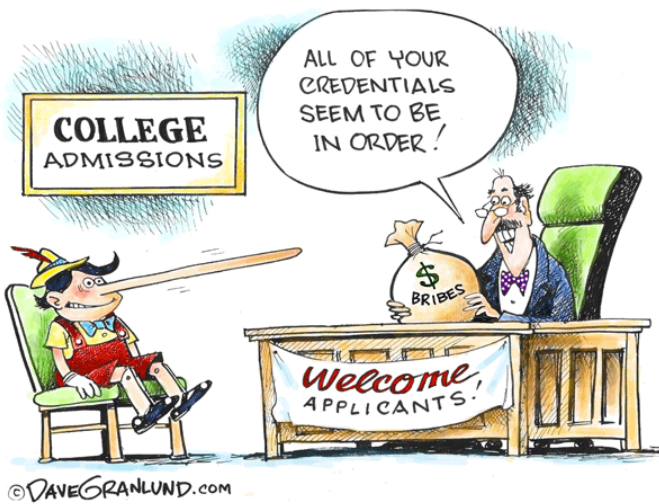


Rédiger en anglais et en 500 mots une synthèse des documents proposés, qui devra obligatoirement comporter un titre. Indiquer avec précision, à la fin du travail, le nombre de mots utilisés (titre inclus), un écart de 10% en plus ou en moins sera accepté.

Ce sujet propose les 5 documents suivants :

- un dessin de presse de Dave Granlund
- un graphique paru sur le site web *census.gov*
- un article paru dans *The Economist*
- Un article écrit par Afua Hirsch paru dans *The Guardian*
- Un article écrit par Meredith Varner paru dans *The Daily Free Press*

L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est aléatoire.

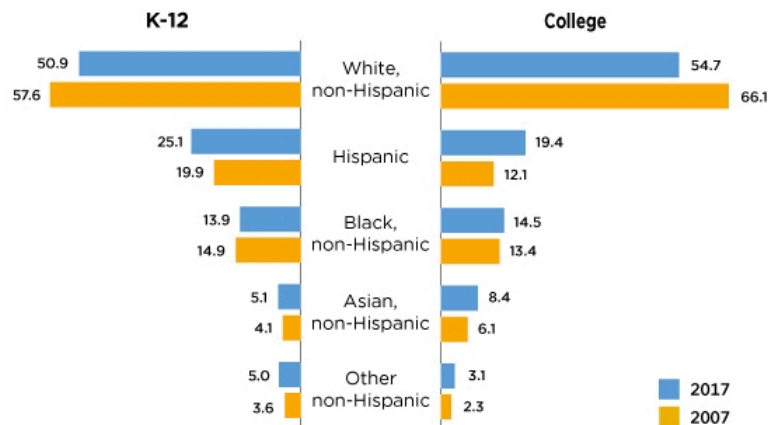


Cartoon by Dave Granlund, published March 2019 on [www.davegranlund.com](http://www.davegranlund.com)



School Enrollment Percentages by Race and Hispanic Origin

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)  
December 11, 2018



## **Affirmative dissatisfaction**

*A lawsuit reveals how peculiar Harvard's definition of merit is*

*The Economist* - June 23, 2018

ABBOTT LAWRENCE LOWELL, the president of Harvard from 1909 until 1933, thought the university had too many Jews. In the first year of Lowell's presidency, they made up 10% of the student body. By 1922 their numbers had more than doubled. To address what he called "the Hebrew problem", Lowell proposed an explicit Jewish quota of 15%. When that proved controversial, he set about making "a rule whose motive was less obvious on its face" to deny admission to students suspected of being Jewish. Admission to Harvard, previously granted by meeting a clear academic cut-off, became more nebulous—based more heavily on the "character and fitness" of applicants. The new "holistic" admissions policy worked as intended, successfully suppressing Jewish admissions.

Harvard, like many of America's top universities, retains a holistic admissions process. Unlike elite universities in most other countries, American colleges do not simply select the cleverest pupils—they also take into account extracurricular activities, family wealth and race. To critics, this system still operates as an engine of unfairness, except that the victims have now become Asian-Americans, who outperform their white peers on academic measures but still face stiffer odds when applying to Ivy League colleges. Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), an organisation founded by Edward Blum, a conservative activist opposed to race-based affirmative action, filed a lawsuit against Harvard alleging discrimination against Asian-American students in 2014. Despite a furious effort to quash the suit, Harvard was forced to turn over 90,000 pages on its tightly guarded admissions process. On June 15th both sides revealed duelling statistical analyses of admissions-decision data in court filings. Harvard's reputation for fairness and impartiality emerges bruised.

