Discrimination: Then and Now

Dr. Richard L. Riccardi
Southern Connecticut State University
Fall 2009 NEACRAO Conference
Introduction

Who I Am...a little bit functional/a little bit technical...
• Director, Office of Management Information and Research
• Banner Project Manager & Banner Student Team Leader
• Associate Dean, Graduate Studies & Continuing Education
• Systems Analyst

Where I’m From...
• Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU)
• Located in New Haven
• About 12,000 students
  • 7,366 FT Undergraduates, 980 FT Graduates (Fall 2009)

Why I’m (and We’re) Here...
• Data and factoids about men and women
• Current gender situation in colleges and universities
• Common myths and future challenges
Discrimination

definition:
1. the act of discriminating, or distinguishing differences
2. the ability to make or perceive distinctions; perception; discernment
3. partiality, or bias, in the treatment of a person or group, which is unfair, illegal, etc.
4. an act, policy, pattern of behavior, etc. characterized by such partiality

Reverse Discrimination

definition:

discrimination in hiring, college admissions, etc. directed against members of certain social or racial groups, as white males, thought of as being dominant or having benefited from past discrimination against minority groups who are now favored, often as a result of affirmative action.
Types of Discrimination

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Ethnicity
- Gender, Gender Identity & Sexual Harassment
- Age
- Marital status
- Pregnancy

- Vietnam Era Veterans Status
- Special Disabled Veterans Status
- Covered Military Service
- Sexual Orientation (real or perceived)
- Religion
- Medical Condition
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Retaliation against individuals who have exercised their rights under these laws
Mr. Richard Riocardi
70 Jasmine Lane
Hamden, CT 06517

Dear Richard:

The Search Committee met last evening to audition another candidate for the Organist-Choir Director position at Trinity. They stayed on for a long discussion and elected to offer the position to another candidate. They were favorably impressed with your audition; but the committee felt they wanted a person who was somewhat more experienced.

Thank you for your time and assistance. We wish you well both in your education and in your musical endeavors.

Sincerely,
On behalf of the Committee

Robert M. Brusic

July 30, 1985
Examples of Discrimination

- Verbiage that could be interpreted as being offensive, such as comments about someone's race, sex, ancestry, color, age, physical or mental disability, mental status, religion, or sexual preference.
- Not allowing a student or employee the time away from class or work to observe a religious holiday, or not allowing him or her to make up the time of work lost due to observance of religious holiday.
- Screening a person out of a job on the basis of age.
- Treating a student or employee or peer differently because of her/his race.
- Constantly commenting or kidding about someone's ancestry.
- Not providing assistance to an employee or student because of a physical or mental disability when you provide this assistance to everyone else.
- Not being sensitive to others' needs because of their gender.
- Not listening to, or not taking seriously, suggestions or ideas from someone because of her/his gender.
- Not giving credit to someone for a well-done effort because of her/his race.
A Few Historical Moments

- 1954: United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled that separate educational institutions for black and white students was unconstitutional and that remedies needed to be developed to correct the inequality.

- 1972: President Nixon signs Higher Education Act, which includes Title IX, barring discrimination in higher education programs, including funding for sports and other extracurricular activities. As a result, women's participation in team sports, particularly in collegiate athletics, surged with the passage of this act.

- 2002: The Disability Discrimination Act applied to Higher Education and as such all Higher Education Institutions are expected to be more proactive in supporting all of their disabled students.

- 2003: The Supreme Court (5-4) upheld the University of Michigan Law School's affirmative action policy, ruling that race can be one of many factors considered by colleges when selecting their students because it furthers "a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body."
Examples of Not-So-Subtle Discrimination

Revenge of the Nerds, © 1984, 20th Century Fox

Animal House © 1978, Universal Studios
Example of Subtle Discrimination

- Analyzed 9,000 students who attended one of 10 highly selective colleges and universities. (They are not named, but include public and private institutions, research universities and liberal arts colleges.)

- Argue that elite higher education contributes to both social mobility and inequality, the authors investigate such areas as admission advantages for minorities, academic achievement gaps tied to race and class, unequal burdens in paying for tuition, and satisfaction with college experiences.
Significant advantages and disadvantages exist for members of some racial and ethnic groups with regard to the SAT or ACT scores they need to have the same odds of admission as members of other groups. While advantages and disadvantages were also found based on economic class, these were far less significant than those based on race and ethnicity.

Example: A black student with an ACT score of 27 would have the same chances of admission at the institutions in the study as a white student with a score of 30.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Public Institutions (on ACT scale of 36)</th>
<th>Private Institutions (on SAT scale of 1,600)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>+3.8</td>
<td>+310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>+0.3</td>
<td>+130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
<td>-140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal: Findings

- Most undergraduates have significant interactions with members of different races and ethnicities, and these interactions result in learning about the experiences of different groups.
  - 62.8 percent said that they often or very often socialize with someone of a different race.
  - 51.2 percent of students reported having lived with at least one student of a different race.
  - 50.9 percent of students reported having a "close friendship" with at least one student of a different race.
  - 35.8 percent of students reported having dated at least one person of a different race.

- There are significant gaps in the kinds of meaningful cross-race interactions that take place with some groups much more likely than others to have such interactions. From most-common to least common:
  - White-Hispanic
  - White-Asian
  - Hispanic-Asian
  - Black-Hispanic
  - Black-Asian
  - Black-White
On measures of academic performance, graduation rates across racial and ethnic groups show only modest gaps at the institutions studied. The average six-year graduation rates for these institutions is 89 percent. Asian students most likely to graduate (92 percent). Black students least likely to graduate (78 percent).

But analysis of class rank suggests major gaps in academic performance. More than half of black students and nearly one-third of Latino students who graduated from the colleges studied, for example, finished in the bottom quintile of their classes.
Response from Roger Clegg,
President and General Counsel at the Center
for Equal Opportunity

There are two forests here that should not be obscured by the trees:

First, there is a lot of racial discrimination in admissions taking place; and, second, the purported beneficiaries of such discrimination perform significantly worse academically than other students.

The justification for such discrimination is the supposed educational benefits of a racially diverse student body. Those benefits are dubious, but even if they exist, they are simply not worth the costs of racial discrimination, namely:

It is personally unfair, passes over better qualified students, and sets a disturbing legal, political, and moral precedent in allowing racial discrimination; it creates resentment; it stigmatizes the so-called beneficiaries in the eyes of their classmates, teachers, and themselves, as well as future employers, clients, and patients; it fosters a victim mindset, removes the incentive for academic excellence, and encourages separatism; it compromises the academic mission of the university and lowers the overall academic quality of the student body; it creates pressure to discriminate in grading and graduation; it breeds hypocrisy within the school; it encourages a scofflaw attitude among college officials; it mismatches students and institutions, guaranteeing failure or academic underperformance for many of the former; it papers over the real social problem of why so many African Americans and Latinos are academically uncompetitive; and it gets states and schools involved in unsavory activities like deciding which racial and ethnic minorities will be favored and which ones not, and how much blood is needed to establish group membership.
“Just about every existing idea for reforming college admissions would not, by itself, preserve current levels of racial and ethnic diversity -- if current affirmative action policies were eliminated or scaled back.”

• Remove testing: dropping SAT/ACT requirements would result in gains for Blacks and Latinos.

• What is your mission?
  • Access
  • Selectivity
  • Diversity

• Are your doors “wide open” or just “slightly ajar?”
Thank You!!!  Questions?

http://www.southernct.edu/management_info_research/

Email: riccardir1@southernct.edu

Dr. Richard L. Riccardi
Southern Connecticut State University
Fall 2009 NEACRAO Conference