
Yolanda Flores Niemann*
Washington State University

Geoffrey Maruyama
University of Minnesota

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the legality of race-based affirmative action at universities in 2003. Although the decisions affirmed the legality of considering race in college admissions decisions, their long-term effects are not entirely clear. They neither resolved conflicts nor solved problems affirmative action was intended to address, namely, disparities in educational outcomes between Whites and ethnic/racial minorities. Although disparities have diminished since 1965, policies and practices to sustain and further increase diversity in higher education without affirmative action are needed. This article provides historical and conceptual grounding for this JSI issue, which examines approaches for attaining campus diversity. Collectively, the issue provides approaches for increasing diversity as well as strategies for managing and benefiting from diversity in post-secondary environments.

The Supreme Court of the United States provided a landmark decision allowing institutions of higher education to continue to use information about race/ethnicity of students as a factor in college admissions (see, e.g., Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003). Using race in any way as a factor in college admissions is often described by the term “affirmative action” (for a complete discussion of the term and its uses, see Crosby, 2004). Although having a court decision supporting affirmative action is in some ways definitive, in others it is only one step in shaping and negotiating
policies, for there undoubtedly will be skirmishes as the ruling is defined in terms of its consequences on practice and as legislation may modify its impact (e.g., Crosby, 2004). Given the range of personal as well as legal perspectives on issues of affirmative action and diversity, no single court decision can provide a permanent and complete resolution.

Future skirmishes on affirmative action will likely reflect the ambivalence among U.S. residents in their attitudes and beliefs about issues of diversity and opportunity, and in resulting practices and policies tied to those issues (e.g., Son Hing, Bobocel, & Zanna, 2002). This ambivalence has a history that predates policies of affirmative action (e.g., Allport, 1954). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that policies of affirmative action affect only that small proportion of college students who attend selective institutions; 80% of students attend colleges that do not restrict admissions, so the issues of equity are far broader than just affirmative action (e.g., Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2002). Although there is evidence that diversity on campus enriches all students (e.g., Antonio et al., 2004; Chang, 2001; Kurleander & Yun, 2001), is valued by the faculty (e.g., Maruyama & Moreno, 2000), and impacts faculty satisfaction (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998a), higher education institutions can no longer assume that they will be able to determine how they want to use information about race to achieve goals relative to diversity in admissions. Rather, they will need to determine how they can meet their values of sustaining diversity within their communities while operating within legal and political boundaries and while facing opposition.

With or without affirmative action policies, however, it is imperative to the social and economic future of the United States that educators develop and or adopt policies that will provide realistic higher educational opportunities for individuals of all races/ethnicities in selective and nonselective institutions. This imperative is based in part upon the rapidly changing demographic make-up of the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Educational achievement has great implications for quality-of-life issues, and is often considered “the great equalizer.” It is the primary way in which wealth is transferred across generations (e.g., Guinier & Torres, 2002). Given the ambivalence of U.S. residents and courts about affirmative action, it is important to consider alternatives as well as plan for a future that might not include affirmative action.

It is critical, therefore, for social scientists and others to present feasible ways to close or at least diminish disparities in participation in higher education irrespective of affirmative action. Although race-sensitive admissions policies are still permitted, one cannot assume that affirmative action will assure the representation of substantial numbers of students and faculty of color in higher education (e.g., Crosby & VanDeVeer, 2000). As discussed later in this article, decades of affirmative action have yielded minimal effects on these numbers (e.g., Renner, 2003). Had affirmative action policies been effective as a means for increasing access to students and faculty of color, they would no longer be needed. Importantly,
one feature of the Michigan decisions is that affirmative action is not envisioned as being in place indefinitely. Of even greater importance, alternative approaches and strategies offer an opportunity to move beyond the polarization of views and strong emotions that have been associated with affirmative action (e.g., Crosby, 2004; Lewis, 2003).

This issue of *Journal of Social Issues* does just that, looking at approaches promoting opportunities that would continue even in the absence of affirmative action as well as ways of addressing diversity issues while creating less polarization of positions. Articles in this issue provide guidance for less selective as well as selective institutions about ways of attracting and maintaining diversity. This issue of *Journal of Social Issues* addresses a range of topics tied to affirmative action policies plus approaches that offer promise of providing education to expanded populations, discussing ways of framing the issues on campuses to lessen conflict, and examining ways in which our society’s history of prejudice tied to skin color still endures.

