

Defining Merit: The Nexus of Mission, Excellence, and Diversity

“Translating the Mission in Student Selection”

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Office of Undergraduate Admissions

Mission Statement

The University of Michigan seeks to enroll and graduate applicants who will develop and grow educationally and personally and contribute to the University community, the State of Michigan, and the broader society. To that end, the role of the Undergraduate Admissions Office is to recruit, admit, and encourage enrollment of classes of students who are academically excellent, accomplished in extracurricular endeavors, and broadly diverse. It is the University's experience and judgment that this mix of students will foster the vibrant educational atmosphere that provides the best educational experience for all students.

Aggressive Diversity Policies vs. Perception

- 25 years before Bakke – most Higher Ed Institutions adopted aggressive policies for student recruitment, admissions, outreach, and financial aid. All as part of their effort to increase minority enrollments.
- Public perception often opposed granting admission on factors other than merit.

Academic Achievement, Quality and Potential

Direct Measures

- Cumulative GPA
- Pattern of grade improvement during high school
- Quality of curriculum
 - Solid college-prep curriculum (4 years in each subject)
 - Strength of senior year courses
 - Core (req) curriculum/courses beyond core curriculum
 - AP, IB and honors courses/College Courses while in H.S.
- Test Scores (SAT I and II, ACT, AP, etc.)
- Internships in area of academic interest
- Participation in enrichment or outreach programs
- Class rank

Academic Achievement, Quality and Potential (contd)

Educational Environment

- Strength of curriculum (inc. availability of AP, IB, honors)
- Average SAT I and/or ACT scores
- Percentage attending 4-year colleges
- Competitive grading system in high school
- Competitiveness of class
- Academically disadvantaged school

Evaluative Measures

- Academic recognition and awards
- Artistic talent
- Depth in one or more academic areas related to student interests
- Evidence of academic passion
- Grasp of world events
- Independent academic research
- Intellectual curiosity
- Writing quality - content, style, originality, risk taking

Characteristics and Attributes

Personal Background

- Alumni connection
- Cultural awareness/experiences
- First generation to go to college from family
- Low-economic family background
- Underrepresented minority (for reporting purposes only)
- Personal disadvantage
- Professional diversity
- Faculty/staff connection
- Military veteran/Peace Corps, America Corps, etc.

Geographic Considerations

- In-State resident
- Economically disadvantaged region
- From school with few or no previous applicants

Characteristics and Attributes (contd)

Extracurricular activities, service, and leadership

- Awards and honors (athletic, artistic, musical, civic)
- Quality and depth of involvement
- Leadership
- Community service
- Impact student's involvement had on school and/or community
- Scholarship athlete
- Work experience

Extenuating circumstances

- Overcoming personal adversity/ unusual hardships
- Language spoken at home/ESL
- Frequent moves/many different schools

Other considerations

- Demonstrated interest in college/good match
- Strong personal statement

Recommendations

Counselor & Teacher Recommendations

- Character
- Civic and cultural awareness / Diverse perspective / Tolerance
- Commitment
- Intellectual independence / Enthusiasm for learning / Risk taking
- Creativity / Artistic talent
- Concern for others / Community
- Motivation / Determination / Grit / Effort / Initiative / Persistence / Tenacity
- Leadership potential / Maturity / Responsibility

Shape of the River



Not until the Bowen and Bok study did we have enough data to show the benefits of diversity in summary.

Shape of the River– Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions

William G. Bowen and Derek Bok, 1998

Freshman Profile

- **Admitted Student Profile for Fall 2013**
- Average High School GPA: 3.85
- Middle 50th Percentile of the Admitted Class:
 - ACT Composite of 29-33
 - ACT English of 30-34
 - ACT Math of 28-34
 - ACT Science 27-33
 - ACT Combined English/Writing of 28-32
 - SAT Total of 2030-2250
 - SAT Critical Reading 650-740
 - SAT Math 680-780
 - SAT Writing 660-760
- Undergraduate students come from all 50 states and 127 countries
- 60% of undergraduates are Michigan residents
- Freshmen from over 1,843 different high schools
- 27% of undergraduates are African American, Hispanic American, Native American, or Asian American
- 4% of our Freshmen and 7% of our undergraduates are international students
- Ratio of undergraduate men to women approximately 51/49

Critical Mass

Critical mass is not a specific number. Rather, it is an educational concept that refers to enrolling enough minority students such that all students can benefit from diversity, minority and majority alike, and have meaningful interactions in the classroom, residence halls, and social and extracurricular settings.

2012 Graduating Class: 1000* & Above SAT I Test Takers by Ethnicity by Selected GPA Range

	National				Michigan			
	B+ or Above		A- or Above		B+ or Above		A- or Above	
	Number	% of Total						
African-American	28,501	4.83%	20,297	4.34%	146	4.21%	119	3.80%
American Indian	2,950	0.50%	2,225	0.48%	10	0.29%	9	0.29%
Asian American	75,296	12.75%	62,132	13.28%	704	20.31%	659	21.04%
Hispanic*	56,877	9.63%	42,975	9.19%	97	2.80%	82	2.62%
Other	27,181	4.60%	21,472	4.59%	203	5.86%	179	5.72%
White	399,689	67.69%	318,751	68.13%	2,306	66.53%	2,084	66.54%
Source: The College Board								
(*includes Mexican, Puerto Rican and Other Hispanic)								

* SAT verbal and math scores only

Sunset Clause

Statement from Justice Sandra Day O'Connor:

“Race- and national origin-conscious programs cannot be designed to continue forever; they ‘must be limited in time to achieve institutional ends.’ In the context of clear benchmarks of success, review these programs periodically and take appropriate action.”