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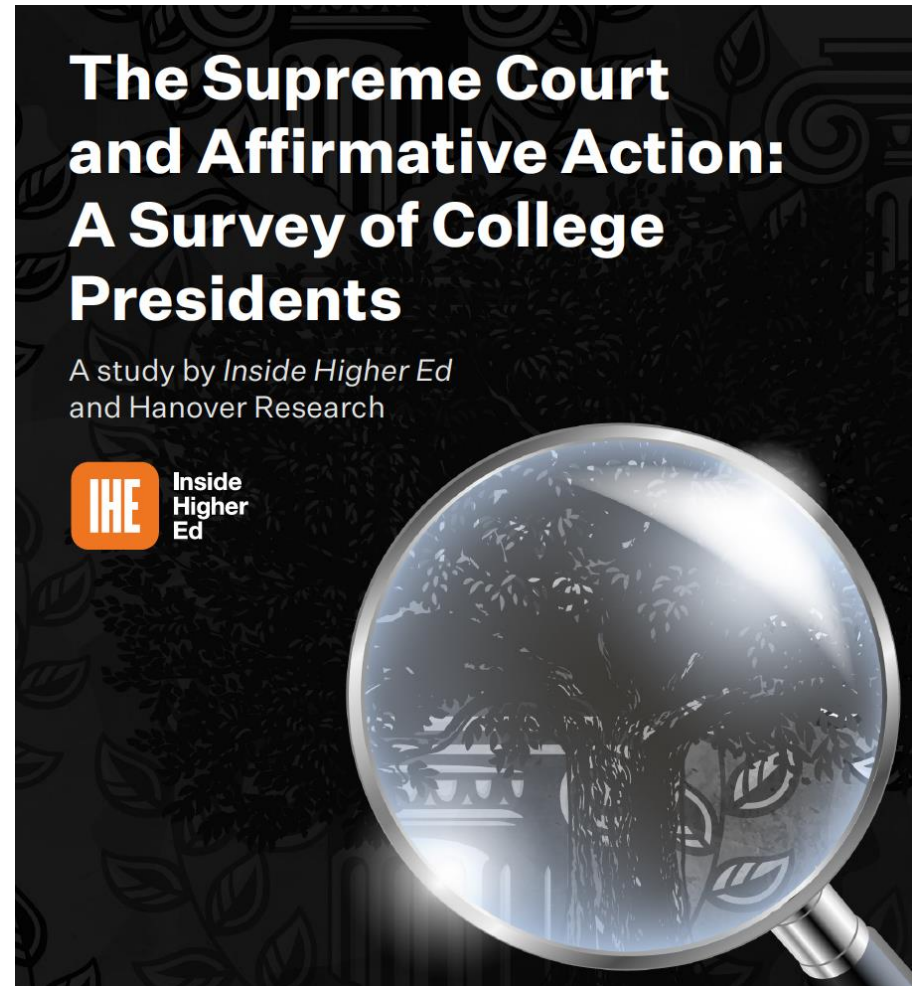
The Future of College Admissions: College Presidents' Reactions to the Affirmative Action Ruling

An Inside Higher Ed webcast
Nov. 16, 2023, 2 p.m. Eastern

About This Webcast

- Hosts:
 - Doug Lederman, editor and co-founder, *Inside Higher Ed*
 - Colleen Flaherty, senior editor, *Inside Higher Ed*
- Guest:

Walter Kimbrough, former president of Dillard University and Philander Smith College



About the Survey

- By: *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover Research
- Administered: Online in August and September 2023 via Qualtrics
- Respondents: 136 presidents and chancellors at private nonprofits and publics
- Margin of error: 8%

