

University of California OKs admissions policy

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - In what some branded as backdoor affirmative action, a University of California regents committee Wednesday approved a new admissions policy that would take into account any hardships a student had to overcome.

The 13-2 vote sends the measure to the full Board of Regents, which is expected to adopt it on Thursday.

The move to look at more than applicants' grades and test scores comes six years after the university system eliminated race-based affirmative action.

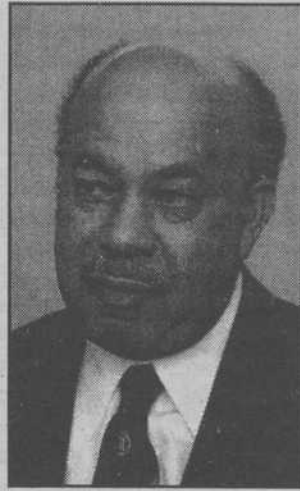
The University of Cali-

fornia has 130,000 undergraduates and includes the prestigious UCLA and Berkeley.

The proposed new policy, known as comprehensive review, involves looking at grades and test scores plus such things as whether a student overcame poverty or has special talents or did well in a bad school.

It has been criticized as a covert way of reviving race-based admissions, now banned by state law.

"There is concern because when subjective factors are involved, the temptation is too great to use proxies for



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race within the process," said Kevin Nguyen, executive director of the American Civil Rights Institute.

Supporters of the new policy, however, maintain it is race-neutral. And the regents added an amendment saying the policy would not be used to inject race into the admissions process.

Comprehensive review already is being used to admit some students to UC's eight undergraduate campuses. But the campuses currently must admit at least 50 percent of

their students on academic criteria alone.

Comprehensive review adds four more criteria, including such things as whether the student pushed himself or overcame adversity.

Proponents said the switch, already approved by the UC faculty, sends a message to California high school students that they can get into UC if they make the most of their opportunities.

"I have always felt that there has to be a better way

than just looking at numbers of a person," said Regent Sherry Lansing.

State Schools Superintendent Delaine Eastin, who is also a regent, said the change helps rectify inequities in California's public schools. Without comprehensive review, UC could lose some potentially great students, Eastin said.

"We'll miss Abe Lincoln if we're not careful. We'll certainly bypass Oprah and we'll miss Whoopi Goldberg (See Action, Page 8)

Ceremony praises black war veterans

WASHINGTON (AP) - About 100 people gathered Monday to pay tribute to black veterans including 18 former slaves who fought in the Civil War and later founded the village of Unionville, Md.

After returning from battle, the soldiers built the village in 1867, on land leased to them by their former owners.

"They took an opportunity for freedom to do something special and they created a community - a community that is still standing strong," said Charles Robinson, pastor of St. Stephen's AME Church. The church is one of the village's original buildings.

Unionville, located on Maryland's Eastern Shore, has about 150 residents, many of whom are descendants of village founders. Some 25 descendants attended the Veteran's Day wreath-laying ceremony at the African American Civil War Memorial.

The ceremony "brings up a lot of pride," said Harriette Lowery, whose great-great grandfather Benjamin Demby was one of Unionville's founders. "People of all races hear again

that we contributed, and that really is important for people to know that, especially our children and our grandchildren."

Lowery, 51, described Unionville as a "small, quaint village" with a church, a now-closed one-room school house and a mostly elderly population. She moved back to Unionville from Baltimore two years ago and now lives on land once owned by her grandfather.

Participants in the ceremony sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and prayed for American troops engaged in the war against terrorism.

"You only have to look around to see the makeup of our forces - Americans," said Col. Oliver Norrell of the Army National Guard. "Veteran's Day is not a white celebration... not a black celebration. It's a celebration of Americans who gave their lives."

The memorial's wall of honor lists the names of 209,145 black soldiers who fought in the Civil War and is inscribed with the words of abolitionist Frederick Douglass: "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow. Better even die free than to live slaves."

Drug Tests

(Continued from Page 3)

school years. It was suspended after Earls sued.

All students participating in a range of voluntary extracurricular activities, including the Future Farmers of America club, cheerleading and sports, were tested at the beginning of the school year. Thereafter, tests were random.

Overall, 484 students were tested, and four turned up positive. The school offered drug counseling after a positive test, and those who complied could remain on their teams. Those who refused were barred from competition.

"If the school is right here, you could drug test... anybody with a voluntary interaction with any level of government," the ACLU's Boyd said, including applicants for drivers' licenses or welfare benefits.

The case is Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County v. Earls, 01-332.

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