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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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 representation for all. Students are also admitted to institutions based on various factors such as geography, religion, and ethnicity.

Asians are admitted to colleges in disproportionate numbers. The “Asian Penalty” is a concept where an Asian student has to “appear less Asian” to increase their chances of getting accepted.

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Sometimes 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 2015 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 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 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.

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