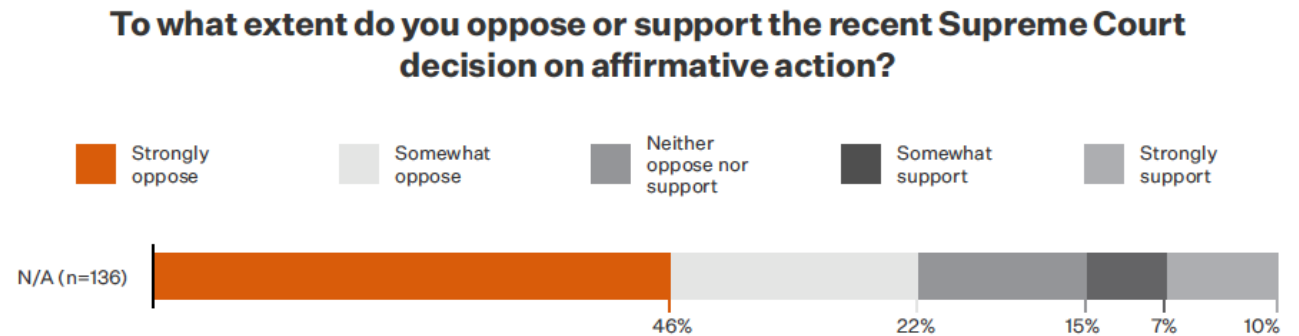
Questions about:

- General reaction to SCOTUS decision
- How decision will impact diversity in higher ed
- How decision will affect respondents' own campuses and admissions policies
- Anticipated responses and possible workarounds

10 Survey Takeaways

Takeaway 1: Most presidents oppose SCOTUS's decision on affirmative action.

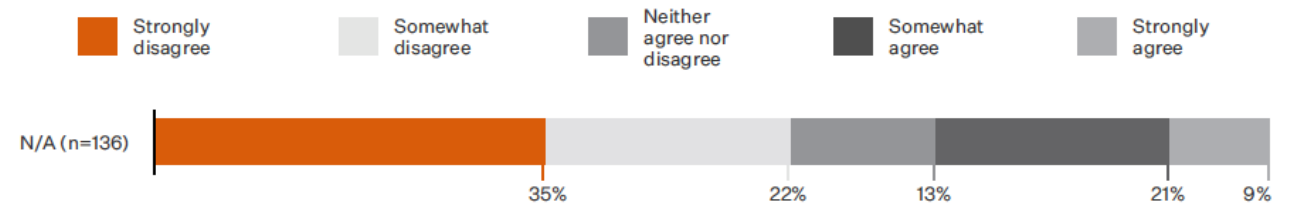
- 2/3+ of presidents **oppose** the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action.
- 46% of presidents **strongly oppose** the decision.
- Just 17% somewhat or strongly **support it**.
- Presidents in the Northeast (64%) and the West (52%) are significantly more likely than those in the South (27%) to **strongly oppose** the decision.



Takeaway 2: The majority of presidents don't think the decision reflects today's racial realities.

- 30% of presidents agree that the SCOTUS decision reflects a **realistic sense of race in the U.S. today**, while 57% disagree.
- Presidents from the South (41%) are significantly **more likely** than those in the Midwest (17%) to agree that the decision reflects race today.

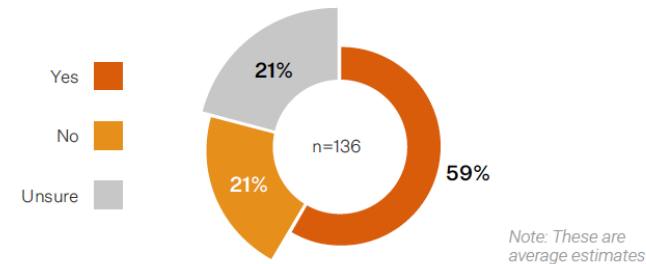
Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statement:
The Supreme Court decision reflects a realistic sense of race in the U.S. today.



Takeaway 3: Presidents predict shifts in diversity, just not at their own institutions.

