

A blue-tinted image of a water tower with the text 'UC DAVIS' on its tank. The tower is a lattice structure with a spherical tank on top. The background is a solid dark blue.

UC DAVIS

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WELCOME TO

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# Standardized Test Scores & The Potential of Holistic Graduate Admissions: The UC AMIGA Mellon Project

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# UC Davis Contributors

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# The Big Picture

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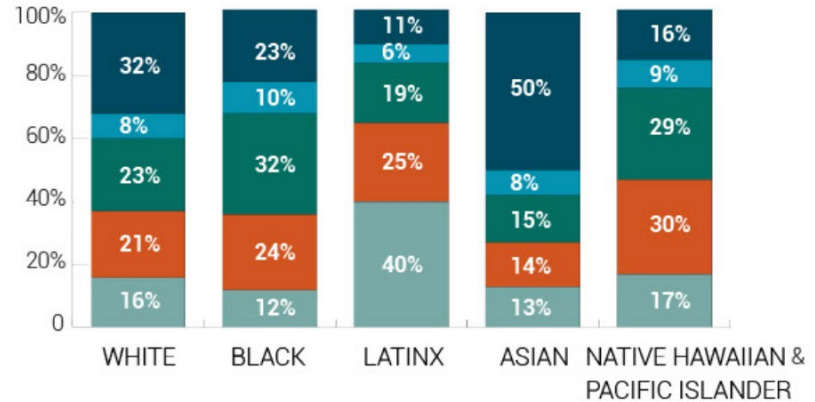
California's higher education system is not keeping pace with changing workforce demands and the state's racially diverse population.

- In 2018, fewer than half of CA adults have a college education
- By 2030, **60%** will need a college degree
- CA needs to produce **1.65** more college graduates in the **next 12 years** AND eliminate the racial education gaps
- In 2016, **51% of White**, **37% of Latinx**, and **34% of Black** 19 year-olds completed a college ready curriculum with a C or better
- In 2016, **50% of White**, **42% of Black** and **42% of Latinx** 18-24 year olds enrolled in college

# The CCO 2018 Assessment

SUMMARY OF GRADES	
<i>California</i>	
SUBJECT	GRADE
COLLEGE PREPARATION	<i>B+</i>
COLLEGE ACCESS	<i>D</i>
COLLEGE COMPLETION	<i>C</i>
COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY	<i>C</i>
<b>GRADE POINT AVERAGE</b>	<i>2.07</i>
<b>A = EXCELLENT   B = GOOD   C = AVERAGE</b> <b>D = POOR   F = FAIL</b>	

Figure 8: Educational attainment of adults over 25, 2016



- Less than a high school diploma
- High school graduate
- Some College, No degree
- Associates degree
- Bachelor's degree or Higher

# The Latinx Student Opportunity

Figure 1: Percentage of Latinx students enrolled in K-12 in California, 2016

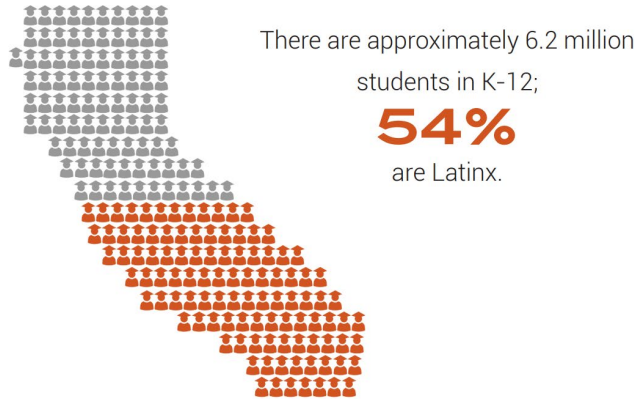
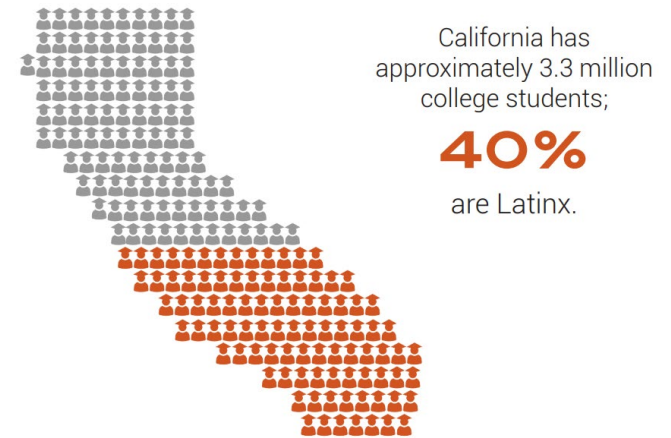


