

NEWS from

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING

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For more information, contact:
Shanda Ivory, (703) 836-2222

Admission Officers and Counselors Respond to President Bush's Statement in Opposition to the University of Michigan

(Alexandria, Virginia) The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) expressed disappointment in President Bush's decision to oppose the University of Michigan in its upcoming Supreme Court case. "We appreciate the president's mention of diversity as a laudable goal in higher education. However, the college admission process that the President described does not reflect the very thorough evaluation of applications that occurs at Michigan and in admission offices across the country," stated Joyce Smith, Executive Director of NACAC. "We are disappointed that the President chose to use divisive rhetoric of 'quotas' rather than speaking forthrightly about the facts of the case."

"NACAC member institutions have for many years stated a commitment to diversity as part of their institutional missions," Smith said. "Colleges and universities are working to ensure that their campuses reflect the changing demographics of the nation's population, and that the workforce reflects the reality of life in our country." While African-Americans and Hispanics together constitute 25 percent of the American population, they represent only 16 percent of students enrolled at four-year colleges and universities. In response to the announcement, NACAC officials conveyed the following key points in contrast to the President's remarks:

- **Misrepresentation of the admission process.** As Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman stated, the University does not use "quotas." Academic qualifications are the most important factors in college admission at Michigan and elsewhere. The President's use of the term is inaccurate in this case.
- **Admissions are not "race-based."** The President's remarks refer to "race-based admission." A proper understanding of the admission process would reveal that there is no such thing. Race is included as one among many factors in the admission decision, and is not used as the exclusive basis for any admission decision.
- **"Preferences" set straight.** Colleges and universities have the right to determine the profile of students in their incoming freshman class. If the language of preferences is to be used with respect to race, then it must also be applied equally to other factors that are beyond the control of students. Preferences in the admission process are given to students from particular geographical areas, students with wealthy or influential parents, and students whose parents attended the institution.
- **"Affirmative Access" is not a viable option.** "X percent" admission plans have not yielded equity in higher education and are no more merit based than current policies. Access for minority and low-income students in Texas, Florida and California to major public campuses has been limited as a result of the implementation of these plans. In addition, the x-percent plans are not applicable to graduate schools, like law school and medical school, which are the subjects of the Michigan and the *Bakke* cases.
- **Michigan admission policy in compliance with Bakke case.** Existing judicial review shows that the University of Michigan admission policy falls well within the boundaries set by the Supreme Court in its 1978 *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* case.

About NACAC: NACAC is an Alexandria, VA-based education association of more than 7,900 primary and secondary school counselors, independent counselors, college admission and financial aid officers, enrollment managers, and organizations that work with students as they make the transition from high school to postsecondary education. The association is committed to maintaining high standards that foster ethical and social responsibility among those involved in the transition process, as outlined in the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice.



**National Association for College Admission Counseling • www.nacac.com
1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2818 • phone: 703/836-2222 • fax: 703/836-8015**