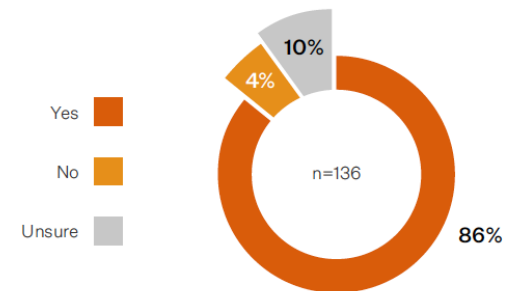
- 1/2+ presidents believe the decision will result in **fewer minority students being admitted to competitive institutions** than in the past.
- 86% of presidents feel that **their institution** will maintain its current level of diversity.
- Just 4% of presidents say their institution **won't** maintain its diversity.

Do you believe the decision will result in fewer minority students being admitted to competitive institutions than in the past?



MAINTENANCE OF CURRENT LEVEL OF DIVERSITY

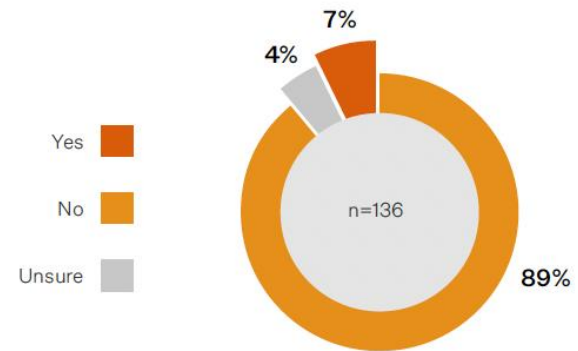
Presidents largely feel as though their institution will maintain its current level of diversity under the decision. Very few feel that their institution will not maintain its current level of diversity (4 percent).



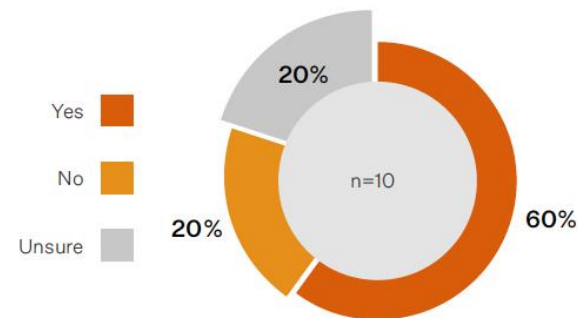
Takeaway 4: Few presidents say the decision will prompt admissions policy changes at their institutions.

- **Just 7%** of presidents think the decision will result in changes to their institution's **admissions policies**.
- Of these few, 60% indicate that their institution is **prepared** for those changes.
- Presidents from private nonprofits are **more likely** to predict such changes than presidents from publics.

Will the decision result in changes in your institution's admissions policies?

