



Helen Irvin says downsizing hampers university hiring, too. "Public response to a perceived loss is to think, 'Why should we give special attention to certain groups?'"

Both proponents and opponents of affirmative action see increasing funding to primary and secondary schools as the first step in equalizing the educational system. Currently, primary and secondary public schools receive funding through property taxes, which means poor neighborhoods have poorly funded schools while affluent neighborhoods have strong schools. "Where you live shouldn't dictate the quality of education you receive," says U. of Idaho senior Russ Wright.

But right now, it does. If you go to a sub-par high school, chances of attending a four-year college shrink accordingly. And with more people seeking a higher education, competition for desk space is getting tougher.

Please come to our campus

A long-running myth surrounding affirmative action is that it's quota-based. It's not. However, campus recruiting methods to achieve diversity sometimes suggest otherwise. Changes in the curric-

ula, minority scholarships [see box] and mentor programs are just some of the ways universities attract minorities.

"We're competing with other colleges for [minority] students," says UCLA's associate vice chancellor Raymund Paredes. "It's not so much that it looks good but that [these] students contribute to the higher caliber of discourse."

Some students have found these bidding wars insincere — more concerned with an appearance of diversity than with any genuine commitment to minority education. "Being a black guy with a 1360 SAT, I received a letter from almost every university and college in the country," says U. of Maryland senior Kevin Sproles. "Before I could be a 1360 score, before I could be a good student, I had to be black."

But the diverse classroom atmosphere recruiters promise when trying to attract minority students doesn't always materialize. Groups tend to migrate toward an integrated separatism: Black Student Union, Jewish Center, Women's Caucus, Gay/Lesbian Center. "If everybody wants to be a melting pot, then groups like that are going to have to say, 'What we're doing is counterproductive,'" says

U. of Georgia senior Nick Mrvos. "They are segregating."

Try telling someone like Mrvos that in this bastion of cultural mixing, he now has to attend a sensitivity class or that the university has a minority studies major.

"If [blacks] have their major, other minority groups will follow in wanting their own majors, too," Mrvos says. "One of our women's studies groups here has a brown bag lunch and talks about feminism and lesbianism — that's what they teach."

Some say that schools are going overboard in creating a shiny, happy, politically correct campus. Others maintain that schools drag their heels to bring their curricula up to speed.

If you're a student at an Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi state school and want to major in African-American studies, you're out of luck. Right now, these are the only states left in the union without an African-American studies major.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court found that Mississippi was running one higher education system for blacks and one for whites. The Court ordered Mississippi to remove all traces of a segregated higher-education system and called the predominantly black institutions underfunded and educationally inferior.

Alabama has been in similar litigation since 1981. The absence of an African-American studies major was one example cited of the state's lack of commitment to integration. "I don't care how many Unity Day celebrations the university puts together," says U. of Alabama senior Richard Thompson, who testified on behalf of the plaintiffs against the U. of Alabama. "There are no classes dealing specifically with African-American culture anywhere within the core curriculum. The rule of thumb on this campus is that if it isn't in my major, I don't have to take it."

California is again leading the nation in political reform, now with its attempts to halt the programs it began. What California decides in the 1996 elections could domino other states' affirmative-action policies.

Although sit-ins may be out of the question, today's generation may no longer have the cushion to be apathetic. Twentysomethings have inherited an unparalleled standard for equality. As the war on affirmative action flares, today's youth will have to set the pace for their own definition of equal rights.

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Erasing Race From Scholarships

As a high school student with a 4.0 GPA, Daniel Podberesky met every requirement for the Benjamin Banneker Scholarship at the U. of Maryland — except one: He's not black.

For 16 years, the U. of Maryland has awarded annually — to black students only — more than 80 full-ride (room, books, tuition) Benjamin Banneker scholarships. When Podberesky, a Latino, was refused an application for the scholarship in 1990, he sued for \$35,000, plus \$1 million in legal fees.

In November 1994, the Fourth Circuit Court ruled in favor of Podberesky. To counter that ruling, the U. of Maryland filed a brief with the Supreme Court in March 1995. If the Supreme Court reviews *Podberesky vs. Kirwan*, it could decide the fate of race-based scholarships.

The scholarship was designed to attract black students with GPAs of 3.0 or higher to the U. of Maryland, which has fought to change a long history of discrimination.

"As late as the '70s, [the University of Maryland] rejected people because of the color of their skin," says the U. of Maryland's director of public information, Roland King. "This was a segregationist institution long after other institutions accepted integration."

Chief counsel of the Washington Legal Foundation and attorney for Podberesky, Richard Samp, says the strength of Podberesky's case is that the scholarship doesn't reach the people it aims to help. "[Banneker scholarship recipients] are not poor black children. They tend to be from Montgomery County, an affluent suburb," Samp says. "It's a matter of schools winning trophies for themselves. It's ludicrous for them to say they're helping poor black students."

Because of the Fourth Circuit Court's ruling, the scholarship has been revised and renamed the Banneker Key Scholarship. Now, King says, "We've combined... the same kind of scholarship without the race restrictions." — AR



Boalt Law student Charles Moore



Berkeley chancellor Chang-Lin Tien



Sproul protest for affirmative action

In January, Berkeley students and faculty rallied after 14 students received fliers in their mailboxes. The flier read in part: "Rejoice you crybaby niggers, it's affirmative action month.... Your failures are hereditary and can't be corrected by these liberals."