Social scientists can play a critical role in facilitating the change from reliance on affirmative action policies in higher education to a broader range of alternatives that support institutional interests in promoting diversity and achieving race-based diversity goals (e.g., Maruyama, Burke, & Mariani, this issue). The role includes expanding understandings of how students come to aspire to college, how intergroup relations and contacts within college environments enrich student educational experiences, and what the long-term effects of college are on students. To date, however, the extant social science literature on affirmative action has generally focused on definitions of affirmative action, effects of policy implementation, effects of policies on beneficiaries and Whites, racism, and, to a lesser extent, effects of policies on institutional climates (e.g., Crosby & VanDeVeer, 2000). This special issue goes beyond these topics to discuss theoretically and empirically based approaches for maintaining and expanding access to a college education irrespective of legal regulations about affirmative action. Its primary focus is on higher education programs, looking at contextual features of colleges as well as programs and processes that increase access. Issues include building pathways to college, improving university climate, recruiting and retaining greater numbers and proportions of diverse students, and graduating enough students so there are role models and mentors in communities.

The contents of this issue challenge institutions of higher education to examine their role with respect to providing access to higher education opportunities to all constituents. This issue of *Journal of Social Issues* will explore theoretically and empirically based concerns, issues, and alternatives to affirmative action. The introduction begins with a discussion of affirmative action and the intended goals of the policy. The use of affirmative action for racial integration of universities for students and faculty is then examined, concluding with results of 30+ years of implementation of affirmative action policies. Finally, the contributions of each of
the authors in this issue are overviewed. Effectiveness of the approaches examined in this issue depends neither upon the existence nor the elimination of affirmative action.

**What is Affirmative Action?**

President Lyndon Johnson’s Executive Order 11246 required that firms take affirmative action to ensure that employees are treated without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin. Affirmative action policies were implemented during the 1960s and 1970s as a means for redressing past inequalities and providing opportunities for individuals from groups that had been victims of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Orfield, 2001). During the 1990s, however, affirmative action policies designed to give preference to White women and to men and women of color were challenged (Orfield, 2001). Even though parity in educational opportunities and outcomes had not been attained, challenges managed to eliminate affirmative action policies in a number of states including California, Florida, Texas, and Washington. In one instance (Texas), the elimination followed a court decision, in two others (California and Washington), a ballot proposition, and in the fourth, institutional policy change via executive order (e.g., Orfield, 2001). Judgments in Michigan and Georgia only added to the complexity of the issues and made policies and practices more difficult to interpret, helping to push the issue to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The seeds of affirmative action are rooted in a color-blind approach (Skrentny, 1996), which ostensibly makes race/ethnicity irrelevant to university admissions. Since its inception, however, affirmative action has come to represent a race conscious paradigm (Jackson, 1992; Niemann & Dovidio, this issue; Skrentny, 1996) that takes race into consideration university admissions and hiring in order to counter differential treatment and discrimination toward particular groups in society.

Because affirmative action appeals to both ostensibly color-blind and race-sensitive perspectives, it is not surprising to find that many Americans today see affirmative action as wrongly providing preferential treatment, in effect as an effort to guarantee equal results to different groups (e.g., Son Hing et al., 2002). The idea that results equally violates values of individualism and meritocracy. To individuals supporting a meritocracy, almost any type of differential treatment is viewed as reverse discrimination, even if its primary purpose is to provide equal rights and opportunities in the face of ongoing discrimination (Skrentny, 1996). A diametrically opposed view represented by critical race theory (CRT) scholars argues that the color-blind perspective represses and renders irrelevant the important and impactful ways in which race shapes social relationships (Guinier & Torres, 2002; Roithmayr, 1999; Ross, 1995). CRT scholars argue that merit standards, purported to be race neutral and objective, are actually race specific because they were constructed in a context of racial exclusion.
by elites who had acquired social power by explicitly excluding people of color (Roithmayr, 1999).

In sum, affirmative action policy today is often a battle between those who support color blindness versus color consciousness and those who focus on current privilege versus historical privilege. Both paradigms can be acknowledged as models of justice (Skrentny, 1996). In his historical and contextual review of affirmative action, Skrentny (1996) states, “affirmative action did not simply replace color blindness; the two coexist as possible civil rights models and both are institutionalized in civil rights enforcement” (p. 8).

What is less clear, however, is whether it is truly possible to have color blindness at this stage of our country’s history (Winant, 1999; Zinn, 1999). Plentiful evidence exists that race matters: in media representations (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003), in education (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1998), in immigration law (Ngai, 1999), in social science research (Nisbett, 1995), and in the criminal justice system (Lamberth, 2003), to name just a few of the seemingly countless contexts in which race matters. People see a person’s color, even as a function of our cognitive processes (Kunda, 2000), and that color has meaning (Kunda, 2000; West, 1993). Our conclusion from this research is that, at least at this stage of our human cognitive and social development, color blindness is impossible. Instead, we might speak of race-neutral alternative policies, such as those currently being implemented in preK-12 and higher education systems (Marcus, 2004). Whether these alternatives will achieve goals of diversity in higher education remains in question.