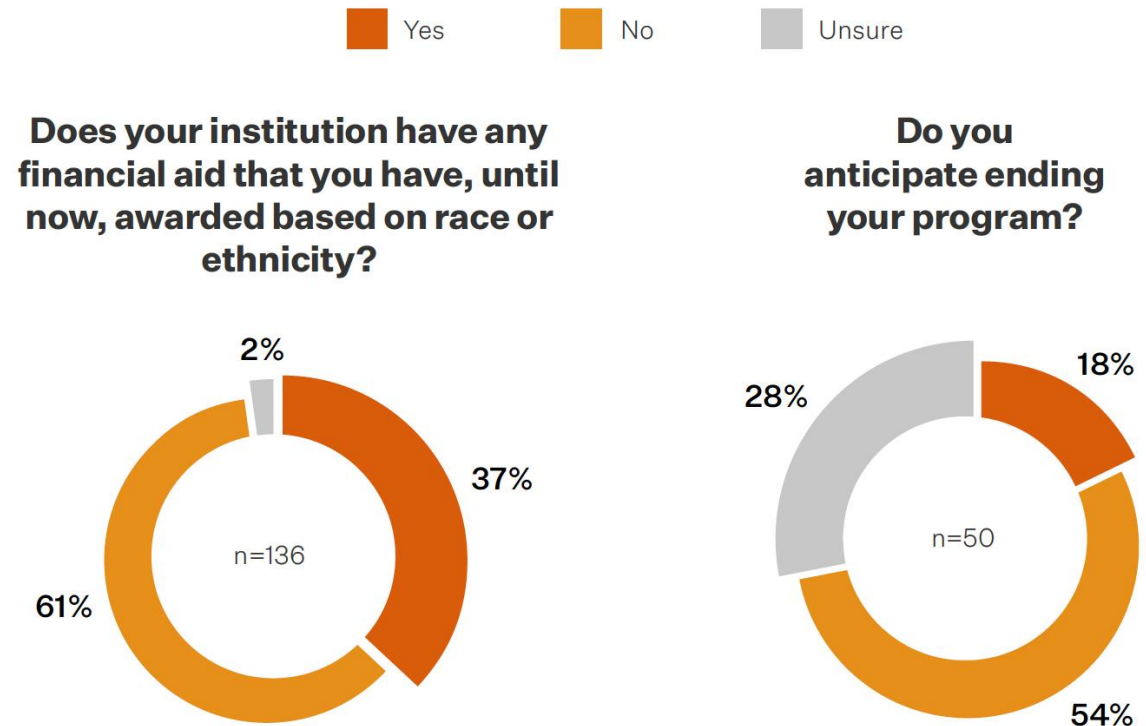


Is your institution prepared for those changes?



Takeaway 5: Half of presidents at institutions with race-based financial aid programs don't plan on ending them.

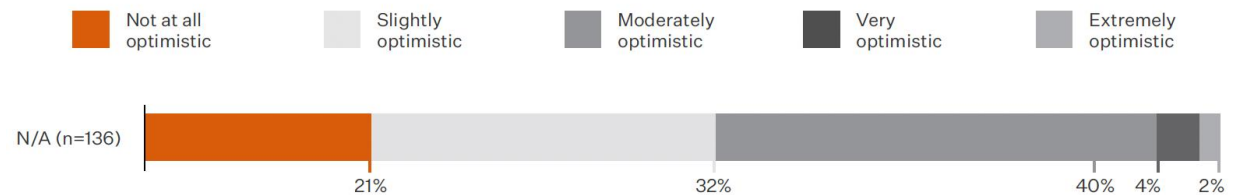
- 1/2+ of presidents say their institution **doesn't** have financial aid that was until now awarded based on race or ethnicity.
- 37% of presidents say their institution **does** have this type of FA (with presidents from private nonprofits more likely than those from publics to say so). Of these, **~1/2 don't plan on ending such programs. ~1/4** are unsure.



Takeaway 6: Presidents are somewhat optimistic about commonly cited workarounds.

- Just 7% of presidents are very or extremely optimistic about **essay questions or interviews** being able to help institutions achieve diversity in the new legal environment.
- Most presidents are either slightly (32%) or moderately (40%) optimistic about these solutions.
- 1 in 5 is not at all optimistic, with presidents from public institutions **significantly more likely** than those from private nonprofits to say this.

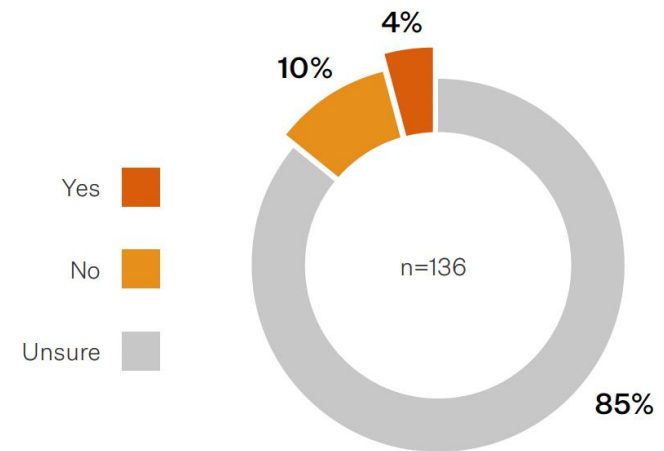
Some institutions hope that essay questions or interviews will help them achieve diversity in the new legal environment.
How optimistic are you about this solution?