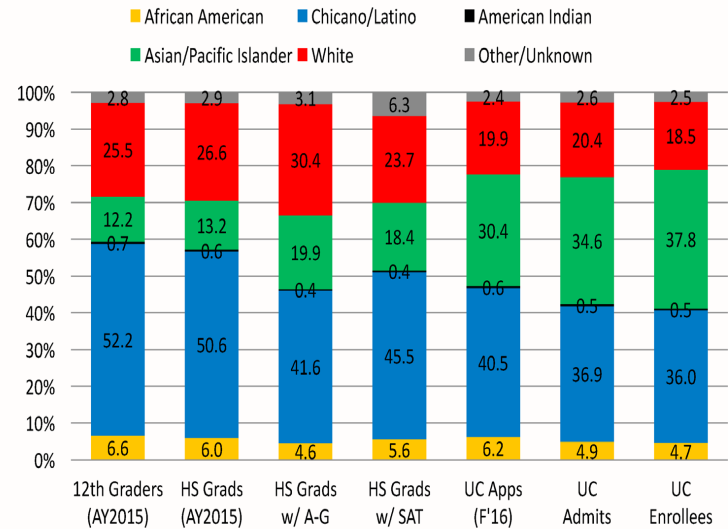
Figure 7: Percentage of Latinx college students in California, 2016



# More than UC and more than admissions but...

- The UC system had 216,747 undergraduate students enrolled last fall, about 83 percent of them California residents. Of those, 20,012 transferred into UC from other schools, 18,703 of them from California community colleges, or about 9 percent of total undergraduate enrollment.

CA Public High School Pipeline to UC, F'16



Sources: CDE Class of 2016 Graduation Data, The College Board Class of 2016 SAT Data, and UC Data Warehouse

# Holistic admissions and the Ongoing Relevance of Standardized Tests – neither is “race neutral”

- Proposition 209 model
- Harvard case

## How Applications are Evaluated at University of California

(Excerpted from: <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index.html>  
See also: <https://www.ucdavis.edu/admissions/undergraduate/freshman/selection-process>.)

- Academic grade point average in all completed “a-g” courses, including additional points for completed UC-certified honors courses.
- Scores on the following tests: ACT with Writing or the SAT with Essay.
- Number of, content of and performance in **academic** courses beyond the minimum “a-g” requirements.
- Number of and performance in UC-approved honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Higher Level and transferable college courses.
- Identification by UC as being ranked in the top 9 percent of your high school class at the end of your junior year (Eligible in the Local Context, or ELC).
- Quality of your senior-year program as measured by the type and number of academic courses in progress or planned.
- Quality of your academic performance relative to the educational opportunities available in your high school.
- Outstanding performance in one or more specific subject areas.
- Outstanding work in one or more special projects in any academic field of study.
- Recent, marked improvement in academic performance as demonstrated by academic GPA and the quality of coursework completed or in progress.
- Special talents, achievements and awards in a particular field, such as visual and performing arts, communication or athletic endeavors; special skills, such as demonstrated written and oral proficiency in other languages; special interests, such as intensive study and exploration of other cultures; experiences that demonstrate unusual promise for leadership, such as significant community service or significant participation in student government; or other significant experiences or achievements that demonstrate the student’s promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus.
- Completion of special projects undertaken in the context of your high school curriculum or in conjunction with special school events, projects or programs.
- Academic accomplishments in light of your life experiences and special circumstances, including but not limited to: disabilities, low family income, first generation to attend college, need to work, disadvantaged social or educational environment, difficult personal and family situations or circumstances, refugee status or veteran status.
- Location of your secondary school and residence.

# GRE, GMAT, LSAT & MCAT

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- Little predictive ability for success in graduate school
- Low correlation skills between skills tested and skills for success
- Significant research that challenges usage
- Admission that tests, such as the GRE, are racialized and flawed



# Graduate Education

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- Graduate and undergraduate admissions face challenges of legitimacy and fairness by using standardized test scores
- Graduate admissions include professional schools (at admission and for licensing) and Ph.D. programs.
- Leadership needed by elite institutions
  - UC in a unique position to lead the way by adopting holistic review through equitable and inclusive graduate admission processes
  - Approach requires producing internal cultural shifts (to counter stigma that change reflect lowering of standards) and strong external messaging (to counter political and possible legal challenges)

