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Kristen Bardou graduated from the HESA master's program in 2003. At Indiana University, Kristen worked as a Resident Leadership Specialist for Residential Programs and Services, a graduate intern at Student-Athlete Services, and a co-instructor for U459 Leadership Essentials. She received a B.A. in Religion and History from Denison University in 1999 and then spent two years at Earlham College as the Men's and Women's Assistant Cross Country and Track Coach.

Shannon Byrne graduated from Indiana University-Bloomington in May 2003 with a M.S. in Higher Education and Student Affairs. She received a B.S. in Environmental Policy from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay in 2001. During her time at Indiana University Shannon worked as a Graduate Supervisor in Eigenmann Residence Center and as a practicum student in the Office of Orientation Programs.

Vicky Pasternak graduated with a M.S. in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Indiana University in 2003. Prior to graduate school Vicky was the Assistant Director of Graduate Admission at Marquette University. While at Indiana, Vicky held an assistantship as a Graduate Supervisor in the Wright Quadrangle and worked in the Office of Student Ethics as a judicial officer. Vicky received her B.A. in Communication Studies in 1998 from Marquette University.

Nikki Perez has a B.A. in Mathematics-Secondary Education from the University of California, San Diego and received a Master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Indiana University in May 2003. During her graduate study, Nikki has served as a graduate supervisor for Briscoe Residence Center and co-convened committees for the Commission on Multicultural Understanding.

Amanda Rainey graduated in May 2003 with a Master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Indiana University. While at IU, Amanda worked as a graduate supervisor for Residential Programs and Services, and also served year-long practica with the Student Activities Office in Greek Life and for the Association of College Unions International (ACUI). Prior to her time at IU, Amanda obtained her Bachelor of Science in Education for Secondary Education Social Studies from Southeast Missouri State University.

Here today, gone tomorrow? A Historical and Contemporary Analysis of Black Student Participation and Affirmative Action Policy in Higher Education

Ontario S. Wooden

This paper reviews literature on Black student participation in higher education and how affirmative action programs have impacted it. Trends in Black student participation at predominantly White institutions and historically Black colleges and universities form the historical foundation for this piece. The evolution of affirmative action in employment and higher education is introduced and explored. Further, legal cases challenging affirmative action are reviewed. The paper concludes with recommendations for higher education practice and directions for future research.

Introduction

The 1960s sparked increased involvement by the federal government in numerous social issues. Believing that Blacks needed "equality as a result," President Lyndon B. Johnson shifted the widely accepted American concept of equality of opportunity to one that meant government would guarantee opportunities through preferential policies for Blacks and later, other racial minorities and women (Rai & Critzer, 2000). One of the most famed of Johnson's policies was affirmative action. Since its inception, affirmative action policy has been altered numerous times and is defined differently by a myriad of groups. Currently, affirmative action policies have come under fire in both the employment and educational arenas. While the roots of affirmative action lie in the employment arena, the discussion of affirmative action in this paper will focus on its relationship with higher education.

First, the early enrollment trends of Black students at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) will be reviewed, followed by a discussion of the founding and subsequent enrollment of Blacks at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Second, this paper will move toward an understanding of the initial purposes of affirmative action in employment and its introduction into higher education settings. Third, the paper will transition to a discussion of the pros and cons of affirmative action, citing arguments from both camps. Fourth, legal challenges surrounding the use of affirmative action in college and university admissions will be explored. Finally, the paper will conclude with a discussion and analysis, as well as a presentation of implications relative to the future participation of Blacks in higher education.

Literature Review

History of Black Higher Education in America

With the founding of Harvard College in 1636 in Cambridge, Massa-

chusetts (Rudolph, 1990), Blacks and women were excluded from participation in higher education. Harvard's student body was comprised of White, upper class men. Not only was this the case at Harvard, it was also true at all PWIs during this time period. It was not until Alexander Lucius Twilight earned a degree from Middlebury College in 1823 that Blacks began to enter higher education (Bennett, 1993).

A few institutions of secondary and higher education for Blacks were organized in the antebellum years. Cheyney University in Pennsylvania, founded in 1837 as the Institute for Colored Youth, has the earliest founding date of an HBCU. Although for most of its early history it offered only elementary and high school level instruction (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Two other colleges for Blacks were also founded before the Civil War: Lincoln University in Pennsylvania (1854) and Wilberforce University in Ohio (1856) (Fleming, 1984; Lucas, 1994). However, the first great expansion in Black higher education came after the Civil War, during the widening opportunities of the Reconstruction era of American history (Anderson, 1999).

