Racial Diversity on Campus After Affirmative Action

Presented by:

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Agenda

I. About PCC

II. Presentation of PCC’s Affirmative Action Report
   • Background
   • Ruling
   • Recommendations

III. Updates

IV. Q&A
About the Partnership for College Completion (PCC)
The Partnership for College Completion (PCC) champions policies, practices, and systems that increase college completion and eliminate degree completion disparities for low-income, first generation, and students of color in Illinois – particularly Black and Latinx students.
The Report

Awareness to Action: Promoting Equity in Education and Careers
# Genesis

### Why PCC
- Race-conscious higher ed equity in our mission
  - Moral and economic imperative
  - Will affect policy and practice

### Why Now
- Higher education equity landscape changed
- Overreaction to ruling can hurt students of color
- Illinois can be a leader within bleak national context
### Report

**Thesis:**
Selective colleges’ current enrollment is inequitable for students of color.

By taking bold action now, legislators, institutional stakeholders, and the people of Illinois still have the power to make the state’s higher education environment *more* racially diverse than it was before the ruling.

### Link and Audience

**Where to Find the Report:**
[Partnershipfcc.org/publications/affirmativeaction](Partnershipfcc.org/publications/affirmativeaction)

**Audiences:**
- Institutional decision makers
- Campus communities
- State-level policymakers & legislature
- Advocates
Background

Affirmative Action History
- Formally incorporated into policy in 1960s
- Court cases narrowed it from 1978-2023
  - Changed from mitigating discrimination to promoting student diversity
  - “Preference” for Black students ignores how white supremacy is embedded in structures & systems

Effectiveness
- White women were greatest beneficiaries of AA policies
- Selectivity and pursuit of prestige have justified filtering out students of color and from low-income backgrounds
- 9 states that banned affirmative action saw decreases in students of color
  - Ex. UCLA’s Black enrollment cut in half after AA ban

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<th>HS Grads</th>
<th>Selective College Enrollees</th>
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<td>Black, Latinx, and Native American Rep.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Source: Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce

Awareness to Action: Promoting Equity in Education and Careers
The Ruling

Decision

● Pares back precedent of holistically considering race in admissions
  ○ Says this is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause because it discriminates against White and Asian applicants
    ■ Did not explicitly refute that diversity represents a “compelling state interest,” but did narrow how institutions can demonstrate that interest

● Casts race-conscious policy as “preference” for students of color
  ○ Rather than righting historical wrongs
The Ruling, Continued

Effect

● Limits how institutions may consider race in admissions
  ○ Particularly cautions against practices without end dates

Exceptions

● Students can still discuss how race has shaped their experiences
● Military academies are exempt
  ○ “Potentially distinct interests” that they represent
● Less than 7% of colleges said race is a considerable influence in admissions
Recommendations
Recommendation 1: Ensure Equity in Recruitment

The four most selective colleges:

- Enroll students from CPS schools with fewer Black students and more White students
- Accept few Black transfer students (250 of 3,848 transfers)
- $21.5 billion combined endowment
Recommendation 2: Improve Equity in Admissions and Yield

Deemphasize early decision
- ED applicants 3x more likely to be White than regular decision

Implement test-blind policies
- Use in institutional aid distribution hurts equitable enrollment and completion
- (Mis)use in dev ed placement is harmful

Use wealth in student aid determination
- UCLA Law increased Black student admissions by 11x and 2x for Latinx students by using wealth

Direct Admissions
Recommendation 3: Transform Campus Supports to Retain Students of Color

Affordability is paramount
- Colleges should cover basic needs
- Emergency grants
- Financial aid

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<th>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD WEALTH</th>
<th>WITH DURABLE GOODS</th>
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<tr>
<td>$11K</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
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<tr>
<td>$14K</td>
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<tr>
<td>$134K</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
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</table>
Recommendation 4: Eliminate Preference for Legacy Admissions

Legacy preferences reinforce racial and socioeconomic gaps

- **35%** of Harvard’s White students were donors, alum, or faculty, compared to **7%** of Black students
- Legacy applicants are less diverse and are not more academically qualified than non-legacy applicants.

**73%** of the most selective schools still use legacy preference in admissions.
Recommendation 5: Invest in Public Institutions with Diverse Enrollment

Public universities
- No funding model
- 52% of appropriations go to 2 universities with the lowest percentages of Black students

Community colleges
- Receive **23%** of estimated funding need from the state

Awareness to Action: Promoting Equity in Education and Careers
Recommendation 6: Hold Institutions Accountable

For changing practices
- Going beyond public statements

For transparency
- Institutions receive taxpayer dollars, through approps and MAP
- Justify how they use resources to equitably recruit, enroll, and support students of color

Legislators, Board, Students/Alumni, and the public can hold institutions accountable
Updates and Discussion
Updates Since the Ruling

**Concerning**
- **Reactionary** admissions responses from some institutions
- Concern and confusion over scholarships
- Conservative states have already over-interpreted ruling
  - Missouri AG: end consideration of race in “things like admissions, scholarships, programs, and employment.”
- Removing race from systems and data

**Positive**
- **Bold** admissions responses
- Public commitment to racial equity from some institutions
- Public support from states like IL
  - IBHE, Gov. Office, and Legislators
- Reinstatement of scholarships
- Equitable Funding Commission
- Higher Education Futures Table (HEFT)
- Legacy admissions questioned

**Awareness to Action**: Promoting Equity in Education and Careers
Q&A

How has the ruling affected your work?
- Have you seen repressive legalism as a result of SFFA?
- Have there been any positive developments/conversations that have taken place since June?

What do you want clarity on?

What are you concerned about in terms of equity in the wake of the decision?
THOUGHTS/QUESTIONS?

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