Takeaway 7: Presidents aren't banking on transfer post-affirmative action.

Just 4% of presidents say they're considering a plan to admit significantly more **transfer students** as part of their response to the decision.

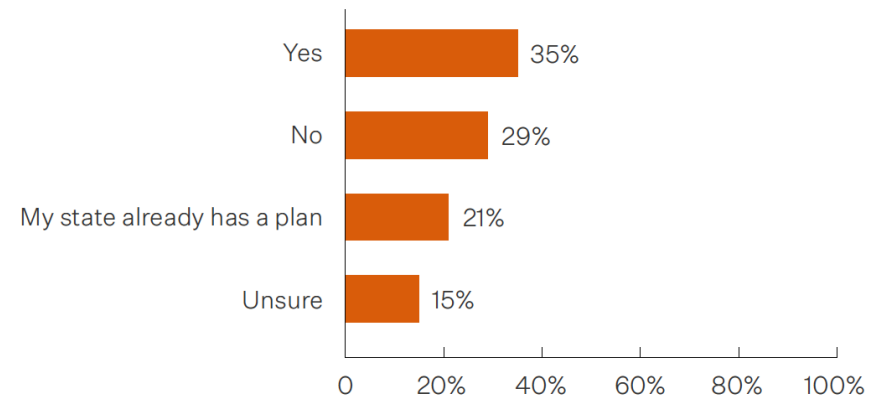
Is your institution considering a plan to admit significantly more transfer students as part of a response to the decision?



Takeaway 8: Presidents are divided on top-10-percent-style admissions plans for publics.

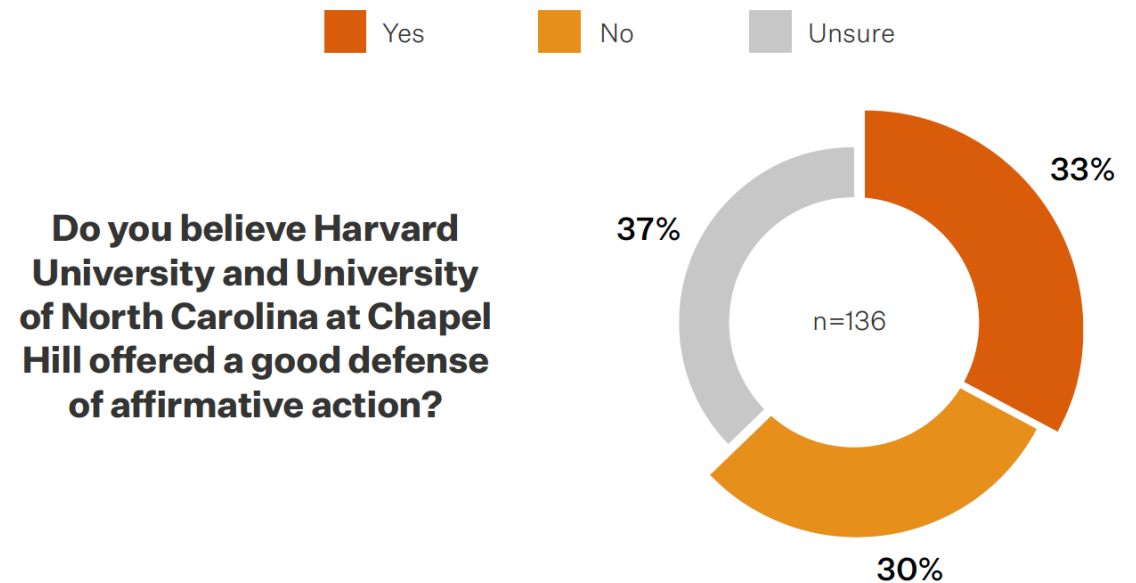
- 35% of presidents would favor a state-level program admitting all high school students in the **top decile of their high school classes** to publics while 29% of presidents wouldn't favor this idea.
- 21% of presidents say their state already has such a plan, with those from the South and West more likely to say so than those from Midwest and Northeast.
- Presidents at private nonprofits are **less likely** to favor such a plan than presidents at publics.