**Why is Diversity Needed in Higher Education?**

*Students*

One of the strongest arguments for maintaining affirmative action today has to do with the policy’s impact on the diversity of higher education institutions—the more elite and selective the institution, the greater the impact of the policy on campus diversity (e.g., Bowen & Bok, 1998). Lessening diversity at the most prominent campuses may reduce the quality of education for all students on those campuses. Among its virtues, diversity fosters the examined life, prepares students for citizenship, enhances education for economic and scientific progress, and, by breaking down barriers, advances a chief purpose of higher education (American Council on Education, 2001; Chang, 2001). Gurin’s (1999) expert report, used to support the Michigan position in the 2003 argument before the Supreme Court, states that affirmative action is needed to precipitate changes in structural diversity within the institution and for classroom diversity and incorporation of knowledge about diverse groups into the curriculum, which has resulted mostly from diverse faculty. For students, Gurin (1999) argues that there are direct effects on
democracy outcomes, including greater social concern and humanitarian values of White students who attended more diverse campuses; and benefits from learning about differences in perceptions of reality that come from engagement on diverse campuses, in contrast to reading about the abstract “others” in texts.

By creating a “critical mass” of students, institutions can avoid situations where having too few students from underrepresented groups can result in negative effects for members of those minority groups (e.g., Hurtado, 2001; Niemann, Romero, & Arbona, 2000). A critical mass of students and faculty of color can also facilitate dissipation of stereotypes about people of color, which are exacerbated by social contexts in which few members of these groups are present (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998a; Niemann & Secord, 1995; Niemann et al., 1998).

An American Council on Education appeals court amicus brief (2001) supports Gurin’s views, arguing that among the benefits of diversity are the following: student body diversity improves classroom learning environments; diverse learning environments promote critical thinking skills; cross-racial interaction has positive effects on retention, college satisfaction, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and leadership; student body diversity promotes the creation of initiatives that lead to improved educational outcomes; diverse learning environments challenge students to consider alternative viewpoints and develop tolerance for differences, and increase participation in civic activities. Additional corroborating work is provided by the Harvard Civil Rights Project research on how best to meet the needs of college students. It concluded that diversity is needed for critical thinking, interactions with other groups, and contact among equals (Light, 2001).

Persico articulates a complementary argument in his statement that “The purpose [of affirmative action] is to create institutions that enable culturally diverse people to share in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are attainable only though education, and to enable them to do so without a loss of culture or self. The corollary is to redefine, as a consequence of the participation of a culturally diverse population in the educational process, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be shared” (1990, p. 57). He argues that institutions must create a welcoming environment that honors cultural diversity by creating a diverse institutional climate, establishing institutional commitment, and creating a culturally diverse faculty, administration, and student body.

Indeed, there seems to be little opposition to the idea that racial diversity is of critical importance for higher education institutions in the United States. Leaders of 34 education groups issued an open letter to President Bush urging his administration to help defend the University of Michigan’s race-conscious admissions policies before the Supreme Court (Schmidt, 2003). Groups of powerful corporate and military leaders also made public their support of affirmative action policies for the purpose of enhancing diversity in universities (e.g., Schemo, 2003). They argued that diverse universities resulted in greater effectiveness in business
and military settings through better development and use of human resources. In his challenge to the University of Michigan policy, President Bush publicly acknowledged that diversity is important in our universities, but promoted different approaches to attaining diversity. At the same time, however, he inaccurately characterized the Michigan case as one of the quotas, arguing that, at their core, the Michigan policies amount to a quota system that unfairly rewards or penalized prospective students based solely on their race (Schmidt, 2003). Assuming that those challenging affirmative action do in fact believe in the importance of diversity, the question seems to be by which means this diversity should be best achieved.

Among other policies employed for achieving diversity are the 10% (or 20% or 5%) plans of Texas, California, and Florida (e.g., Horn & Flores, 2003; Guinier & Torres, 2002). Under these plans, students graduating in the top percentage in their high school class will automatically be admitted to the more elite state universities. However, research findings indicate that percentage plans may be ineffective and, in instances where they have been most successful, their success depends upon targeted, race conscious outreach efforts rather than efforts that ignore race (Horn & Flores, 2003; Marin & Lee, 2003). Furthermore, such plans rely on the racial segregation of public schools, which was deemed detrimental to the education of racial minorities in the 1954 Brown v Board of Education Supreme Court decision and which many scholars (Anyon, 1997; Schmidt et al., 2001; Valencia, Menchaca, & Donato, 2002) believe underlies the disparate educational achievement and preparedness of students of color.

