

Impacts of the Recent U.S. Supreme Court Decision on Undergraduate Admissions

P-20 Council November 15th, 2023

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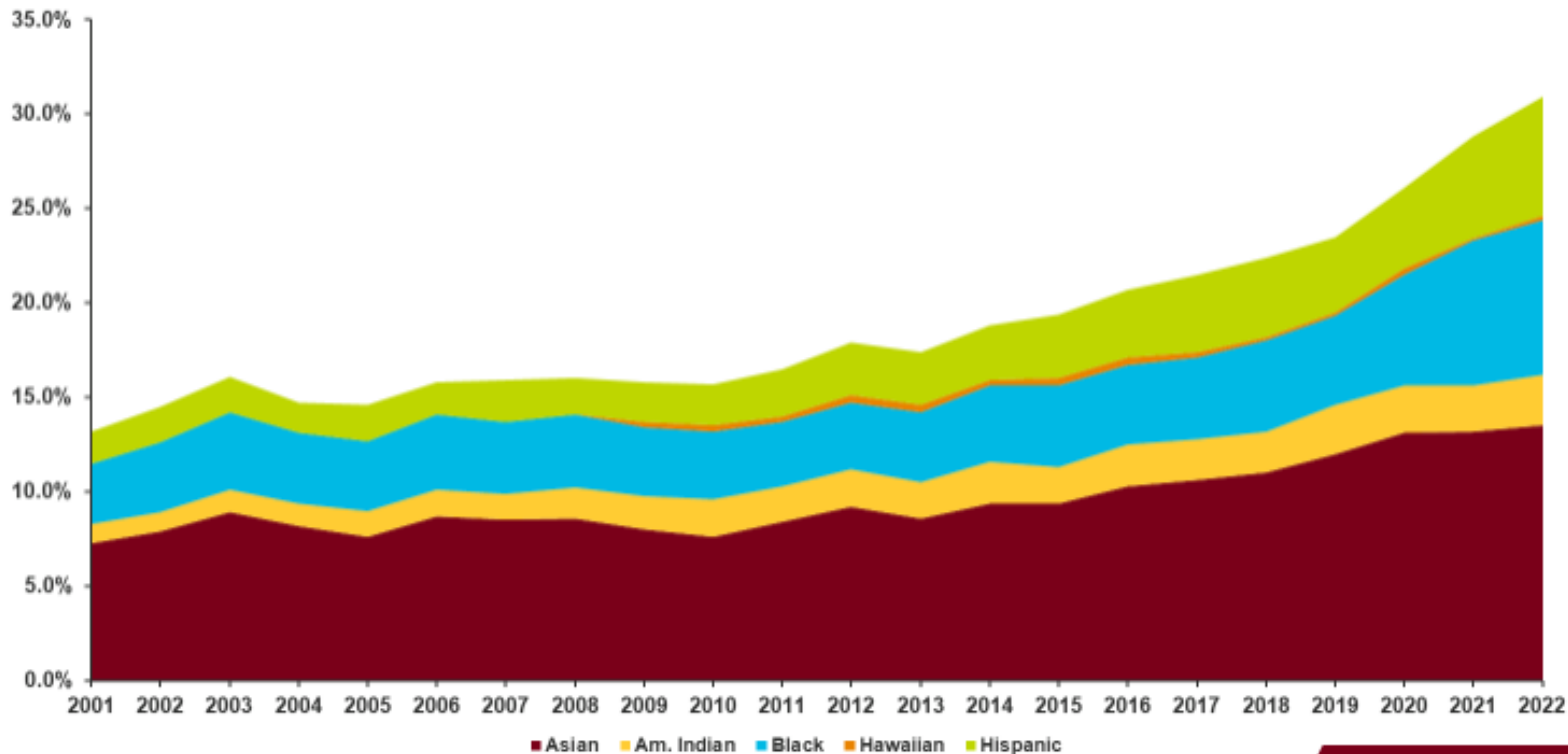
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Systemwide Fall Semester BIPOC Percentage of New Freshmen (NHS)



June 29, 2023: U.S. Supreme Court Decision

- U.S. DOE/DOJ Dear Colleague Letter and FAQ (“DOE/DOJ”)
 - “Harvard College and the University of North Carolina violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (‘Title VI’) by impermissibly using race in their undergraduate admissions processes.”
 - “Institutions may continue to collect this information [geodemographic data] and use it for a variety of purposes, so long as that use is consistent with applicable privacy laws and ensures that data related to the race of student applicants do not influence admissions decisions.”