Would you favor your state adopting a program to admit all students to public institutions who are in the top 10 percent of their high school classes in the state? (n=136)



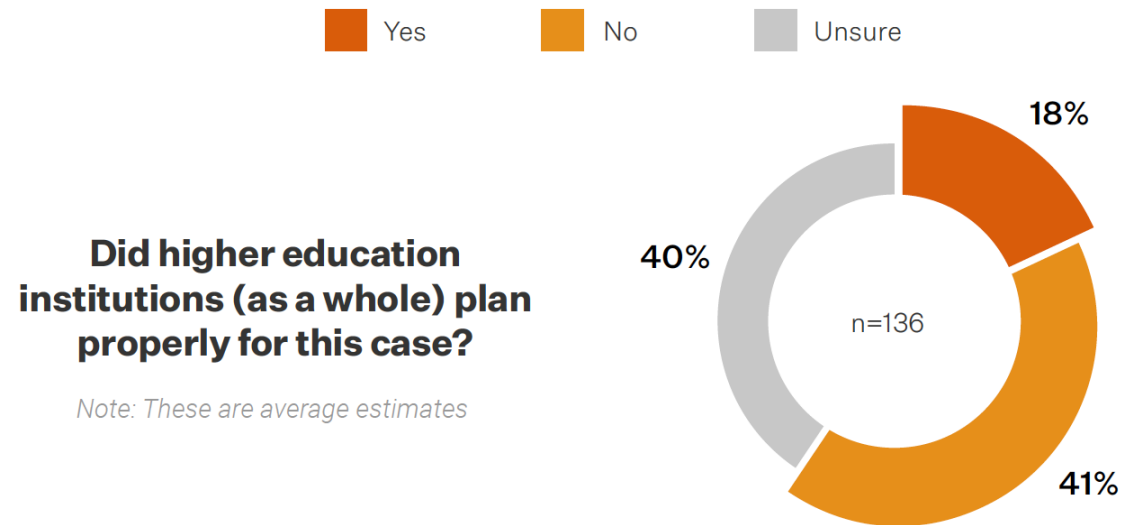
Takeaway 9: Presidents are also split on the defense of affirmative action in the SCOTUS case.

1/3 of presidents believe that Harvard and UNC-Chapel Hill offered a **good defense** of affirmative action in the case and nearly 1/3 say they did not.



Takeaway 10: A significant number of presidents think planning for this case was lacking across higher ed.