Faculty

Creating welcoming climates in institutions of higher education depends on the significant presence of faculty and students of color. For example, with respect to women, the most accurate predictor of subsequent success for female undergraduates is the percentage of women among faculty members at their college (Trower & Chait, 2003). A substantively diverse faculty helps mitigate against factors present in higher education. These include an unaccommodating culture that includes stereotypes that adversely affect expectations for students, and lower relative value assigned to faculty work and research related to diversity (Trower & Chait, 2003). Faculty mentoring is also very important for students (e.g., Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, this issue). College students experience an increase in self-efficacy and academic goal definition as a result of mentoring, and same-race/ethnic mentors are perceived as significantly more supportive of students’ academic pursuits than are nonmatched mentors (Santos & Reigadas, 2002). Faculty interact differently with minority than with White students and have significantly lower academic expectations of undergraduate minority students (Thomas, 1997). In general, minority students perceive unequal treatment by White faculty
and a lack of adequate oral feedback as compared to Whites, and report that White professors hold stereotypical views of them (Thomas, 1997).

Despite positive effects of faculty diversity, Whites constituted 95% of all faculty members in 1972 and 83% in 1997, with most of the growth in numbers of faculty of color occurring in Asian Americans and almost half of all Black faculty teaching at historically Black colleges (Trower & Chait, 2003). Research indicates that numbers matter—the greater the number of faculty of color, the less likely that those faculty will experience feelings of tokenism found when only a few faculty of color are present in a university or when one is alone in a department or unit (Niemann, 2003; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998a; Pollak & Niemann, 1998). With greater numbers, faculty of color feel less representative of their group and less visible than their solo status counterparts, thereby allowing them to focus on work that facilitates their success in the academy (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998a).

**Current Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action Policies**

Racial and ethnic diversity on campus too often is perceived as a zero-sum game based on self-interest, in which improvement for one group comes only at the expense of other groups (Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998b). As a result, Whites oppose affirmative action policies much more strongly than do Blacks and Latinas/Latinos. For instance, Kinder and Sanders (1996) found regarding preferential hiring and promotion of Blacks: 49.3% Black versus 4.9% Whites favor strongly, while 62.9% Whites versus 19.7% Blacks oppose strongly allowing college quotas for Blacks; 62.1% Blacks versus 11.3% Whites favor strongly; 48.6% Whites versus 13.1% Blacks oppose strongly. Women evaluated affirmative action more positively than men, and Blacks and Hispanic were more positive than Whites. In each instance, the findings can at least in part be explained by self-interest (Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998b). Feelings about affirmative action are more positive toward White women and persons with disabilities than toward minorities (Kravitz & Platania, 1993). It may be that opposition to affirmative action has more to do with African Americans than with preferences per se (Skrentny, 1996). For instance, the opposition to preferences for African Americans is greater than for White women. Furthermore, preferences for veterans are not referred to as affirmative action, and neither are legacy admits or nepotism hires (Skrentny, 1996).

However, although reasons for lack of support differ from those of Whites, support for affirmative action by Blacks and Latinas/os is not consistent. For example, in a survey of Latino faculty, 74% stated they do not believe affirmative action is working effectively to bring members of their own groups to their universities (Garza, 1993). In comparison to their positive reaction to the principle of educational equity, college students are less supportive of specific policies that address racial and ethnic inequalities (Lopez et al., 1995). However, Black and Latino students support the policy more than Whites (Lopez et al., 1995).
Criticism of affirmative action comes from two primary sources (Orfield, 2001). First, as noted earlier, the policy was intended to be a time-limited strategy for providing access. It was expected that minority groups eventually would produce qualified students at rates comparable to Whites. Thus, even if affirmative action were to survive, it would not survive forever (Orfield, 2001). Second, affirmative action has not had uniformly positive effects on its beneficiaries (Heilman, 1996; Orfield, 2001; Steele, 1990). For instance, as has been argued in the debates on affirmative action, the admission of students under affirmative action policies potentially can stigmatize all students from groups gaining by affirmative action. Nonbeneficiaries may assume that all students from those groups are admitted only through affirmative action rather than based upon their personal attributes, and that they are less qualified than their peers (Nacoste & Lehman, 1987).