During the Reconstruction era (1863-1877), educational provisions were enacted into the new state constitutions with the aid of Black legislators (Spring, 2001). For the first time in Southern history, universal education was recognized as a right of all citizens. Most states set up school funds, which frequently required Blacks to pay special taxes in addition to those required of all citizens (Dyer, 1989). Of the 17 Southern states that mandated racially segregated education during the Jim Crow era, a period of strict separation of Blacks and Whites in the South, 14 simply refused to establish state-supported colleges for Black students until Congress required them to do so in the 1890 Morrill-McComas Act, which required states with dual systems of higher education (all-White and all-Black) to provide land-grant institutions for both systems (Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

As a result, the number of HBCUs increased modestly. Unfortunately, the institutions that were established were colleges only in name and did not meet the requirements to teach agriculture, mechanical arts, and liberal education on a collegiate level (Rudolph, 1990). According to the Bureau of Education, in 1916 Black land-grant colleges had almost no students enrolled in college-level curricula (Anderson, 1999; Hoffman, Snyder, & Sonnenberg, 1996). By 1935, Black collegiate enrollments in the Southern states had risen to 12,600, while Black enrollment in Black private colleges nationally was almost 17,000. These enrollment numbers still represented only a small percentage of the country's Black population (Lucas, 1994).

While the improvements that stemmed from the Morrill Land Grant Act showed physical change due to improving campus conditions for Blacks, psychologically the country still viewed "separate but equal" as an acceptable idea. The Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896

declared that Blacks and Whites could not attend the same schools (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). This doctrine would stand unchallenged for over 40 years. As Blacks started to understand the reality of the inequities, they began to demand equality in educational arenas. Between 1945 and 1954, the "separate but equal" doctrine began to be overturned in graduate and professional schools. Equality, in a sense, was gained in public elementary and secondary school education with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas* decision in 1954 (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Fleming, 1984; Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

In 1964, there were an estimated 15,000 Blacks enrolled in PWIs in the South, which was a fourfold increase since 1957. Despite this increase, by 1965, only 4.8% of all college students in the country were Black (Bowen & Bok, 1998). Remarkably, Lucas (1994) reports, Black undergraduates in the North had increased from 45,000 in 1954 to around 95,000 in 1967-68. From 1965 to 1970, Black enrollment at PWIs in the South more than tripled. At the same time, enrollments of Blacks at HBCUs had dropped from 82% of all college-attending Blacks to 60% between 1965 and 1970; it had further declined to 40% by 1978 (Lucas, 1994). Black student enrollment as a percentage of all undergraduate student attendance rose after the mid-sixties. By 1971, the figure was 8.4% and in 1977 it was 10.8%. Between 1967 and 1974, Black enrollment in PWIs increased 160%, compared to a 34% increase at HBCUs (Lucas, 1994).

Towards an Understanding of Affirmative Action

By the 1960s, Black students had been participating in higher education for a number of decades. However, those participation levels were not proportionate to Black representation in society at large. The introduction of affirmative action programs in higher education would increase Black student participation rates to unprecedented levels. The phrase "affirmative action," which is defined as taking positive steps to remedy a problem, first became associated with race relations in the United States when President John F. Kennedy used it in a 1961 civil rights speech (Lemann, 1997). The term had been the idea of Hobart Taylor, a popular Detroit businessman who had charged former Supreme Court Justices Arthur Goldberg and Abe Fortas with preparing a document to address discrimination in the hiring of federal contractors. This document was initially known as Executive Order 10925 (Lemann, 1997).

Governmental reform to advance racial justice was not a totally new idea. An executive order signed in 1941 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt forbid racial discrimination in federal contracting, and after World War II, the U.S. military had been ordered to end racial segregation in the armed service (Brown, 1996). In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Executive

Order 11246, which required federal contractors to increase the number of minority employees as an affirmative step toward remedying the underrepresentation of minorities in those firms (Brown, 1996; Tatum, 1997). However, it was Kennedy's use of the phrase "affirmative action" that began to garner public attention. Interestingly enough, Tatum acknowledges, "though Executive Order 11246 required affirmative action, it did not specify exactly what affirmative action programs should look like" (p. 117). Because of this lack of specificity, it is not surprising that there remains great variety in the ways affirmative action programs operate around the country.