Undergraduate Admissions



- All campuses will continue to collect race/ethnicity data for IPEDS reporting and other purposes, but will suppress in application review
- All campuses also continue to collect information about previous family attendance/employment, but will suppress in application review

Application Short Answers (DOE/DOJ)

- “[N]othing in [its] opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.”
- “In short, institutions of higher education remain free to consider any quality or characteristic of a student that bears on the institution’s admission decision, such as courage, motivation, or determination, even if the student’s application ties that characteristic to their lived experience with race—provided that any benefit is tied to ‘that student’s’ characteristics, and that the student is ‘treated based on his or her experiences as an individual[,]’ and ‘not on the basis of race.’”



Holistic Review: Academic Factors (UMTC)

Because the greatest predictor of college success is academic preparation, the strongest consideration in the decision is given to a student's high school record

- Coursework taken and rigor of curriculum
 - adjusting for what is available in the school
- Grades in academic coursework
- Class rank/Grade point average (if available)
- ACT or SAT scores (if provided)



Holistic Review: Context Factors (UMTC)

Holistic review also takes into consideration the individual circumstances that make each individual student unique. While we will not consider an applicant's race and ethnicity (or previous family attendance or employment), we will still consider relevant context factors in our review (for example):

- Evidence of exceptional achievement, aptitude, or personal accomplishment not reflected in the academic record
- Participation in extracurricular activities related to your intended major
- Strong commitment to community service, leadership, and educational involvement
- **Evidence of having overcome social, economic, or physical barriers to educational achievement**
- First-generation college student
- Significant responsibility in a family, community, job, or activity
- Military service



Revised Application Short Answer (UMTC)

Previously, the application included 3 optional questions, now two are optional and this one is required:

The University values diversity, broadly defined to include diversity of experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, and talents. Enrolling a diverse community of scholars interested in learning with and from each other fosters discussion and discovery inside and outside of the classroom. Please share briefly how you might contribute to, or benefit from, our community of scholars.



Training for Reviewers (UMTC)



- 50-60 staff members, including seasonal readers and full-time professional staff
- Every application is reviewed individually by multiple readers
- Training (including bias training), reader meetings and quality assurance measures
- Every reviewer now required to read and acknowledge their understanding of a guidance statement

Acknowledgment of Guidance Statement (UMTC)

Excerpt from “Acknowledgement”:

Please note that students **may share** information on their application that discloses their race or ethnicity. For example, students are welcome to share information with us regarding their lived experiences, which may include information about their racial or ethnic identity.

This information about a student’s race or ethnicity **cannot be considered in and of itself** as a contribution to the diversity of the student body. It can, however, be considered as part of the holistic review of an application as it relates to challenges that applicants have faced, skills they have built, or lessons they have learned that will provide them a unique ability to contribute to the University of Minnesota’s scholarly community, in which case the challenges, skills, or lessons can be considered in connection with the context factors considered in admission review.



Examples of Permissible Ways to Consider Race in Admissions (DOE/DOJ)

- A college could consider an applicant's description of what it meant to become the first Black violinist in his city's youth orchestra
- [A]n applicant of South Asian descent's account of overcoming prejudice after transferring to a rural high school
- [A]n applicant's rendering of how learning to cook traditional Hmong dishes from her grandmother had "nurtured her sense of self"
- [A]nd a school counselor's explanation of how a Latina student at a predominantly white high school had overcome her feelings of isolation



Pathway Programs (DOE/DOJ)

- “Institutions may continue to pursue targeted outreach, recruitment, and pipeline or pathway programs (referred to here as ‘pathway programs’).”
- “The Court’s decision likewise does not prohibit admissions models and strategies that do not consider an individual’s race, such as those that offer admission to students based on attendance at certain secondary or post-secondary institutions or based on other race-neutral criteria.”



Recruitment Strategies (UMTC)

Focused on Diversity Broadly Defined

- Continued and enhanced recruitment strategies
 - First-generation students
 - Low-income students (free and reduced lunch)
 - Specific geographies (enhanced recruitment at urban high schools [e.g. CORE], Greater MN)
 - Expanded community group and high school partnerships that support underserved students
- On-campus programming
 - Ensuring campus events and visit options are offered
 - More college exploration programming for younger students in college access programs (9th and 10th graders)
 - Evolved campus experiences and events to ensure that underserved students learn about campus
- Partnerships
 - Established a Community Access Partnership Advisory Board to ensure programs and efforts meet student needs
 - Enhanced partnerships with community colleges to expand transfer student outreach