Research on stereotype threat and stigma consciousness, the extent to which people expect to be viewed and treated in stereotypic ways (e.g., Pinel, Warner, & Chua, this issue; Steele, 1997), indicates that when even highly capable students believe that they are part of a group that is expected to perform poorly on a particular type of task, their performance suffers. In addition, people high in stigma consciousness are more likely to perceive discrimination directed toward their group and toward them personally and are more likely to provide sound evidence for these perceptions. However, arming people with knowledge that they will be stereotyped and discriminated against may backfire and may make them more likely to confirm group stereotypes (Pinel, 1999). “Paradoxically, people’s excessive concern about their stereotyped status can actually have the unintended effect of spoiling their opportunities to move beyond it” (Pinel, 1999, p. 127). Exacerbating the situation is that stigmatized people exist in a state of chronic uncertainty regarding why they receive positive and negative outcomes (Blaine, Crocker, & Major, 1995).

The work on stereotype threat and stigma consciousness is strongly related to that on expectancies (Dovidio, Gaertner, Niemann, & Snider, 2001; Niemann, 2001; Niemann, O’Connor, & McLorie, 1998). Expectancies exist in the eyes of beholders and actors. As such, disconfirmation of expectancy resulting from stigma and stereotyping is very difficult (Crosby & Clayton, 1990). It can negatively impact self-identity, educational expectations of members of ethnic/racial minority groups (Niemann, 2001; Niemann, Romero, & Arbona, 2000; Niemann et al., 1999), and intergroup relations (Mindiola, Niemann, & Rodriguez, 2002; Niemann, 1999). Affirmative action provides the truly prejudiced with an easy mark for their intolerance, while also permitting covert racists to voice racist feelings. “[M]any Whites assume that every surly or incompetent Black worker they encounter owes his or her job to federal pressure, while blaming surliness or incompetence among Whites on permissive child bearing and junk food” (Crosby & Clayton, p.67). “The very programs designed to help members of disadvantaged social groups may perpetuate disadvantage in the long run through a process of self-fulfilling negative prophesies” (Crosby & Clayton, 1990, p. 62).
Arguing against affirmative action from a different perspective, Shelby Steele (1998) states that a focus on their race helps people avoid full agency for their fate, transforms responsibility, and allows others to use it for moral power. He argues that “Race absolutely corrupts those who use it for redemption and absolutely weakens those who use it for advancement” (Steele, 1998, p. 112). Shelby Steele views redemptive liberalism as the way many Whites avoid initiation of minorities into full society. “As the culture of preference has lost face in the United States, it has simultaneously increased the power of stigma. . . . This, I believe, is what defines the great polarization that is so evident today between black and white Americans. Whites grow more fatigued with preferences, deference, and the power of stigma, while Blacks become more invested in stigmatization as their only significant power in American life. And behind the power of stigma, giving it credibility, is the charge that American is still a racist society” (Steele, 1998, p. 150).

In sum, psychological and social processes help explain why attitudes are so polarized about affirmative action and why there are strong feelings both supporting and opposing policies. In effect, it is clear that affirmative action per se cannot survive indefinitely. At the same time, however, the court findings in the Michigan case reflect a different type of policy where race can be a factor weighted among many in attempting to achieve a student body that represents many types of diversity. As such, criticisms like those of Shelby Steele are minimized because stigma does not cross the full array of diversity factors and affect them all proportionately to their weights. Rather, negative effects of stigma in the academy center on race. Nevertheless, practices that shed light on the bases of attitudes and that provide approaches that move beyond affirmative action language are important, for they provide direction for the future.

**Affirmative Action Policy Implementation**

In 1995, Blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians constituted slightly more than a quarter (26.3%) of all U.S. citizens (Jones, 1998). By the year 2050, they will collectively constitute nearly half, that is, 47.5% (Jones, 1998). However, research on university representation and demographics indicates that changes since affirmative action policies, which were put in place have been modest: “Thirty years of affirmative action, largely as preferential admissions, has failed, and it has failed at individual institutions” (Renner, 2003). While doors to public U.S. educational institutions are technically open to all, the great disparities in the educational system between Whites and ethnic/racial minorities have been diminished only modestly since President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 11246 in 1965, implementing affirmative action policy.

According to enrollment numbers from an almanac issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2002), enrollments today are not dramatically different from where they were 20 years ago. Fall 2001 freshmen enrollments included 27%
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students of color (American Indian, 1.2%; African American, 10.6%; Asian American/Pac Islander, 7.6%; Mexican American/Chicano/Puerto Rican/Latino, 7.4%), compared with 24% students of color in 1993 and 18% in 1982. The changes have not resulted in proportions comparable to the proportions of these groups in the general population, particularly given increases in the proportion of students of color during that period. With respect to college graduation, 28% of White non-Latinas/os ages 25 year and over had a bachelor’s degree or more (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), compared with 17% of non-Hispanic Blacks and 11% of Latinas/os (see also Maruyama, 2003).

