

UC Is More Segregated than the University of Mississippi

by

J. Alfred Smith, Jr., Senior Pastor at Antioch Baptist Church
Aubry Stone, President and CEO of California Black Chamber of Commerce

Last month, the University of California’s millionaire Board of Regents approved a program to cut the number of African Americans students by 340 a year. Camouflaged as a cost measure, the Regents increased the minimum grade point average from a “B-” to a “B.”

What the Regents ignored is a recently published study by the Greenlining Institute entitled, “The Return of Segregation,” which demonstrates that our once democratic and integrated publicly funded University has become a de facto segregated institution. This has occurred as a result of Ward Connerly’s infamous anti-affirmative action Prop 209. Prop 209 prevents UC from effectively addressing and outreaching to African Americans forced into marginal inner city public schools that have been compared unfavorably to those in Mississippi.

The Greenlining Institute study, based on verified data provided by all of UC’s undergraduate campuses, documents that the typical UC campus freshman class this year will consist of an almost invisible ½ of 1 percent African American males.

Located in a county with almost one million African Americans, UCLA’s incoming freshman class will have only 22 African American males not on athletic scholarships out of 7,500 students. UCLA, which finished last in the study, received a grade of “FF (2 Fs).” Only one campus, UC Riverside, received a passing grade and it had just 2 percent African American males.

Report Card on “Return of Segregation to UC”

Rank	Campus	Fall 2003 Undergraduate Population²	Fall 2004 African-American Males	Percent	Grade
Worst					
8	UCLA	7,527	22	.3%	FF
7	UC Berkeley	5,310	28	.5%	F
6	UC Davis	6,719	36	.5%	F
5	UC Irvine	5,676	35	.6%	F
4	UC Santa Barbara	5,388	34	.6%	F
3	UC San Diego	5,254	64	1%	D-
2	UC Santa Cruz	4,373	50	1%	D-
1	UC Riverside	4,899	103	2%	C
Best					

The Regents' recent decision to eliminate an estimated 340 African American men and women a year beginning in 2007 is likely to further reduce the number of African American males by 30 percent or more. This would ensure that UC is more segregated than the once legally segregated University of Mississippi.

University of Mississippi has Twenty Times More African Americans than UCLA

The recent admissions record of the once segregated University of Mississippi is a slap in the face to our flagship university recruitment of African Americans. The University of Mississippi, with an entering freshman class less than one-third the size of UCLA, will be admitting 130 African American males versus 22 at UCLA. On a percentage basis, Mississippi is therefore almost twenty times better than UCLA. Similarly, UC Berkeley, which will be admitting more than twice as many freshman as the University of Mississippi will enroll only 20 percent as many African American males as the University of Mississippi. That is, Mississippi's admissions record is more than ten times better than the record at what many consider to be our nation's most progressive public university, UC Berkeley.

Stanford Has Twelve Times As Many African American Males

UCLA will likely contend that it is unfair to contrast it with the less prestigious University of Mississippi. However, UCLA's contention that there are virtually no qualified African Americans is repudiated by its far more prestigious academic rival, Stanford University. Approximately 4% of Stanford's freshman class consists of African American males. This is more than twelve times the percentage of African American males at UCLA. Harvard University has had similar success—nine times as many African American males as UCLA.

Gubernatorial Action Needed

By two simple acts, Governor Schwarzenegger could alter the exclusion of African Americans.

First, the Governor could restore the state's tax on millionaires to the level under Governor Wilson. This would raise \$3 billion a year in additional revenue and allow UC to again accept all qualified students.

Second, the Governor, a strong proponent of the initiative process, could lead an initiative to reverse Prop 209. This would allow UC to once again effectively recruit African Americans, much as Stanford and Harvard already do.

Just before Thanksgiving, our six state legislators will have an opportunity to call upon the many white millionaire members of the Board of Regents to address this problem. At this pre-Thanksgiving Regents meeting on the UCLA campus, our African American legislators, all from Southern California, should strongly urge the Board of Regents to end de facto segregation at UC by:

- Supporting a one percent tax increase on millionaires.

- Support a statewide initiative to overturn Prop 209 and allow UC to aggressively outreach to all qualified UC students.

Scores of African Americans and other students will be at this Regents meeting and with legislative support we will stop any further efforts to make the University of California another University of Mississippi.