By the admission office's own ratings, Asian-Americans rank higher than white applicants in both their academic prowess and the quality of their extracurricular activities. Yet their admission rates are much lower. For Asian-Americans in the top decile of academic skill, just 13.4% are admitted, compared with 18.5% of whites (see chart). Asians are scored much worse on another measure of applicant quality—the "personal rating"—by admissions officers. Unlike the other two metrics, personality is judged subjectively and is decided by admissions officers who have not met the applicants. The alumni who conduct in-person interviews rate Asian-Americans as highly as white applicants. To SFFA, this constitutes clear proof of discrimination.

Peter Arcidiacono, an economist at Duke University employed by the plaintiffs, built a statistical model of the effect of race on admissions. He estimates that a male, non-poor Asian-American applicant with the qualifications to have a 25% chance of admission to Harvard would have a 36% chance if he were white. If he were Hispanic, that would be 77%; if black, it would rise to 95%. Damningly for the defendants, an internal report by Harvard's research arm, obtained during discovery, reached the same conclusions. Harvard officials claim that the report was incomplete and the analysis oversimplified.

Fighting statistics with statistics, Harvard's lawyers hired David Card, a prominent labour economist at the University of California, Berkeley. His model includes factors like the quality of a candidate's high school, parents' occupations and the disputed personal rating. Under these controls, Mr Card claims that Asian-American applicants are not disadvantaged compared with whites. But given that these factors are themselves correlated with race, Mr Card's argument is statistically rather like saying that once you correct for racial bias, Harvard is not racially biased.

The duelling economists disagree because they cannot agree on what constitutes fairness. Susan Dynarski, an economist at the University of Michigan, argues that Mr Arcidiacono's model tests for racial bias in an idealised system. Mr Card's model searches for racial bias in the context of how Harvard actually operates. For those unconvinced by fancy maths, the basic statistics also look worrying. Harvard insists that it has no racial quotas or floors, which would fall foul of Supreme Court rulings and jeopardise the university's federal funding. Yet the share of Asian-Americans it admits has stayed near 20% over the past decade. This is true even as the number of Asian-Americans in high schools has increased. Caltech, a top university without race-based affirmative action, saw its share of Asian-Americans increase dramatically over the same period.

Court filings also reveal how legacy preferences, which give significant advantages to the relatives of alumni, skew Harvard's admissions system. A suppressed internal report shows that the preference is the same size as that given to black applicants. Roughly 34% of legacy applicants are admitted—more than five times the rate of non-legacy applicants. This is tantamount to affirmative action for well-off white students. According to a survey of freshmen conducted by the Harvard Crimson, the college newspaper, 88% of legacy students come from families making more than \$125,000 a year. Recruited athletes, which Harvard admits in droves to fill its lacrosse teams and rowing eights, are also disproportionately white. By Mr Arcidiacono's reckoning, 22% of white students are legacies and 16% are recruited athletes.

Even if Harvard does not actually discriminate against Asian-Americans, its insistence on preserving hereditary preferences undermines its case. Rakesh Khurana, the dean of Harvard College, justified the policy on the grounds that it would bring those with "more experience with Harvard" together with "others who are less familiar with Harvard". Others say that it is necessary to ensure fundraising. Aside from the moral questions this poses, it is worth noting that nearby MIT, which does not favour legacy applicants, manages to do just fine.

---

### **I went to Oxford. As a black female student, I found it alienating and elitist**

*The experiences of minority students reflect new research showing the UK's top universities need to tackle the social segregation they reflect and help to cause*

By Afua Hirsch – Tuesday 15 August 2017 | *The Guardian*

I got asked a lot of annoying questions when I was a student. Some were about my hair texture (afro, kinky), libido (presumed to be supernatural) and expected ability to dance (think Beyoncé). Over time, researching the experiences of other students at Oxford, where I studied, I've found these interactions to be a common consequence of being black and female in an environment that is populated not just by white students but also by many who have never met a black person in the flesh before.

Then there was another question, asked by a much wider demographic. When I told people who lived and worked in Oxford – including local black people – that I was a student in the city, they would ask, "Oxford Brookes?"

People assumed that was where someone who looked like me belonged. I was at Oxford University, not Oxford Brookes – a distinction that didn't bother me in the slightest per se. What bothered me was the assumption, and the reason behind it. Oxford Brookes is a former polytechnic, and although it has excellent ratings in some subjects, lacks the prestige of the University of Oxford,

where I was studying. It does, however, have both better levels of diversity and less of the stigma of being a place of study reserved for the most privileged and elite.

In part, however, their assumption was right. A report out on Tuesday suggests that black and ethnic minority students are far more likely to study at newer, post-1992 universities, and those with highly diverse student bodies. The study, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath, found that while some universities are 95% white, at others minority students make up almost three-quarters of the student body. At the same time, the report says, “many prestigious universities ... do not reflect the diversity of the cities in which they are located”.