In terms of university administration, in 1997, White males and females made up 86% of all administrators. The change in administrators of color between 1989 and 1997 was 1.4% (Harvey, 2001), representing 14% of administrators. Among college presidents, 64% were White men in 2000, and 9.2% of college presidents were members of ethnic/racial minority groups (Harvey, 2001). However, most African American presidents work at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), (Harvey, 2001).

White representation in faculty employment for all full-time faculty (including instructors) in all institutions changed from 91.07% in 1979 to 87.9% in 1991. For African Americans, the change was from 4.5% to 4.9%; so overall representation changed by 0.4%. For Latinas/os, the change was from 1.5% to 2.1%, a change of 0.7% of faculty. For Asians, the change was from 1.5% to 4.6%, representing an increase of 3.1% for this group. For Native Americans, there was no change in faculty representation that stayed constant at 0.3% from 1979 to 1991. Between 1989 and 1997, full-time faculty of color have increased their proportional representation moderately, from 11.5 to 13.7% (Harvey, 2001). Between 1995 and 1997, the number of minority full-time faculty increased by 9.5% compared with an overall increase of 2.8% (Harvey, 2001). The specific change per groups between 1995 and 1997 was as follows: African Americans up 3.3%, American Indians up 6.3%, Asian Americans up 13.5%, Latinas/os up 14.1%. Despite the modest gains, more than three decades after the implementation of affirmative action policy, White males are still substantially overrepresented in higher education.

Among women, White females have been the greatest beneficiaries of faculty employment changes that were, in large part, the result of the implementation of affirmative action (Rai & Critzer, 2000), while women of color are the least represented among the faculty ranks. In 1997, women of color accounted for only 2.5% of all full professors, compared with 72.1% for White men, 17.3% for White women, and 8.1% for Men of Color (Harvey, 2001).

**PreK-12 Education and Affirmative Action**

Part of the criticism of the U.S. educational system is laid upon the preK-12 system (e.g., Carter, 2001; Payne, 2001; Schmidt et al., 2001), suggesting that if
students of all races/ethnicities were being equally prepared in the preK-12 system, affirmative action policies for achieving diversity in higher education would be unnecessary. According to a report by the American Council on Education (Harvey, 2002), in 2000, 77% of African Americans aged 18–24 years completed high school, compared to 59.6% of Latinas/os, and 82% of Whites. Some of this low performance for Blacks and Latinas/os, in particular, has been attributed to tracking, which has strong implications for university admissions. Tracking amounts to legal segregation, sorting students into high, average, and low tracks based on prior achievement and perceived intellectual ability. Many scholars consider tracking to be de facto segregation (e.g., Green, 1999). Blacks are more than twice as likely as Whites to be placed in a low, noncollege preparation track; 24% of Blacks in 10th grade are placed in a vocational track versus 10% of Whites (Green, 1999). If there is good news for the future, it is that the standards movement and the work on school improvement have argued that in the current information age all students need to be educated to levels equivalent to preparation for college, for the skills that employers are looking for are virtually the same as the ones that colleges have expected (e.g., Somerville & Yi, 2002). The practical consequences of such assertions, however, remain to be seen.

Certainly, the preK-12 system is one logical place to examine inequality for college preparedness. However, placing all the blame on the preK-12 system may be naïve; it disregards preexisting differences tied to poverty and language proficiency that markedly affect children’s educational experiences from preschool through college (e.g., Maruyama, 2003). Although some argue that preK-12 education today is probably better than it ever has been (e.g., Berliner & Biddle, 1995), shifts in the expectations for schools plus political pressures have led to negative impressions of schools. Nevertheless, because addressing differences in college preparedness begins there, differences in preK-12 achievement warrant attention.

The Bush administration focused attention on educational achievement of all students with the passage of the 2002 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act. In general, the ESEA stipulates that children must meet the educational standards of each state in order to graduate from high school. The ESEA states that by 2007, students who do not pass state mastery assessments will not receive a diploma. Beginning in academic year 2003–2004, any schools in which the majority of students do not meet minimum criteria on the state assessments will be placed on focused assistance. The school then has 3 years to improve or be taken over by the state. In addition, all special interest groups, including different ethnic/racial minority groups and ESL (English as a second language) groups, must also pass the test in representative proportions. In principle, this law should bode well for students of color. It focuses attention on their performance like never before. Unfortunately, however, the process is highly politicized and supported by an approach that would not pass scrutiny of social scientists (e.g., Maruyama, 2003). Specifically, the methodological issues inherent
in tracking progress of small numbers of students from varying backgrounds are so great that they are likely to bog down the system. Most important for this issue, however, is that preK-12 school reform is moving forward independently of affirmative action. The effects of the ESEA remain to be seen; perhaps they will be better than the expectations of one of us (Maruyama, 2003). In the meantime, however, we might hope that as schools comply with the law, they develop ways of preparing more of their students for college success. As part of their research and public service responsibilities, universities need to be involved with the preK-12 systems in developing approaches and solutions from which schools can draw.