Brown (1996) asserts that the use of affirmative action allows members of all backgrounds and genders to have the potential to succeed if the opportunity presents itself. She contends that a diverse environment is crucial to the existence of higher education, as colleges set the standards for other institutions to follow. Brown further argues:

Colleges and universities are the principal institutions in which America's future professional leaders and role models are educated and shaped. And lest we forget the higher education community had historically served as the nation's conscience, holding its own members and the larger community of citizens to higher standards of intellectual achievement and social justice (p. 12).

Trent (1991) defines affirmative action programs and strategies as those targeted at Blacks, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and women. These programs are employed by colleges and universities to encourage minorities to apply and enroll. Many affirmative action programs serve only to ensure that institutions do not discriminate in a negative manner against certain groups. "Leveling the playing field," as it is called, seeks to ensure that merit determines whether some groups are included or excluded in admissions processes. However, there are still affirmative action programs that try to increase the number of individuals that represent certain groups. This approach to diversity is intended to include groups that have been historically excluded or underrepresented from various types of institutions (Thomas, 2000).

Misconceptions about Affirmative Action

Numerous misconceptions have arisen during the ongoing debate about affirmative action. Chang, Witt-Sandis, and Hakuta (1999) address four popular misconceptions. The first misconception is that "Past inequalities in access and opportunities that racial and ethnic minority groups have suffered have been sufficiently addressed and no longer require attention" (p. 13). While research by Trent (1999) has shown that intervention by national, state, and campus leaders toward addressing underrepresentation and success of minority groups in higher education has made some progress,

much remains to be done.

The second misconception is that test scores can define merit. On the contrary, Wightman (1999) contends that standardized tests are far from being infallible and comprehensive in their measures of merit. Further, she argues that a combination of ability, talent, and motivation, which are immeasurable by standardized tests, are the real factors that determine who will be successful in college. Likewise, Sedlacek (1996) offers a set of noncognitive variables that institutions may consider during admissions processes. These variables include understanding and dealing with racism, availability of support systems, successful leadership experience, community service, and knowledge acquired in a field, just to name a few. In addition to test score and academics, noncognitive variables, to a large extent, determine who will and will not succeed in college.

The third misconception is that fairness is best achieved through race-neutral policy. Levin (1999) claims that racism exists today and has always existed in the United States on individual, institutional, and societal levels. She contends, "Using the same standards to judge individuals from majority and minority groups is unfair because differences in power prevent the two groups from having equal opportunity" (p. 14). Further, Bowen and Bok (1998) found in their study of admissions data from selective schools that if Black students had been admitted in the same proportions as Whites with similar SAT scores, Blacks would have constituted only 3.9% of the entering class at the schools studied. This represents a decrease of between 50% and 70%.

The fourth, and final misconception offered by Chang, Witt-Sandis, and Hakuta (1999) is that diversity programs only benefit students of color. Milem (1999) reports numerous findings that support the idea that all students benefit from diversity programs. For example, he discusses the inclusive benefits of cross-cultural interactions, which lead to acceptance of those from other cultures, civic participation, increased retention rates, and a greater commitment to racial understanding. Milem's research also shows that individuals who experience desegregation in grades K-12 later seek desegregation in college, social settings, and careers.

Opposing Viewpoints of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action debates have endured since the inception of efforts to systematically open doors of education for members of groups that have experienced long-standing and persistent discrimination (Chang, 1999). When colleges and universities formulated race-related admissions policies in the 1960s, there were two intended objectives: (1) to create a diverse educational environment and (2) to prepare larger numbers of minority students to enter the mainstream of American life (Falsetti, 1999).

University of Georgia President Michael Adams (as cited in Shearer, 2000) argued, "Maintaining a diverse student body is a question of justice; therefore justice compels us to help this state to find a way to serve all of its citizens educationally" (p. 1). He added that having a diverse student body is important to prepare students for the increasingly multicultural world in which they will work and live (Shearer, 2000). These statements supported his decision to continue to use race as a factor in admissions. However, in *Johnson v. Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia* (2001), the court ruled that race could no longer be used as a factor in admissions. The race-based admissions policy is also in question at the University of Virginia. The Washington-based Center for Equal Opportunity brought admissions policies under fire at the institution in January 1999. The Center claimed that a Black student with the same SAT scores as a White student has an unfair advantage in gaining admission to the University, merely because of his or her skin color (Gopalan, 1999).

