For: Dean of Admissions of Universitaria

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Subject: Maintaining Racial Diversity at Universitaria

The recent repeal of affirmative action risks a decrease in racial diversity at Universitaria. We recommend becoming need-blind and ending legacy considerations to increase income diversity, consequently increasing racial diversity. A combination of budget reallocation and fundraising would effectively account for lost donation and tuition money.

Problem

Previous statewide affirmative action bans present evidence of significant decline in enrollment rates among students of color. University of Michigan and University of California filed amicus briefs following the affirmative action ban, citing a drop in Black student enrollment from 8% to 4% at all California State Universities and 7% to 4% at University of Michigan (Maye, 2023; Saul, 2022).

The ban has already produced similar results in the class of 2028 demographics. The percentage of Black and Hispanic students at MIT dropped 15% this year, and students of color at UNC dropped 5%. Schools like Duke and University of Virginia mitigated these negative impacts by increasing economic diversity. These schools stabilized Black and Hispanic populations through new financial aid programs and recruitment initiatives targeting low-income students (Knox, 2024). This makes sense considering the strong correlation between socioeconomic status and racial identity; only 8% of white Americans live in areas of extreme poverty compared to 25% of Black Americans and 17% of Hispanic Americans (Borr, 2023).

Recommendations

1. **Establish a need-blind admissions system**, increasing income diversity by ensuring an applicant's ability to pay full tuition does not influence admissions officers. Historically, colleges that switched to need-blind admissions have seen up to an 18% increase in diversity (Carter, 2016). When colleges consider need, they generally look favorably on students who do not require financial aid (Carlton, 2024), allowing the university to save money.

2. **Remove the consideration of legacy.** Legacy students are far more likely to come from families in the top 1% and far less likely to come from families in the bottom 60% (Chetty, 2023). The incomes of college educated parents, especially from elite institutions, are significantly higher than those without college educations (Crimson Editorial Board, 2018). Eliminating preference for these disproportionately wealthy applicants makes more spots available for students from more diverse economic backgrounds.

Considerations and Implementation

These recommendations are more effective in increasing racial diversity than other alternatives because they focus on admissions rather than solely outreach. Other options focus on recruiting underrepresented students, but current recruitment methods do not significantly impact enrollment rates for underrepresented students (Narea, 2024).

While these recommendations would allow Universitaria to maintain racial diversity, the college must consider tradeoffs. The primary negative impact is the high cost. Need-blind admissions will lead to more students requiring financial aid from the college. Further, removing legacy considerations would cause alumni donations to decrease. The college must compensate for these economic losses by setting aside funding for additional students who require aid and to

replace lost alum donations. Universitaria has three potential avenues to provide this funding: budget reallocation, fundraising, and raising tuition.

1. **Budget reallocation** would redistribute departmental money. Universitaria should examine the current budget distribution and cut funding from departments with excess to redistribute to admissions.

2. **Fundraising** would allow the school to use outreach to generate money from external sources. Increasing calls and mail to alumni, hosting fundraising events, and raising donation awareness through social media are all low-cost methods Universitaria could utilize.

3. **Raising tuition** would generate more money for financial aid through making wealthier students pay more to attend the school. This method is highly contentious, and therefore has practicality concerns.

We recommend a combination of fundraising and budget reallocation as the most feasible way to fund this initiative. While raising tuition would be the most immediate way to generate money, it would generate backlash. Fundraising supplemented by budget reallocation is the most feasible method to effectively increase funding while also minimizing controversy.

Conclusion

While the affirmative action ban has decreased racial diversity in colleges across the US, Universitaria can maintain diversity on campus. We suggest Universitaria become need-blind and remove legacy from admissions to increase income diversity, and consequently, racial diversity. Fundraising combined with budget reallocation is the most palatable option for acquiring additional funding. Following these recommendations would allow Universitaria to maintain its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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