These findings confirm what many of us already know: our universities are both a symptom and a cause of segregation. They are a symptom because young people are segregated well before they submit their university applications. Analysis from Demos in 2015 found, for instance, that 61% of ethnic minority pupils in England enter schools where ethnic minority pupils are a majority. In 2016, the Social Integration Commission found that young people under 17 have fewer than 50% of the interactions with other ethnicities than would be expected if there was no social segregation. A government-commissioned report last year by Louise Casey found local areas that are becoming increasingly divided, and that some groups – such as those of Pakistani or Bangaldeshi heritage – experienced “profound socioeconomic exclusion”.

But universities are also a cause of segregation because, as they gain reputations for being undiverse, they repel perfectly capable students from non-white and underprivileged backgrounds who should consider studying there. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds told researchers that they were concerned about “feeling uncomfortable or thought they might be stared at” if they went to places with few other minorities. They were right to be concerned. Being in an environment where you are an extreme minority often pits you against a level of ignorance, as I found, and renders you self-conscious and highly visible at a time when you are already vulnerable as a young person, away from home probably for the first time, experiencing new academic and social pressures without the support of your family and community. This is not just about race. Students from working-class backgrounds are often deeply self-conscious in an Oxbridge or Russell group environment when surrounded by public school middle-class students too.

Students who do overcome the anxiety this creates cannot necessarily expect any support from their university either. Of the two students I have informally mentored, from both ethnic minority and working-class backgrounds, at prestigious, mainly white universities, both dropped out. One returned, eventually gaining a first-class degree – a result that suggests her anxiety about her academic ability was entirely unfounded. Instead, she suffered from a kind of “impostor syndrome”, which is common among students who do not see themselves reflected in the student body. The other student is still considering whether she can face going back. Neither had the support they deserved from the university, nor the recognition that theirs was a unique set of emotional and social challenges that needed to be addressed.

Universities still adopt a stance of “tolerance” – suggesting they are performing some kind of good deed by allowing students from minority backgrounds to study there – instead of recognising the need to take proactive steps to enable them to thrive. The Office for Fair Access to higher education (Offa), which requires universities to set targets and milestones for increasing access to their courses, warned last month that “far more students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds leave before completing their courses, but far fewer receive the highest grades when they do stay the distance”. Offa is explicit that it doesn’t impose sanctions on universities solely for not meeting their targets. None of this is surprising. We are yet to develop a sophisticated approach to identity and integration in Britain, and our universities are no exception. This report sheds light on the need for greater diversity at our universities. But getting students through the door will not be enough on its own.

---

## **American Protest: College admissions scandal is just tip of iceberg**

March 18, 2019

by Meredith Varner

*The Daily Free Press* (The Independent Student Newspaper at Boston University)

Last week the American education system was rocked when the scandal of famous and wealthy parents paying hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars to cheat their children into elite colleges broke to the public.

It is ridiculous that parents paid someone to fake test scores and athletic abilities just to get their children into a specific college, but this is not the worst thing about the college admissions system in America.

Realistically, the higher education system has always been about money and was created to serve the wealthiest Americans. It is a game of money and wealth over true intelligence for many universities.

Just last year secret files in a lawsuit against Harvard University went public, proving there are special admissions preferences and backdoors for specific applicants. Documents in the case brought to light the little-known dean and director's interest lists — lists of applicants connected to top donors or other people of interest to the university.

It is pretty common knowledge that someone who can pay tuition in full takes priority over other students due to their elite status, but the fact that there are actual lists to keep track of this is just another indicator of how broken the system is.

In fact, children from the top 1 percent are 77 times more likely to attend elite colleges than children from the bottom 20 percent.

Beyond the actual admissions decision by the school is the broken system of standardized tests. Colleges can say they consider a variety of things beyond standardized testing, but it is still a significant measurement of whether a student will get into a college or not.

These standardized tests do not measure intelligence so much as they measure the ability to take an exam or pay for a tutor to teach you how to take an exam. I had a tutor, and without him, I would not have done nearly as well on the exam because he taught me the techniques to take the test.

These tutors and SAT classes are also ridiculously expensive and widely unavailable to many American students. It is a game of whoever can afford to learn how to take the test to then be prioritized by colleges because they can afford the school and make potential donations.

The upper-class children of America can get into most colleges they want to when their parents make a donation, also known as buying their way in. This is a very common practice in the education system.

Affirmative action has been criticized on the basis that minority students might not actually deserve the admission offers they receive, but when rich kids buy their way in, no one bats an eye. This is because money runs the admission process, and those born into wealth are inherently valued more.

The root of this problem is the emphasis placed on higher education and elite institutions. Community college is viewed as shameful or less than because it is not \$70,000 a year like some of the most elite universities.

Children are pressured into attending a four-year university regardless of what they really want, and the pressure is so extreme it has pushed parents to spend millions donating or cheating their child's admission into a school.

There has to be a change in the way we look at higher education. If we are going to place so much emphasis on a college degree, then it must be more available to everyone. Higher education shouldn't be an easy game that can be won by the wealth of rich families while the rest of the country's children are left behind.