Opponents of affirmative action feel that race-based admissions policies discriminate against majority students, who subsequently feel unfairly bypassed (Heilman, 1996). These claims have led to challenges in the courts. Thus, a consequence of the litigious attitude of today's society is that many schools are turning their backs on minority students in the admissions process. For instance, officials at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst revamped their admissions process, to decrease the likelihood of legal challenges, thereby decreasing educational access for Black students. Chancellor David Scott explained that the current political climate, created by court decisions striking down race-sensitive admissions policies in many states, served as the catalyst for the University's decision. University representatives admitted that, under the new admissions plan, minority enrollment will likely plummet to as low as 13% of the University's student enrollment from its current 19% (Bennefield, 1999).

In addition, some opponents assert that affirmative action programs place Black students in rigorous academic positions, where they are unable to compete. These students eventually drop out of school, which leads many to think that affirmative action has a hindering effect on Black students (Cross, 1998). Heilman (1996) stated that affirmative action breeds a stigma of incompetence among the individuals for whom these programs were intended to benefit. Her research has shown that inferences of incompetence were found from association with affirmative action whether the individuals were students, working people, or racial minorities.

Legal Challenges to Affirmative Action in Higher Education

While affirmative action programs were initially designed to increase the number of minority persons allowed to enter educational programs, the

policies pose delicate legal questions (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). Affirmative action in higher education has taken center stage in recent years, with a plethora of court cases that address college and university admissions practices and the value of diversity. Additionally, countless headlines emphasizing the politicization of the issue and the surrounding debate have created the current climate for affirmative action (Coleman, 2002). The onslaught of legal action regarding race-based admissions policies has led to additional challenges. Cases have been filed challenging college admissions policies in many states across the country. In some instances, decisions have been made that support the notion that minority students do not deserve a seat in academic arenas based solely on their race.

The Supreme Court has decided that it will revisit its 1978 decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, which prohibited racial quotas, but allowed universities to consider race as one factor among many in the pursuit of diversity (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Shaw, 2000). The Medical School of the University of California at Davis had two admissions programs for its entering class of 100 students: the regular admissions program and the special admissions program (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). Under the regular procedure, candidates whose overall undergraduate grade point averages fell below 2.5 on a scale of 4.0 were immediately rejected. About one out of six applicants was then given an interview, following which he or she was rated on a scale of 1 to 100 by each of the committee members. The student's rating was based on the interviewers' summaries, overall grade point average, science courses grade point average, Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) scores, letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities, and other biographical data, all of which resulted in a total "benchmark score" (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). The admissions committee then made offers of admission on the basis of its review of the applicant's file and his or her score, considering and acting upon applications as they were received. The committee chairman was responsible for placing names on the waiting list and had discretion to include persons with "special skills" (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978).

In both 1973 and 1974, special applicants were admitted with significantly lower scores than Bakke's. After his second rejection, he filed a lawsuit in state court for mandatory admission to UC-Davis, alleging that the special admissions program operated to exclude him on the basis of race in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, a provision of the California Constitution. Additionally, he suggested that the committee had violated Article 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which provides that no person shall, on the ground of race or color, be

excluded from participating in any programs receiving federal financial assistance (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978).

The trial court found that the special program operated as a racial quota, because minority applicants in that program were rated only against one another, and 16 places in a class of 100 were reserved for them (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). Declaring that UC-Davis could not take race into account in making admissions decisions, the program was held in violation of the Federal and State Constitutions and Title VI. In spite of this ruling, Bakke's admission was not initially ordered, for lack of proof that he would have been admitted had the special program not existed. The California Supreme Court concluded that the special admissions program was not the least intrusive means of achieving the goals of the compelling state interests of integrating the medical profession and increasing the number of doctors willing to serve minority patients (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). Without passing on the state constitutional or federal statutory grounds, the court held that UC-Davis could not satisfy its burden of demonstrating that Bakke, absent the special program, would not have been admitted, and the court ordered his admission to UC-Davis (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978).