# The GRE: What does it measure and is the measurement reliable?

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**The GRE measures general skills,**

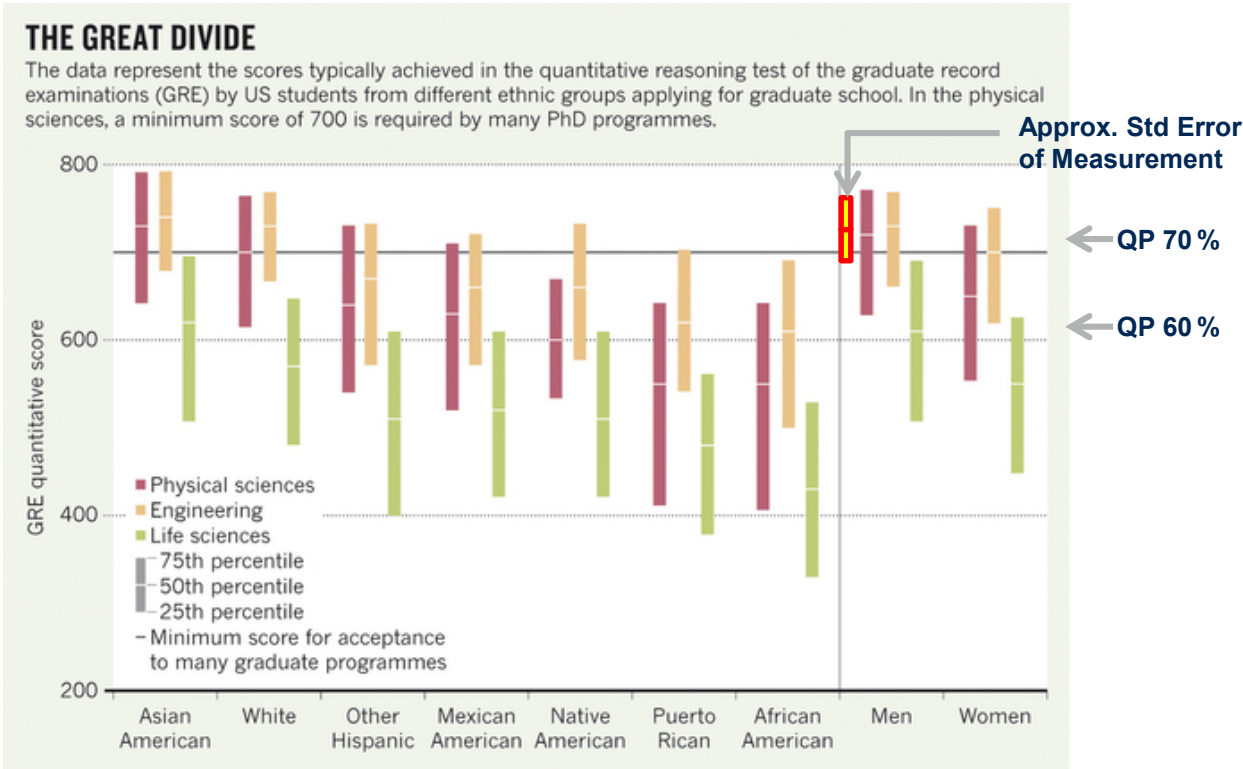
- **reading and text analysis**
- **arithmetic and algebra**
- **writing using supporting examples**

**Numerous studies of GRE validity, mostly focused on**

- **Consistency (e.g. same student re-taking the test)**
- **Accuracy (for the skill being measured)**

**Very few studies address the most important attributes of successful graduate students or direct measures of successful graduate student outcomes.**

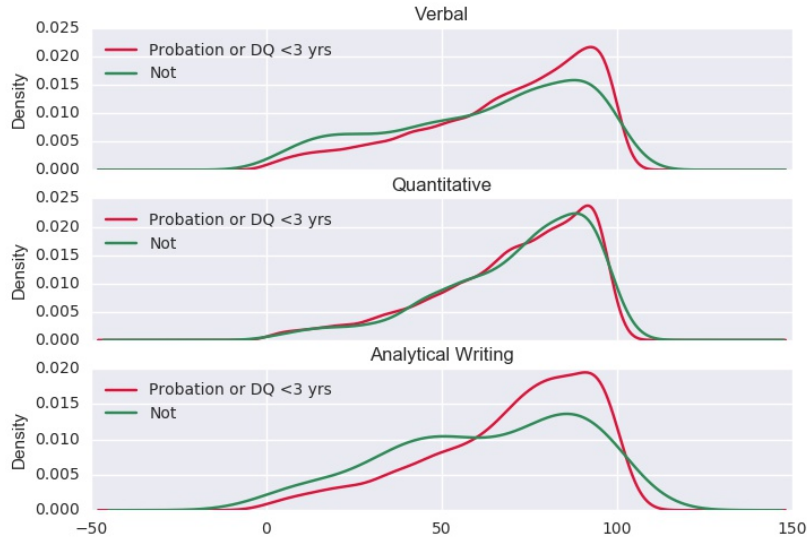
# High cut-off values reduce opportunities for applicants from diverse backgrounds.