Where Do We Go From Here? Articles in Special Issue

Although affirmative action has been the primary policy employed to increase access of ethnic/racial minorities’ to higher education, it has not been the only approach. For instance there are long-standing Federal Programs like TRIO and Education Talent Search, and relatively new initiatives like GEAR UP, which target low-income and/or ethnic minority students and work to increase their preparedness for college (for further information on these programs, please go to www.ed.gov/programs). These programs focus primarily on the preK-12 system, and include campus visits, mentoring, and building cohort groups to support learning. They have not, however, had much systematic or public evaluation. Other institution-based programs in place across the United States are smaller in scale, and have received little recognition and are thus difficult to duplicate. Still other efforts have worked to improve retention of students of color, which also increases the numbers of graduates.

The articles in the special issue cover a wide range of topics. They include examination of teaching/classroom models, mentoring, historical racism, outreach programming and development of relations with minority organizations, and other social-ecological factors that need to be considered when proposing alternatives to affirmative action. The first article after this introduction addresses the need to prepare students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education programs, focusing on partnership programs for students in preK-12 schools (Maruyama et al., this issue), an issue not addressed by affirmative action policies. It examines successes and challenges of a program that has been in existence since 1987, and which has seen over 4,000 of its graduates go on to postsecondary education. In the absence of programmatic developments that increase the pool of students who can gain admission to selective colleges without affirmative action, one could view admissions in a postaffirmative action era as a question of rearranging deck chairs, where universities compete more intensively to attract the limited numbers of students of color who can meet admissions standards. As described earlier, higher education is at the end of an education pipeline that narrows much too dramatically for students of color.
The next two articles describe research and programs focused on student and faculty retention (Girves et al.; Pinel et al., this issue), another issue ignored by affirmative action policies. Girves et al., share their experience in running mentoring programs for students of color, and look at philosophical underpinnings of mentoring programs, existing research on them, and their own data from a multiinstitutional program. They also provide a conceptual model for mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are widely viewed as effective, and provide a critical tool for use both in preK-12 education and higher education. The authors have extensive experience with programs for females in science as well as for students of color. They identify key components of effective programs, and give examples of programs serving undergraduate students, graduate students, and junior faculty.

Pinel et al. (this issue) focus on structural factors in institutions that result in certain types of students disengaging from college and doing poorly. Specifically, they look at how stigma consciousness affects performance of male and female students from stigmatized groups at predominantly White institutions as well as issues tied to retention of those students. The consistent finding is that stigma consciousness adversely affects the academic performance of both males and females.

The next articles focus on university climate and how it affects issues like polarization of the campus community as well as student and faculty retention (Niemann & Dovidio; Knight & Hebl, this issue; Rabinowitz & Wittig, this issue). Drawing from multimethod research that includes experiments, surveys, and individual interviews, Niemann and Dovidio discuss issues that impact organizational climate, such as mentoring, which, in turn, impact faculty retention. They present a model that mediates the impact of affirmative action on the satisfaction of faculty of color, and apply that model to survey data collected from a diverse faculty sample. Their data show that faculty satisfaction is related to how faculty members of color perceive that affirmative action is viewed by their communities. Community views are mediated by supportiveness of colleagues as well as assuredness of the faculty. They argue that perceptions of departmental and institutional support are a central factor in faculty satisfaction and retention, and that real support through processes like mentoring also is very important.

Rabinowitz and Wittig (this issue) illustrate the importance of programs of prejudice reduction in high schools for students from high-status groups. As prejudice is reduced among high school students, university retention of students of color may increase. Students who have participated in prejudice reduction programs should be less likely to stigmatize students of color, thereby positively impacting university climate. In addition, they focus on the processes through which programs are effective, identifying outgroup orientation as a variable that mediates the relation between student beliefs about egalitarianism and prejudice.

Knight and Hebl (this issue) look at the relation between how diversity programs are presented and how college students interpret those programs.
Specifically, they examine whether or not appeals to broad benefits of diversity programs would be more effective than those that focused primarily on the benefits to the group receiving favorable treatment. Based upon responses of White college students, Knight and Hebl found that justifying programs using appeals to benefits for both minority and majority students were more effective than those that focused on benefits only to a single group.