The 5th Circuit Court ruled in another landmark case, *Hopwood v. State of Texas* (1996), in which Cheryl Hopwood and three other students disputed their rejection by the University of Texas Law School. The students were successful as the court ruled that the institution could not use different standards for minority applicants from those it uses for White applicants. One of the strengths of the case says Terral Smith, the lawyer who filed the case, is that Hopwood is "a real victim, the sort of person affirmative action should help" (Gwynne & Cray, 1996, p. 54). Hopwood, who came from a blue-collar family, was offered a few partial scholarships, including one to Princeton, but still could not afford to go to law school. Instead, she attended California State University, married a serviceman, worked as an accountant, and was raising a child with cerebral palsy when she applied to the University of Texas law school. Her Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) scores were strong enough to qualify for the pool of minority and disadvantaged applicants. But, charged Smith, "They take the last 60 White kids and make places for minority students" (p. 54). Smith's comment supports the notion that academically talented White applicants and disadvantaged Black applicants normally receive a seat in the University of Texas law school, while applicants with other circumstances are not granted any special considerations.

The court agreed that Hopwood is "a fair example of an applicant with a unique background...her circumstances would bring a different perspective

to the law school" (Gwynne & Cray, 1996, p. 54). This statement endorses the idea that other types of "diversity" are valid for colleges and universities to consider. And later in the decision, it states, "A university may properly favor one applicant over another because of his ability to play the cello, make a downfield tackle, his relationship to alumni or his economic or social background" (Gwynne & Cray, p. 54). However, the court concluded that schools must "scrutinize applicants individually, rather than resorting to the dangerous proxy of race" (Gwynne & Cray, p. 54). Kaplin and Lee (1997), assert that the case calls into question the continuing validity of the *Bakke* line of cases. The Supreme Court's refusal to review this case raised questions about how to lawfully create admissions policies that take affirmative action into consideration.

In the most recent ruling on affirmative action and college admissions, Judge Bernard Friedman, in the University of Michigan law school case, surprised many leaders and legal experts when he contradicted another district judge, who just three months earlier had ruled that the University of Michigan's undergraduate school could lawfully continue using race as a factor in admissions. In the fall of 1997, the Center for Individual Rights filed two class-action lawsuits on behalf of White students who were denied admission to the University of Michigan's undergraduate and law school programs (Alger, 1999). Based on information garnered by a professor that demonstrates that higher standards are required for the admission of White students, the suit alleges that the University uses different standards for admitting White and minority students. However, the University claims that these standards are representative of its commitment to affirmative action (Alger, 1999).

Judge Friedman, appointed to the bench in 1988 by former President Ronald Reagan, ruled that diversity is not a compelling state interest. He added that if it was a state interest, Michigan's admissions system was not narrowly tailored. Thus, it is targeting a specific group or interest, in this case Black students. He also ruled that there was no evidence of past or present discrimination by the law school to justify the use of race as a factor in admissions. He rejected the University's argument that race was simply one of many factors used in admissions and said the law school admissions policy has created the functional equivalent of a quota system with a strong emphasis on race.

Friedman also rejected the argument that affirmative action is necessary to compensate for past discrimination and wrote that such a rationale ignores a person's individual history. There has been a "long and tragic history of race discrimination in this country," Friedman wrote, but that does not justify using race as a standard in the law school's admissions process

(Lords, 2001). However, in the meantime, many institutions are faced with the dilemma of assuring diversity on campus, while avoiding legal action for doing so.

Interpretation and Analysis

Blacks have had to deal with legal, administrative, and rhetorical attacks on affirmative action in both education and general society. As the debate over affirmative action continues, many issues still need to be addressed. These issues include the historical gaps and inequities in Black student participation in higher education. Second, diversity and its relevance to higher education outcomes must be addressed. Finally, a discussion needs to be held on a viable future for affirmative action programs.

Cross (1994) notes, "For the first two and a half centuries of the life of our country, Black people were virtually shut out from access to higher education" (p. 52). This statement indicates the lack of participation of Blacks during the founding of American institutions of higher education. The small number of Blacks that graduated from PWIs during the 1820s was definitely not in proportion with the presence of Blacks in society at large. In fact, up until 1900, less than 100 Blacks had earned degrees from PWIs, while at the same time, 500 had received degrees from HBCUs (Bennett, 1993; Lucas, 1994). These degrees from HBCUs were conferred in spite of obvious issues such as funding, poor physical plant, and underprepared teachers. During the period of "separate but equal," the development of the HBCUs was important to Black students. This importance was obvious because in 1940, 90% of all Black degree holders had received their degrees from HBCUs (Davis, 1998). To date, Black student participation has increased, but continues to lag behind that of Whites. "In view of this history, most fair-minded people would agree that there is a strong moral case for establishing a period of university admissions that confers advantage on Black people" (Cross, 1994, p. 52).

