

Alternative Access Strategies: An Analysis of
University Outreach in the Context of Anti-
Affirmative Action Policies

Lucretia P. Murphy
Britany Affolter-Caine
Amy Conger
Donald E. Heller

Center for the Study of Postsecondary and Higher Education
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

RESEARCH QUESTION

How is this institution utilizing outreach as an access strategy within the constraints of anti-affirmative action policies?

- How did the context influence the institutional decision concerning affirmative action alternatives?
- What institutional factors facilitated the formulation, adoption and implementation of outreach as the alternative access strategy in response to the anti-affirmative action policies?
- How can the experience of this institution inform future university outreach initiatives and access strategies?

RESEARCH DESIGN

National comparative study

Institution	Policy
University of Washington	Initiative 200
University of Texas-Austin	Hopwood
University of California-Los Angeles	Proposition 209

Methodology

Quantitative data - descriptive statistical techniques

- Admissions data
 - Applicants, admits, and enrollees
 - Includes race, gender, test scores, high school, high school GPA, admissions index, and admissions status

Qualitative data - case analysis (UW)

- Document analysis
- Semi-structured Interviews
 - Senior level
 - Front-line administrators
- Emergent themes from interviews triangulated with documents and data

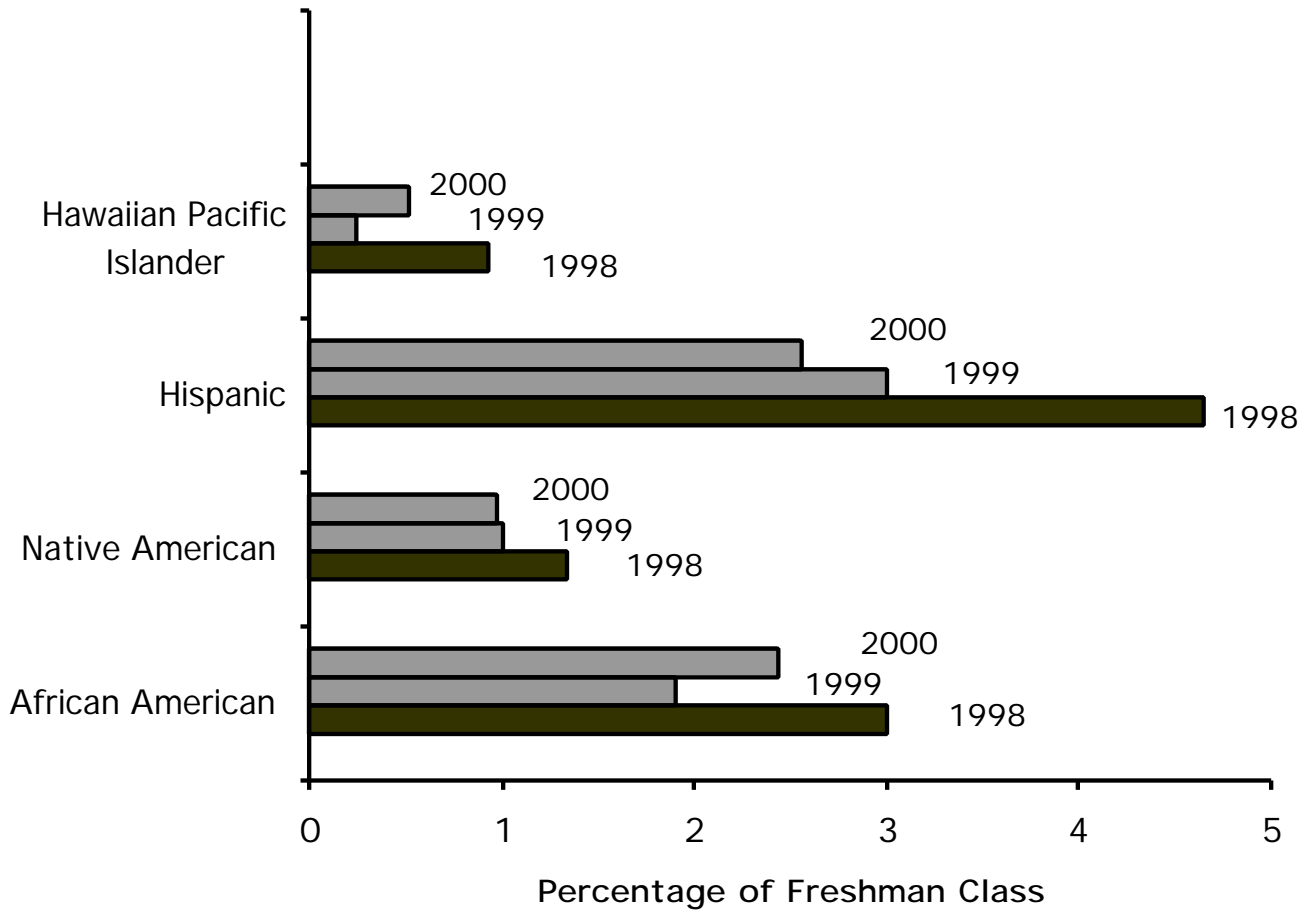
INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