The next article by Torre and Fine focuses on an innovative program for those traditionally completely left out of the higher education system—incarcerated women. An irony of the current penal system is that it has dramatically limited the educational experiences that incarcerated individuals can attain, with the consequence that the chances of rehabilitation and gainful employment in meaningful careers are limited. Torre and Fine (this issue) begin with a detailed discussion of the racialized criminal justice system and its impact on education of incarcerated youth, noting that 58% of youths in prison are African American. In most systems, these youths are subsequently denied opportunities to pursue education. For those youths who remain in the preK-12 system, standardized testing, zero tolerance policies, and disproportionately high rates of suspension from school lead to situations whereby those youth distrust the educational system and psychologically, if not actually, “drop out” of the system and become part of the underground economy of the underpaid. Fine and Torre also review college prison programs. They follow this bleak review with data from a participatory action research project that looks at effects of education on a range of outcomes. Their research supports the view that education could have a number of positive effects on youth and young adults in prison. Although Torre and Fine work with incarcerated women, the implications of their findings for work with men is critical, for the proportions of men from all major ethnic/racial groups in postsecondary education has been declining (e.g., Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2001). Programs for men offer the possibility of reducing the disproportionate numbers of men in prison and replacing them with increasing numbers of men in college.

The final article (Hurtado, this issue) first provides an analysis of the knowledge gained from the programs and research described in the various articles in this issue. Hurtado (this issue) also presents data from a 10-campus study examining effects of diversity experiences in postsecondary educational settings on students’ educational outcomes, their engagement in civic activities, and their views about diversity. Her study provides support for previous work on impacts of students’ cognitive and social developments as a function of frequency and quality of interaction with diverse peers. It demonstrates that effects occur as early as the second year of college. In addition, Hurtado’s article examines how the programs and research in this issue fit into the larger literature on minority participation in higher education. Linking the work to the larger literature, it presents information from her research and research of others about what current research says with respect to benefits to higher education institutions of affirmative action. Finally, it links
these articles to other work looking at the benefits of diverse student bodies and interaction with diverse peers on entire campus communities.

References


Inequities in Higher Education


YOLANDA FLORES NIEMANN (MEd, MA, PhD from the University of Houston) is Chair of the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies at Washington State University, where she is also an Affiliate Faculty in Women’s Studies, Disability Studies, and American Studies. Her research interests include effects of stereotypes across various domains, including identity and risky behavior, the psychological effects of tokenism, and overcoming obstacles to Latinas/os’ pursuit of higher education. She is the Co-PI of a 5-year $12,000,000 GEAR UP grant from the U.S. Department of Education. She has served as Program Chair for the APA Division of the Study of Ethnic Minority Issues and on the Washington State
Governor’s Commission on Hispanic Affairs. Her publications have focused on stereotypes, tokenism, and intergroup relations.

GEOFFREY MARUYAMA has PhD and MA degrees from the University of Southern California, and a BA from Macalester College. He is Professor of Educational Psychology and Assistant Vice President for Multicultural and Academic Affairs at the University of Minnesota. He has held a number of administrative positions at the University, and has been Interim Director, Research, Evaluation, and Assessment for the Saint Paul Public Schools. He is a past president of SPSSI. He has authored two books and numerous articles.
Gaining on the Goals? Affirmative Action Policies, Practices, and Outcomes. in Media Communication Education. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Office ol Educational Research and improvement. employment opportunities and access to higher education for all Americans in an economy squeezed by global competition, and maintains that "Wedge politics, scapegoating, and the politics of scarcity go hand in hand" (p. 13). Jones argues that driving segments of society apart and blaming them for society's problems - in the current case, unemployment - has been a common political device throughout history and results in easy justifications for unequal treatment of ethnic minorities in the current atmosphere of mistrust. Affirmative action aims to promote diversity, but it's one of the most controversial practices in college admissions. Here's what you need to know about it. Likewise, students from overrepresented groups may need to meet higher academic standards to gain acceptance. This was the issue brought to the foreground in the lawsuit against Harvard University by Students for Fair Admissions, which was representing Asian-Americans who claimed that affirmative action made it harder for them to get in. The Paradox of Affirmative Action. The root of the issue of affirmative action is that it's a paradox. History of Affirmative Action in Education and College Admissions. Thus affirmative action as currently applied does not enhance access and gender equity in university education. A multifaceted approach to developing gender equality in universities would require various strategies to support one another in order to enhance access and gender equity in university education in the three countries. Keywords: gender, access to university education. Affirmative action has been practiced in all three countries since the early 1990s, but there has been no comparative analysis of its effects. Country level studies have been done for Uganda (Kwesiga 2002; Businge 2005; Morley et al. 2006), Tanzania (FAWE, 2001; Lihamba et al. 2006; Morley et al. 2006) and Kenya (Nyamu 2004; Nungu 1994; Onsongo, 2007).