

Affirmative APPREHENSION

On June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court banned affirmative action in a 6-3 decision, terminating race-conscious admissions in higher education.

The court concluded that affirmative action violated the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. This decision has sparked controversy and questions regarding the application process.

6 key events leading up to the affirmative action decision

1978: Regents of University of California v. Bakke

The Supreme Court rules a university's use of racial quotas unconstitutional but that accepting more minority students with affirmative action could be constitutional.

1996: Hopwood v. Texas

The Supreme Court bans race-conscious admissions, financial aid considerations and recruiting policies in public and private institutions. In the same year, California voters approved Proposition 209 which ended state affirmative action programs.

2003: Grutter v. Bollinger

Following two lawsuits that challenged the University of Michigan, the court ruled in favor of the university, allowing it to still consider race as a factor in applications.

2014: Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action

After the majority of Michigan voters argued against affirmative action, the Supreme Court upheld the ban of affirmative action in higher education, adding that state voters should have the right to decide.

2016: Fisher v. University of Texas

A white student at the University of Texas at Austin said she was unfairly rejected from the school in 2008. The Supreme Court sent the case back to the lower court, and still, the high court upheld affirmative action at the university by a close vote of 4-3.

2023: Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard/University of North Carolina

The Supreme Court ruled against affirmative action at Harvard and the University of North Carolina, prohibiting public and private colleges from considering race in admissions decisions.

— compiled by Audrey Park

Students debate ruling

By SAHANA UNNI
Editor-in-Chief

For some Black students the Supreme Court decision to end affirmative action in college admissions was disappointing but not surprising. Although senior Katie Williams had anticipated the ruling for two years, she said the finality of the decision feels restrictive as she now must find other ways to incorporate her racial identity in her applications. However, for some of her peers, the termination of affirmative action is perceived in a more positive light.

As Lab is closely connected to a top university, there is a stark difference in how U-High students view the end of affirmative action in college admissions depending on their racial identity and political stances.

Some students, like senior Robert Groves, who identifies as white, believe that ending affirmative action in the college admissions process is a welcome change.

"I think overall it's a complex issue, but it was probably the best

thing," Robert said. "When you start to consider factors like race and gender, there's less of an emphasis on merit and things you can control."

Others, like senior Leila Battiste, who identifies as Black, strongly disagree with the decision because of the decrease in diversity it may cause within college campuses.

"Many people think that affirmative action is favoritism," Leila said, "but the system is meant to increase and sustain races and all minority groups at the most disadvantage. The system has, and never will, favor POC and minority groups."

Some students don't find the issue quite as straightforward. Junior Jack Colyer, who identifies as white, disagrees with the ruling but also believes it may benefit his application.

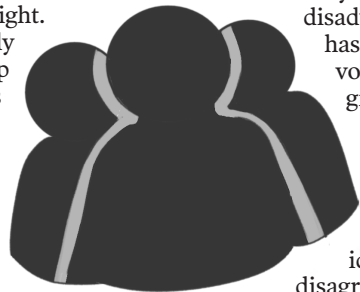
"I mean being realistic, it might help my chances at college," Jack said. "That

being said, I don't think it was necessarily the right thing to do. I mean, I think it

hurt more people than it helped because the people it helped are generally going to get into somewhere anyway, so it doesn't really matter. It's more hurting the people who don't have those opportunities."

Regardless of their opinions about this decision, students wonder what this really means for the college admissions process in the coming years and their own applications.

Katie said, "There's just, like, an unknown future of how that impacts us and our future."



Midway illustrations by Eliza Dearing

Expert input: Law professor explains case

By AUDREY PARK
Editor-in-Chief

University of Chicago Law School Professor Geoffrey R. Stone, a former dean, explained what the end of affirmative action means for students entering the college application process in the following interview. As law school dean, he witnessed the effects of affirmative action on the university.

Professor Stone's responses were lightly edited for length, clarity and style.

How does the decision impact the college admissions process?

"The decision says that it is impermissible for a college or university to explicitly take race into account in making admissions decisions. In the past, an institution could take into account race as one of the factors to create diversity and to address past discrimination."

tion when looking at its application group. And now, they cannot do that."

How does the decision impact the application process for students?

"In the essay portion of the application, you can certainly talk about whatever your background is, whether it's a woman or a gay or male, Black or white or Hispanic or whatever. And you can talk about that in the context of the essays. And particularly, if you're from a group that is disadvantaged, you can talk about how you've dealt with that. And the college or university will be aware of that information. The difference is, applications cannot be discussed on the basis of race, but on the basis of the character of the individual and how their race has affected their experiences."

How can students include race in applications?

"The difference is, applications cannot be discussed on the basis of race, but on the bases of the character of the individual and how their race has affected their experiences."

Geoffrey R. Stone, University of Chicago Law School Professor

which themselves have abolished and prohibited affirmative action, like say, California, there has been a significant decline in the number of Black students at these law schools, many major universities. And the negative effect that has had, I think, is both in terms of the experience of the students at those institutions and in terms of the disadvantage imposed upon the progress of Black citizens in our society."

Will there be a decrease in diversity in higher education?

"Unless they can find ways to circumvent the decision. You know, one thing they can do in theory is, since they can take character and experience into account, then they can of course say that Black applicants have had a much more difficult time in our society, and therefore, they will likely be the beneficiaries of giving credit to people who've had to overcome those difficulties. Not literally because you're Black, but because with the stories they tell in their applications. So there is some ambiguity in the decision."