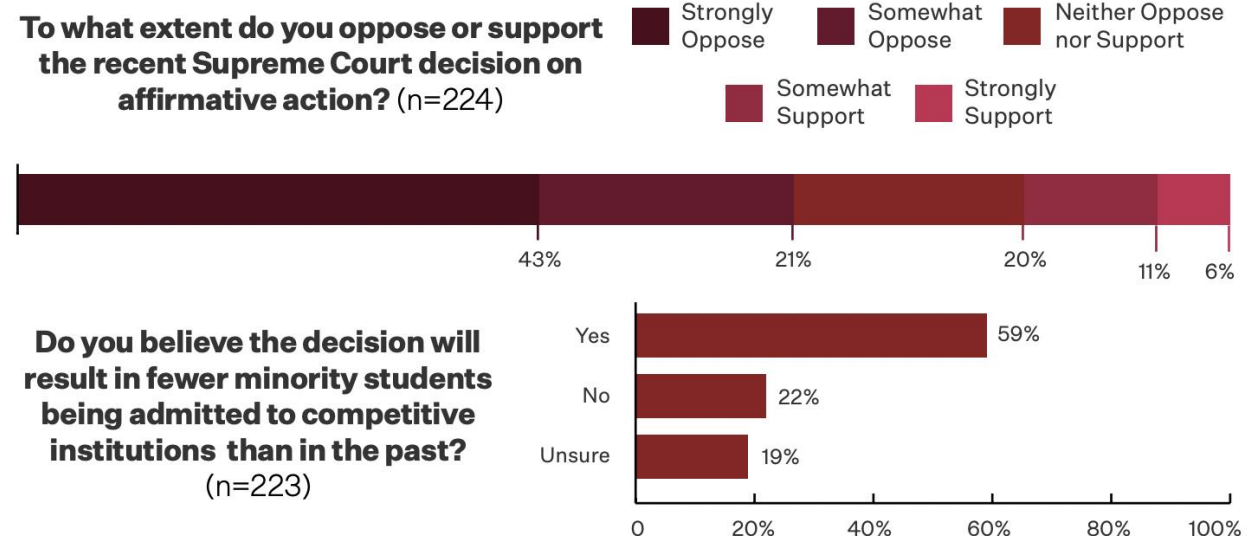
- Fewer than 1/2 of presidents say that higher ed as a whole **planned properly** for this case.
- Just 18% think that it **did plan properly** for this case, while 40% are unsure.
- Presidents in the Northeast are **significantly more likely** than those in the Midwest, South and West to think higher ed planned properly.



Bonus Takeaway: Presidents' views on the decision largely align with admissions officers'.

According to *Inside Higher Ed's* annual survey of admissions officers:

- 64% of respondents said they **disagreed** with the court's decision, while 17% **agreed**.
- Just 15% of said the ruling would **lead to changes** in their institution's admissions policies.
- 75% said they did not think diversity would decrease **at their college**.
- ~2/3 said their institution does not award any financial aid based on race or ethnicity, while 20% of those whose institutions do so anticipate a policy change.



Case Study: How Wesleyan University Is Responding

1. Ending legacy admissions
2. Pursuing **geographical diversity** within the U.S
3. Creating an annual **scholarship program** to recruit and support a group of undergraduates from Africa
4. Redoubling efforts to recruit **veterans**
5. Strengthening **outreach** to community-based organizations, college access programs and Title I high schools
6. Enhancing **community college** recruiting
7. Solidifying the university's Center for Prison Education
8. Increasing **financial aid** support

“The pessimism reflected in your survey about the country at large stems from the loss of the tool of affirmative action. In large states where this has happened before, we have seen a decline in the numbers of Black and brown students applying to universities. We fear this will happen again. The optimism each president has about his or her own school stems from our hopes that our particular new policies of recruiting will bring in the applications from minoritized groups. This may be wishful thinking—an occupational hazard for university presidents.”

—President Michael Roth

Another Take: Too Soon to Tell?

*“Schools that have a long and deep history of taking race into account in some respect in their admissions processes at the undergraduate level will have been trying to figure out what the near- and long-term ramifications of the decision are, and where their policies and practices may need to be refined and maybe even changed rather significantly. But chances are that even for institutions that are not highly selective and that do not have holistic admissions that took race into account, there could be places **embedded** within their institution where race had been taken into account.”*

—Peter McDonough, vice president and general counsel at the American Council on Education

Tip:

Some institutions are forming **working groups** to better understand the decision’s impact.

Guest Q & A

Audience Q & A

- What questions remain for you?
- How are you digesting/responding to the affirmative action decision on your campus?

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