

MINORITY *Enterprise* DEVELOPMENT



Thrifty Car Rental was one of the more than 120 employers welcoming incoming students the Career and Job Information Fair sponsored by the Cascade Skill Center at Portland Community College. (Photo by M. Washington)

Affirmative action students do well in medicine

Affirmative-action students admitted to a California medical school with lower grades and test scores became just as good doctors as the higher-scoring applicants, researchers say.

The study, conducted at the University of California at Davis, was undertaken by two UC doctors concerned about the recent rollback of affirmative action in the state university system.

The authors found no difference between special admissions students and regular admissions students in completing residency training, in their residency performance or in

ultimately obtaining board certification.

The special admissions students did have a higher failure rate on the national science examinations taken in medical school, and had to repeat the exam more often before passing.

The exam is among three that doctors must pass to obtain a license.

But the authors concluded that the UC admissions policy that takes race and unique skills into account showed "no evidence of diluting the quality of the graduates."

The findings, published in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association, drew quick

fire from opponents of affirmative action, who said the authors manipulated the data to favor minority preferences.

The authors, Drs. Robert C. Davidson and Ernest L. Lewis of the UC-Davis School of Medicine, examined admissions at the institution from 1968 through 1987.

They analyzed student files and sent questionnaires to graduates and directors of their residency programs.

During the period studied, 20 percent - 356 of 1,784 students - were admitted with special considerations.

About 43 percent of the special admissions were minorities covered by affirmative action. The rest demonstrated unique leadership qualities, had overcome barriers such as poverty or physical disability or had special skills such as fluency in multiple languages.

Davidson and Lewis found a graduation rate of 94 percent for special admissions students, compared with 98 percent for regular admissions. Although regular admissions students were more likely to receive honors or A grades, there was no difference in rates of failing core courses.

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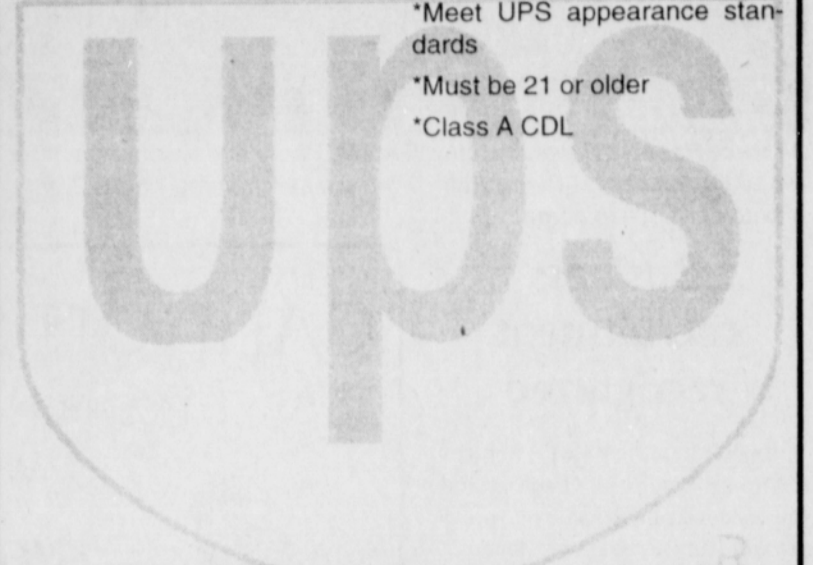
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