Affirmative action programs and the influx of Black students at PWIs have, without a doubt, contributed to the diversity of institutions of higher education. Thus, by 1987, Black students were more likely to matriculate at PWIs than at HBCUs (Lucas, 1994). After a decline in representation from 9.4% in 1976 to 8.8% in 1984, Blacks increased their representation among all college students to 10.1% by 1994. In 1994, Black enrollment at all postsecondary institutions was 1,448,208 and 230,162 of these students were enrolled in HBCUs (Nettles & Perna, 1997). In 1997, Black participation in higher education had reached 1,532,800 students, 11% of all students enrolled (Snyder, 2001). Wilds (2000) recorded that in 1998, 85.6% of Black students in higher education were enrolled in PWIs.

As mentioned earlier, Milem's (1999) research has proven that all

students benefit from a diverse learning environment. Further, Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1999) describe the psychological climate for students on college campuses that involve feelings of comfort, inclusion, and a campus commitment to positive racial relationships. In an academic setting, it is an asset to have numerous different backgrounds represented, as it allows for a more complete worldview. A diverse campus environment also challenges students to view a situation or an issue, not only through their own lens, but also through the lens of others.

Milem and Hakuta (2000), present four findings of their research on diverse learning environments. Diversity enriches the educational experience, it promotes personal growth as well as healthy society, it strengthens communities and the workplace, and it enhances America's economic competitiveness. Without a doubt, the aforementioned points are definitely attained in diverse learning and work environments. These facts also contribute to the idea that Black students are needed at PWIs in order to diversify (academically and socially) the environment. However, Hurtado, et al., (1999) warn that increasing the racial/ethnic diversity on a campus without addressing the changed racial climate, can result in difficulties for all students on college campuses. This is significant because institutions must do more than just get Black students on campus; there must also be programming and support/advising systems in place to respond to their needs and interests.

Further, Darity (2000) contends that affirmative action has only been in effect for 25 years, and today it is being drastically rolled back. He continues to say that instead of pretending that racism is no longer present and certain individuals no longer suffer from it, affirmative action programs should be strengthened and policies should be implemented that directly address the racial gap in wealth. The fact that Black enrollment in higher education lags behind Black representation in the population indicates that reverse discrimination is not a solid foundation on which to place the arguments against affirmative action. However, the Supreme Court will render a decision relative to the future of affirmative action programs on college and university campuses across the country.

Should the Court rule against affirmative action programs, the participation of Blacks in higher education would be significantly impacted. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (JBHE) (1997) illustrates the realities of Black student enrollments after affirmative action programs were eliminated in Maryland, Texas, and California. After a scholarship program for Blacks was found to be unconstitutional, the University of Maryland allowed all students to apply for the scholarship. Surprisingly, the number of Black students receiving the scholarship remains the same as it was before the Court ruled the program unconstitutional. However, the court's decision was

also applicable in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, and while the numbers are not yet in for those states, it is highly unlikely that they did not negatively impact Black student access and participation. The JBHE (1997) further reports that in 1997, the number of Black applications to the University of Texas and Texas A&M dropped 26% and 13% respectively. Even worse, Black applicants to the University of Texas Law School dropped 42%, while the acceptance rate for Blacks dropped from 54% to 37%. In California, applications were down 7% at UC Berkeley and 13% at UCLA in 1997 (JBHE, 1997). These three states provide differing examples of what could happen across the country should affirmative action programs cease to exist.

Hopefully, the example that Texas provides will not hold for the rest of the country. If affirmative action programs cease to exist, Black student enrollments at academically selective colleges would probably see the largest decline. The decreases in enrollment are projected to be between 50% and 70% at selective colleges and universities (Bowen & Bok, 1998). The worst-case scenario may be a return to segregation of higher education, encompassing a reversal of demographic trends with the majority of Black students enrolled at HBCUs and White students at PWIs. Though this may seem to be a drastic prediction, it is far from impossible.

As noted earlier, in 1997, Black participation in higher education had reached 1,532,800 students, 11% of all students enrolled (Snyder, 2001). Further, Wilds (2000) recorded that in 1998, 85.6% of Black students in higher education were enrolled in PWIs. While enrollment of Black students is on the rise, only time will truly tell whether further increases will be realized.

