



Undergraduate Pioneer Grant Financial Aid Strategy Evaluation

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Abstract

This study sought to determine whether offering Undergraduate Pioneer Grants (UGPG) in the amounts awarded to 2007-08 freshman applicants admitted to UC Merced influenced decisions to file a Statement of Intent to Register (SIR). Including the amount of UGPG aid offers in logistic regression models decreased incorrect predictions of SIRing and increased correct predictions of SIRing, providing evidence that UGPG aid offers positively influenced SIR decisions.

Study Population

- **Intervention Group (n=2028)**
 - Freshman applicants admitted for 2007-08
 - who filed a complete, on-time FAFSA
 - whose parents earned \$80,000 or less in 2006
- **Comparison Group (n=1709)**
 - Freshman applicants admitted for 2006-07
 - who filed a complete, on-time FAFSA
 - whose parents earned \$80,000 or less in 2005

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Logistic Regression - First Block

First block consisted of co-variates:

- admission to other UC campus(es)
- home geographic region & high school API decile
- high school GPA and SAT score
- ethnicity, gender, and intended major
- participation in pre-college programs
- educational attainment of parents
- amount of non-gift financial aid offered
- amount of scholarship/grant/gift aid offered

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Logistic Regression - Second Block

Second block consisted of predictor variables:

- amount of UGPG1 aid offered (to students with financial need whose parents earned \$80,000 or less and for whom university fees exceeded gift aid, excluding UGPG aid)
- amount of UGPG2 aid offered (to students with financial need who were estimated eligible for either a Cal Grant A or Cal Grant B award and whose parents earned \$40,000 to \$80,000)

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Findings

When the second block was included (after controlling for academic performance, demographic, and non-UGPG financial aid offer co-variates), the logistic regression model:

- decreased incorrect SIR predictions
- increased correct SIR predictions
- increased Cox & Snell pseudo-R Square
- increased Nagelkerke pseudo-R Square

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Limitations of Study

- Analysis based on a point-in-time snapshot
 - initial aid offers made prior to income verification
- Analysis did not account for:
 - repackaging of financial aid offers
 - changes in SIR decisions following repackaging
 - timing of SIR decisions relative to aid repackaging
 - applicants who rescinded SIR decision if aid was reduced following income verification

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Conclusion

- UGPG1 and UGPG2 aid offers each had statistically positive impacts on SIR decisions.
- The significance (or lack thereof) of academic performance and demographic co-variates in the final logistic regression model enabled UC Merced's financial aid director and enrollment management team to more precisely target groups of admitted, eligible applicants for UGPG aid offers in 2008-09.

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Discussion: Reported Income

- Huge differences between income reported on FAFSA and income reported on application
- Income reported on admission application is not valid and should not be used to describe populations or make inferences about them
- Self-reported social class on UCUES might be more valid than self-reported income on admission application