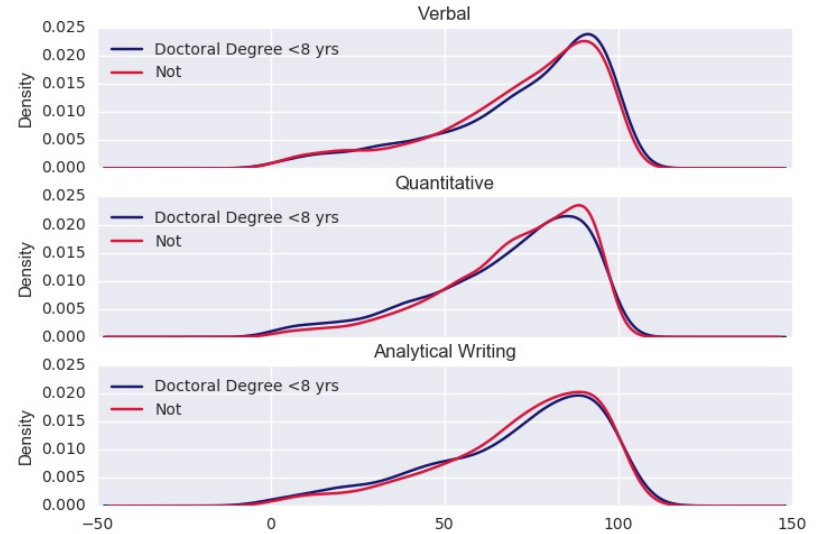
A requirement that applicants exceed a certain threshold (e.g. top 30% of test takers in Quantitative) removes a high share of URM applicants from consideration (e.g. ~70% of Latinx, >75% of Afr-Am in physical sciences, compared to ~40% Asian-Am, 50% white).

# Simple correlations of campus GRE scores are surprisingly low

Students who go on probation and/or DQ within 3 years have higher GRE scores



GRE distributions almost identical for PhD completers, non-completers



# TGA Seed Grant

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## Transforming Graduate Admissions (TGA), seed grant

- Explored admission methods that pointed to holistic graduate admissions at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UCLA & UC Riverside
- Equitable and inclusive information for prospective applicants
- Flexible and robust graduate admissions platform, SLATE
- Holistic review requires faculty development and engagement

# AMIGA Project

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Alliance for Multi-campus, Inclusive Graduate Admissions, AMIGA

- UC Davis ( PI campus) and UCLA
- Faculty committees from four humanities or humanistic social sciences
  - Faculty advisors and trainers
  - ~3 meetings/quarter
  - Leadership on holistic graduate admissions in depts. and campus

# AMIGA - Changing culture through knowledge and leadership in holistic graduate admissions

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- Trainings, workshops and dialogues
- Assessment to identify starting point
- Faculty meetings from four grad programs, graduate studies deans and key staff
- Faculty advisors and development leads
- Meet with departmental admissions faculty
- Explore and permanently adopt holistic review processes
- Potentially include HR methods in departmental review

# What is Holistic Review ?

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Holistic Review or “whole file” review is a process that considers a broad range of characteristics, including both quantitative and behavioral attributes, when reviewing applications for admission.\*

Elements may include a combination of:

- Behavioral attributes, e.g. persistence, resilience, creativity, passion, organization
- Discipline specific skills
- Diversity, contribution to
- Fair and consistent evaluation through the use of a rubric or template
- GPA in context
- GRE in context or set aside
- Recommendation letters from unfamiliar faculty or institutions
- Research experience
- Interviews
- Socioeconomic level, e.g. first generation college, “distance traveled”



# AMIGA & Faculty Involvement

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- Faculty experience participating in both TGA and AMIGA projects
- How has participation shaped conversations with colleagues?
- Potential of AMIGA project to diversity at UC

# Q & A