“...even when we had affirmative action ...we had not achieved, according to our own desires, the diversity we wanted. And now we dropped further.

We have much less success in creating the diversity that we wish to see in our student body, and that's where our greatest problem lies.”

(Dean of Undergraduate Education)

Impact of I-200 on Minority Freshman Enrollment



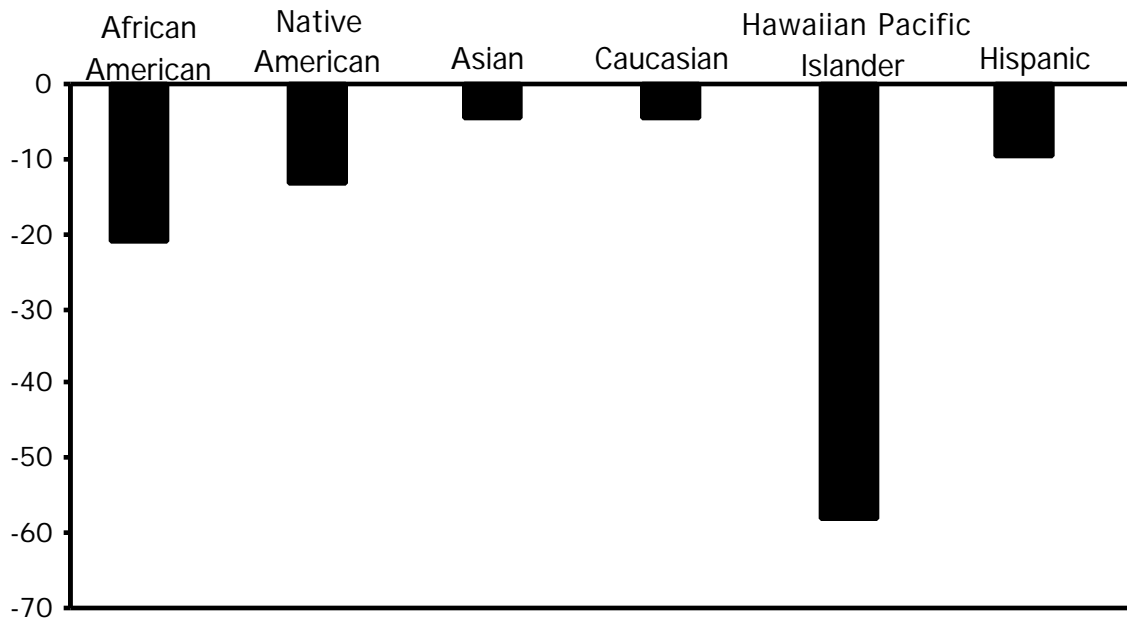
“Are you kicking us out?”

“Can I still come here?”

“Are you still supporting us? If I get there is there a supportive environment? Are there programs that are going to address our needs?”

