



MICHIGAN CIVIL
RIGHTS INITIATIVE

NEWS

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ADMISSIONS POLICIES AT UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FAIL TO SOLVE REAL PROBLEMS

Admissions data released by the University of Michigan demonstrate the underlying failures that its policies of race preference are unable to address. Data show gains for certain racial groups, declines for other groups, and a no changes for others. The underlying weakness of Michigan's strategy is that race preferences in university admissions don't help minorities when it counts - by improving overall educational performance at the K-12 level. As result, U-M's increasing preferences can't keep pace with the demographic and social trends causing fewer African Americans, and others, to apply. The numbers also reveal that U-Michigan has lowered its standards *for everyone* in its' effort to keep up with demographic trends.

According to a university press release, U-Michigan's freshman class enrollment this year was 6040, a record number (8.8% higher than last year). The number of African American students fell from 410 to 350, continuing a trend that began in 2001 (when it was 499). According to the *Ann Arbor News*, (Oct. 15) U-M administrators' "speculated that although the Supreme Court decision allows them to consider race in admissions, the national debate over the case and affirmative action in general has sent a chill over prospective minority students."

The author of the *Ann Arbor News* piece however goes on to present a variety of other information revealing this speculation for what it is. For example, the number of Hispanic and Native Americans enrolled "grew slightly," according to the report. One observer within the education community noted that "steep tuition hikes" were also a likely cause. U-M's press release points out that admission of whites remained exactly the same as a percentage of overall admissions, and that admission of Asians fell in both absolute and percentage terms. Still, the most significant causes of these changes were overlooked in U-M's press release.

For example, U-M points out that applications from African Americans fell by 25% but

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failed to mention that applications by individuals of all groups were down 18%. This reflects a nationwide demographic shift in student populations for all groups, and directly implies that U-M has *lowered* its admissions *standards for everyone* to accommodate an increased enrollment.

U-M has maintained all along that the new system was designed to have the same effect as the now-illegal point-system. According to Theodore Spencer, U-M's Director of Admissions, shortly after the new admissions system was implemented in 2003, "The only thing we've done ... we've rearranged them so that ... they are no longer given points."

Ward Connerly, a Regent of the University of California and chairman of the American Civil Rights Coalition stated, "U-M just doesn't get it. There is an achievement gap in educational performance. The only way to compensate for the academic gap between certain 'racial' groups is to either give extra points, which is now illegal, or help get 'underrepresented' groups better prepared to compete academically. U-M should stop looking for other excuses. Failure in outreach to minority schools or the absurd notion that the court decision put a 'chill' on minority applications are all just excuses. Lack of adequate academic preparation is the single most important reason for the decline. Michigan administrators - along with politicians - need to use their expertise and creativity to solve the problem at the point of failure. They need to improve K-12 educational achievement, rather than trying to cover it up with an appearance of 'diversity.' The record should now be clear that decades of racial preferences policy can not keep up with their refusal to address the problem head on."

The Michigan Civil Rights Initiative Committee (MCRI), a Michigan-based Ballot Question Committee, is dedicated to giving the people of Michigan the opportunity to end preferential treatment based on race, gender, ethnicity, or national origin by State or local governments. MCRI will make Michigan a place of equal opportunity for all, not a State that uses discrimination as a tool to create "diversity." Achieving "diversity" and "affirmative action" should never be an excuse to discriminate!

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