What implications will large institutions witness as a result of the decision?

"As has been the case in states

vox pop.

How has the Supreme Court decision to ban affirmative action in higher education admissions affected your college application?



Myles Cobb

"They're still going to be able to figure out what race I am, and who I am. So I'll just try to leverage that, and turn it into the best opportunity for me, which will probably be a lot harder now that affirmative action is gone."



Diana Chaves

"My ethnicity is an important aspect of my identity and I think that because that factor is being taken out of consideration for colleges, it leaves out part of who I am and how I present myself to future opportunities. In my college essay especially, the important events in my life root from significant racial and cultural values, so it's been difficult to decide how to best represent myself when race isn't a factor."



Dante Vairus

"To be honest, I was kind of banking on affirmative action on all my applications because I'm mixed. I'm half Argentine, half Korean. I'm pretty sure Asian countries like both east and south are not helped by the decision. I'm pretty sure Latino benefits a lot. So, it made me a little nervous finding out about the decision."



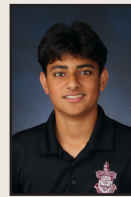
Sofia Niedazkowski

"I've considered whether I should add my race and ethnicity because I think it is still an option on the application, but I am kind of confused on why it is when they are saying that they are trying to not consider that at all for people and make it kind of blind."



Ross Wilson

"I feel like I haven't done enough research on it personally. I feel like it may discourage me a little bit in terms of the scale of schools I would apply to but it hasn't really affected my plans for school that much."



Sohail Sajdeh

"I think it has made a whole difference on the application process. I think it's a step in the right direction and I'll be interested to see how it affects my applications. I haven't considered it fully yet but I'll definitely take it into consideration when I look at where I am applying."

— compiled by Light Dohrn, Haley Maharry and Milo Platz-Walker

opinion

It is now time to end legacy admissions

By CLARE McROBERTS
Features Editor

In June, when the Supreme Court ruled against affirmative action, it barred race-conscious decisions in college admissions but still permitted universities to practice legacy admissions in a vast sea of applicants. More than 40% of private universities — including many of the most elite schools in the country — indulge in this practice.



Clare McRoberts

The schools say that legacy admissions have their benefits: ensuring that the children of alumni are granted acceptance motivates families to continuously donate, generation after generation. All that money is essential to sustaining the elite status of these institutions, educating one generation and then ushering in the next.

Yet the notion that the descendants of privileged, educated people ought to receive a leg up — in

addition to their inherited advantage — is anti-meritocratic and goes against a supposed tenet of this country and of these institutions: that hard work equalizes.

Let's address the elephant in the room: many of us at U-High are these descendants. We — myself included — are the potential beneficiaries of legacy admissions at top colleges. Many of our parents and even grandparents attended some of the most prestigious universities in the country.

That's why I sympathize with those who might squirm at the thought that legacy admissions could end this year, right now. It's no longer theoretical; it's personal. Many of us deeply believe in the logic behind the need to end legacy admissions. Still, the thought that this would put our own plans, futures and dreams in jeopardy complicates the topic in a way that might blur our vision and our morals. Those plans of college applications and increasingly imminent futures feel devastatingly, earth-shatteringly important.

But to uphold the fundamental values that many of us have formed regarding our privilege,

we must not get tunnel vision. We must come back into focus and see the broader scope of our role in all of this. We must understand that this issue is so much vastly bigger than any of us.

Statistically, the children of those who attended elite colleges come from socioeconomically privileged backgrounds. With that comes the best preschools, top tutoring, artistic enrichment and other expensive educational advantages only available to those who can afford them. These families highly value education and are often more than capable of providing their children with resources necessary to achieve greatness. Their potential is boundless, as are their college résumés.

These are the people — most of us — least in need of an extra edge while applying to universities.

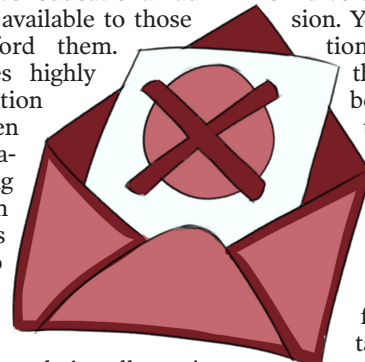
The Supreme Court decision removing affirmative action makes

it even more clear that the use of legacy admissions is intolerable. The consideration of race in college admissions was intended to not only bring diversity for the benefit of entire college campuses but also to provide appropriate opportunities to groups marginalized, mistreated and enslaved over generations.

Many of the country's top universities claim to uphold a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. Yet, those same institutions perpetuate a system that almost entirely benefits those in positions of socioeconomic privilege.

If admissions officers are barred from being conscious of race, surely they should not consider familial relations in tandem.

It's important to consider one argument in favor of continuing legacy admissions: at this point, the practice has finally begun to benefit a number of previously underrepresented groups, giving those families the



"

But to uphold the fundamental values that many of us have formed regarding our privilege, we must not get tunnel vision. We must come back into focus and see the broader scope of our role in all of this.

"

opportunity to grow long-term, generational wealth as well. But the amount of those who recently benefit are eclipsed by the number of people who have long benefited from legacy admissions.

Let's admit it: this is hard. It can feel impossible to look past our own self-interest, our own immediate needs, our own ambitions, expectations and lives. But it is time to do so.

It is our responsibility to advocate for what is right. Those of us who could benefit from legacy admission practices must be willing to sacrifice one of our privileges.