(Vice President for Minority Student Affairs)

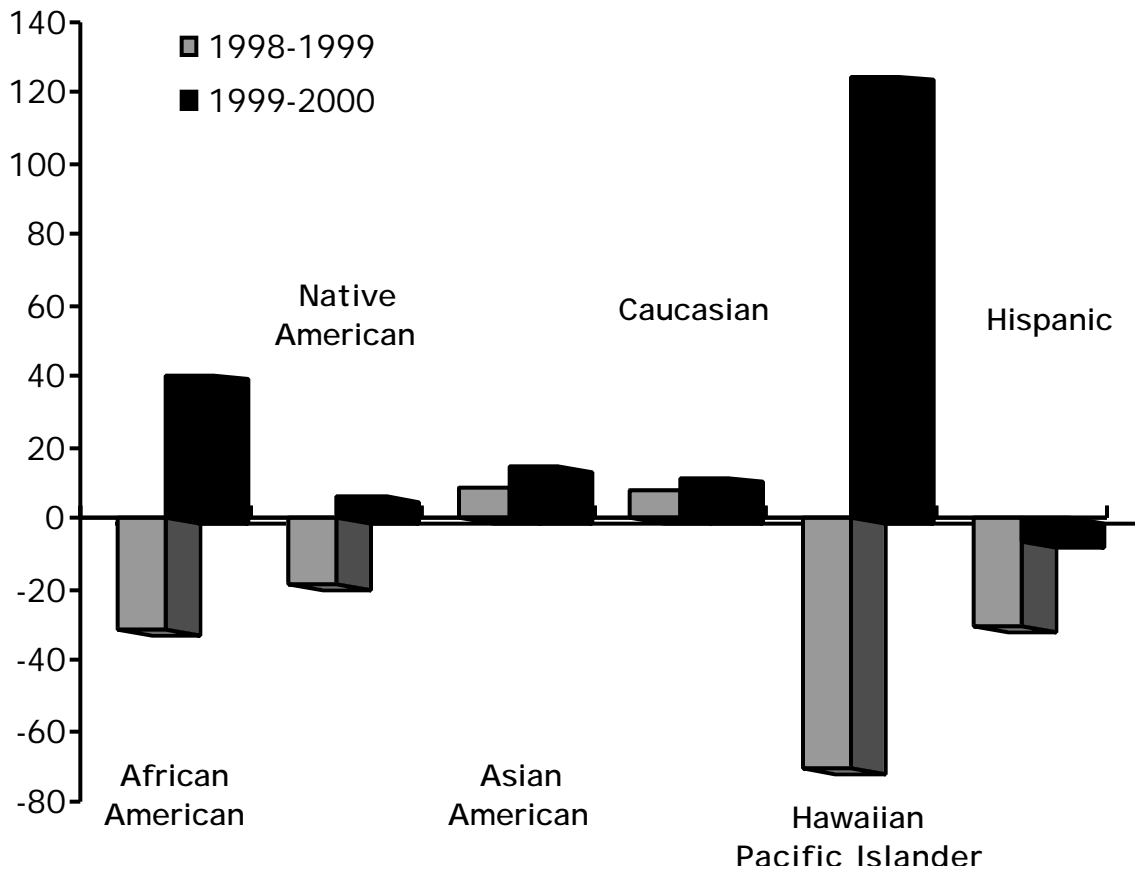
Impact on Applications (% Change) 1998-1999



"The number of minority students that apply to the pool dropped. It just plain went down."

(Dean of Undergraduate Education)

Impact of I-200 (% Change in Enrollment Numbers)



"If you were a white freshman in the class of 1998, 1 out of every 11 classmates would have been an underrepresented minority. If you were a white freshman in the class of 1999, 1 out of every 18 of your classmates would have been an underrepresented minority."

(President of the University)

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

“Outreach and recruitment and swelling the pipeline of applicants is probably the single most important thing.

. . . swelling the pipeline of those who are eligible to apply because they have taken the right academic courses and the pipeline of those who are psychologically, socially and financially prepared to apply.” (President of the University)

Address minority communities’ negative perceptions of campus

Attract academically prepared minority students

Address lack of academic preparation among minority/first generation students due to K12 inequities

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Institutional Context

Demographics of State

underrepresented students in schools . . . they're integrated. (Director of Admissions)

No matter what measure you try to use...free lunch programs, depressed areas . . . you are always picking up more majority students than minority students (Dean of Undergraduate Education)

Autonomous

Institutional Culture

"We are not a very politically correct campus on the whole, but... views that minority students whom we have admitted are not academically or intellectually of the caliber we should seek . . .would not be welcomed."(President of the University)

Institutional Organization

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Institutional Leadership

Directed Agenda

"The President was absolutely unwavering in his support, and I think that was absolutely critical to the things that have happened...It's not often that you can get an institution like this to commit the kind of resources that have been committed ... to make some things happen in short order."

