/](http://www.CollegeCampaign.org/) [Facebook.com/CollegeCampaign](https://www.facebook.com/CollegeCampaign) or follow [@CollegeOpp](https://twitter.com/CollegeOpp).*

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