Implications and Recommendations

The increase in Black students at PWIs has decreased the number of students enrolling in HBCUs, the institutions that were responsible for mass access to higher education for Black students. In light of the expected demise of affirmative action, and Black students possibly being relegated to HBCUs, now is the time to financially strengthen HBCUs. Renner (1998) suggests funding HBCUs at flagship standards, at the expense of those flagship institutions. He further insists that states end the practice of ordering HBCUs to find White students, instead shifting that responsibility to PWIs. HBCUs have never had policies that excluded White students from enrolling and should not be forced to enroll students that don't choose to attend these institutions. While these suggestions are far from reality, they are logical steps in the direction of equality for all students in higher education.

Academic advising units, in conjunction with academic and other

student affairs departments, should establish programs that reach out to Black high school students not performing well enough to meet college admissions standards. Student affairs professionals should also seek to engage students on a regular basis to hear their thoughts on affirmative action programs. These discussions can form the foundation for subsequent forums on introducing the benefits of diverse learning environments for all students, not just Black students. There should also be opportunities for students to engage the literature on research in this area. If all students could see the benefits of affirmative action programs, there might be greater support for the existence of these programs.

Admissions offices should increase their recruiting efforts for academically qualified Black students at predominantly Black high schools. Over time, partnerships should be established that guarantee access and funding for students who meet pre-determined thresholds. Due to the disappearance of color-specific scholarships, financial aid offices should seek to disseminate information to high school students on financing options for college. Also, Black students should be encouraged to participate in more community service and high school campus activities, as options for funding may be present for participating in these activities. Colleges and universities should seek to diversify faculty and administration. The presence of diversity in the academy at the faculty and administrative levels can have an overwhelmingly positive effect on Black student enrollment and persistence.

Finally, research in this area should address the impact that affirmative action programs have on perceptions of the existence of these programs. It may also be beneficial to study Black and White students' perceptions of affirmative action programs. Most of the discussion on these programs does not include the views of those that it most directly impacts. Researchers should also continue to seek methodologically sound means for assessing the educational benefits of diverse learning environments.

The aforementioned recommendations can be instrumental in sustaining and increasing Black student participation in higher education at both HBCUs and PWIs. The higher education community cannot continue to reduce or deny access to Black students. Working within the legal framework the Supreme Court will soon outline, the higher education community must find innovative ways to achieve access, equity, and diversity on college campuses.

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Ontario S. Wooden is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education Administration at Indiana University Bloomington. He is also a Research Associate at the Indiana Education Policy Center. Correspondence regarding this article may be sent to: owooden@indiana.edu.

Assessing International Student Perceptions of the Classroom Environment at a U.S. Business School

Sandra Britton, Todd Chamberlain, Colin Davis, Denise Easley,
Cynthia Grunden, and Julie Williams

The number of international students on college campuses has sharply increased in the last decade. Although several studies have explored the topic of international students from the perspective of faculty, little research has been conducted on the classroom experiences of the international students themselves. This qualitative study examines the business school classroom environment from the perspective of international students, specifically focusing on instructional methods, international student-faculty interactions, and the effectiveness of instructional tools.

Introduction

According to a survey by the Institute of International Education (Davis, 2002), the number of international students studying in the United States rose to 582,996 in 2001, a 6.4% increase over the previous year. Enrollment of international students increased by nearly 100,000 in the 1990s (Tomkovich & Al-Khatib, 1996). Several authors (Coleman, 1997; Tomkovich & Al-Khatib, 1996) have attributed these increases to the active recruitment of international students by colleges and universities, for both educational and utilitarian purposes. International students often represent the top-tier students of their native countries and bring diverse perspectives to the classroom; they also bring in greater tuition revenues since they typically pay closer to the full cost of their education than domestic students (Tomkovich & Al-Khatib, 1996).

Despite the growing number of international students in the United States, studies exploring their unique needs and perceptions of the classroom environment are lacking. Although there is a useful body of literature on faculty perceptions of international students (Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Trice, 2000, 2001; Young, 1998), little exists to indicate how well these students feel their educational needs are being met and what pedagogical techniques they consider most effective.

Because business and management continue to be the most popular fields of study for international students (Davis, 2000, 2002), this study focuses on students in these majors, specifically those for whom English is not their primary language. Students who must overcome this language barrier face a variety of challenges, making an examination of their needs all the more critical. The purpose of this study is to explore international student perceptions of the classroom environment, with a special emphasis on the