(Vice President for Student Affairs)

Shared Governance

Empowerment

"We put our proposal together and we went and we saw the Board of Regents ...and that year they funded four student ambassadors." (UW Minority Student)

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Institutional Commitment

Commitment to Outreach as Alternative Strategy

"We know from one experience with [High School] that deep on-going relationships can make a difference."

(President of the University)

Institutional Support for Long-term Planning

"Our outreach is aimed at empowering students academically, and it doesn't start with the junior year...it is more focused in the middle school years where you can still make an impact."

(Assistant to the Vice President for Minority Affairs)

INFORMING FUTURE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

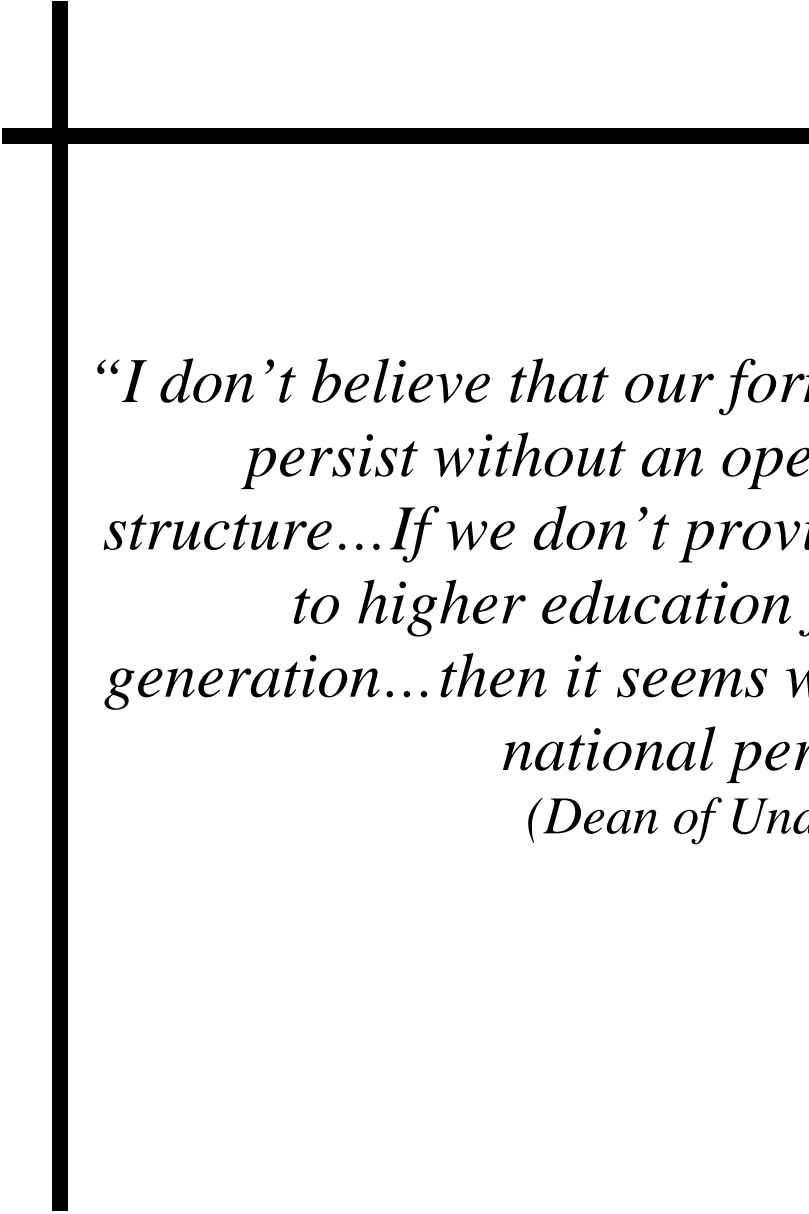
Leadership throughout the institution must be committed to the outreach strategies.

Leadership should support an environment that fosters creativity and innovation from many participants.

Outreach strategy should be particular to the institutional context.

Strategic planning should be based on institutional research.

Outreach strategy should include and be accountable to community constituents.



“I don’t believe that our form of democracy can persist without an open opportunity structure...If we don’t provide the same access to higher education for this next generation...then it seems we do so at our own national peril.”

(Dean of Undergraduate Education)

Paper and Presentation available at
<http://www.umich.edu/~dheller>