

# UC Office of the President

## Race and Diversity

**Title**

California's Outreach

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## **CALIFORNIA'S OUTREACH**

**By Richard C. Atkinson**

*On Common Ground:*

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The University of California is embarking on an ambitious new program for cooperative work with California's schools and communities. This Fall, UC campuses began working jointly with a select number of individual schools for major improvement of learning opportunities for all students. These new alliances will set high standards for student achievement focusing specifically on college preparation.

This new strategy grows out of the work of a 35 member Task Force established to address educational achievement and diversity in light of Proposition 209 and the University Regents' decision to eliminate consideration of race, ethnicity, and gender in admissions. The Task Force concluded 18 months of study last July and issued their report calling for a major new expansion and reorientation of University outreach activities. One critical aspect of this expansion is a recommendation that UC and K-12 schools pool their expertise to effect broad scale changes in school culture and practice such that college preparation and college-going activity of students improve substantially.

This new plan offers the University a unique opportunity to work directly with the State's K-12 schools in a holistic approach that addresses the difficult problems connected with educational disadvantage. It will provide students significant new opportunities, not only at the school sites where partnerships will be established, but at all of the State's schools through a much closer relationship between UC faculty and teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. Out of this relationship will be developed new ways of addressing the gap that now exists between levels of post secondary preparation achieved by students in educationally disadvantaged circumstances and the high standards of academic achievement needed as a foundation for successful college work.

The new partnerships with schools that will be established will be built around the notion of renewal across the full length of the education pipeline, beginning with the early years of elementary education. Clusters of schools will be drawn into these projects, including high schools and the surrounding feeder middle schools and elementary schools. This approach is intended to address the fact that differences in achievement begin early in students'

careers, with patterns becoming clearly noticeable at the third and fourth grade levels.

A second principle of the school partnerships is a recognition of the role played by all members of a community in school achievement, not only within the boundaries of the school, but in the surrounding community. The partnerships will seek to involve parents, local businesses and industry, and community organizations in support for the school and for the learning process of students enrolled.

Lastly, the partnerships will be formed around a set of high academic standards and careful monitoring of the process of achieving those standards. The partnerships will recognize the potential that all children have for achievement and seek to provide new tools and an environment in which that potential can become a reality.

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