

FEATURES & PROFILES



How Race Plays a Role in College Admissions

From elite private institutes of learning to public colleges and universities, students are categorized according to ethnicities. For many potential students this may create insurmountable problems.

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The Mirror Staff

A range of factors from extracurricular activities to test scores come into play when a college’s admissions office evaluates a student’s application. Students aim to impress admissions officers with above-satisfactory grades and accolades from clubs, teams, or competitions.

However, a component that does not often appear in one’s mind when told the word “college,” plays a significant role in an application—race.

Universities around the nation are seeking to maintain a “racial quota” amongst the student population on their campuses.

Racial quotas are implemented to admit a balanced number of students according to their ethnicity, all the while attempting to create representation for all.

Although student demographics in many colleges and universities are very unbalanced, other schools strive to enrich their learning environments by admitting students of many different ethnic backgrounds.

Students are also admitted to institutions based on geographics. For example, many schools in the South and Midwest are looking for more racial diversity, which allows for a wider acceptance rate of students from the North and East, where the schools are already more diverse due to a more diverse regional population.

California’s population is already extremely diverse in terms of race. Still, state schools consider a student’s ethnic background, even though California schools tend to avoid using a student’s ethnicity as a primary deciding factor for admission.

Even with California’s overall diversity, African-American and Latino representation is lacking in the state university system, which is comprised of the UCs and California State universities.

“I know the UCs are aware of the fact that they have a very low African-American student body number/rep-

resentation,” Ms. Mary Charlton, the College Counselor, pointed out.

“They’re very conscious of recruiting a satisfactory African-American student, whereas if you were a satisfactory Asian-American student, you probably will not get accepted.”

Asians are at a racial disadvantage because Asian students predominate at many UC schools. Up to 50% of some school populations are Asian.

At the University of California at Los Angeles, the largest racial group is Asian/Pacific Islanders, which make up about 40% of the student body. This year, the undergraduate programs admitted 9,917 Asians, or about 32.1% the largest group, compared with Whites, which make up 26.3%.

UC San Diego’s student body is nearly 50% Asian.

But does one’s racial background influence college acceptance chances? Not necessarily, according to Ms. Charlton.

“Generally, I feel that the UCs are fair—they’re blind in that regard. But they’re also aware of who’s in their community because—let’s face it—they’re being subsidized by the taxpayers of California.”

UCLA—and most UC schools in general—raise the standards for White and Asian pupils.

But other minorities, such as African-Americans, Latinos, and especially Native Americans, have a much likelier chance of getting into the school of their choice.

According to statistics on the official University of California website, the number of African-American undergraduates in the entire system from 1994 to 2014 was only 3%.

African-Americans, especially males, are drastically underrepresented, even though 7% of the California population is black according to the latest U.S. Census statistics.

African-American students are underrepresented in schools throughout the country, excluding historically black colleges, such as Howard University, whose focus is to admit black students.

However, African-American representation has neither increased or decreased.

African-American representation is lacking, but Asians are admitted to colleges in disproportionate numbers.

Many Asians feel the pressure when applying to state schools. The “Asian Penalty” is a concept where an Asian student has to “appear less Asian” to increase their chances

of getting accepted.

Some students have even resorted to hiring personal college counselors that steer them away from looking “too Asian” on the application.

Universities are also keeping the Asian populations in check so they won’t look like “the Asian school.”

Lawsuits were filed against Harvard and other Ivy League schools in 2016 because these institutions “use racial quotas to admit lesser qualified candidates over Asians,” according to the Boston Globe.

Many will argue that Asians are not on the same playing field as other applicants. But that is not the case. The average Asian student that applies to an Ivy League institution, or any elite private school, is competing with other Asian applicants.

Each student of any race is competing against their own to gain a spot in a school. Therefore, the playing field is leveled to match the competence of its applicants.

Special institutions, such as religious private schools, usually do not take one’s ethnicity into consideration. They typically base their admissions on the student’s

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religion instead.

Brigham Young University is one such religious university operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

“You can definitely go even if you’re not Mormon, but they prefer a student with a Mormon background. Ethnicity will not even play into that,” said Ms. Charlton.

Racial profiling—in this sense—is not necessarily discrimination because race isn’t specifically considered.

Universities around the state and the country are merely aware of the ethnic ratios on their campuses. This would, in turn, affect how they consider one’s application that would pertain to their own racial quotas.

Future seniors: consider this information when sending out an application, but do not necessarily be discouraged.

College admissions offices still evaluate a student’s assets and look at whether the standard credentials fit for their school.

Just remember, because a student is rejected by one school, there are still plenty of other college options available out there.

Racial Breakdown of Incoming Freshmen 2015

